

Environmental Assessment

Highway Garage Facility

Town of Afton, Chenango County, New York

FEMA-1650-DR-NY

April 2011



FEMA

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Region II
26 Federal Plaza, NY, NY 10278

**Environmental Assessment
Town of Afton Highway Garage Facility**

Table of Contents

LIST OF APPENDICES	iii
LIST OF ACRONYMS	iii
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
2.0 PURPOSE AND NEED.....	2
3.0 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED	2
3.1 Proposed Action	2
3.2 No Action	3
3.3 Alternatives Screened from Full Analysis	3
4.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENTS AND POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED	4
4.1 General Site Description.....	4
Physical Resources	4
4.2 Geology, Topography & Soils	4
4.2.1 Existing Condition	4
4.2.2 Potential Environmental Impacts	6
4.3 Land Use	6
4.3.1 Existing Condition	6
4.3.2 Potential Environmental Impacts	6
4.4 Air Quality	7
4.4.1 Existing Condition	7
4.4.2 Potential Environmental Impacts	7
Water Resources	7
4.5 Water Quality	7
4.5.1 Existing Condition	7
4.5.2 Potential Environmental Impacts	8
4.6 Wetlands.....	8
4.6.1 Existing Condition	8
4.6.2 Potential Environmental Impacts	8
4.7 Floodplain Management	8
4.7.1 Existing Condition	8
4.7.2 Potential Environmental Impacts	9
4.8 Biological Resources - Fish and Wildlife Habitat	9

**Environmental Assessment
Town of Afton Highway Garage Facility**

4.8.1	Existing Condition	9
4.8.2	Potential Environmental Impacts	9
4.9	Cultural Resources.....	9
4.9.1	Existing Condition	10
4.9.2	Potential Environmental Impacts	10
4.10	Visual Resources	10
4.11	Existing Condition	10
4.12	Potential Environmental Impacts	10
4.13	Socioeconomics	11
4.13.1	Existing Condition	11
4.13.2	Potential Environmental Impacts	11
4.14	Environmental Justice	11
4.14.1	Existing Condition	11
4.14.2	Potential Environmental Impacts	11
4.15	Public Health and Safety.....	12
4.15.1	Existing Condition	12
4.15.2	Potential Environmental Impacts	12
4.16	Public Services and Utilities	12
4.16.1	Existing Condition	12
4.16.2	Potential Environmental Impacts	12
4.17	Traffic.....	13
4.17.1	Existing Condition	13
4.17.2	Potential Environmental Impacts	13
4.18	Noise.....	13
4.18.1	Existing Condition	13
4.18.2	Potential Environmental Impacts	13
4.19	Climate Change.....	14
4.20	Cumulative Impacts	14
5.0	PERMITS AND CONDITIONS.....	14
6.0	PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND AGENCY COORDINATION	14
7.0	CONCLUSION.....	16
8.0	LIST OF PREPARERS.....	16

**Environmental Assessment
Town of Afton Highway Garage Facility**

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A	Figures.....	17
Appendix B	Pertinent Correspondence.....	30

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CFR	Code of Federal Regulation
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EO	Executive Order
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FPPA	Farmland Protection Policy Act
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NYS	New York State
NYSDEC	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
NYSHPO	New York State Historic Preservation Office
NYSOEM	New York State Office of Emergency Management
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
Town	Town of Afton
USDA-NRCS	United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Town of Afton (Town), Chenango County, New York experienced flooding and storm damages within its community during severe storms and flooding from June 26, 2006 to July 10, 2006. The storm incident period was declared a major disaster by President George W. Bush on July 1, 2006, and federal public assistance was made available to affected communities such as Afton per FEMA 1650-DR-NY and in accordance with the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act) (PL 93-288), as amended. The Town's highway garage on Court Street was significantly damaged during the disaster and was condemned and later demolished in the fall of 2006. The Town has requested federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to construct a new highway garage facility at a property located at 1418 State Route 7 (Figures 1-5). After the 2006 flooding, the Town had rented space within an existing commercial building on this property for its highway garage operation. The Town later acquired the property. The proposed project would involve construction of an addition to the existing commercial building and construction of site utilities and amenities to house both the relocated highway garage and to be relocated Town Administrative offices. The Town's long-term planning for the newly acquired parcel could also involve construction of a future bus garage on the west side of the property.

The Town has applied for federal funding as a grant applicant, and is also referred to as a subgrantee. New York State serves as the grantee for the disaster recovery operation, as represented by New York State Office of Emergency Management. The proposed project is referenced as subgrant application #3608 for FEMA 1650-DR-NY. The Town is seeking federal financial assistance to apply towards the costs of demolition of the flood-damaged original highway garage facility; rental costs for use of the temporary relocation building; property acquisition; and planning, engineering, design and construction of a the new highway garage facility. The Town is not seeking federal funds for the approximate 4,500 square-foot portion of the new site construction related to the relocation of the Town's administrative offices. The Town's administrative offices were not damaged during the disaster incident and are considered improvements to the FEMA eligible highway garage facility project.

FEMA is required as a federal agency to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of its proposed action and alternatives to the proposed action, in order to make an informed decision in defining a proposed project for implementation that incorporates to the extent practicable measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse impacts to the human environment. The environmental analysis is conducted in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and its implementing regulations at 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508 and FEMA's regulations at 44 CFR Part 10. FEMA evaluates financial assistance projects prior to grant approval. This Environmental Assessment serves as documentation of FEMA's analysis of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed highway garage demolition and construction project, including analysis of project alternatives, and identification of impact minimization measures. The document serves as written communication of the environmental evaluation for public and interested party comment. Public involvement is a component of NEPA to inform an agency's

determination of whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

2.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the project is to restore a highway garage facility of equal or better structural operation than existed prior to the disaster incident. The need for the project is to fully re-establish a public works facility so that the Town can conduct its necessary road maintenance for transportation functionality and to support public safety within the community.

3.0 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

3.1 Proposed Action

The proposed action would provide a new highway garage facility for the affected community to not only restore, but improve upon the Town's pre-disaster highway garage operation capabilities. The new highway garage facility would be constructed at 1418 State Route 7 (Latitude 42.2394, Longitude -75.4849). This property is an approximate 3.47 acre size lot that the Town currently owns. The existing metal frame building at this property was at one time a commercial trucking facility and also housed a portable sawmill business at one point in time. It was constructed in 1980 with a slab foundation and has a footprint of approximately 109ft x 60ft. The existing building garage would be renovated and enlarged to accommodate large highway equipment and approximately 7,400 square-feet of garage space (Figure 6). The garage would be outfitted with a truck exhaust system for worker health. The site would be developed with construction of new highway garage office space of approximately 896 square-feet. The site would be developed to include new utilities including a septic system, new sewer/water line, and site amenities such as a parking lot.

The property would also be developed to include construction of 4,500 square-feet of Town administrative office space, although not a dependent feature or connected action to the eligible highway garage project due to its independent utility. It is anticipated that in the reasonably foreseeable future, a bus garage may also be constructed on the western side of the property.

The original highway garage facility at Court Street was described as a 50ft x 90ft x 20ft cinder block building constructed in 1956 as a main garage with a separate shed structure (Latitude 42.231691, Longitude -75.526373). The original highway garage facility was demolished in fall 2006 after the flooding and condemnation. The structure had reportedly been pushed off its foundation by flood waters (Figure 3). A remaining fuel tank from the original facility would be relocated to the new highway garage facility. A salvaged garage door from the original facility may be reused at the new highway garage location. The original facility location is a 1.7 acre lot (Lot 19) and was paved in summer 2007 to create a municipal parking lot as re-use of the property. The original facility would continue to serve as a parking lot for nearby recreational fields and community buildings with implementation of the proposed action.

3.2 No Action

If no federally funded project were implemented, it is anticipated that the Town would not achieve full restoration of its pre-disaster highway department facility operations. The Town would likely continue to operate its public highway functions out of the existing commercial building at 1418 State Route 7. The existing building in its current condition does not fully restore the functions of the Town's pre-disaster highway department. The Town purchased the property after approximately 8 months of renting the building after its original facility was damaged. The existing building was formerly used for trucking and a portable sawmill. The building and the site property have not been fully retrofitted to the highway garage function. It is anticipated that with the no action alternative, the Town may be limited in its ability to retrofit the existing structure to properly accommodate heavy equipment, workshop machinery, and to install exhaust systems that promote worker health and safety. It is also anticipated that under the no action alternative, the Town may not have the financial capability to construct Town offices or a bus garage at the 1418 State Route 7 location.

Similar to the proposed action, under the no action alternative, the original highway garage site at Court Street would continue to serve as a parking lot for nearby recreational fields and community buildings. The salvaged garage door and fuel tank would be relocated to the 1418 State Route 7 location.

3.3 Alternatives Screened from Full Analysis

Reconstruction of the highway garage at its original location was screened from consideration, as the property is located adjacent to Bumps Creek, partially within the 100-Year floodplain, and has had a history of flooding prior to the disaster incident in 2006. The Town would not elect to put the new structure at risk at this original site.

The Town evaluated three (3) alternative locations to the original site for construction of a new highway garage facility that were screened from further analysis due to site constraints, building capacity deficiencies, and/or economic considerations:

1. A Town owned property described as a 6-acre parcel on NYS Route 7 was eliminated from detailed evaluation as the site is known to flood with depths of 3-4 feet of water. The Town would not elect to construct a new facility at a site of increased risk of flood damage.
2. A property referred to as Interstate Battery on NYS Route 7 was considered, but the cold storage building was reportedly not large enough for storage of highway equipment.
3. A building, referred to as the IVCI office complex on County Route 39, was eliminated from further consideration due to cost considerations and due to the site's location across the Susquehanna River from the Town's center.

These alternatives are not carried forward into the environmental evaluation of this environmental assessment; however, demonstrate the Town's planning process and initial steps in alternative analysis to make an informed community decision for implementation of the best practicable site alternative to achieve project purpose and need, and to minimize future risk of flood damages to the public works facility.

4.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENTS AND POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

4.1 General Site Description

The original facility location at Court Street is now a paved parking lot with a narrow grass border along Bumps Creek. Japanese knotweed, a common invasive, non-native plant was growing on-site along the creek. The creek banks are lined with stone riprap. The area vicinity includes residential structures located along Caswell Street and farmland and recreational fields along Court Street.

The proposed facility site at 1418 State Route 7 is partially developed with an existing building constructed in 1980. The eastern section of the property is open space with disturbed grass lawn area. There is a right-of-way that crosses the eastern edge of the parcel for access to farmland on the Susquehanna River side of the railroad line. Off-property to the east is a forested plot with oak, white pine, hickory and other mixed hardwoods. A freight line defines the southern border of the property, which is buffered by a vegetative border of shrub species such as Staghorn sumac and herbaceous species such as goldenrod and ragweed. The property is separated from the Susquehanna River by a riparian forest border, farmland, and the railroad line. The western edge of the property is bordered by an Agway business. Across the street to the north is a mix of residential structures and open space. Numerous dirt and gravel stockpiles are located on the property. The site is generally described as developed with disturbed soil conditions.

Table 1 on Page 5 summarizes impacts of the No Action and Proposed Action alternatives, and the following sections provide a more detailed description of the affected environment and potential environmental impacts of the No Action and Proposed Action.

Physical Resources

4.2 Geology, Topography & Soils

4.2.1 Existing Condition

The Town is geologically part of the Alleghany Plateau physiographic region and the Catskill rock formation region. Glacial sediments in the project vicinity include till, ice-contact deposits, lacustrine deposits, and outwash. The topography of both the original site and proposed highway garage site is relatively flat, with minor grade change and drainage towards Bumps Creek at Court Street, and minor grade change and drainage to the south at 1418 State Route 7. The soils of both the original and proposed highway garage are classified by the United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) as CkB: Chenango channery silt loam, fan, 3 to 8 percent slopes (Figure 7). The soil series consists of very deep, well and somewhat excessively drained soils formed in water-sorted material on outwash plains, kames, eskers, terraces, and alluvial fans (USGS).

The Town conducted Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessment of the proposed facility site and found that there was minor petroleum contamination of the soils within the first 2-4 feet below ground surface. The soil contamination levels were described by Geo-Environmental Management Solutions, LLC in the Phase II Environmental Site Assessment

Table 1 Summary of Potential Environmental Impacts of Project Alternatives

Resource	No Action Alternative	Proposed Action
Geology, Soils, Topography	No impact.	No significant impact.
Land Use	No impact.	No significant impact.
Air Quality	No impact.	No significant impact. Minor, temporary impact associated with dust and particulate matter during construction. Positive benefit to worker health with installation of truck exhaust system at new facility.
Water Quality	No impact.	No significant impact.
Wetlands	No impact.	No impact.
Floodplain Management	No impact.	No impact.
Fish & Wildlife Habitat	No impact.	No significant impact.
Cultural Resources	No impact.	No Historic Properties Affected.
Visual Resources	No impact.	No significant impact.
Socioeconomics	Negative impact due to diminished road maintenance capabilities.	Positive impact in restoring Town's full road maintenance operation.
Environmental Justice	No impact.	No impact.
Public Health & Safety	Negative impact on Town's socioeconomics due to diminished road maintenance capabilities.	Proposed Action benefits public health and safety due to re-establishment of its roadway maintenance operation.
Public Services & Utility	Negative impact on Town's socioeconomics due to diminished road maintenance capabilities.	Proposed Action benefits public services due to re-establishment of its roadway maintenance operation.
Traffic	Negative impact on Town's socioeconomics due to diminished road maintenance capabilities.	Proposed Action benefits transportation due to re-establishment of its roadway maintenance operation. Proposed site is suitable for highway garage facility due to location adjacent to State Route 7 and prior use as trucking facility.
Noise	No impact.	Minor, temporary noise disturbance during construction. Noise associated with operation similar to ambient condition, and prior facility use as trucking facility.

Report (2007) as residual subsurface contamination likely from use of the site as a trucking facility and described the contamination as non-significant level with no off-site migration. Much of the site is developed or has disturbed surface soils.

No soil testing at the original facility site is known to have been conducted. As stated previously, the site is paved with only a limited portion of impervious grass buffer along Bumps Creek.

4.2.2 Potential Environmental Impacts

The No Action and Proposed Action alternatives would not change the soil conditions at the original facility on Court Street. The site would remain in its current paved state. The Town is responsible to secure the site and ensure that the original facility property does not have contamination concerns.

No Action

The No Action alternative would not change the soil conditions at 1418 State Route 7 location, as this alternative assumed that the Town would not proceed with new construction on the site.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would develop a portion of the site at 1418 State Route 7 and thus convert pervious to impervious cover. Development as described would include building construction and parking lot coverage. The site is generally in a disturbed, developed state, thus the impact to soils is not significant. The geology and soils of the site are suitable for construction.

4.3 Land Use

4.3.1 Existing Condition

Chenango County is a rural county. According to the Chenango County Environmental Management Council website, only about 5% of the county land area is developed as industry, residential or commercial use. Much of the county is forested (60%) or agricultural (30%). The Town is within Agricultural District #5 as identified by New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. The Chenango channery silt loam soils of the original and proposed facility sites is classified as prime farmland soil. The Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) requires federal agencies to minimize the extent to which federal programs contribute to the unnecessary conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use and to assess potential conversion of farmland to developed property.

The land use of the original facility was a developed public works facility and now is utilized as parking lot to support Town recreational field use and for other community parking. The proposed facility site is already developed.

4.3.2 Potential Environmental Impacts

No Action

The land uses for the original facility and the proposed facility would not change with the No Action alternative.

Proposed Action

The land uses for the original site and the proposed site would not change with the proposed action. Although the soils of the proposed project site are classified as prime farmland soils, the site itself has already been developed and does not represent state prime or protected farmland. The Environmental Assessment document will be circulated to USDA-NRCS for concurrence with FEMA's determination per the FPPA. Although the original site is now impervious cover, the parking lot is a more compatible land use than reconstruction of a building at this site that has a known risk of flooding.

4.4 Air Quality

4.4.1 Existing Condition

Chenango County is designated as being in attainment of National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for criteria pollutants sulfur dioxide (SO₂), carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), lead (Pb), PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}. The State of New York is treated as a moderate nonattainment area for ozone (O₃) because it is included in the Ozone Transport Region (New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, the six New England states, Washington D.C. and portions of Virginia).

4.4.2 Potential Environmental Impacts

No Action

No air quality impacts would result from the No Action alternative.

Proposed Action

Impacts to air quality with the Proposed Action would be minor, temporary, and localized due to dust and particulate matter during building and site construction. Best management practices, including dust control, could be used during construction to minimize air quality impacts. Construction equipment emissions would be negligible and accounted for in the State's Implementation Plan for air quality. The installation of a truck exhaust system with the new facility would improve indoor air quality for worker health.

Water Resources

4.5 Water Quality

4.5.1 Existing Condition

The original facility site consists of predominantly impervious cover as a paved parking lot. Sheetflow runoff flows into Bumps Creek. The narrow grass buffer along Bumps Creek provides minimal filtration for parking lot runoff. Bumps Creek is classified by New York State Department of Environmental Conservation as a Class C waters that support fisheries and is suitable for non-contact activities.

The proposed facility site is not directly linked with any waterway. The freight railroad line separates the site from the lower floodplain of the Susquehanna River. The site is approximately 120-400 linear feet from the river's edge, but roughly 40-50 feet higher in elevation from the river floodplain. The site has an existing freshwater well. According to the Phase II

Environmental Site Assessment Report (Geo-Environmental Management Solutions, LLC 2007), the tested well water showed no detectable presence of petroleum hydrocarbons.

4.5.2 Potential Environmental Impacts

No Action

No water quality impacts would result from the No Action alternative.

Proposed Action

Impacts to water quality with the proposed action are minor. The proposed action would increase impervious cover at the proposed site; however, construction and post-construction runoff would be managed through a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) if site disturbance will be over one acre. An SWPPP would be developed by the applicant for compliance with a State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Construction Activity (GP-0-10-001) that would be issued pursuant to article 17, titles 7.8 and article 70 of the Environmental Conservation Law of New York State. The Town plans to update the sanitary system and incorporate an oil separator and dry well to manage grey water. The Town is responsible for securing all applicable permits for protection of water quality, including a New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) General Permit, as applicable.

4.6 Wetlands

4.6.1 Existing Condition

The original facility site is adjacent to Bumps Creek, open water river habitat that has been altered by man with placement of riprap on the embankments. The stream has degraded buffer habitat, mostly consisting of invasive species, such as knotweed, and turf grass. There are no wetlands located at the proposed facility site. See National Wetlands Inventory and NYSDEC Wetlands Maps (Figures 8-9).

4.6.2 Potential Environmental Impacts

No Action

The No Action alternative would have no impact on wetlands.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action alternative would have no impact on wetlands.

4.7 Floodplain Management

Executive Order (EO) 11988 Floodplain Management requires federal agencies to take actions to avoid long term and short-term impacts associated with occupancy and modification of floodplains. The 8-Step Process for compliance with this EO is integrated with this NEPA document per 44 CFR Part 9.

4.7.1 Existing Condition

The original site is located only partially within the 100-Year Floodplain or Special Flood Hazard Area adjacent to Bumps Creek, but has had a history of reoccurring flooding prior to the 2006 disaster flood. The floodplain habitat at the original facility is in a degraded state as much

of the property was paved to impervious cover, and the stream buffer is dominated by invasive herbaceous plants. The proposed site is outside the 500-Year Floodplain. See Flood Insurance Rate Maps for the original and proposed sites (Figure 10).

4.7.2 Potential Environmental Impacts

The Town's past action of deciding to relocate their highway garage operation to a site that is outside the floodplain, rather than rebuild at the original site, was a prudent and practicable decision supported by EO 11988. The Town's relocation to 1418 State Route 7 had a beneficial impact on floodplains. The relocation of an operation to a site outside the 500-year floodplain reduced the risk of flood damage to their current highway garage facility. The demolition of the original facility structure, without rebuild, reduced risks of flood damage at the original site.

No Action

The No Action alternative would have no impact on floodplains.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action alternative would have no impact on floodplains.

4.8 Biological Resources - Fish and Wildlife Habitat

4.8.1 Existing Condition

There is minimal habitat to support fish and wildlife at both the original and proposed sites. Bumps Creek at the original site is not listed as a trout stream, and its stream and water's edge habitat is degraded due to riprap and invasive vegetation. The parking lot of the original site provides no habitat. The undeveloped portion of the proposed site that is disturbed mowed grass area isn't suitable for foraging or nesting wildlife, but may be utilized by the occasional passerine bird or small mammal. Federal agencies must evaluate potential impacts to threatened and endangered species per the Endangered Species Act. There are no federally listed threatened or endangered species for Chenango County. Federal agencies must evaluate potential impacts to bald eagle and its habitat per the Bald Eagle Protection Act. The bald eagle, *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, may be occasionally found in the project vicinity; however there is no habitat for the bald eagle at the original or proposed site. Federal agencies must evaluate potential impacts to migratory bird habitat per the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. There is no migratory bird habitat at the original or proposed site.

4.8.2 Potential Environmental Impacts

No Action

The No Action alternative would have no impact on fish and wildlife habitat, including federally listed threatened or endangered species, bald eagles or migratory bird habitat.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action alternative would have no impact on fish and wildlife habitat, including federally listed threatened or endangered species, bald eagles or migratory bird habitat.

4.9 Cultural Resources

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) directs federal agencies to take into account the effect of any undertaking on historic properties. "Historic property" is any district, building, structure, site, or object that is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places

because the property is significant at the national, state, or local level in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, or culture. Typically, a historic property must be at least 50 years old and retain integrity.

4.9.1 Existing Condition

There is no known National Register listed historic property located within vicinity to the original or proposed sites; however, both sites are mapped within archaeologically sensitive areas (Figure 11). The building to be renovated at the proposed site is modern, constructed in 1980. The building already demolished at the original site was not eligible for listing to the National Register and was condemned prior to demolition.

4.9.2 Potential Environmental Impacts

No Action

The No Action alternative would have no impact on historic properties.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action involves ground disturbing activities at the proposed site. A FEMA archaeologist conducted a site visit of the proposed site in October 2009 and consulted with the New York State Historic Preservation Office (NYSHPO) per Section 106 of the NHPA regarding findings of the site visit and FEMA's assessment that the proposed action would have no adverse effects on historic resources. FEMA had concluded that the ground to be disturbed during construction was previously disturbed. The NYSHPO office concurred with FEMA's finding of "No Historic Properties Affected" via correspondence dated November 2, 2009 (See Appendix B). The building to be renovated at the proposed site is modern, constructed in 1980. The building already demolished at the original site was not eligible for listing to the National Register and was condemned prior to demolition.

4.10 Visual Resources

4.11 Existing Condition

The vicinity to the original site is a mix of residential and recreational fields. The stream habitat has little tree or shrub habitat both on and off property. The proposed site is developed and the meadow area has a disturbed appearance from the site's former use as a trucking facility. The neighboring Agway facility also gives the site surrounds a commercial feel.

4.12 Potential Environmental Impacts

No Action

The No Action alternative would have no impact on visual resources.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would not alter the appearance of the proposed site from its current developed and commercial state. The original site would remain unchanged.

4.13 Socioeconomics

4.13.1 Existing Condition

According to census data for the period of 2005-2009, the population of the Town is on average 2,973 persons. According to census data available at the U.S. Census Bureau website, approximately 50,620 people live in Chenango County in a total of 19,926 households. The County population is less than 1% of the total State population, which is not surprising given the less than 10% of residential development in the County, as discussed previously. The median income for a household in the County was \$42,257 (2008 data), and in the Town was \$46,705 (2009), as compared to the State average of \$55,980 (2008 data). About 14.2% of persons in the County are below the poverty level.

4.13.2 Potential Environmental Impacts

No Action

The No Action alternative would adversely impact the Town socioeconomically. The Town would not receive the federal public assistance that it is eligible to receive from FEMA. It is anticipated that the Town would not be able to fully re-establish its highway garage facility, impacting jobs and maintenance of transportation that supports local economic productivity.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would have a positive impact on socioeconomics. The Town could fully restore its public highway garage facility, benefiting jobs associated with the operation, and temporary job stimulus associated with construction. The restoration of the highway garage operation could indirectly benefit socioeconomics with re-establishment of full capability to meet road maintenance needs.

4.14 Environmental Justice

EO 12898, entitled “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations,” directs Federal agencies to “make environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.”

4.14.1 Existing Condition

According to census data, the population of the Town is predominantly white (97.7%). About 14.2% of persons in the County are below the poverty level. Approximately, 14.1% of the Town’s families at/or below poverty level (2005-2009 data). There are no senior housing or low-income housing complexes in the immediate vicinity of the original or proposed facility sites.

4.14.2 Potential Environmental Impacts

No Action

The No Action alternative would have no impact in accordance with EO 12898.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would have no impact in accordance with EO 12898. The Proposed Action would benefit the entire community with restoration of the Town's road maintenance capabilities.

4.15 Public Health and Safety

4.15.1 Existing Condition

The Town's public health and safety was impacted by the 2006 flooding disaster. According to the Town's Emergency Operations Plan, floods are the most probable natural cause of emergencies or disasters in their community. The Town has not been able to fully restore its highway garage operation since the 2006 flood, thus its road maintenance services were/are impacted by the lack of full restoration of its highway garage facility operation.

4.15.2 Potential Environmental Impacts

The Town's past action of deciding to relocate their highway garage operation to a site that is outside the floodplain, rather than rebuild at the original site, was a prudent and practicable decision that supports public health and safety.

No Action

The No Action alternative would limit the Town's ability to restore its road maintenance capabilities for transportation services that benefit public health and safety.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would re-establish the Town's capability to provide road maintenance services to the public, benefiting public health and safety.

4.16 Public Services and Utilities

4.16.1 Existing Condition

The Town's capability to provide road maintenance services to the public was compromised due to the loss of its original highway garage facility.

The original site has been secured as a parking lot with limited need for utilities, with exception to lighting. The proposed site already has an existing well and utilities for the existing building.

4.16.2 Potential Environmental Impacts

No Action

The No Action alternative would not achieve full re-establishment of the highway garage operation, thus would adversely impact the Town's public services for road maintenance.

The No Action alternative would not impact any site utilities at the original or proposed facility site.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would re-establish the Town's capability to provide road maintenance services to the public.

The Proposed Action would not impact any site utilities at the original site. The sewer/water lines at the proposed site would be upgraded, and a dry well would be installed for enhanced handling of grey water.

4.17 Traffic

4.17.1 Existing Condition

The Town's road maintenance capabilities have been compromised due to the loss of the original highway garage facility.

The traffic in vicinity of the original site is normal for a residential area. The proposed site is adjacent to an active roadway, State Route 7, and the freight railroad line thus the project area has existing heavy use transportation routes.

4.17.2 Potential Environmental Impacts

No Action

The No Action alternative would not achieve full re-establishment of the highway garage operation, thus would adversely impact the Town's public services for road maintenance. The No Action alternative would have no impact on increase of traffic due to the highway garage operation.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would re-establish the Town's capability to provide road maintenance services to the public.

The Proposed Action would not impact traffic levels at the original facility site. The proposed site is suited for the highway garage facility, as it was a trucking facility and is adjacent to a roadway that can handle the truck traffic and loads.

4.18 Noise

4.18.1 Existing Condition

The ambient noise level in the vicinity of the original site is normal for a residential area. The proposed site is adjacent to an active roadway, State Route 7, and the freight railroad line thus the project area has existing transportation noise, and some truck noise associated with the neighboring Agway facility.

4.18.2 Potential Environmental Impacts

No Action

The No Action alternative would have no impacts on noise levels.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would not change noise at the original facility site. The Proposed Action would cause temporary noise increases due to operation of heavy equipment during construction. The Town will be responsible to conduct construction in accordance with any local noise ordinances that may/may not include work hour restrictions. The improved facility to be constructed at the proposed site will not cause a significant increase or change in noise levels at

the site with the expanded operation. The site at one time was a trucking facility, and the site is adjacent to a commercial site that operates trucks. The setting is suitable for the highway garage operation.

4.19 Climate Change

Climate change could potentially increase temperatures in the northeast, cause more severe weather incidents to occur, and cause sea level rise. Consideration of climate change does not change the decision-making to implement the proposed project. As stated previously, the Town already made a smart decision in risk reduction by not rebuilding at the original flood-prone site, and by selecting a site outside the 500-Year Floodplain for their current highway garage facility operation. New construction at this same site is a prudent alternative to achieve the project purpose and need.

4.20 Cumulative Impacts

Table 1 on Page 5 summarizes the potential environmental impacts of the No Action and Proposed Action alternatives. Neither alternative would significantly adversely impact the environment due to the cumulative assessment of potential impacts. There are no known past or reasonably foreseeable future actions in the project vicinity that would contribute to cumulative impact analysis.

5.0 PERMITS AND CONDITIONS

The applicant is responsible to obtain all applicable permits for project implementation prior to construction, and to adhere to permit conditions. The proposed highway garage site would require a Town Building Permit and would require a NYSDEC General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Construction Activity if site disturbance exceeds one acre. It is expected that the Town and its construction contractor(s) will conduct construction utilizing best management practices to limit noise, dust and sedimentation & erosion during construction. The Town will be responsible for completing a Short Environmental Assessment Form for this unlisted activity per the State Environmental Quality Review Act (Article 8 of Environmental Conservation Law).

Any change to the approved scope of work will require re-evaluation for compliance with NEPA and other laws and executive orders. If ground disturbing activities occur during construction, applicant will monitor ground disturbance and if any potential archaeological resources are discovered, will immediately cease construction in that area and notify the State and FEMA.

6.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND AGENCY COORDINATION

The Town has conducted public involvement at the local level, including planning board and community coordination of the alternative for the relocation of the highway garage facility operation to 1418 State Route 7. As stated in Section 3, the Town conducted alternative analysis and project formulation at a local level to evaluate and screen a number of reasonable

alternatives for site selection to arrive at the proposed action. The Town involved the public through passing of a Town resolution for acquisition of the proposed site property. In accordance with NEPA, this Environmental Assessment (EA) Report will be released for a 15-day public review and comment period. Availability of the document for comment will be advertised by the Town via a public notice in The Tri-Town News newspaper. A hard copy of the EA was made available for review at the Town Hall, Office of the Town Clerk, 169 Main Street, Afton, NY. An electronic copy of the EA will be available for download from the FEMA website at <http://www.fema.gov/plan/ehp/envdocuments/ea-region2.shtm>.

This EA reflects the evaluation and assessment of the Federal government, the decision-maker for the federal action; however, FEMA will take into consideration any substantive comments received during the public review period to inform the final decision regarding grant approval and project implementation. The public is invited to submit written comments by mail to Megan Jadrosich, Regional Environmental Officer, FEMA Region II, Mitigation Division, RM1337F, 26 Federal Plaza, NY, NY 10278 or via email to Megan.Jadrosich@dhs.gov.

If no substantive comments are received from the public and/or agency reviewers, the EA will be adopted as final and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be issued by FEMA. If substantive comments are received, FEMA will evaluate and address comments as part of Final Environmental Assessment documentation. The federal government will post the FONSI to the FEMA website. The public has an additional 15 days to review and comment on the FONSI and project after FEMA's signature of the FONSI prior to final grant approval.

Copies of the EA will be sent to:

Town of Afton
Town Supervisor, Town Clerk, and Town Planning Board
169 Main Street
Afton, New York 13730

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Region 7
Regional Natural Resources Supervisor
Dan Bishop
1285 Fisher Avenue
Cortland, NY 13045-1090

New York State Office of Emergency Management Office
Disaster Recovery Assistance
1220 Washington Avenue, Suite 101, Building 22 Albany, NY 12226-2251

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
44 West Street
Walton, NY 13856-1041

The following agencies will receive notices of availability of the Environmental Assessment:

Chenango County Environmental Council
admin@ccemc.org

Mr. John Bonafide
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Peebles Island, PO Box 189
Waterford, New York 12188-0189

Mr. David Stilwell
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New York Field Office
3817 Luker Road
Cortland, NY 13045

The following is a list of federal, state, and local agencies that were consulted during the preparation of the EA. Coordination letters are presented in Appendix B.

NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Peebles Island PO Box 189
Waterford, New York 12188-0189
(518) 237-8643

7.0 CONCLUSION

During the construction period, short-term impacts to soils, surface water, transportation, air quality, and noise are anticipated. Short-term impacts will be mitigated utilizing best management practices, such as silt fences, proper equipment maintenance, and appropriate signage. Environmental impacts of construction will also be minimized per adherence to any required Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and building permit conditions.

At this time, it is anticipated that the proposed action will not have any significant impact upon the human environment. FEMA anticipates that a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be issued upon closure of the public review period. The FONSI will be made available on the FEMA website.

8.0 LIST OF PREPARERS

Megan Jadrosich, PMP, M.S.
Regional Environmental Officer, FEMA Region II

APPENDIX A

Figures

Figures

Figure 1	Site Location Map, Original Facility
Figure 2	Site Location Map, Proposed Facility
Figure 3	Site Photos, Original Facility
Figure 4	Site Photos, Proposed Facility
Figure 5	Aerial Photograph, Proposed Facility
Figure 6	Site Plan, Proposed Facility
Figure 7	Soils Maps
Figure 8	National Wetlands Inventory Mapping
Figure 9	NYSDEC Wetlands Mapping
Figure 10	Flood Insurance Rates Maps
Figure 11	Archaeological Sensitivity Maps

Figure 1 Site Location Map for Original Facility at Court Street

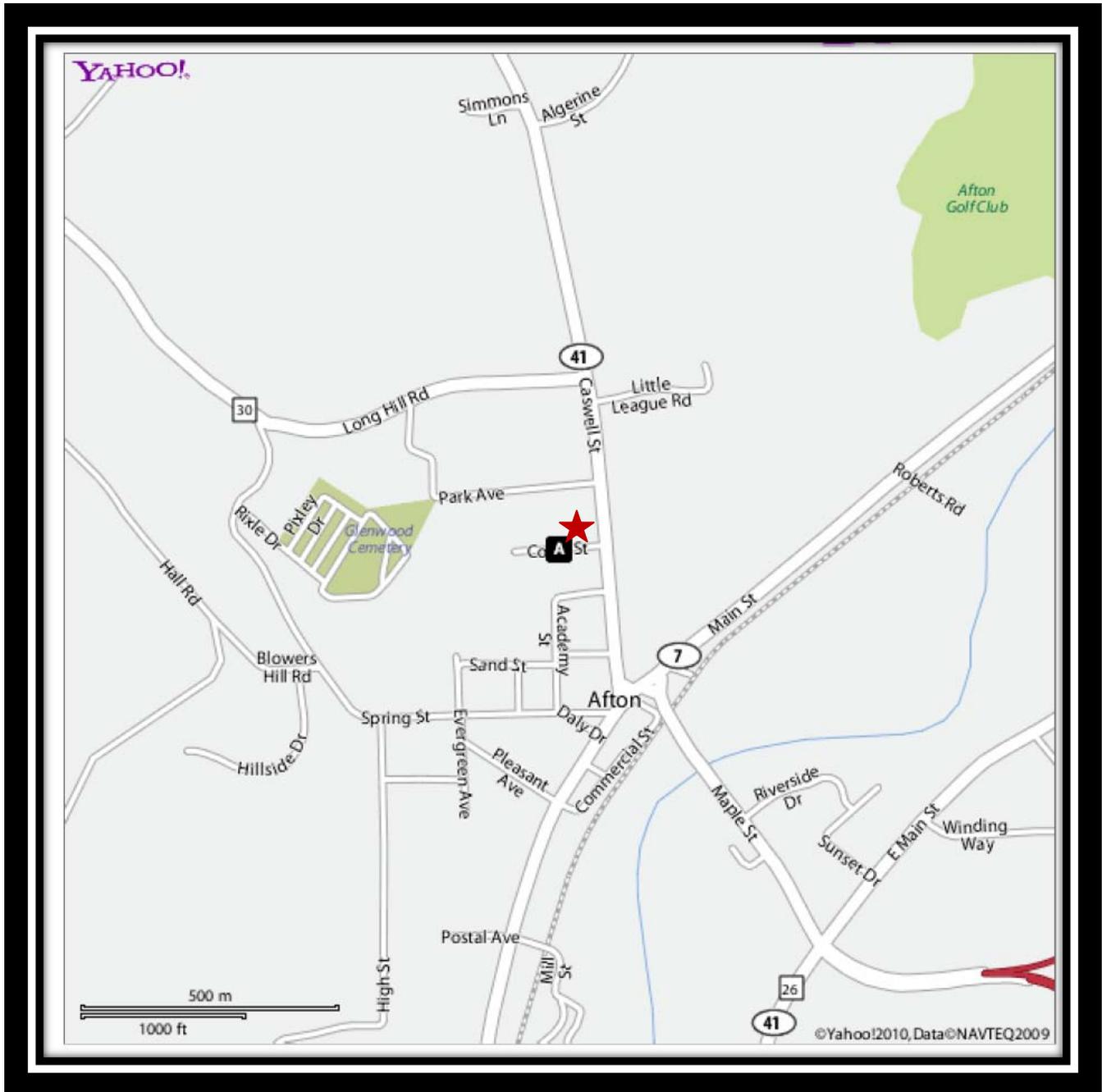


Figure 2 Proposed Facility Site Location Map & Aerial

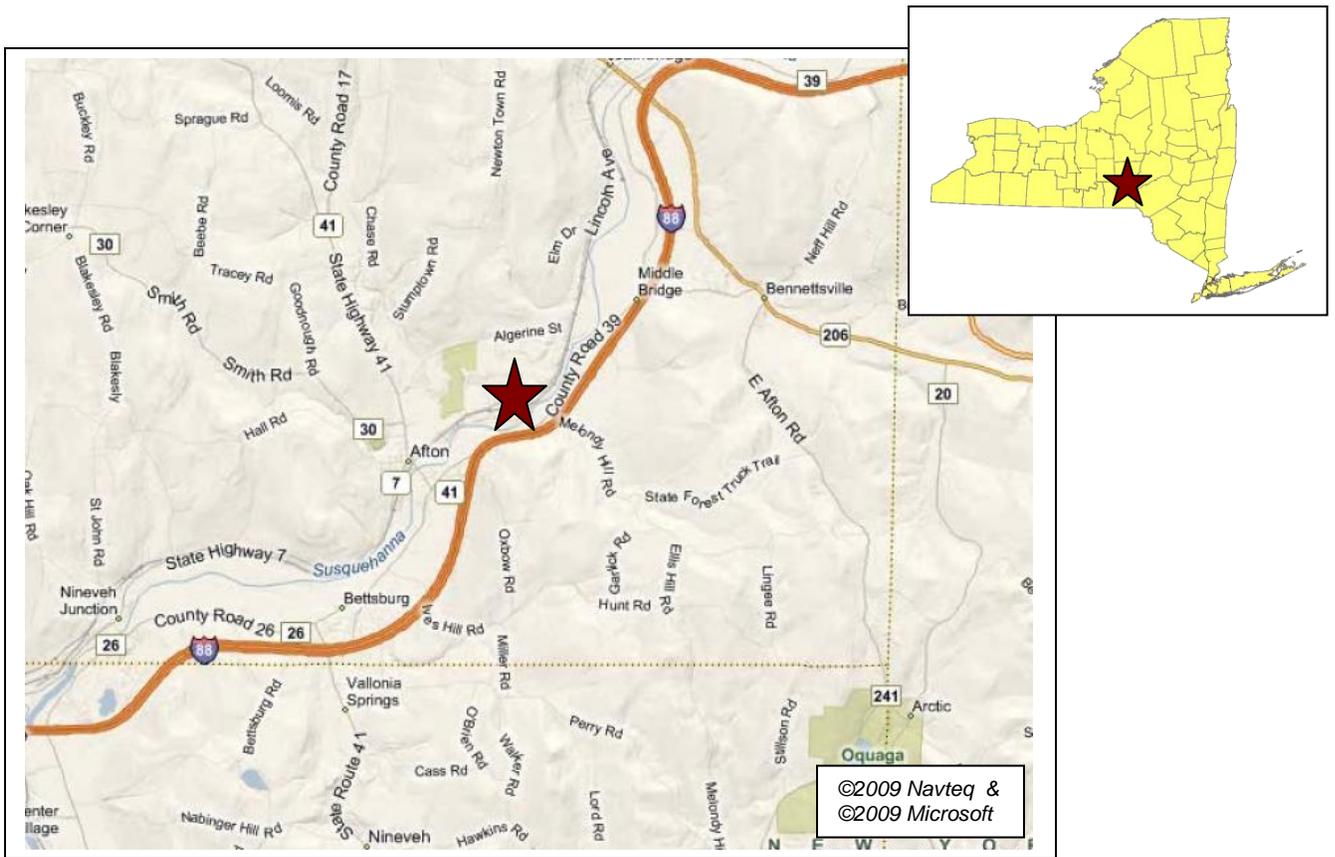


Figure 3

Photos of Original Highway Garage Facility During 2006 Flooding Event



Photos source: <http://news.webshots.com/photo/2445989900079617017jfpNJd>



Figure 3
Photos of Original Facility post-demolition



Parking lot at Original Facility Site



Bumps Creek

Figure 4 Site Photos at Proposed Facility Location



Below: Existing Building



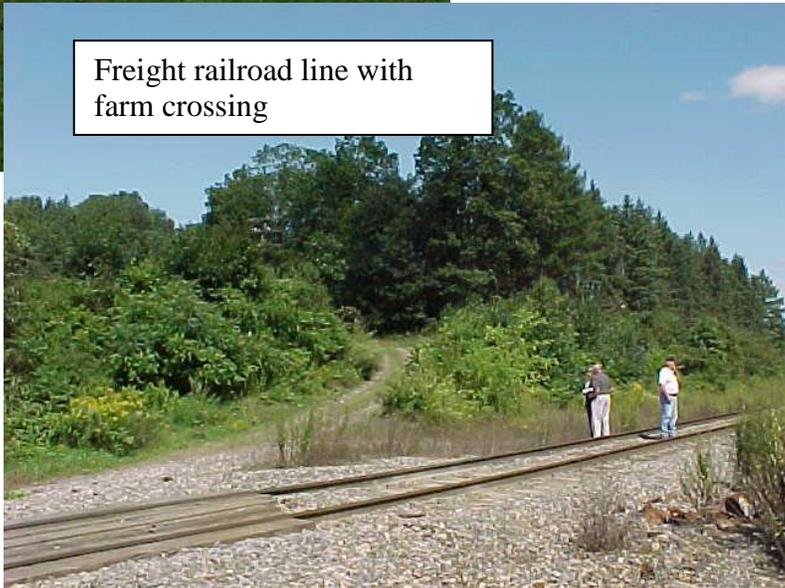
Numerous soil and other fill fill stockpiles on site

Figure 4 Site Photos at Proposed Facility Location

Below: View west towards existing building



View west from disturbed meadow area towards stockpiles



Freight railroad line with farm crossing

Figure 5 Aerial Photograph of Proposed Site



Figure 7 Soils Maps for Original & Proposed Facility Sites



Summary by Map Unit — Chenango County, New York

Map unit symbol	Map unit name	Rating	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
CkB	Chenango channery silt loam, fan, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland	1.6	100.0%



Summary by Map Unit — Chenango County, New York

Map unit symbol	Map unit name	Rating	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
ChB	Chenango gravelly silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland	4.5	100.0%

FIGURE 8 National Wetlands Inventory Mapping for Proposed and Original Facility Sites

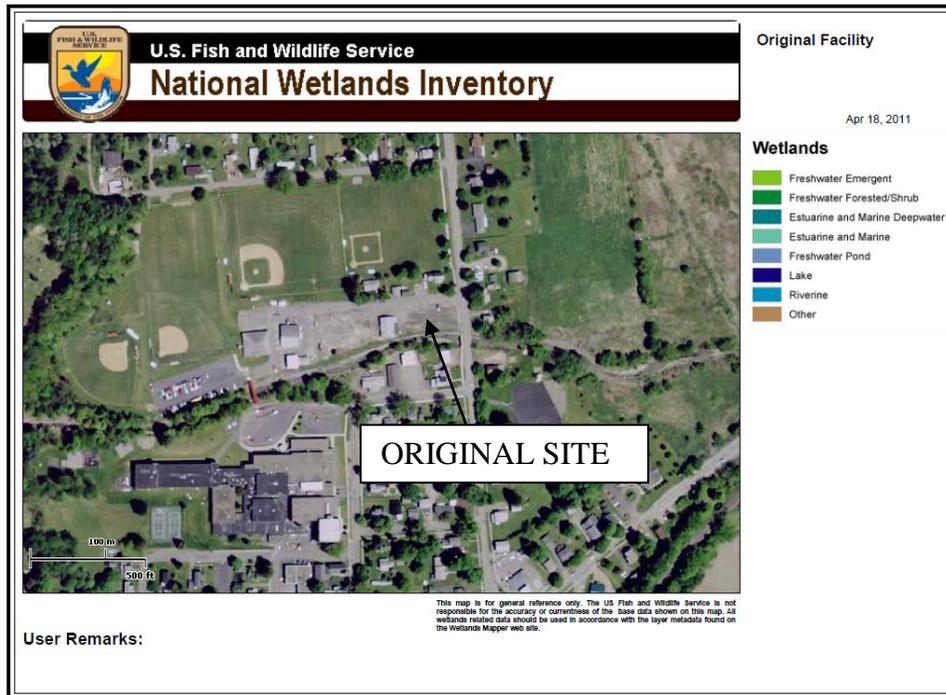
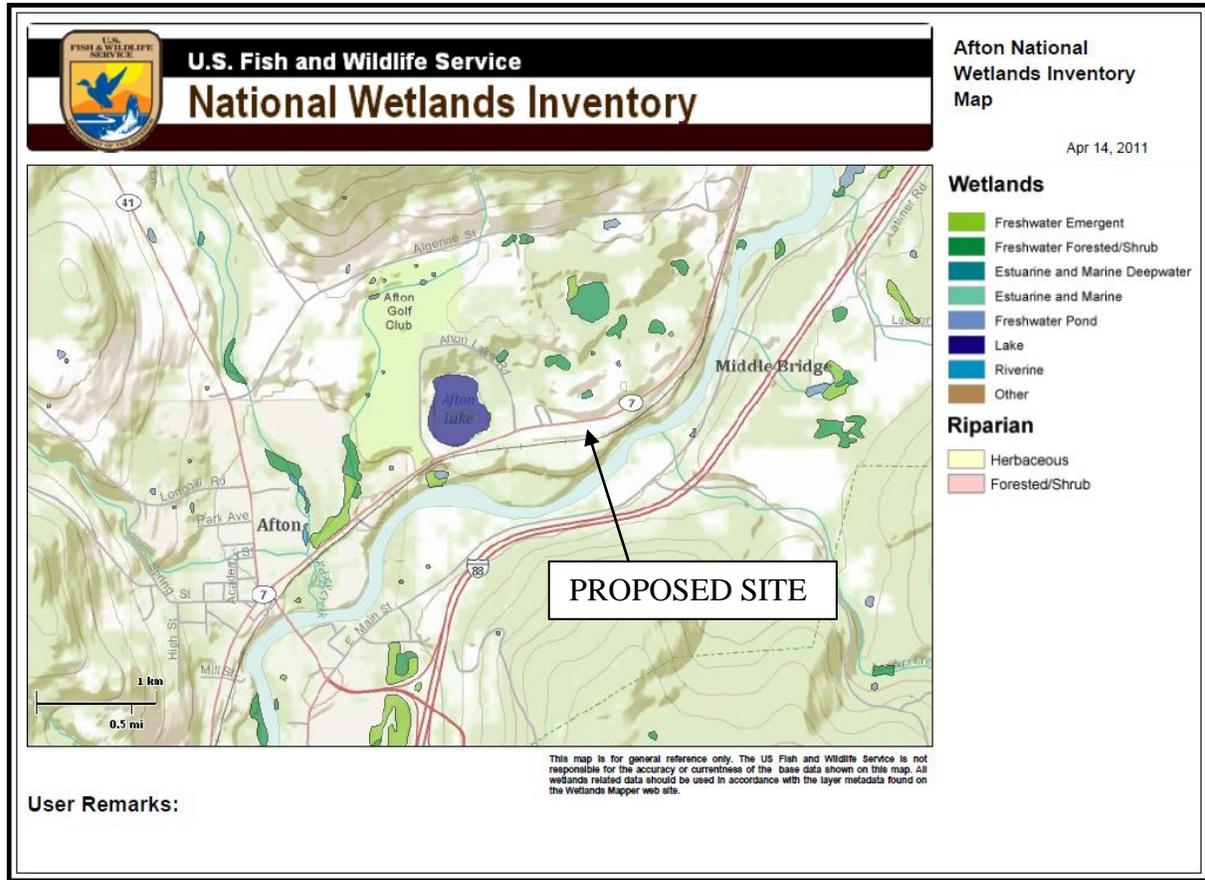
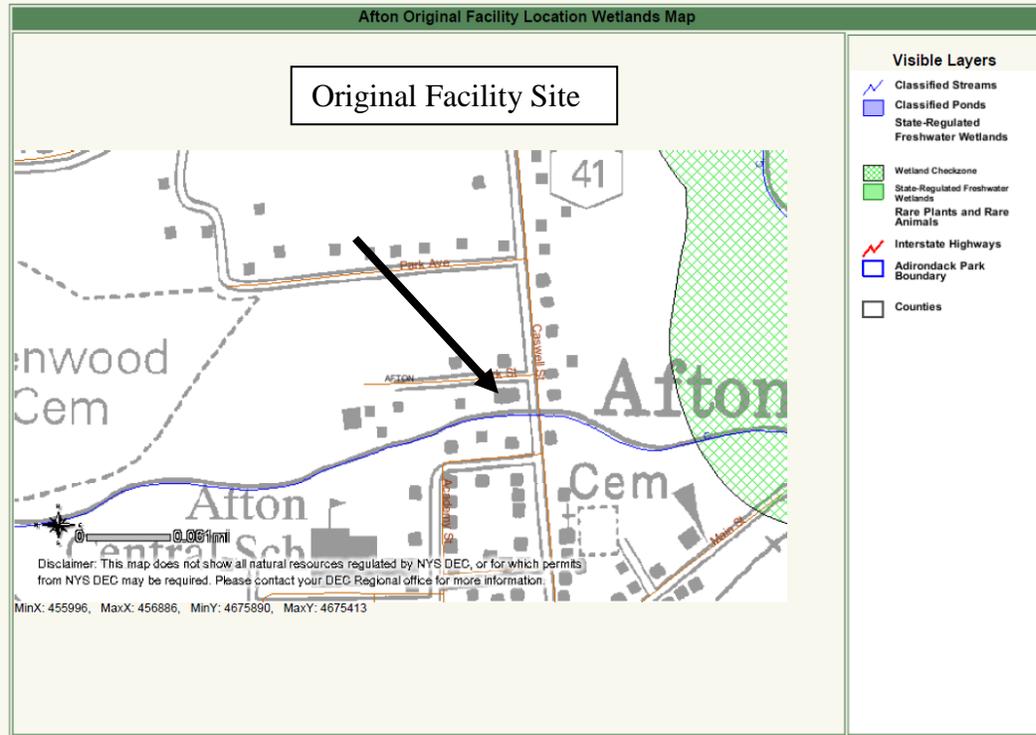
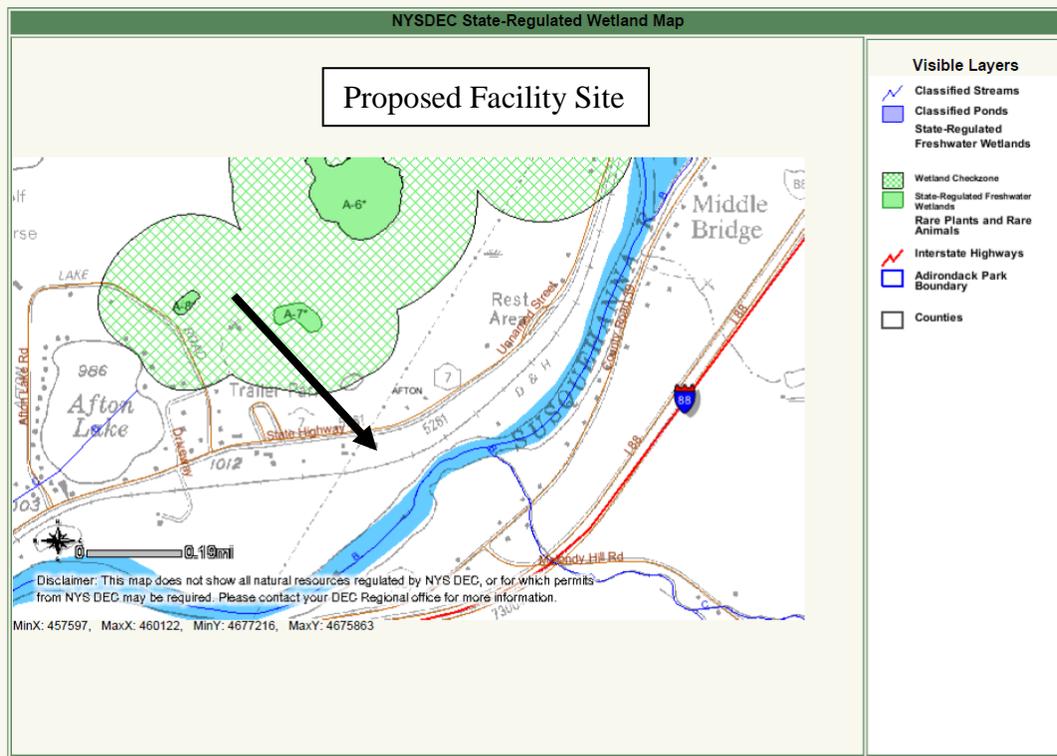


Figure 9 NYSDEC Enviromapper State Wetland Mapping for the Original & Proposed Sites



Disclaimer: This map was prepared by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation using the most



Disclaimer: This map was prepared by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation using the most

Figure 10
Flood Insurance Rate Maps for Proposed and Original Facility Sites

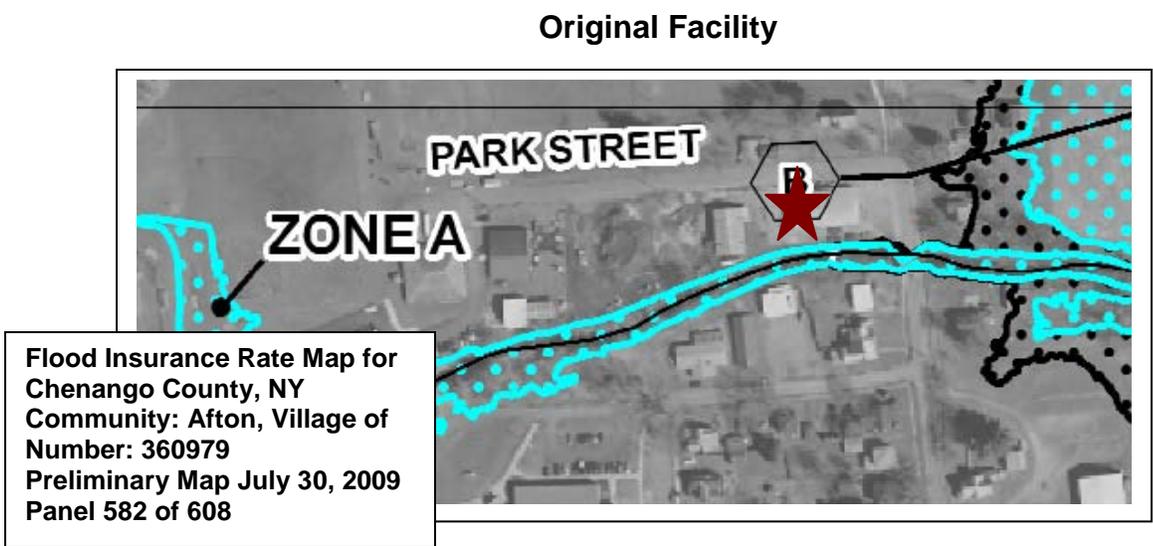
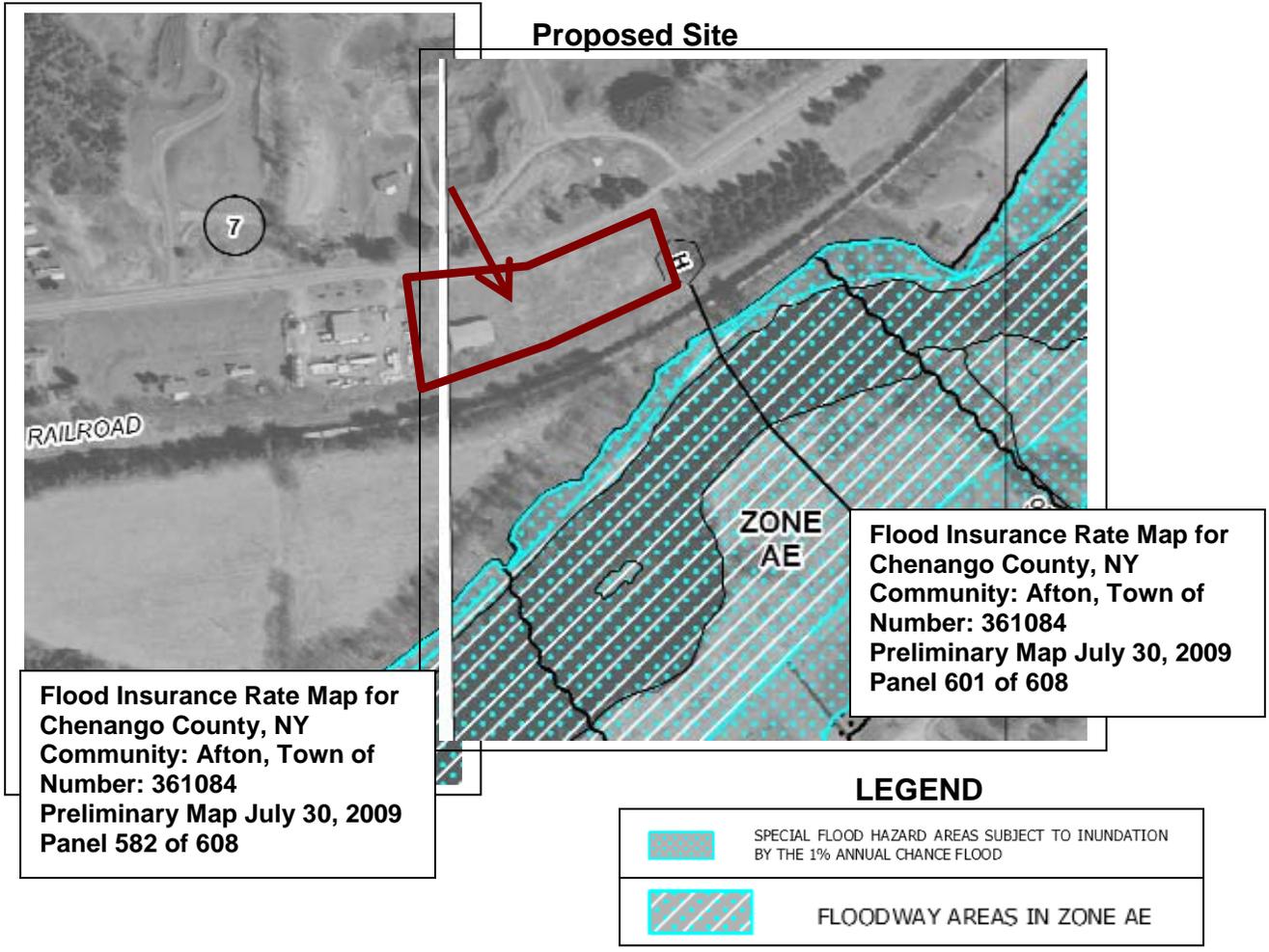
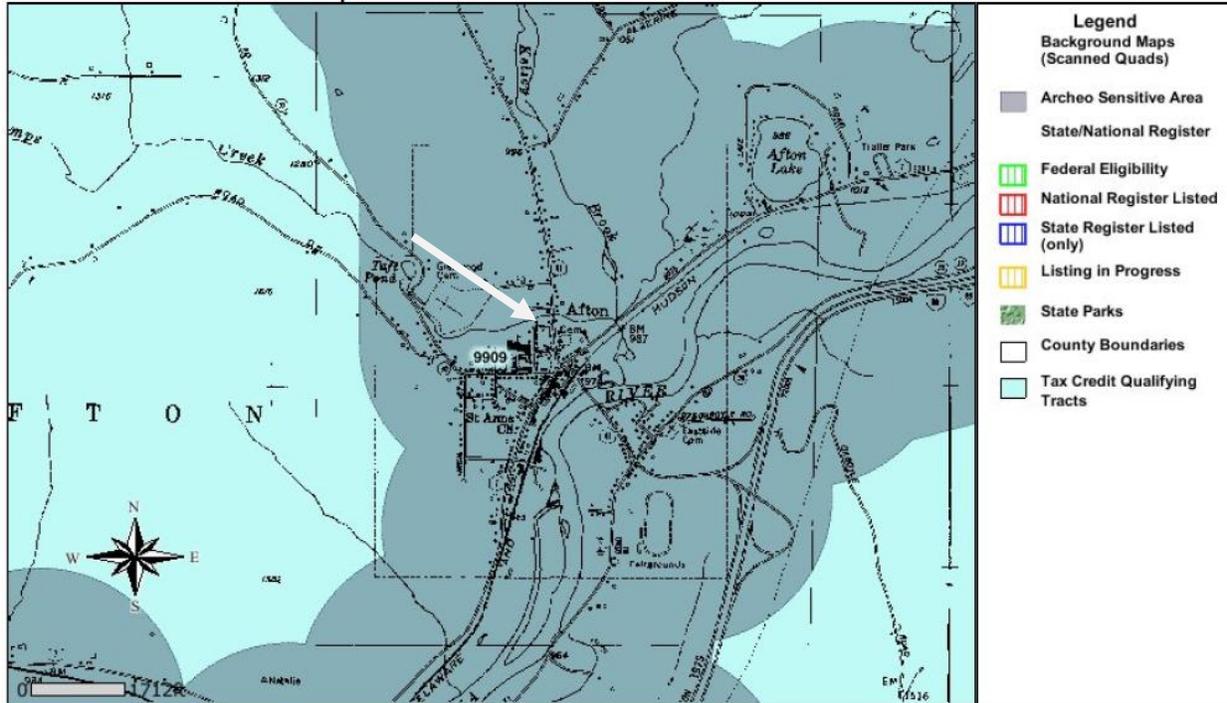


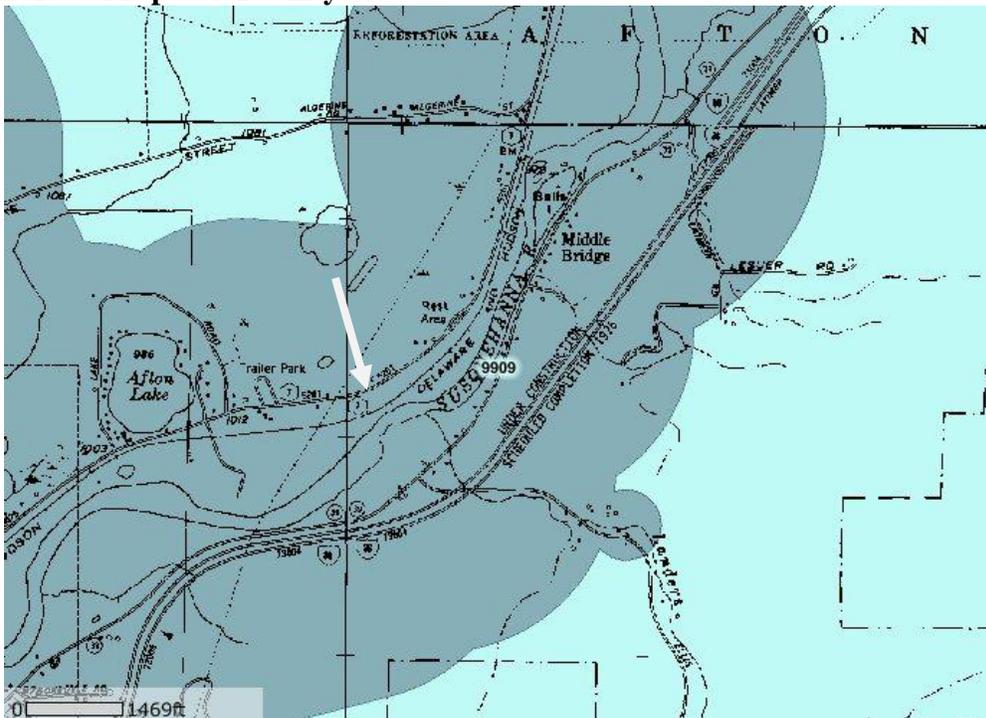
Figure 11 Archeological Sensitivity Maps for Original and Proposed Facility Sites

Original Site



April 18, 2011
 Disclaimer: This map was prepared by the New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation National Register Listing Internet Application. The information was compiled using the most current data available. It is deemed accurate, but is not guaranteed.

Below: Proposed Facility Site



Map sources: NYSHPO GIS website at <http://www.nysparks.com/shpo/>.

APPENDIX B

Pertinent Correspondence



**New York State Office of Parks,
Recreation and Historic Preservation**

Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau • Peebles Island, PO Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189

518-237-8643

www.nysparks.com

David A. Paterson
Governor

Carol Ash
Commissioner

November 2, 2009

Donna Bolognino
FEMA-Dept. of Homeland Security
4 Harriman Campus Road, Suite 30 Ave
Albany, New York 12206

Re: FEMA
New Highway Garage/DN 1650
1418 SR 7/AFTON, Chenango County
09PR05730

Dear Ms. Bolognino:

Thank you for requesting the comments of the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). We have reviewed the project in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. These comments are those of the SHPO and relate only to Historic/Cultural resources. They do not include potential environmental impacts to New York State Parkland that may be involved in or near your project. Such impacts must be considered as part of the environmental review of the project pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and/or the State Environmental Quality Review Act (New York Environmental Conservation Law Article 8).

Based upon this review, the SHPO's concurs with your agency's findings of No Historic Properties Affected by this undertaking.

If further correspondence is required regarding this project, please be sure to refer to the OPRHP Project Review (PR) number noted above.

Sincerely,

Ruth L. Pierpont
Director

cc: Richard Lord, SEMO (via-e-mail)

Town of Afton DPW garage building replacement

Location and Resource: The Town of Afton Department of Public Works building was a 50'x90' CMU structure with a laminated arched wood truss system. It was constructed in 1956.

45 Caswell Street, Afton, Chenango County
42.23172°N -75.52636°W

Cause and Description of Failure: The DPW garage was adjacent to Bump's Creek on the northern edge of the village of Afton. The heavy rains of June 2006 caused the banks of the creek to overflow and the building was filled with over 2' of fast moving water. The foundation and exterior walls were heavily damaged. Approximately 15'x20' of CMU wall at the southwest corner was removed by the flood waters. Three 15'x 15' roll-up doors and their frames on the south façade were damaged beyond repair. It was determined by the building inspector to be unsafe and therefore condemned and demolished in the fall of 2007.

Undertaking: A new facility will be built on a 3.3 acre lot that the town bought in 2007. The new location is 1418 State Route 7, Afton, N.Y. 13730; 42.23964, -75.4849. A one story masonry building will be constructed on a concrete slab and will service both the highway garage and town offices. The overall square footage will be approximately 12,500 sf of which 8,400 sf will be attributed to the garage/office and the remainder will house other town offices. A 4-5 ft frost wall and footings will be dug around the perimeter of the building. A garage facility currently sits on northeast side of the lot and is being used as the garage in the interim. The following utilities are already on site: well water, electric, gas. A septic system and leach field will be constructed as part of the project.

Archaeology: No known properties listed on or eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) are known to exist in or near the APE of this undertaking. However, the entire APE lies within an area of identified high sensitivity for archaeological resources (map is attached). FEMA Archaeologist Kathleen Bergeron visited the project site on October 14, 2009, to determine whether any previously unidentified historic or archaeological resources were present. A visual inspection of the entire 3.3 acre lot which contains the existing garage building as well as the proposed construction area for the 12,500 sf masonry building followed. No evidence of archaeological or historic material was identified. All work will take place in previously disturbed context

of the existing gravel and soils. The town has been utilizing this open space area for stockpiling of road materials and equipment.

Findings:

The site has undergone heavy disturbance by the trucking and logging business that occupied the site as well as the original disturbance caused by the construction of State Route 7 at the front of the site and rail construction (Canadian Pacific) on the back side of the property. Disturbance in the area is noted by local farming on the western side of the site (a right-of-way is still maintained through the property to access farmlands on the other side of the rail tracks) and most recently during the construction of the existing garage building and the associated utilities: electric, well water, and fuel tanks. All of these factors indicate that the likelihood of identifying any previously unrecorded significant resources in the vicinity is very low. Accordingly FEMA has made the determination of “no historic properties affected” in accordance with 36 CFR 800.4(d) (1).



FEMA

April 29, 2011

Mr. Michael J. Clifford
District Conservationist
USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service
44 West Street, Suite 1
Walton, NY 13856

Re: Farmland Protection Policy Act Consultation
Town of Afton, Proposed Highway Garage Facility, Chenango County, NY
FEMA 1650-DR-NY

Dear Mr. Clifford:

The Town of Afton has proposed to expand a newly acquired highway garage facility in Chenango County off of State Route 7 in the eastern part of the Town. The expanded facility would functionally replace the Town's former highway garage on Court Street, which was severely damaged during a 2006 storm event, condemned and demolished. The proposed project is eligible for federal public assistance funding from FEMA Region II associated with federal disaster declaration: FEMA 1650-DR-NY.

The site location for the proposed project has been formerly used as a commercial trucking facility and portable sawmill operation. Following the Town's acquisition of the property, it was used as a public works equipment storage facility. The site is disturbed with a mix of pavement, gravel and grass cover types. The soils in the project vicinity include soils classified as prime farmland (CkB: Chenango channery silt loam, fan, 3 to 8 percent slopes). FEMA has preliminarily found that a Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Form is not applicable given the site's existing condition and former trucking and public works use. The original facility location has the same soil type. The original highway garage facility building was demolished. The area was turned into a paved parking lot in 2007. The original site was developed for many years and would not lend itself to agricultural production; however, the pavement could be removed in the future if the Town elected to return the floodplain area to impervious cover for habitat restoration or for an agricultural use.

Due to the presence of prime farmland soils, FEMA requests your office review of the proposed action in accordance with the Farmland Protection Policy Act. The enclosed Environmental Assessment includes site maps, photos and project description.

FEMA requests your agency's review of the proposed project. We appreciate if your office could provide an expedited review within 15 days of receipt of this letter, if practicable, to either concur with FEMA's findings or comment if it is appropriate for FEMA to submit a Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Form AD-1006. We look forward to your response via mail, phone 212-680-3635 or via email at Megan.Jadrosich@dhs.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Megan Jadrosich". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Megan Jadrosich, PMP
Regional Environmental Officer

Enclosure: Environmental Assessment