

Public Notice of the Intent of FEMA to Fund a Project

Notification is hereby given of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) intent to provide funding for the construction of a new facility in the City of Joplin, MO. Due to the large tornado that struck the town, Mercy Hospital Joplin (formerly known as St. John's Regional Medical Center), a 367- bed facility serving Joplin and the regional area, was devastated beyond repair by the tornado. The new site is bordered on the north by Interstate 44, to the east by Indiana Ave., on the south by 50th Street, and to the west by Hearnes Boulevard/US Highway 86. In addition a separate tract of land lies south of 50th Street, bound to the north by 50th Street, to the east by the residential community in the City of Leawood, to the south by vacant and commercial property, to the west by Hearnes Boulevard/US Highway 86. The proposed site is located in Section 26, Township 27 North, Range 33 West, City of Joplin, Newton County, Missouri, (Latitude 37°02'06" N and Longitude 94°30'34" W). Funding will be provided in accordance with the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, Public Law 93-288, as amended.

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), FEMA is required to review the proposed action and possible alternative solutions to the proposed action. Two alternatives were evaluated in an Environmental Assessment (EA): No-Action, Under the No Action Alternative, the hospital would not be rebuilt. Shortly after the tornado, a temporary, 60-bed field hospital was erected using temporary fabric shelters, allowing the hospital to provide some emergency and other medical services to the community. However, an urgent need exists to rebuild the hospital in order to provide the necessary level of medical and health care services to the people of Joplin and the surrounding area. The purpose of this project is to assist Mercy Hospital Joplin in constructing a new medical facility so health care professionals can continue to provide vital medical and health related services and facilities to the residents of Joplin and the surrounding region and to relieve the burden that the loss of the hospital has placed on the remaining medical facilities in the region.

In considering the "range of reasonable alternatives," the hospital considered their immediate options, including use of the existing, damaged, facilities. In the aftermath of the destruction, it was necessary the hospital set up a field hospital on an outlying portion of the facility, opposite S. Pitcher Avenue. Consideration was given to using more of the facility, however, due to the potential for biohazards, the widespread damage, and the need for demolition access to the existing hospital site and associated infrastructure, and the need to use the existing parking lots for vehicles, this alternative was dismissed. Because the region lost a 367-bed facility with a full range of services, timing became a crucial factor. The Proposed Action provides a more complete medical facility for people within the local and regional communities. Under this alternative the new medical facility would be located in the same general area as the existing field hospital and the damaged Mercy Hospital Joplin. The new medical facility proposed site ("site") is 120 acres in size and would provide ample room for the facilities necessary to provide an increased level of medical services and health care to people and families within the local and regional communities.

Agencies contacted for comments in the writing of the EA included the: Environmental

Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), Missouri Department of Natural Resources, and Missouri State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) produced “No Effect” determination letters from each agency.

The President of the United States has issued Executive Orders (EO) that require Federal agencies, when considering an action or finding, to focus attention on the environment and on human health with respect to: Floodplain Management, Executive Order (EO) 11988; Wetlands Protection, EO 11990; and Environmental Justice, EO 12898. Compliance with Executive Orders, other environmental laws, and the NEPA have been documented in an EA. The EA has found that the proposed action alternative will have no significant adverse impact on the human environment. As a result of this finding, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared, and if no comments to the contrary are received, A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be signed after 30 days from the date of this notice. At that time the proposed project as described in the prepared EA may proceed.

Interested persons may submit comments, obtain more detailed information about the action, or request a copy of the FONSI by contacting FEMA's Joint Field Office, which is located at 1230 East 7th Street, Joplin, MO 64807, the Joplin Public Library, Joplin City Hall and comments can be made at Mercy Hospital Joplin's website found at: www.mercy.net/Joplin-rebuild.com. Requests can also be made to the Environmental and Historic Preservation Advisor at (816) 872-2014 or at Chelsea.Klein@fema.dhs.gov