



FEMA

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
MEDINA CHILDREN'S HOME TOWER SITE
BEXAR AND BANDERA COUNTIES, TEXAS
HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM
PROJECT # 2009-SS-T9-0064 (9976)**

BACKGROUND

In accordance with 44 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Subpart B, Agency Implementing Procedures, Part 10.9, an Environmental Assessment (EA) has been 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). This EA informed FEMA's decision on whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

The proposed project is to construct a 180-foot tall (top of structure) self-support telecommunications tower at Latitude 29.880944, Longitude -99.274889, at 21300 State Highway 16 North, Medina, Bandera County, Texas. Bexar County has been awarded funding under the 2009 Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) to fund the Proposed Action. The funding grant number is 2009-SS-T9-0064 (9976). Upon completion of construction, the facility will be owned by Bexar County but will be loaned to and managed, on a permanent basis, by Bandera County as a lease agreement. This program provides funding to public safety agencies to construct and implement equipment and programs that will increase and protect critical communications infrastructure in the event of a natural disaster, terrorism event, as well as during routine operations.

Two project alternatives were considered in this EA: 1) No Action; and 2) Construction of a 180-foot new communications tower (Proposed Action). Under the No Action alternative, no telecommunications tower would be constructed. This alternative would jeopardize public safety by allowing the continuation of the existing, inadequate level of radio communications for public safety agencies.

The Proposed Action Alternative will involve the construction of a 180-foot total height self-support telecommunications tower located on top of a hill located south of, and on the campus of, the Medina Children's Home (also known as Arms of Hope) in Bandera County, Texas. The Proposed Action would be used to manage routine daily radio traffic as well as emergency incident radio traffic. Upon completion of construction, the facility will be owned by Bexar County but will be loaned to and managed, on a permanent basis, by Bandera County as a lease agreement.

A public notice was posted in the Bandera County Courier on February 23, 2012, and the draft EA was made available for comment at the Bandera County Public Library, located at 515 Main Street, Bandera, Texas 78003-1568, and on the FEMA website for a 15-day public comment period. No comments were received from the public during the 15-day comment period.

FINDINGS

The Proposed Action as described in the EA will not adversely impact geology, soil, seismicity, water resources, wetlands, floodplains, coastal resources, wildlife and fish, threatened or endangered species, migratory birds, historic properties, American Indian or religious sites, air quality, noise, infrastructure, utilities, traffic, waste management or socioeconomic resources. Positive long-term impacts to socioeconomic and environmental justice are anticipated since the project will provide better communication between emergency and first responders in the event of an emergency, natural disaster or terrorist action. During the construction period, short-term impacts to soils, air quality, water quality, waste management, noise, traffic, and health and safety are anticipated. All populations, including minority and low-income populations, will benefit from the Proposed Action. All adverse 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 this project. Failure to comply with these conditions may jeopardize the receipt of federal funding.

1. This review does not address all federal, state and local requirements. Acceptance of federal funding requires recipient to comply with all federal, state and local laws. Failure to obtain all appropriate federal, state and local environmental permits and clearances may jeopardize federal funding.
2. Excavated soil and waste materials must be managed and disposed of in accordance with applicable local, State, and Federal regulations. If contaminated materials are discovered during the construction activities, the work will cease until the appropriate procedures can be implemented and permits obtained. Any hazardous materials discovered, generated, or used during construction will be handled and disposed of in accordance with applicable local, State, and Federal regulations.
3. Construction will take place during daytime hours and equipment will meet all local, State, and Federal noise regulations.
4. Construction contractors will be required to comply with the Federal and state health and safety regulations.

5. In the event that archeological deposits, including any Native American pottery, stone tools, bones, or human remains, are uncovered, the project shall be halted and the applicant shall stop all work immediately in the vicinity of the discovery and take reasonable measures to avoid or minimize harm to the finds. All archeological findings will be secured and access to the sensitive area restricted. The applicant will inform FEMA immediately and FEMA will consult with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) or Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) and Tribes and work in sensitive areas cannot resume until consultation is completed and appropriate measures have been taken to ensure that the project is in compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).
6. Any change to the approved scope of work will require re-evaluation for compliance with NEPA and other Laws and Executive Orders.

CONCLUSIONS

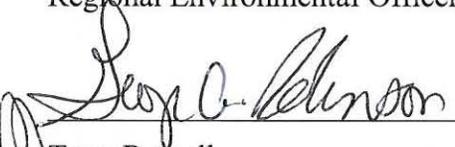
Based on the findings of the EA, coordination with the appropriate agencies, and adherence to the project conditions set forth in this FONSI, FEMA has determined that the proposed project qualifies as a major federal action that will not significantly affect the quality of the natural and human environment, 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 proposed project as described in the attached EA may proceed.

APPROVAL



Kevin Jaynes, CHMM
Regional Environmental Officer

Date 3/12/12



Tony Russell
Regional Administrator
FEMA Region 6

Date 3/12/12