



FEMA

**DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
LATTIMORE PROPERTY
GROUP TEMPORARY EMERGENCY HOUSING PROJECT
MEREAX, ST. BERNARD PARISH, LOUISIANA
*FEMA-1603-DR-LA***

As a result of damages from Hurricane Katrina on August 29, 2005 the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was authorized under Presidential disaster declaration (FEMA-1603-DR-LA) to provide Federal assistance to designated disaster areas in Louisiana. Section 408 of the Stafford Act authorizes FEMA's Individual Assistance (IA) Program to provide emergency temporary housing for disaster victims whose homes are uninhabitable. There are insufficient rental units available to house displaced disaster victims, and the use of hotel rooms, shelters, or staying with family/friends is only appropriate for a very limited time period. In response to this need, FEMA is proposing to build group temporary emergency housing for residents in the City of Meraux in St. Bernard Parish at the Lattimore Property.

In order to implement its IA Program in a timely and effective manner, FEMA proposed an expedited process to assess the potential environmental impacts of building emergency temporary housing for displaced disaster victims. A draft Environmental Assessment (EA), dated January 23, 2006, was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the President's Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and FEMA regulations for NEPA compliance (44 CFR Part 10). The EA's purpose is to analyze and document the potential environmental impacts of the proposed group housing site. It serves as a vehicle to document compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations, and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The EA is hereby incorporated by reference.

The Lattimore Property is approximately 7 acres and is located at 3200 E. Judge Perez Drive in Meraux, St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana. FEMA contractors have been tasked with constructing a new group housing park (hereafter "Park") of approximately 124 travel trailers on land to be leased by the General Service Administration. Details of the Park construction were covered in the draft EA. At this time, Park occupancy is expected to not exceed 18 months. When the temporary housing need has ended, FEMA expects that the travel trailers would be hauled from the site to suitable locations elsewhere (to be determined on case-by-case basis). The Park site would then be seeded and restored to previous conditions, to the extent practicable, and/or used by the landowner in a manner consistent with parish zoning classification.

The public comment period for the Draft EA was from January 25-27, 2006, with public notice published in the *Times Picayune* and on FEMA's web site at <http://www.fema.gov/ehp/docs.shtm>.

FINDINGS

FEMA has made the following determination from the information contained in the Lattimore Property Group Temporary Emergency Housing EA:

The above described action will not result in any significant adverse impacts related to geology, soils, hydrology, floodplains, wetlands, water quality, air quality, vegetation, wildlife, state and federally listed threatened and

endangered species, cultural resources, socioeconomics (including minority and low income populations), safety, security, noise, hazardous materials, toxic wastes, traffic, or transportation. The proposed alternative is not anticipated to have the potential for significant cumulative effects when combined with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in accordance with 44 CFR Part 10.8 (d)(3)(x).

The following summarizes much of what is outlined in the mitigation column of Table 1 of the EA and are the conditions that must be met as part of implementing this proposed project:

1. Construction contractor is required to obtain and comply with all applicable local, parish, state and federal laws, ordinances and permits (or waivers, if issued). This may include, but is not limited to, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permits, stormwater construction permits (e.g., a Louisiana Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit), Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals permits, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality permits, and meeting codes and standards for utility hookups, housing, and the National Fire Code.
2. Preparing (clearing and grading) of the proposed temporary emergency housing site will require removal vegetation and may increase short-term soil erosion. Appropriate erosion control measures will be used during construction, including the use of Best Management Practices (e.g., installation of silt fences and straw bales), to reduce soil erosion and sedimentation. If fill is stored on site, the contractor is required to appropriately cover it to prevent erosion. Area soils and rock cover for roads will be covered and/or wetted during construction to minimize dust.
3. In order to convey stormwater runoff, the contractor will be required to design drainage features so that flows will not flood Park residents or surrounding properties during storm events. The drainage system will be required to meet local and parish requirements, including the acquisition of easements, if applicable. All permit conditions will be incorporated into the project design and implementation.
4. In accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, if unanticipated historic or cultural materials are discovered during construction, all construction activities shall immediately cease within 100 feet of the materials until their cultural affiliation and ultimate disposition are determined in consultation with the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office, FEMA Environmental Liaison Officer and other interested parties.
5. If necessary, the following noise reduction measures should be considered: (1) restricting the 24-hour schedule to the first two weeks of construction, (2) using a 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. construction schedule, (3) completing construction closest to adjoining residents first, and (4) completing noisier activities during the day if a 24-hour schedule is used.
6. If any hazardous materials are found during construction or Park occupation, all hazardous materials shall be remediated, abated, or disposed of as appropriate, and otherwise handled in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations.
7. The contractor shall post appropriate signage and place fencing, including a safety fence around the perimeter of the site, to minimize potential adverse public safety concerns. Appropriate signage and barriers should be in place prior to construction activities in order to alert pedestrians and motorists of project activities and traffic pattern changes.
8. Once the temporary housing need has ended, the site would be seeded and restored to previous conditions to the extent practical and/or used by the landowner in a manner consistent with local zoning. This may include a requirement to use native species to revegetate the site. Informal consultation with state and federal resource agencies will ensure that the project does not adversely impact regional species diversity.

CONCLUSIONS

Based upon the incorporated EA, and in accordance with Presidential Executive Orders 12898 (Environmental Justice), 11988 (Floodplain Management), and 11990 (Wetland Protection), FEMA has determined that the proposed action, implemented with the conditions and mitigation measures outlined above, will not have any significant adverse effects on the quality of the natural and human environment. As a result of this FONSI, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared (44 CFR Part 10.8) and the proposed action alternative as described in the EA may proceed.

APPROVE:

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