

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Louisiana Recovery Office
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New Orleans, Louisiana 70114



FEMA

DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
ST. BERNARD III MULTI-FAMILY AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECT
CITY OF MANDEVILLE, ST. TAMMANY 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' 45,757-square foot, 66-unit St. Bernard III Apartment Housing Project located at 244 Archbishop Hannan Boulevard in Meraux, St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana.

The applicant proposes to re-locate the apartments to a new 66-unit building at Roquette Lodge, 4300 Highway 22 in Mandeville, St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana. The alternatives considered include 1) No Action 2) Reconstruction at the original location and 3) Reconstruction at the alternate location. The new project is intended and needed to replace the hurricane-damaged St. Bernard III 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 Mandeville, St. Tammany Parish.

COORDINATION, PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT

In preparing the EA, HUD coordinated with federal, state and local agencies including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)– Groundwater Division, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF), the Louisiana Natural Heritage Program, State Historic Preservation Office, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) and Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (LDNR) – Office of Coastal Management. In conducting its own review of the HUD EA and the proposed project, FEMA solicited comment from USEPA, LDEQ, USFWS, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), LDWF, LDNR, and HUD.

FEMA published a Public Notice and Draft FONSI in the St. Tammany Farmer on December 2nd through December 6th, 2011, and on FEMA's website at www.fema.gov/plan/ehp/envdocuments/ea-region6.shtm. HUD's EA and FEMA's Draft FONSI were also made available for public review at St. Tammany Parish Library, 3505 Highway 190, Mandeville, Louisiana.

No substantive comments were received during the 15-day open public comment period from December 6th to December 20th, 2011; therefore the Draft EA will become final and the initial Public Notice will also serve as the final Public Notice.

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. During the construction period, short-term impacts to soils, water quality, transportation, air quality, and noise are anticipated. All short-term impacts require conditions to minimize and mitigate impacts to the proposed project site and surrounding areas.

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:

- The Applicant should ensure that best management practices are taken to minimize the generation of fugitive dust during construction activities.
- Unusable equipment, debris and material shall be disposed of in an approved manner and location. Applicant is responsible to ensure potential hazardous materials, if any, shall be removed, handled, transported and disposed of in accordance with local, State and Federal compliance requirements.
- The Archdiocese of New Orleans and its contractors should ensure that all project activities are conducted in a safe manner and in compliance with all state and federal occupational safety regulations, including OSHA, to protect workers and the general public.
- 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 must comply with the Louisiana Unmarked Human Burial Sites Preservation Act (R.S. 8:671 et seq.) and the Inadvertent Discovery Clause, which can be found under the Environmental Review NHPA conditions. 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. Any change to the approved scope of work will require reevaluation under Section 106.
- 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.
- This project is located within the Louisiana Coastal Management Zone. Applicant must check with Louisiana Department of Natural Resources for permitting or other authorization requirements. Projects may be coordinated by contacting LDNR at 1-800-267-4019.
- All precautions should be taken to control non-point source pollution from construction activities. The applicant should contact LDEQ's Water Permits Division at (225) 219-3181 for permit requirements.

CONCLUSION

Based on the information analyzed, FEMA has determined that the implementation of the proposed action would not result in significant adverse impacts to the quality of the natural and human environment. In addition, the proposed project does not appear to have the potential for significant cumulative effects when combined with past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions. As a result of this FONSI, an EIS will not be prepared (per 44 CFR Part 10) and the proposed project as described in the EA may proceed once finalized.

APPROVAL:

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

Joseph Threat, Director Date
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FEMA-1603/1607-DR-LA