



North Carolina Department of Public Safety

Office of Recovery and Resiliency

Roy Cooper, Governor
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EARLY NOTICE AND PUBLIC REVIEW OF A PROPOSED ACTIVITY IN A 100-YEAR FLOODPLAIN AND WETLAND

PRINCEVILLE LEVEE FLOODGATE REPAIRS FOUR LEVEE FLOODGATE CULVERT LOCATIONS ALONG THE TAR RIVER, PRINCEVILLE, EDGECOMBE COUNTY, NC 27886

December 8, 2022

To: All interested Agencies, Groups and Individuals

This is to give notice that the North Carolina Office of Recovery and Resiliency (NCORR) has received an application from the Town of Princeville to use U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funding under 24 CFR 58 from the Infrastructure Recovery Program to implement the Princeville Levee Floodgate Repairs Project (“Proposed Activity”). NCORR is conducting an evaluation as required by Executive Orders 11988 and 11990 in accordance with HUD regulations (24 CFR Part 55) including identifying and evaluating practicable alternatives to locating the Proposed Activity in floodplain and wetlands and the Proposed Activity’s potential impacts on these special areas. There are three primary purposes for this notice. First, people who may be affected by activities in floodplains and wetlands, 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. Commenters are encouraged to offer alternative locations outside of the floodplain and wetlands, alternative methods to serve the same project purpose, and methods to minimize and mitigate impacts. Second, adequate public notice is an important public education tool. The dissemination of information and request for public comment about floodplain and wetlands facilitates and enhances governmental 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 government determines it will participate in actions taking place in floodplain and wetlands, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

The State of North Carolina was adversely impacted by the landfall of Hurricanes Matthew (October 8, 2016) and Florence (September 14, 2018). During the Hurricane Matthew storm event, a large majority of the 2,357 citizens residing in the Town of Princeville were displaced by floodwaters due to the functional failure of the Princeville floodgates located along the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) levee bordering the Tar River. Following the storm event, the Town of Princeville undertook to design construction upgrades and necessary repairs to critical flood control infrastructure so as to prevent flooding of the Town during future storm events. The Proposed Activity has been selected by the Town of Princeville

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to assist its residents and community to be protected from future storm damage and flooding.

The Proposed Activity entails inlet and outlet channel repairs at four (4) existing floodgate culverts along the levee and constructing permanent access roads to facilitate said repairs and provide access for future inspection, maintenance, and flood-fighting operations. The existing levee segments of the proposed project were constructed in 1965 to 1967 by the USACE but are maintained by Edgecombe County. The four floodgate culvert locations include Site 1 (35.890816, -77.532662), Site 2 (35.894597, -77.516820), Site 3 (35.895364, -77.513700), and Site 4 (35.873450, -77.525434). The proposed floodgate inlet and outlet channel repairs include excavating and installing rip-rap channel linings consistent with the dimensions and extents shown in the original Princeville Levee construction plans, with some modifications to the rip-rap thickness and size to prevent rip rap loss during high flow events. The access roads consist of constructing 10-foot-wide gravel roads with 1-foot-wide shoulders and 3:1 side-slopes. The access roads constructed of fill material with a gravel, travel way will traverse up, over, and/or down the levee and connect to “stub-roads” that provide access to inlet and outlet channels at Sites 1, 2, and 3. Site 4 already has adequate access for proposed channel repairs and future inspection, maintenance and flood-fighting operations, therefore, no new access roads are proposed at Site 4.

The Proposed Activity will result in temporary impacts to 0.11 acres of 100-year floodplain, 0.027 acres of National Wetlands Inventory (NWI)-mapped and USACE verified delineated wetlands (freshwater palustrine forested and scrub-shrub), 0.05 acres of stream, and 1.37 acres of floodway. The Proposed Activity will result in permanent impacts to 0.11 acres of 100-year floodplain, 0.007 acres of NWI-mapped and USACE verified delineated wetlands, 0.05 acres of stream, and 1.37 acres of floodway. These impacts will consist of excavation, fill and channel repair in the 100-year floodplain; hand clearing, fill and channel repair in wetlands; temporary dewatering and channel repair in stream; and excavation, fill and channel repair in FEMA-designated regulatory floodway. The Proposed Activity’s levee floodgate repairs are allowed in floodway since it is classified as non-critical action, is a functionally dependent use that must necessarily be in close proximity to water (24 CFR §55.2(b)(6)), and is being processed under 24 CFR 55.20. Natural floodplains and wetlands provide flood risk reduction benefits by slowing runoff and storing flood water. In addition, floodplains and wetlands are beneficial by providing diverse wildlife habitat, flood and erosion control, surface water quality maintenance, groundwater recharge, and educational, scientific, cultural, and recreational opportunities. Wetlands have unique natural characteristics that play an integral role in the ecology of the watershed. The regulatory floodway refers to the channel of the Tar River and adjacent land areas that are reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than a designated height. Communities must regulate development in floodways to ensure that there are no increases in upstream flood elevations. A Floodplain Development Permit and no-rise certification for the Proposed Activity concluded that it will not increase base flood elevations within the FEMA floodplain. According to FEMA, the purpose of a levee is to keep the course of rivers from changing and to protect against flooding of the area adjoining the river. Levees are designed to reduce flood risk from flooding events; however, they do not eliminate the risk entirely. Levees can and do deteriorate over time and must be maintained to retain their effectiveness. When levees fail, or are overtopped, the results can be catastrophic. Thus, the Proposed Activity is necessary to prevent future storm events from flooding the affected areas of the Town of Princeville.

Floodplain maps based on the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), NWI wetlands maps, USACE Jurisdictional Determination (with classification codes), and supporting documentation are available for review at <https://www.rebuild.nc.gov/about/plans-policies-reports/environmental-reviews>. A full description of the Proposed Activity may also be reviewed in person during business hours at the Princeville Town Hall, 201 South Main Street, Princeville, NC 27886. A full description of the Proposed Activity may also be viewed in person, by appointment only, at: NCORR, 200 Park Offices Drive, Durham, NC 27709. Call (984) 833-5350 to make an appointment.

Written comments must be received by NCORR at the following address on or before December 23, 2022: Laura Hogshead, Director, NCORR, ATTN: Princeville Levee Floodgate Repairs, P.O. Box 110465, Durham, NC 27709. Comments may also be submitted by email to publiccomments@rebuild.nc.gov with “ATTN: Princeville Levee Floodgate Repairs Comments” in the subject line.