FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA)
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
PROPOSED PIGEON FORGE FIRE HALL, SEVIER COUNTY, TENNESSEE
FEMA ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT PROGRAM
FEMA EWM-2009-FC-02928R

BACKGROUND

In accordance with 44 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) for FEMA, Subpart B, Agency Implementing Procedures, Part 10.9, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared Pursuant to Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as implemented by the regulations promulgated by the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ; 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508). The purpose of the proposed project is to enhance firefighter and resident safety by construction of a fire hall in an underserved part of the city through reduced response times in Pigeon Forge, Sevier County, Tennessee that are compliant with national standards. An EA was prepared to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

The Pigeon Forge Fire Department has applied for FEMA's Assistance to Firefighters grant program funding under application number FEMA EWM-2009-FC-02928R. FEMA provides funds under this program for activities that help to meet the firefighting and emergency response needs of fire departments and nonaffiliated emergency medical service organizations.

Two project alternatives were explored in depth in the EA for the fire hall: 1) No Action and 2) Preferred Action Alternative:

The preferred action alternative in Pigeon Forge will result in construction of a fire hall in a drastically underserved area of Sevier County. The preferred action would provide improved response within the southern portion of the City of Pigeon Forge. The preferred action would reduce response time to the expanding residential areas and tourist businesses in an area that is expected to experience significant population growth in the next ten years. Emergency response times will be drastically reduced following construction of this 9,356 sq. ft. fire hall complete with three pull-through bays and ample space for 24 hr. occupancy by a crew of twelve firefighters. The No Action alternative would result in no construction of a new fire station in this location. Without the construction of a new fire hall, response times would continue to be unacceptable. Response times are expected to further increase with the predicted population growth and associated increased call-volume. The no action alternative results in a lower level of overall public safety than the preferred action alternative.

A public notice was posted in the Mountain Press on November 11, 2010 and the draft EA was available for review for a period of 15 days at the Sevier County Library Pigeon Forge Branch and at the Pigeon Forge Fire Department. The draft EA was also available online at the http://www.fema.gov/plan/ehp/envdocuments/ea-region4.shtm website. The public was invited to comment on the proposed action and the draft EA. No comments were received from the public during the 15 day comment period.

FINDINGS

The preferred action as described in the EA will not adversely impact geology, groundwater, floodplains, wetlands, environmental justice, threatened and endangered species, cultural resources, hazardous materials, or socioeconomic resources. During the construction period, short-term impacts to soil, downstream surface water, traffic, air quality, and noise are anticipated. All short-term impacts require utilizing best management practices to minimize and mitigate adverse impacts to the proposed project site and surrounding areas.

CONDITIONS

Any change to the approved scope of work will require re-evaluation for compliance with NEPA and other Laws and Executive Orders.

In accordance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations, the applicant is responsible for acquiring any necessary permits prior to commencing construction at the preferred project site. All permit conditions and/or Best Management Practices must be followed.

If ground disturbing activities occur during construction, applicant will monitor ground disturbance and if any potential archeological resources are discovered, will immediately cease construction in that area and notify the State and FEMA.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the EA, coordination with the appropriate agencies, comments from the public, and adherence to the project conditions set forth in this FONSI, FEMA has determined that the proposed project qualifies as a major Federal action that will not significantly adversely affect the quality of the natural and human environment, nor does it have the potential for significant adverse cumulative effects. As a result of this FONSI, an EIS will not be prepared (44 CFR Part 10.9) and the preferred actions as described in the attached EA may proceed.

APPROVAL

William R. Straw

Date 12/08/10

William R. Straw, Ph.D.
Regional Environmental Officer