

These notices shall satisfy two separate but related procedural requirements for activities to be undertaken by the City of Wewahitchka
Combined Public Notice
Final Notice and Public Explanation of a Proposed Activity in a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard Designated Floodplain and Notice of Intent to Request Release of Funds

December 20, 2024
City of Wewahitchka
211 N Highway 71
Wewahitchka, Florida 32465
(850)-639-2605

Final Notice and Public Explanation of a Proposed Activity in a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard Designated Floodplain

To: All interested Agencies include all Federal, State, and Local, Groups and Individuals

This is to give notice that the City of Wewahitchka under 24 CFR Part 58 has conducted an evaluation as required by Executive Order(s) 11988, as amended by Executive Order 13690, and Executive Order 11990, in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 in Subpart C Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management and Wetlands Protection. The activity is funded under Florida Commerce CDBG M0163. The proposed project(s) is located throughout the City Limits of Wewahitchka in Gulf County, Florida and is located in the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS) floodplain/wetland. The extent of the FFRMS floodplain was determined by the 0.2 percent flood mapped on the FEMA Firm maps. The City of Wewahitchka is proposing to replace damaged storm water infrastructure inside the city limits. More specifically, replaced damaged storm water pipes, drain inlets/grates/structures, and regrade ditches to provide positive drainage inside the City limits, A few locations of this proposed project lie within the "A" and "AE" Flood Zones. The project proposes that the existing storm water infrastructure be replaced in the same locations. The work taking place within the "A" and "AE" Flood Zone is approximately 0.25 acres within the City's Right of Way throughout the City limits.

The City of Wewahitchka has reevaluated and considered the following alternatives and mitigation measures listed below to minimize adverse impacts and to restore and preserve natural and beneficial functions and intrinsic values of the existing floodplain. Although these alternatives were considered, the most practical and preferred option would be to repair/replace the damaged infrastructure in its existing location to keep gravity flows consistent and maintain the effectiveness of the system, to serve those residents that lie within said floodplain (which infrastructure is in dire need of replacement), and to be able to be the most effective with the budgetary restraints and fix as many areas within the City limits of Wewahitchka as possible (most storm water infrastructure in the city is around 50-70 years old). All applicable permits will be obtained for this project as well as all mitigation requirements required.

A. Relocate the Project to a New Site.

1. This option would include relocating all proposed activities outside of the floodplain onto a new site. In doing so, this would require the acquisition of a new City Right of Way. This would also require impacting wetland areas not intended with the original project in order

to gravity flow storm water throughout the city limits. This would also include installing drainage pipes 10-15' below existing grade, which would become a maintenance/construction challenge as well as cause budgetary issues. This option has been rejected as the time frame and cost needed to acquire a new Right of Way and install additional infrastructure would exceed the project budget.

B. Conduct the replacement of the storm water repairs outside the floodplain.

1. This option would entail replacing all of the storm water system outside of the floodplain. This would include installing new pipes, likely 10-15' below existing grade, and an abundance of additional infrastructure. Naturally the storm water in the City limit's flows with the natural topography of the landscape, and with that, causes it to flow down into lower areas within the City (floodplain areas), which are also the exit points in which the storm water exits the city. This option has been rejected due to the issues of the infrastructure serving those residences inside the floodplain and the overall cost would exceed the budget of the project.

C. No Action or Alternative Actions that Serve the Same Purpose

1. A no action alternative was considered and rejected because of the infrastructure issues observed and tested throughout the city, more specifically some areas inside the floodplain. The damaged infrastructure inside the floodplain areas is in dire need of replacement/repairs and the condition of said infrastructure will continue to deteriorate until a failure resulting in public safety concerns and flooding of residences/businesses in the City limits.

The City of Wewahitchka has reevaluated alternatives to reconstructing the infrastructure in the floodplain and has determined that it has no practicable alternative to floodplain development. Environmental files documenting compliance with Executive Order 11988, as amended by Executive Order 13690, and Executive Order 11990, are available for public inspection, review and copying upon request at the times and location delineated in the last paragraph of this notice for receipt of comments.

There are three primary purposes for this notice. First, people who may be affected by activities in floodplain and those who have an interest in the protection of the natural environment should be given an opportunity to express their concerns and provide information about these areas. Second, an adequate public notice program can be an important public educational tool. The dissemination of information and request for public comment about floodplain can facilitate and enhance Federal efforts to reduce the risks and impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of these special areas. Third, as a matter of fairness, when the Federal government determines it will participate in actions taking place in floodplain it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

Written comments must be received by the City of Wewahitchka at the following address on or before December 30, 2024: Rachel Jackson, City Clerk, 211 N. Highway 71 in Wewahitchka, Florida, and 850-639-2605 Attention: Michael Gortman, Certifying Officer/City Manager. A full description of the project may also be reviewed from 8:00am-4:00pm at the above address. This notice is available at <https://www.cityofwewahitchka.com/>. Comments may also be submitted by email at Hunter.Baumgardner@SoutheasternCE.com.

Notice of Intent to Request Release of Funds

On or about December 30, 2024 the City of Wewahitchka will submit a request to the Department of Florida Commerce administering agency for the release of Grant Number M0163 funds under CDBG-DR Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 and described in the 2020 State of Florida Action Plan for Disaster Recovery to undertake a project known as The City of Wewahitchka Storm Water Infrastructure Repair Project for the purpose of repairing damaged storm water infrastructure and conveyance system throughout the city limits.

The activities proposed are categorically excluded under HUD regulations at 24 CFR Part 58 from National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). An Environmental Review Record (ERR) that documents the environmental determinations for this project is on file at the City of Wewahitchka City Hall located at 211 N. Highway 71 and may be examined or copied weekdays 8 A.M to 4 P.M.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any individual, group, or agency may submit written comments on the ERR to the City of Wewahitchka City Hall. All comments received by December 30, 2024 will be considered by the City of Wewahitchka prior to authorizing submission of a request for release of funds. Comments should specify which Notice they are addressing.

ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION

The City of Wewahitchka certifies to The Department of Florida Commerce that Michael Gortman in his capacity as City Manager/Certifying Officer consents to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. Florida Commerce's approval of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under NEPA and related laws and authorities and allows the City of Wewahitchka to use Program funds.

OBJECTIONS TO RELEASE OF FUNDS

Florida Commerce will accept objections to its release of fund and the City of Wewahitchka certification for a period of fifteen days following the anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if they are on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer of the City of Wewahitchka; (b) the City of Wewahitchka has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by HUD regulations at 24 CFR part 58; (c) the grant recipient or other participants in the development process have committed funds, incurred costs or undertaken activities not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of a release of funds by Florida Commerce; or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures (24 CFR Part 58, Sec. 58.76) and shall be addressed to Florida Commerce administration office at 107 East Madison Street, Caldwell Building, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-4120. Potential objectors should contact Florida Commerce to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

Michael Gortman, City Manager