



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, SAVANNAH DISTRICT
100 W. OGLETHORPE AVENUE
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA 31401-3604

November 23, 2020

Planning Branch

PUBLIC NOTICE
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

SUBJECT: Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA), and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) Ramey Unit School Reconstruction and Demolition in Aguadilla, Puerto Rico.

Notice of the following is hereby given:

a. Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, notice is hereby given that the Savannah District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) prepares a DRAFT EA and FONSI for the Ramey Unit School Reconstruction and Demolition.

b. Savannah District announces the availability to the public of a Draft EA, and Draft FONSI for Ramsey Unit School Reconstruction and Demolition. Copies of the draft documents may be obtained from the District website at:

<http://www.sas.usace.army.mil/About/Divisions-and-Offices/Planning-Division/Plans-and-Reports/>.

c. Written statements regarding the Draft EA and FONSI for the proposed action will be received at the Savannah District Office until

12 O'CLOCK NOON, 23 December 2020

from those interested in the activity and whose interests may be affected by the proposed action.

LOCATION OF PROPOSED ACTION: The site consists of approximately 26 acres of the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Air Station Borinquen, located in the former Ramey Air Force Base (AFB) in Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. The property is bound to the south by the Rafael Hernández Airport and to the north, west, and east by residential units and other buildings of the former Ramey AFB. Approximately 1,800 feet (0.34 miles) to the north, beyond the housing, a cliff drops approximately 215 feet to the Atlantic Ocean shoreline.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The proposed action would be developed in three phases: Phase 1 consists of the construction of a new school, Phase 2 will be the demolition of the old school buildings, and Phase 3 will be the development of the outdoor play fields

that will occupy the existing school area. A preliminary step will include the relocation of overhead power lines to the south and away from the proposed soccer field. Please refer to Figure 3 for the Proposed Phasing Plan.

The new school will be located south of the existing school. This allows the current school to remain in operation without interruption until completion of the new building. The new construction area will be segregated from the existing school operations with a six-foot -high fence, building a new entrance road and temporary parking areas. Construction vehicles will utilize the existing main control gate on Crown Road, which will later be decommissioned once the new permanent entry is built.

Following construction of the new school, the old buildings will be demolished, the construction & demolition debris would be removed and disposed in accordance with Federal and state regulations, the ball fields would be developed, and the former school grounds would be re-landscaped.

The proposed Ramey Unit School is compliant with the existing land use and is appropriately sited in an area zoned for community support functions. The design meets the standards outlined in the DoDEA Education Specifications 21C, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. The new Ramey Unit School would be built to the standards required by the International Building Code including the wind code requirements of American Society of Civil Engineers/Structural Engineering Institute Standard 7, which for Puerto Rico is the requirement to withstand 161 miles per hour winds, and fulfill the Seismic Design Category D criteria. It will also meet Anti-Terrorism Force Protection (ATFP), and all standoff distances will comply with Unified Facilities Criteria (UFC) 4-010-01 Department of Defense Minimum Antiterrorism Standards for Buildings.

Alternative plans were developed as part of the planning process. The alternatives that were considered were as follows:

a. **Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative:** The No Action Alternative (NAA) would not construct the new Ramey Unit School or demolish the existing school. Under this alternative, the existing Ramey Unit School would continue to be used.

b. **Alternative 2 – Preferred Alternative – Construction of the New Ramey Unit School:** This alternative consists of constructing the new Ramey Unit School along with demolition of the existing Ramey Unit School buildings. The new facility would replace the current school, which is not adequate to meet the current needs of the students. The new facility would provide a safe and healthy environment. Construction of the new school has been coordinated with the installation physical security plan and all physical security measures are included, including hurricane/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) standards; and fire, health and safety standards that are

not adequately addressed with the current facility. All required ATRP have been explored and included in the design of the new facilities. Sustainable principles will be integrated into the design, development, and construction of the project in accordance with Executive Order 13123 and other applicable laws and Executive Orders.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY EVALUATION:

Environmental Assessment: Savannah District has prepared a Draft EA and found that an Environmental Impact Statement would not be required for this action. The Draft EA is being coordinated concurrently with this Notice to Federal and State natural resource agencies for review and comment.

Wetlands: With implementation of the proposed action, the construction of the new school and demolition of associated buildings would have no adverse impacts on wetlands. There are no wetlands or other undisturbed natural areas within the project's footprint.

Wildlife: With implementation of the proposed action, construction of the new school and demolition of associated buildings would have no adverse impacts on wildlife. Removal of trees within the proposed action's footprint and sodded areas would be replaced re-sodded. Urban wildlife species that use these green areas would be temporarily impacted and avoid the area during construction.

Protected Species: With implementation of the proposed action, construction of the new school and demolition of associated buildings would have no adverse effects on threatened and endangered species. However, due to the Puerto Rican Boa's mobility and potential presence at the karst cliff approximately 1,800 feet (0.34 miles) to the north, the proposed action includes the implementation of standard measures designed to ensure that no boas are present or affected within the work area.

Cultural Resources: With implementation of the proposed action, the USACE determined that demolition of the Ramey Unit School constitutes an adverse effect to a historic property eligible for listing in the NRHP consistent with Section 106 of the NHPA (54 USC 300101) and its implementing regulations (36 CFR 800). The Puerto Rico SHPO, DoDEA, USACE, and the ACHP have executed a Memorandum of Agreement to resolve these adverse effects and are attached to the EA in Appendix B.

Solid Waste: With implementation of the proposed action, construction of the new school and demolition of associated buildings would generate solid wastes, a minimal adverse impact.

HTRW: With implementation of the proposed action, the demolition and disposal of lead and ACM would follow specific protocols for compliance with local and federal laws and regulations. All hazardous or special wastes generated from the demolition activities of

the existing school would be transported off property through a permitted contractor for disposal in an off-property landfill. The construction of the new school and demolition of associated buildings would have a beneficial impact, as lead and ACM would be properly disposed and no longer a potential safety and health threat.

Pollution Control and Environmental Protection Plan: With implementation of the proposed action, construction of the new school and demolition of associated buildings would utilize the pollution control measures, regulatory framework, and environmental protection plan to ensure that the action would have negligible adverse impacts.

Traffic/Utilities: With implementation of the preferred alternative, during the construction and demolition period, the presence of the associated heavy equipment could cause some traffic congestion and traffic delays in the area. Adverse effects would be temporary during construction and demolition phases.

The new school would be serviced by a new water main, fire hydrants, and service connections. These would have beneficial effects to the water utilities.

The proposed sanitary sewer system would need to comply with UFC 3-240-01, as well as the local regulatory PRASA design guides. This would have beneficial effects.

With the implementation of the preferred alternative, an emergency generator is proposed for the life safety system. A power generator upgrade to include other areas, such as the kitchen/cafeteria, lighting, telecom/data system and portions of administration (to maintain exterior communications capability) is pending approval from the DoDEA.

An opportunity for utilizing renewable energy sources (wind, solar, or a combination of both) with a reasonable payback would be developed for the facility, on the northwest corner of Puerto Rico, that offers sustained coastal winds and good solar exposure. The exact size and type of the system will be designed as more information becomes available. These would have a beneficial effect for the electrical systems.

Air Quality: With the implementation of the preferred alternative, construction of the new school and demolition of associated buildings would have temporary adverse impacts on the air quality due to nominal fugitive dust and construction vehicle emissions (mobile sources) during the construction and demolition phases. The proposed action would have an emergency power generator that would also have temporary adverse impacts.

Geology and Soils: With the implementation of the preferred alternative, construction of the new school and demolition of associated buildings would have minimal adverse impacts on the geology and soils. Construction of the new school would cause short-term minor adverse effects on soils, such as construction-related erosion and increased

runoff, due to the removal of the existing vegetation, exposure of soil, and increased susceptibility to wind and water erosion. These effects would be minimized using appropriate erosion-sedimentation control measures, as required by the General Consolidated Permit and the Stormwater NPDES Permit. Recommended control measures include silt fences, straw bale dikes, and prompt re-vegetation.

Water Resources: With the implementation of the preferred alternative, the construction of the new school and demolition of associated buildings would have no adverse impacts on the surface water resources. Both the state and the federal authorities require and enforce that the project take measures to prevent and control surface water contaminants from leaving the site, through the General Consolidated Permit and the Construction NPDES Permit, respectively. Construction of the new school and demolition of associated buildings would have no adverse impacts on the groundwater resources. An application for certification of consistency with the Puerto Rico Coastal Management Program will be submitted to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Planning Board and they will determine the need for coastal zone certification and consistency during the review of the EA.

Noise: With the implementation of the preferred alternative, the construction and demolition activities would have temporary, insignificant noise impacts due to the use of heavy equipment and the noise generation that accompanies it. Typical construction equipment generates noise levels of 80-90 decibels at a distance of 50 feet. Multiple items of equipment operating concurrently could result in relatively high noise levels during the day around the construction site. The construction and the demolition sites are adjacent to residential units therefore, the construction and demolition contractor must take the necessary measures to avoid impacting the classrooms and the residential areas during construction and operation activities and be limited to daylight hours.

Socioeconomics: The proposed action would generate approximately 930 jobs, many of which will be for area residents. This would have beneficial effects for the socioeconomics.

Environmental Justice: With implementation of the proposed action to construct a school to replace one that has deteriorated, there would be no change in land use, and there would be a beneficial impact to human health and the environment in minority or low-income populations.

Protection of Children: With implementation of the proposed action, there would be limited access to the construction site, and it would be off-limits to children. This proposed action would not impact children, in compliance with Executive Order 13045: Protection of Children for Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks. The proposed action would benefit and protect the children by the proposed removal of lead and ACM.

Consideration of Public Comments: The Corps is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Native American Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of the proposed activity. Any comments received would be considered by the Corps in its deliberations. Comments would be used to assess impacts to endangered species, wetlands, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments would be used in the preparation of the Final EA and FONSI pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments would also be used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

Comment Period: Comment to the Corps on this proposed action should be submitted no later than the end of the comment period shown in this notice, in writing, to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 100 W Oglethorpe Avenue, Savannah, GA 30643 Attn: PM-P - Gose, or by e-mailing the comments to the following address: CESAS-PD@usace.army.mil. Questions concerning this request can be directed to Mrs. Cynthia Gose, Environmental Engineer at (912) 652-6107 or at Cynthia.A.Gose@usace.army.mil.

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Savannah District