



FEMA

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
RECONSTRUCTION OF CLENDENIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
KANAWHA COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA
FEMA-4273-DR-WV

BACKGROUND

The West Virginia School Building Authority (SBA) with the Kanawha County Board of Education (KCBOE) as a client, has applied to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Public Assistance (PA) grant program for funding assistance, under the Presidentially Declared Disaster FEMA-4273-DR-WV, for the reconstruction of Clendenin Elementary School. In accordance with FEMA Directive 108-1 and FEMA Instruction 108-1-1, this Environmental Assessment (EA) is being 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) in 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 1500-1508. The purpose of the EA is to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project, and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

According to the United States Geological Survey (USGS), central West Virginia experienced intense convection storms along a stationary front on June 23, 2016. The stationary movement of the storms led many areas to receive up to 10 inches of rainfall within 24 hours, producing a 1,000-year storm event. The intense rainfall resulted in widespread flash flooding crippling the state with substantial damage to residences, commercial buildings, and public infrastructure. The areas that were impacted the greatest were primarily in the Greenbrier, Elk, and Gauley River watersheds (USGS, 2016). In Kanawha County, the Elk River watershed includes the communities of Clendenin and Elkview, which were both significantly impacted by the flood event. Statewide, the flood event damaged more than two dozen schools in 10 counties, including four schools in the Elk River Valley of Kanawha County: Clendenin Elementary School, Elkview Middle School, Bridge Elementary School, and Herbert Hoover High School. Clendenin Elementary School and Herbert Hoover High School were deemed eligible for replacement and relocation assistance under the FEMA PA grant program.

FEMA proposes to fund the replacement of Clendenin Elementary School with the construction of a new school at a location outside of the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). The new school is needed to provide elementary school education in Elkview and Clendenin, Kanawha County, by providing a permanent facility that is safe, accessible, and meets all applicable codes and standards.

In accordance with federal laws and FEMA regulations, the EA process for a proposed federal action must include an evaluation of viable alternatives and a discussion of the potential environmental impacts. This EA was prepared in accordance with NEPA, 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508, and FEMA's

implementing procedures for NEPA, including those in FEMA Instruction 108-1-1. As part of this NEPA review, the requirements of other environmental laws and executive orders were evaluated. This EA informed FEMA's decision on whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

The EA evaluated several alternatives for the replacement and relocation of Clendenin Elementary School including No Action; the Proposed Action, new development offsite; and redevelopment on-site.

Under the No Action Alternative, redevelopment of Clendenin Elementary School would not be conducted. The elementary school age students of the Town of Clendenin and surrounding community would continue to attend school at the portable classrooms located at Bridge Elementary School in Elkview.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, Clendenin Elementary School would be replaced with a comparable facility at a new location. Focus was placed on finding an alternative location that would allow for new development outside of the SFHA. The proposed action would acquire 101.64 acres located off Hokie Lane/Wolverton Mountain Road and Fairwater Road in Elkview, of which 39.27 acres would be developed. In addition to the surface rights, subsurface (mineral) rights would be acquired for the entire property. The 101.64 acres is comprised of 19 tax parcels, some of which are owned and occupied by private residents. The proposed action would require extensive site preparation, including an access road to accommodate ingress and egress to the northern extent of the subject property, and grading activities that would provide an appropriate area for construction of the elementary school, extracurricular facilities, and associated parking areas. The limit of disturbance (LOD) for the development is estimated at 39.27 acres. The remaining 62.37 acres located outside of the LOD would not be developed. The five existing residential structures within the acquired acreage would be demolished prior to the start of construction. The proposed site meets all the requirements listed under WVDE Policy 6200. Development at this site would provide adequate educational facilities for elementary age students in the Town of Clendenin. As an additional benefit, the new facility would be able to accommodate the Bridge Elementary School student population, whose current facility has its own history of flood related damage. Coordinates for the center of the subject property are 38.477853 latitude, -81.376292 longitude

Under the Reconstruction Alternative, Clendenin Elementary School would be redeveloped on the former site, located at 503 Maywood Avenue East, Clendenin, West Virginia. This alternative would have long-term impacts to the safety and security of the school and children due to the location of the building and surrounding areas within the floodplain.

A public notice was posted in the local newspaper of record, the *Charleston Gazette-Mail*, and on FEMA's website at <https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4273>. The draft EA was made available for public comment at the Kanawha County Main Library, located at 123 Capitol St, Charleston, WV 25301; Clendenin Branch Library, located at 107 Koontz Ave, Clendenin, WV 25045; and Elk Valley Branch Library, located at 313 The Crossings Mall, Elkview, WV 25071. Two substantive comments were received during the public comment period and addressed in Appendix E of the EA as well as the Final EA.

FINDINGS

The Proposed Action would not impact wetlands, hazardous materials, environmental justice, or historic and cultural resources and may affect but would not likely adversely impact threatened and endangered species. The impacts from the Proposed Action Alternative would include changes to land use (including displacement of residents who currently live on the proposed site), minor short-term impacts from construction activities, and minimal long-term impacts to farmland, water resources, and the floodplain. Implementation of mitigation procedures would minimize long-term effects to soils and water resources resulting in minor impacts. The project would be required to follow all applicable restrictions and regulations and implement best management practices during construction to minimize and mitigate adverse impacts to resources.

Because frameworks are in place to manage potential environmental impacts, no significant impacts are anticipated from the incremental impact of the Proposed Action in combination with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions on the Town of Clendenin, community of Elkview, or Kanawha County.

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. If deviations from the proposed scope of work result in substantial design changes, the need for additional ground disturbance, additional removal of vegetation, or any other unanticipated changes to the physical environment, prior to the start of work the applicant (SBA and KCBOE) must contact FEMA so that the revised project scope can be evaluated for compliance with NEPA and other applicable environmental laws.
2. The applicant (SBA and KCBOE) is responsible for obtaining and complying with all required local, State and Federal permits and approvals.
3. Terms and conditions set by USACE and WVDEP to minimize effects to water quality will be abided by the applicant. Per Nationwide Permit 39, projects require Individual State Water Quality Certification if impacting Section 10 waters and adjacent wetlands or placing in-stream stormwater management facilities. The applicant must abide by all conditions.
4. The Compensatory Mitigation Plan for stream impacts submitted will be in compliance with USACE and WVDEP regulations.
5. Construction best management practices, as identified in the Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan prepared for the Proposed Action, will be utilized and maintained throughout construction to control soil erosion and sediment, reduce spills and pollution, and provide habitat protection.
6. Erosion controls will be in place prior to any ground disturbing activity.
7. Avoided wetland and streams will be fenced during construction as no-work areas.
8. Site soils will be covered and/or wetted during construction to minimize fugitive dust.
9. Construction activities will be conducted during the daytime hours to reduce adverse noise impacts.
10. The applicant (SBA and KCBOE) will monitor ground disturbance during the construction phase; should human skeletal remains, or historic or archaeological materials be discovered during construction, all ground-disturbing activities on the project site shall cease and the

applicant shall notify the coroner's office (in the case of human remains), FEMA, and the State Historic Preservation Office.

11. Any hazardous materials discovered, generated, or used during construction would be disposed of and handled in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations, with WVDEP being the lead agency regarding compliance. During all activities, appropriate measures to remove, prevent, contain, minimize, and control spills of any potentially hazardous materials will be employed.
12. Heavy machinery and equipment to be used for the Proposed Action will meet federal clean air standards. In addition, all equipment used shall have sound control devices no less effective than those provided on the original equipment. No equipment shall have un-muffled exhaust.
13. All equipment shall comply with pertinent equipment noise standards of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the EA, coordination with the appropriate agencies, comments from the public, 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 (FEMA Instruction 108-1-1) and the proposed project as described in the attached EA may proceed.

APPROVAL

**STEPHANIE D
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Stephanie Everfield
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