



**FEMA**

**DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**  
**ST. BERNARD II MULTI-FAMILY AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECT**  
**CITY OF METAIRIE, JEFFERSON PARISH, LOUISIANA**  
*FEMA-1603-DR-LA*

**BACKGROUND**

On August 29, 2005, the floods, heavy rain, and high velocity winds from Hurricane Katrina caused extensive damage to the Archdiocese of New Orleans' St. Bernard II low income senior and disabled housing project, a five-story, 82-living units, 51,027-square foot facility located at 2300 Archbishop Hannan Boulevard in Mereaux, St. Bernard Township.

The Archdiocese of New Orleans (the Applicant) proposes to construct a new St. Bernard II Multi-family Housing Project, an 82-living units, 54,687 square-foot federally subsidized apartment building for low income and disabled residents, to be located at the Metairie Manor affordable housing project on a currently vacant lot at the corner of Transcontinental Drive and York Street in Metairie, Jefferson Parish. The new project is intended and needed to replace the hurricane-damaged St. Bernard II affordable housing facility, at a location not flooded during Hurricane Katrina. The project is being funded with HUD Section 901 and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds.

In accordance with the environmental review guidelines of the Council on Environmental Quality found at 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1500, and with the use of the implementing environmental review procedures of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) found at 24 CFR, Part 58, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared for submission to HUD dated August 13, 2010. The purpose of the EA was to analyze the potential environmental impacts associated with the construction of a new St. Bernard II Multi-family Affordable Housing facility on a new site, and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The alternatives considered include 1) No Action 2) Reconstruction at the original location and 3) Reconstruction at the alternate location. The preferred alternative 3 includes the construction of a new multi-family affordable housing facility on a site adjacent to another affordable housing project in Metairie, Jefferson Parish, as identified above.

## COORDINATION, PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT

In preparing the EA, HUD coordinated with federal, state and local agencies including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Louisiana Office of Coastal Management, the Louisiana Natural Heritage Program, State Historic Preservation Office, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, and the Orleans Levee District. A public notice of the Archdiocese's Agent's (Christopher Homes, Inc.) intent to construct the proposed project and perform the Environmental Assessment, and to request public comment on the project, was published in the Times Picayune on May 6, 2010. No adverse public comments or concerns were received.

## FEMA'S INVOLVEMENT

The applicant, the Archdiocese of New Orleans, has requested Public Assistance funding under Section 406 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, PL-93-288, as amended, and implementing regulations at 44 CFR Part 206 for this project. FEMA has conducted a review of HUD's Environmental Assessment and has adopted it pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality's Implementing Procedures for NEPA at 40 CFR 1506.3.

## FINDINGS

FEMA has made the following determinations from the information contained in the HUD EA:

FEMA has evaluated the proposed project for significant adverse impacts to geology, soils, water resources (groundwater, wetlands and floodplains), coastal resources, biological resources, cultural resources, air quality, noise, traffic, safety, hazardous materials and environmental justice. No long-term, significant adverse impacts to the surrounding area from the proposed project are anticipated. However, noise impacts from the surrounding street system upon the proposed project are anticipated to require attenuation through building design and materials.

## CONDITIONS

The following conditions must be met as part of the implementation of the project. Failure to comply with these conditions may jeopardize federal funds. This FONSI applies only to the project area that has been specifically described and evaluated in the HUD EA. If there is a change in the scope of work, or if any other areas outside the project area described in the HUD EA will be impacted, the project must be re-evaluated

for compliance with NEPA and other applicable federal, state, and local environmental and historic preservation laws, regulations and Executive Orders. The following conditions must be adhered to:

- If during the course of work, archaeological artifacts (prehistoric or historic) or human remains are discovered, the applicant shall stop work in the vicinity of the discovery and take all reasonable measures to avoid or minimize harm to the finds. The applicant shall inform their Public Assistance contacts at FEMA, who will in turn contact FEMA Historic Preservation (HP) staff. The applicant will not proceed with work until FEMA HP completes consultation with the SHPO. In addition, if unmarked graves are present, compliance with the Louisiana Unmarked Human Burial Sites Preservation Act (R.S. 8:671 et seq.) is required. The applicant shall notify the law enforcement agency of the jurisdiction where the remains are located within twenty-four hours of the discovery. The applicant shall also notify FEMA and the Louisiana Division of Archaeology at 225-342-8170 within seventy-two hours of the discovery. Failure to comply with these stipulations may jeopardize receipt of FEMA funding.
- Unusable equipment, debris and material shall be disposed of in an approved manner and location. In the event significant items (or evidence thereof) are discovered during implementation of the project applicant shall handle, manage, and dispose of petroleum products, hazardous materials and/or toxic waste in accordance to the requirements and to the satisfaction of the governing local, state and federal agencies.
- The applicant is responsible for acquiring any necessary permits prior to commencing construction at the proposed project site in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.

The following condition, contained in the HUD EA, shall be adhered to as a condition of this FONSI:

- The proposed project is in close proximity to three major roadways - Transcontinental Drive, Napoleon Avenue, and Interstate 10 – which would subject interior spaces of the project to unacceptable noise levels of approximately 78 decibels. Noise attenuation features such as double-paned windows, and interior and exterior insulation, are required to be incorporated into the project plans in order to reduce noise levels to interior spaces of the proposed project below 75 decibels.

APPROVAL:

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Katherine Zeringue, Environmental Liaison Officer  
Louisiana Recovery Office  
FEMA-1603/1607-DR-LA

Date

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Joseph Threat  
Acting Director  
Louisiana Recovery Office  
FEMA-1603/1607-DR-LA

Date