

DRAFT
FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA)
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
PROPOSED PITTSBORO VOLUNTEER FIRE / RESCUE DEPARTMENT NEW FIRE
STATION #3, CHATHAM COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
FEMA – ARRA ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS FIRE STATION CONSTRUCTION GRANT
GRANT # EMW-2009-FC-00843R

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 grant is to facilitate the Pittsboro Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department's (PVFRD) construction of a new fire station / rescue building within the Asbury Community in southern Chatham County, North Carolina. This facility will allow the PVFRD to decrease response times for firefighting and other emergencies in that area to be compliant with national standards. An Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

Pittsboro Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department, Inc. has applied for a grant to assist with this project under the FEMA – A.R.R.A. Assistance to Firefighters Fire Station Construction Grant Program. The application number for this grant is EMW-2009-FC-00843R. FEMA provides funds under this program for activities that help to meet the firefighting and emergency response needs of local fire departments and first responders.

Two project alternatives were explored in depth in the EA for the proposed new fire station / rescue building: 1) No Action and 2) Preferred Action Alternative:

The preferred action alternative is the construction of a new fire / rescue building at the intersection of Highway NC 87 and Walter Bright Road within the Asbury Community of southern Chatham County, North Carolina. This facility would decrease firefighting and emergency response times in that area to about one-half to one-third of the existing times. At present this area has to be served by the main station in Pittsboro, located approximately 12 miles away. Response times are now heavily influenced by this distance, traffic considerations on Highway NC 87, and a small bridge that will not accommodate a large fire truck to access part of the Asbury area in a timely manner. The proposed building is a pre-engineered metal / masonry building approximately 60' x 100' in size with 3 pull-through bays, a kitchen, bedrooms, a day room and training areas. This facility would be manned full time with two or more personnel. The No Action alternative would result in no construction of a new fire station in this location. The Asbury area would still have to rely on service from the main station in Pittsboro and the problems with extended response times would remain. Response times would continue to be influenced by heavy traffic on Highway NC 87 and the problem with the small bridge noted above. Response times are expected to further increase with future increases in traffic along Highway NC 87. 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 Chatham Record on November 18, 2010 and the draft EA was available for review for a period of 15 days at the Chatham County Public Library at 197 NC 87 North, Pittsboro, N. C. and at the Pittsboro Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department, Inc. at 150 Sanford Road in Pittsboro, N. C. 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 impacts to the proposed project site and surrounding areas.

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 affect the quality of the natural and human environment, nor does it have the potential for significant 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, Ph.D.
Regional Environmental Officer

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