



North Carolina Department of Public Safety

Office of Recovery and Resiliency

Roy Cooper, Governor
Eddie M. Buffaloe, Jr., Secretary

Laura H. Hogshead, Director

EARLY NOTICE AND PUBLIC REVIEW OF A PROPOSED ACTIVITY IN A 100-YEAR FLOODPLAIN AND WETLAND

WEST LUMBERTON FLOOD GATE AT VFW ROAD AND RAILROAD UNDERPASS NEAR INTERSTATE 95 IN THE VICINITY OF VFW ROAD, COX ROAD, HACKETT STREET, AND THE CSX RAILROAD CROSSING, LUMBERTON, ROBESON COUNTY, NC

December 9, 2023

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 City of Lumberton to use Community Development Block Grant – Mitigation (CDBG-MIT) funding from the Infrastructure Recovery Program to implement the West Lumberton Flood Gate at VFW Road and Railroad Underpass project (“Proposed Activity”) and is conducting an evaluation as required by Executive Order 11988 and Executive Order 11990 in accordance with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations (24 CFR Part 55). There are three primary purposes for this notice. First, to provide the public an opportunity to express their concerns and share information about the Proposed Activity, including alternative locations outside of the floodplain and wetland. Second, adequate public notice is an important public education tool. The dissemination of information about floodplains and wetlands facilitates and enhances governmental efforts to reduce the risks 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 wetland, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk. Funding for the Proposed Activity will be provided by the HUD CDBG-MIT program for storm recovery activities in North Carolina.

The Proposed Activity is needed to mitigate future storm flooding as experienced and exacerbated by the effects of the landfall of Hurricanes Matthew (October 8, 2016) and Florence (September 14, 2018). The purpose of this Proposed Activity is to enhance the City’s existing earthen levee and flood control system to mitigate against 100-year flood events flowing from the west side of the I-95 underpass via the CSX railroad crossing in the vicinity of VFW Road, Cox Road, and Hackett Street. The City has identified the Proposed Activity site to mitigate flooding experienced on the protected side of the existing levee system, which is critical to protect lives and property in southern and western Lumberton. In addition, the levee system helps maintain access to and operation of several critical facilities behind the levee, such as the

Mailing Address:
Post Office Box 110465
Durham, NC 27709



Phone: (984) 833-5350
www.ncdps.gov
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City's water treatment plant, two power grid point of delivery transformer sub stations, the City's Electric Utility Department, and a City Fire Station. Failure to make the proposed improvements will result in the area continuing to experience flooding during future storm events, which in turn has impacts across the entire city.

The Proposed Activity entails construction of a permanent floodgate system and related drainage and flood improvements to prevent future flood occurrences from the Lumber River through a CSX railroad underpass beneath I-95 in an area of Lumberton that has suffered devastation, primarily associated with hurricanes. The Proposed Activity is located near Interstate 95 (I-95) in the vicinity of VFW Road, Cox Road, Hackett Street, and the CSX railroad crossing within the City of Lumberton (City), North Carolina. The proposed limits of disturbance consist of public rights-of-way, Hackett Street, Cox Road, VFW Road, the CSX railroad line, and portions of five parcels, including a 7.16-acre lot at VFW and Hackett Rd., Parcel Pin #938280300700; an 0.83-acre lot at 550 VFW Rd., Parcel Pin #938189443052; a 6.3-acre lot at 2400 Cox Rd., Parcel Pin #938179684407; a 6.34-acre lot at 2460 Cox Rd., Parcel Pin #938179143700; and a 2.8-acre lot at 2306 W. 5th St., Parcel Pin #938189201500. The Proposed Activity will disturb approximately 4.9 acres mostly within previously disturbed railroad and roadway easements and industrial businesses' lawns. The Proposed Activity has been designed with agency input particularly the NC Department of Transportation (DOT) which is undertaking the widening of I-95. The NC DOT project includes realignment of Cox Road, VFW Road and Hackett Street, I-95 embankment and bridge surfacing, a drainage channel, I-95 replacement bridge, retaining walls near Cox Road, and temporary and permanent NC DOT easements and ROWs, all to be completed by NC DOT before construction commences on this Proposed Activity.

All of the Proposed Activity site is located in 100-year floodplain with the five parcels totaling 23.43 acres and no areas in regulatory floodway. The Proposed Activity will result in temporary impacts to approximately 4.9 acres of 100-year floodplain (Zone AE) which includes four construction entrances, a staging area, two check dams, and a 26-linear-foot (lf), 15-inch HDPE. The permanent impacts to 4.7 acres of 100-year floodplain includes the construction of an approximately 30-foot flood gate to swing over the CSX railroad tracks with concrete wing flood walls extending outward from both sides of the gate and connecting concrete wing wall sections to a proposed earthen berm with supportive sheet piling that ties the system into the I-95 proposed embankment; slope revetment; riprap groin protection; two 15-foot-wide gravel access drives with turnout onto Cox Road and corresponding 34-lf and 36-lf, 15-inch reinforced concrete piping culverts; 2-foot x 2-foot and 3-foot x 3-foot sluice gates; water main offset; railroad ditch grading; removal and reinstallation of steel casing and 6-inch watermain south of the flood gate, as needed; and all surfaces to be restored to existing grade after construction. CSX will remove and reinstall 34-foot rail sections and two timber crossties from each track with contractor to install sections of shoring sheet piling cut off a minimum of 2-feet below the top-of-tie. CSX and contractor will schedule a 12-hour track window to install the jump span bridge with CSX removing a 50-foot track section and contractor excavating materials, cutting off piles, and installing wales, struts, pile caps, and jump span bridge.

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. Floodwater storage and conveyance and erosion control will be affected by the Proposed Activity. The flood gate over the railroad tracks will be swing-hinged closed in line with the concrete wing walls during future storm events and flooding. This design will provide long-term flood prevention and minimize potential flood damage to the surrounding properties. Erosion and sediment control measures include filter fabric under 24-inch class 2 riprap east of the flood gate; geotextile fabric under 18-inch class B riprap and 6-inch stone groin protection riprap along southeastern portion of the earthen berm; two stone riprap check dams; temporary stabilizing vegetation; site grading;

and silt fencing. Under 100-year flood conditions, peak water surface elevation upstream of the gate is estimated to increase 0.3 feet from both installation of the flood gate system and raising of I-95 (see posted H&H Analysis for more details). The project components will be elevated well above the 100-year base flood elevation (BFE) in order to protect lives and property from potential flash floods. The 100-year floodplain in the proposed floodgate system area has a BFE from 123.56 feet to 123.71 feet (vertical datum, NAVD88). The proposed flood wall will have a 134-foot top-of-wall elevation compared to the top of the railroad bed elevation which is around 120 feet. Therefore, the wall extension will be approximately 14 feet high above the railroad bed. The Proposed Activity will comply with a Floodplain Development Permit, NC DEMLR Erosion and Sediment Control Permit, NPDES Construction Stormwater Permit (NCG010000), and all applicable federal, State and local laws, regulations, and permit requirements and conditions which shall be obtained before commencing work.

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 Proposed Activity will result in no direct or indirect, temporary or permanent impacts to approximately 4.44 acres of NWI-mapped Freshwater Forested/ Shrub Wetland (PFO4Ad) located on the VFW Rd. and Hackett St. parcel #938280300700 that is part of a 69.51-acre wetland feature. There are no other wetlands located on the other parcels. No activities are proposed in wetlands and a US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Approved Jurisdictional Determination and No Permit Required Letter are being obtained. Therefore, no wetland impacts are expected, Clean Water Act Section 404 and 401 permits will not be required, and mitigation is not required. Best management practices for erosion and sedimentation control such as silt fencing will be utilized during construction and native plants used in landscaping and site restoration. Since the Proposed Activity will avoid the wetland and incorporate these measures, no indirect wetland impacts or negative impacts to wetland functions and values are anticipated.

Floodplain maps based on the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), Preliminary FIRMs, NWI wetlands map, Hydrologic and Hydraulic Analysis, USACE correspondence, site plans 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 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 26, 2023: Laura Hogshead, Director, NCORR, ATTN: West Lumberton Flood Gate, P.O. Box 110465, Durham, NC 27709. Comments may also be submitted by email to publiccomments@rebuild.nc.gov with “ATTN: West Lumberton Flood Gate Comments” in the subject line.