

FEMA
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
HHC Coney Island Hospital New Critical Services Structure
New York City, Kings County, NY
New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC)
FEMA-4085-DR-NY

BACKGROUND

On October 29, 2012, Hurricane Sandy caused storm damage to several areas of New York City including Coney Island Hospital (CIH) in Kings County, New York. President Barack Obama declared Hurricane Sandy a major disaster on October 30, 2012. The declaration authorized federal public assistance to affected communities and certain non-profit organizations per Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 4085-DR-NY and in accordance with the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5172) as amended; the Sandy Recovery Improvement Act (SRIA) of 2013 and the accompanying Disaster Relief Appropriations Act, 2013. The New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) (Subgrantee), which operates the city's public healthcare system, has applied to FEMA for financial assistance for a comprehensive flood mitigation project for CIH, its healthcare facility located in the Coney Island neighborhood of Brooklyn. The New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (NYS DHSES) is the Grantee partner for the proposed action.

Hurricane Sandy inundated the CIH campus with contaminated floodwaters, causing the loss of critical electrical and mechanical systems ultimately requiring evacuation of all patients and staff. HHC is seeking funding from FEMA pursuant to section 406 and 428 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act for the Proposed Project, which would prevent damage to the hospital from future storm or flooding events by providing elevated and/or hardened space for the Emergency Department (ED) and mechanical, electrical, and plumbing (MEP) equipment.

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared in accordance with Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended; and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementation of NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500 to 1508). The purpose of the EA is to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Project and alternatives, including a no action alternative, and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). In accordance with above referenced regulations and FEMA's regulations for NEPA compliance found at 44 CFR Part 10, FEMA is required, during decision making, to fully evaluate and consider the environmental consequences of major federal actions it funds or undertakes.

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project would construct a New Critical Services Structure (NCSS) on the CIH campus, located at Avenue Z and Shore Parkway between Ocean Parkway and E 6th Street in the Coney Island Section of the Borough of Brooklyn in New York City. The NCSS would provide elevated space for critical hospital facilities and infrastructure while providing minimal disruptions to hospital functions during construction. The proposed project would also construct a floodwall around the perimeter of CIH's Main and Tower Buildings; an improved stormwater management system would be provided within the floodwall.

SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

The Subgrantee identified that the proposed project is the best-suited alternative to repair, rehabilitate, and increase the resiliency of CIH and to minimize damage to the critical facility's infrastructure and ensure the hospital remains fully operational during and after future storm or flooding events. The NCSS and other mitigation measures would provide a defense against flooding, thus minimizing risk of future damage to the hospital's critical assets and minimizing future disruption of function and service to the community. The continuous functionality of the hospital is critical to minimize deleterious public health, economic, and environmental consequences that could arise as a result of a disruption in the hospital's service.

This EA concludes that the construction and operation of the NCSS and other mitigation measures would have no significant adverse impact on the human environment. While there are numerous ongoing projects throughout New York City and near the CIH site related to restoring roads, buildings, recreational facilities, and public utilities to pre-disaster conditions, the proposed project is not anticipated to impact these projects. The proposed project is subject to certain design, regulatory compliance, and/or best management practices under New York City and state regulatory frameworks, including permitting and required reviews. Additional impacts not addressed through these existing local and state means are predominantly temporary, incremental, and not a significant impact to the human or natural environment.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

An electronic copy of the EA was made available by email request and for download from <http://www.nyc.gov/html/hhc/html/about/About-PublicNotice-CIHEA.shtml>. The public was invited to submit written comments by mail to: FEMA NY Sandy Recovery Office, Attn: EHP-Coney Island Hospital Hazard Mitigation EA Comments, 118-35 Queens Blvd., Forest Hills, NY 11375, or: FEMA-4085-Comment@fema.dhs.gov. This EA reflects the evaluation and assessment of the federal government, the decision-maker for the federal action; however,

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FEMA has taken into consideration any substantive comments received during the public review period to inform the final decision regarding grant approval and project implementation.

PERMITS & PROJECT CONDITIONS

The Subgrantee is responsible for obtaining all applicable Federal, State, and local permits and other authorizations for project implementation prior to construction and adherence to all permit conditions. Any substantive change to the approved scope of work will require re-evaluations by FEMA for compliance with NEPA and other laws and EOs. The Subgrantee must also adhere to the following conditions during project implementations and consider the below conservation recommendations. Failure to comply with grant conditions may jeopardize Federal funds:

1. The Best Available Data (BAD) must be used to determine the 500-year floodplain elevation for final engineering design in accordance with 44 CFR Part 9. At the time of this publication, the Preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Map Community-Panel Number 3604970354G dated January 30, 2015 is the BAD.
2. Any proposed construction in the floodplain must be coordinated with the local floodplain administrator and must comply with Federal, state and local floodplain laws and regulations.
3. Excavated soil and waste materials shall be managed and disposed of in accordance with applicable Federal, state, and local regulations. Solid waste haulers will be required to have a NYSDEC waste hauler permit and all waste will need to be disposed of or processed at a permitted facility.
4. If project exceeds or changes outside of parameters in their V Permit for air quality, notification to NYSDEC will occur and modifications to permit may need to be made.
5. Threatened or endangered species are likely to not be found in the area of the proposed project site. As a result, pursuant to section 7(a)(4) of the ESA and implementing regulations at 50 CFR §402.02 and 50CFR §402.10, FEMA has determined that the proposed action would not be likely to jeopardize endangered or threatened species, or destroy or adversely modify critical habitat. If any threatened or endangered species are to be found in project area, work will cease and consultation with United States Fish and Wildlife Services and other appropriate agencies will be conducted.
6. In the event that unmarked graves, burials, human remains, or archaeological deposits are uncovered, the Subgrantee and its contractors will immediately halt construction activities in the vicinity of the discovery, secure the site, and take reasonable measures to avoid or minimize harm to the finds. The Subgrantee will inform the Grantee, NYSHPO and FEMA

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immediately. The Subgrantee must secure all archaeological findings and shall restrict access to the area. Work in sensitive areas may not resume until consultations are completed or until an archaeologist who meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualification Standards determines the extent and historical significance of the discovery. Work may not resume at or around the delineated archaeological deposit until the Subgrantee is notified by the Grantee to proceed.

7. A Construction Protection Plan may be required for this site to identify the coordination needed to limit potential impacts to the environment, protected resources and communities within and abutting the Project area.
8. The Subgrantee and its contractor are required to use best management practices for construction not limited to sedimentation and erosion control measures, dust control, noise abatement and restriction of work areas to limit vegetation removal and habitat impacts.
9. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards shall be followed during construction to avoid adverse impacts to worker health and safety.
10. The Subgrantee shall submit copies of all obtained permits to the Grantee/FEMA at or prior to final closeout of the public assistance grant.
11. Subgrantee shall not initiate construction activities until fifteen (15) days after the date that the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been signed as “APPROVED.”

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Following are the comments received from the public comment period for the EA and FEMA’s Response

Commenter	Comment	Response
US EPA	Will the excavation for the New Critical Services Structure be below the water table? If so, how will ground water be kept out of the excavation area?	Groundwater in the area is likely to be within 4 and 8 feet below grade. Based on proposed development plans, dewatering may be needed in some areas with deeper pile caps as part of the NCSS construction. Pending further geotechnical investigation and if dewatering is required, regulatory protocols may require pretreatment of groundwater pumped from the site before discharge into the sewer system. Prior to initiating any dewatering activities, a groundwater sample would be analyzed to

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		ensure it meets the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP) criteria for effluent to municipal sewers as part of the application process for the NYCDEP Bureau of Wastewater Treatment (BWT) Wastewater Quality Control Permit. Any contaminated groundwater generated by construction dewatering would be treated on-site, if necessary, to meet discharge limitations. Following on-site treatment, the water would be disposed of in the City sewer with the appropriate permit.
US EPA	Will the new building be connected with existing water and wastewater utilities?	The new facility would be connected to existing water and wastewater utilities. As discussed in the Infrastructure section of the HHC Coney Island Hospital EA, the Proposed Alternative would not affect CIH's primary electrical, gas, and water and sewer services, which would continue to be provided by the City of New York and major utilities such as Consolidated Edison. These systems are expected to have sufficient capacity to accommodate the increase in demand for utility services with the Proposed Alternative. NYCDEP manages new flow (both sanitary and stormwater) to its system by requiring all new developments, such as the NCSS, to apply for a connection to the City sewer (this is NYCDEP's site connection approval process).
US EPA	How will heat and hot water be provided to the facility? Natural gas? Will there be underground fuel storage tanks?	There will be no change in how heat, hot water, and natural gas are provided to the facility. Electrical power will continue to be provided by Consolidated Edison. Natural gas will continue to be provided by National Grid. No new underground fuel storage tanks will be introduced by the Proposed Alternative. A new fuel oil storage tank would be provided on Level 1 of the NCSS.

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US EPA	Language about native planting plans should be in EA.	Any plantings that may be done on the Coney Island Hospital campus will be done using native plants.
US EPA	<p>More details on how greenhouse gases are analyzed in the EA.</p> <p>a. How it is addressed through SEQR; is HHC preparing a CEQR/SEQR review? If so, that may have the level of analysis needed.</p> <p>b. CEQ guidance from December 2014 updating 2010 guidance should be referenced.</p>	<p>For Coney Island Hospital, it is anticipated that variances will be required from the New York City Board of Standards and Appeals; these actions are subject to review under New York City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR).</p> <p>EA Section 5.16, "Climate Change," was prepared following the CEQ guidance referenced in 5b as well as SEQRA and CEQR guidance. The Draft CEQ guidance suggests a threshold of 25,000 tons for requiring quantified analysis; the Proposed Alternative is well below the 25,000 ton threshold, thus not requiring analysis. Further, since the Proposed Alternative would include updated and more efficient boilers, the EA concluded: "energy use and the associated GHG emissions would improve with the implementation of the Proposed Alternative, consistent with Federal, State, and City policies aimed at reducing GHG emissions."</p>
US EPA	A request for more substance backing up the claim in the Clean Air Act section regarding the de minimus discussion; is there a quantitative analysis or information to support the assertion beyond the air quality permit included? This pertains not just to the operation of the facility but also the construction period.	The primary objective of the Proposed Alternative is to increase the resiliency of Coney Island Hospital and to minimize damage to the critical facility's infrastructure and ensure the hospital recovers immediately after future storm or flooding events. With the Proposed Alternative, the existing Power House building, Building 6, and the Hammett Pavilion would be demolished and existing equipment will be upgraded and/or relocated to the New Critical Services Structure (NCSS) facility, which would provide elevated space for critical hospital facilities and infrastructure. Overall, hospital capacity will remain substantially the same (there is anticipated to be a 9 bed

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		<p>decrease; the reduction in the number of beds is not expected to affect the service population). Therefore, the Proposed Alternative would not result in an increase in vehicle trips after the construction period and consequently would not increase emissions from mobile sources. The Proposed Alternative would replace the existing older MEP systems with newer, cleaner, and more energy efficient systems that will meet or exceed current building energy code. It is anticipated that the Proposed Alternative would include the installation of three 3,000 kilowatt diesel-powered emergency generators to increase the standby power capacity for critical, life safety and equipment functions at the hospital; these generators would be for emergency purposes only and limited to a maximum of 500 operating hours per year per generator. These generators would not result in emissions that exceed the de minimis rates for the relevant criteria pollutants defined in general conformity thresholds, and therefore no further analysis is required.</p> <p>The air pollutant emission levels associated with construction of the Proposed Alternative would not be considered out of the ordinary in terms of intensity and are typical of ground-up building construction in New York City. Measures would be taken to reduce pollutant emissions during construction in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations, and building codes. In addition, there is an increasing percentage of in-use newer and cleaner vehicles and engines for construction, resulting in greatly reduced air pollutant emissions related to construction activities. Accordingly, the potential construction emissions associated with the Proposed Alternative are expected to be below the</p>
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		applicable de minimis levels, and no further analysis is required. Therefore, the Proposed Alternative would not result in adverse effects on air quality.
US EPA	Cumulative Effects section does not sufficiently address FEMA-funded projects in the immediate area. There needs to be discussion about cumulative effects from near-by known FEMA projects.	There are no FEMA funded projects within the vicinity of the project area and there for there will be no cumulative effects on other projects.
US EPA	Once the excavation has been dewatered, how would water be prevented from re-entered the space? When the basement is constructed, how would its concrete walls be protected from the water on the exterior side? Will the walls be provided with a water-resistant plastic on the exterior side?	The NCSS does not have a basement level and the garage space on the first level will be designed with wet flood proofing materials. The project designer will take all necessary measures to ensure that water does not infiltrate the new building. As for the below grade piles with pile caps, they do not typically require any waterproofing treatment since they will be designed to account for soil with groundwater loads.

FINDINGS

In accordance with NEPA and 44 CFR Part 10, FEMA has determined that the proposed action will have no significant impact on the quality of the human environment. As a result of this FONSI, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared, and the proposed project as described in the Final PEA may proceed. This FONSI serves as the final public notice for the proposed project.

APPROVED:



fos
Katherine Zeringue
FEMA Region II Regional Environmental Officer

08.28.2015