

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 to the Joplin School District. Multiple Joplin School District educational facilities were damaged or destroyed as a result of the May 22, 2011 tornado. Some were candidates for immediate repair and others were considered a total loss. The Joplin School District was forced to make decisions in order to provide its students with educational opportunities by the start of the next school year in August of 2011. Whether those decisions involved repairs to existing facilities or total reconstruction, emergency financial assistance would be required so that the Joplin School District could continue to meet the educational needs of the community. There are a number of sites included with this proposed action. The proposed action for the Joplin School District varies for each facility damaged or destroyed depending on the damage received by the structure and its subsequent ability to continue to function as a viable educational facility. The Joplin School District locations that were damaged and/or destroyed are listed below:

East Middle School/New Elementary, 4594 E. 20th Street, Joplin, MO.

Old Irving Elementary, 311 Gabby Street Boulevard, Joplin, MO.

Roi S. Wood Administration Building, 1717 E. 15th Street, Joplin, MO.

Old South Middle School, 22nd and Wall, Joplin, MO.

Kelsey Norman Elementary, 1323 E. 28th Street, Joplin, MO.

Old St. John's/New Elementary, Old 32nd Street and McClelland Boulevard, Joplin, MO.

Cecil Floyd Elementary, 2201 E. 24th Street, Joplin, MO.

Emerson Elementary, 301 E. 19th Street, Joplin, MO.

Joplin High School/Franklin Technology Center, 20th and Indiana, Joplin, MO.

In addition to schools that were damaged and/or destroyed by the tornado, the Joplin School District intends to retrofit undamaged schools using FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funding to include FEMA Tornado Safe Shelters to provide near absolute level of protection to school occupants and adjacent community population. HMGP is a supplemental program that provides funding to states to reduce or eliminate threats to future disaster events. All FEMA funding will be provided in accordance with the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, Public Law 93-288, as amended.

The purpose of this project is to assist the Joplin residents in their recovery from the natural disaster by using the FEMA Public Assistance Program to fund the new construction or repair of various Joplin School District facilities, as well as the retrofit of undamaged schools to include near absolute protection in tornado safe rooms. The need for the proposed project is to replace, repair, relocate, or consolidate elementary, middle, and high school infrastructures in various locations in response to the devastating storm event that struck the community. Currently, the Joplin School District operates out of temporary facilities. Students and administration were re-

located to various temporary locations until existing schools can be repaired or built. Hundreds of staff members and 3,200 students attend temporary schools.

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), FEMA is required to review the proposed action and possible alternative solutions to the proposed action. In considering the “range of reasonable alternatives”, the Joplin School District considered their immediate options after the storm event. Joplin School District Administration and the Board of Education began evaluating each respective site and each location’s ability to be a viable option for being utilized by the District.

Three alternatives were evaluated in the environmental assessment:

- (1) The No Action Alternative where FEMA would not fund the reconstruction and rehabilitation of schools
- (2) the Restore to Pre-disaster Condition Alternative where FEMA would fund the repair or reconstruction of the respective Joplin School District facilities at their locations prior to the disaster and
- (3) the Meet Existing Needs/Requirements Alternative where FEMA would provide funding to Relocate or Reconfigure Joplin School District facilities either at new locations or at reconfigured locations near their existing pre-disaster sites.

Agencies contacted for comments in the writing of the Environmental Assessment (EA) included the: the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Missouri State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), Jasper County Health Department and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

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 draft EA by contacting the Joplin Public School Administration Building, located at 3901 E. 32nd Street, Joplin, MO 64801; the Joplin School District Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/joplinschooldistrict>; or the Joplin School District Website, <http://www.joplinschools.org/>. Requests can also be made to the Environmental and Historic Preservation Advisor at 816-276-5059 (available 7am-3:30pm M-F) or at Chelsea.Klein@fema.dhs.gov.