

DRAFT
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Environmental Assessment
Alternative Housing Pilot Program (AHPP) Permanent Housing
Jackson Barracks Site, Orleans Parish, Louisiana

Under the authority of Section 408 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) administers the Individual Assistance Program to provide temporary housing for disaster victims in affected areas whose homes are uninhabitable or destroyed. Although FEMA's traditional temporary housing options are sufficient to address the unmet housing needs of residents in most disasters; the catastrophic dimensions of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita challenged the efficacy of these traditional methods. Recognizing the extensive and complex housing challenges facing victims and communities as a result of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and acknowledging the limitations on FEMA's ordinary statutory authority to provide non-temporary housing solutions, Congress appropriated funds to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to support alternative housing pilot programs (Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2006, Public Law 109-234).

The Alternative Housing Pilot Program (AHPP) represents a one-time exception to FEMA's existing authority under the Stafford Act. The Stafford Act legally binds FEMA to a temporary housing mission, by providing an opportunity to explore, implement, and evaluate innovative approaches to housing solutions, and to address ongoing housing challenges created by the 2005 hurricane season in the states of the Gulf Coast region, including the State of Louisiana, especially the southernmost parishes. The Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA) has applied for FEMA funding under the AHPP to provide both temporary and permanent housing solutions for eligible applicant families displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

The Proposed Action Alternative consists of the construction of permanent AHPP housing on a previously developed portion (Area E) of Jackson Barracks, a National Guard installation. The Proposed Action includes the construction of 95 permanent AHPP housing units, consisting of 57 single-family residences (Louisiana Cottages) and 38 multi-family residences (Carpet Cottages). Both cottage types would be constructed on piers, and may require as much as 3 feet of fill. The project site would be cleared of all vegetation and debris and then grubbed. Contouring and grading would be done, if

necessary. Three interior green spaces would be constructed in the interior portion of the AHPP group housing development and would act as stormwater catchment basins as well. These green spaces would require underground drainage piping to allow stormwater to flow to a nearby stormwater retention pond. The fenced stormwater retention pond would be located on the northernmost extent of Area E and would be approximately 2-3 feet in depth. Driveways, on-street parking, access roads and circulation roads would be constructed to facilitate transportation and parking for the AHPP cottages. The houses would tie into water and sewer infrastructure currently being constructed.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1500 *et. seq.*, 44 CFR 10 *et. seq.*, and DHS's Management Directive 5100.1, FEMA has prepared a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the AHPP in Orleans Parish, Louisiana (November 2008) to evaluate the impacts of the one action alternative on the human environment. The draft EA also analyzes the impacts of taking no action, in compliance with NEPA. The draft EA is available online at <http://www.fema.gov/plan/ehp/envdocuments/ea-region6.shtm> or by contacting the undersigned via fax at (504) 762-2670.

Based upon the information contained in the EA, the potential direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts resulting from implementation of the proposed action, and in accordance with FEMA's regulations in 44 CFR Part 10, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is concluded. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process will not be required, based on the fact that there would be no long-term adverse direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts on the natural environment resulting from FEMA actions, as identified in the EA, taken to establish permanent housing under the AHPP.

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