

FINAL PUBLIC NOTICE

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and South Carolina Emergency Management Division (SCEMD has received the following application for Federal grant funding. Notice is hereby given of FEMA's consideration to provide funding in the form of a Hazard Mitigation Grant to the Shell Point Drainage Improvements Project.

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), federal actions must be reviewed and evaluated for feasible alternatives and for social, economic, historic, environmental, legal, and safety considerations. - Executive Order (EO) 11988 and EO 11990 requires FEMA to consider alternatives - and provide a public notice of any proposed actions in or affecting floodplains or wetlands. EO 12898 requires FEMA to provide the opportunity for public participation in the planning process and to consider potential impacts to minority and low-income populations. This notice may also fulfill requirements under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

This notice serves as a project- specific final notice for FEMA's funding action located within a Special Flood Hazard Area. Funding for the proposed project will be conditional upon compliance with all applicable federal, tribal, state and local laws, regulations, floodplain standards, permit requirements and conditions. This action complies with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) requirements.

Date Posted: September 15, 2022

Applicant: Beaufort County Stormwater

Project Title: Shell Point Drainage Improvement Project

Location of Proposed Work/Date of Construction: Shell Point Area – South of Savannah Hwy and Parris Island Gateway, Port Royal, SC (map can be found in Figure 1). Construction is estimated to begin 7/1/2023 and conclude 6/30/2024.

Proposed Work and Purpose: The proposed improvements include replacing eight underground culvert pipes, extensive clearing of 52,525 linear feet of drainage conveyances, and installation of six tidal flap gates. This project will reduce the hours flooded at average tide from 16 hours to just over an hour at the 25 year storm. The project is broken up into eight smaller projects for bidding and procurement purposes. All eight projects are planned to all be completed at one time within one budget. The project is directed to be designed with an appropriate factor of safety for a residential neighborhood and to account for the projected sea level rise for Beaufort County through the year 2071. The work will conform to all applicable national, state, and local environmental protection standards. To achieve maximum benefit, work must take place in the direct proximity to the floodplain and wetland because the issues are adjacent to these systems. Many of the most flooded drainage conveyances in the neighborhood are tidally influenced, which results in increased sediment that accumulates when no action is taken.

Project Alternatives: If no action is taken, flooding will continue, and infrastructure will continue to age. The age of the drainage system, projected increase in frequency and magnitude

of storm systems, and projected sea level rise will add extensive stress of the system, resulting in more intense and more frequent flooding. More intense and more frequent flooding has the potential to restrict access of the community to lifelines and inflict damage to property. If no action were to be taken, the potential of loss of life would grow with each passing year.

Purchasing the homes of residents in the projected flood zone is a feasible alternative to the drainage improvements to this project. This would not alter the location of the project, but instead shift focus away from the out-of-date infrastructure and to the location of residents. The scope of work for this would be to research the homes to be impacted, have the homes assessed for a fair purchase price, find a relocation area and home, make an offer to the homeowner, and provide support through the relocation process.

The impacts associated with this project are both positive and negative. Though relocating affected residents would be a positive result on the hydrology of the neighborhood, there are environmental justice issues because not all residents would be affected. Historically, homes in lower lying, flood-prone areas are less expensive than homes of the same caliber on high, dry ground, even if those exist just blocks apart. Further, using stormwater utility funds, which are generated from a fee assessed on property within the county, to buy out properties is not currently permitted in the stormwater management plan. The fiscal impact of this alternative would be significant, as the average price of homes on the market in the Shell Point Area at the present time is \$435,250. Additional cost impacts would need to be factored in, like the cost of a new residence and moving expenses. Assuming it cost \$500,000 per relocation and an additional \$75,000 in restoration costs per lot, the total of moving 20 residencies would be \$11,500,000.

This alternative was considered but ultimately decided against given the lack of success with similar efforts in Beaufort County. Homeowners in areas like this, characterized by older homes, do not want to move as the homes have deep family history. Beaufort County Stormwater aimed to work with residents as opposed to against them in this approach, supporting their desire to stay in the location many of them have called home their entire lives. The engineering study, which took both rainfall and sea level rise into account, projects that homes will be protected from flooding with the implementation of these improvements. The selected solution takes the preference of residents into account while also upfitting the infrastructure to better fortify those who would not benefit from the relocation solution. Mitigation in the selection solution will be achieved through a combination of on site restoration and mitigation credits.

Comment Period: Comments are solicited from the public; local, state or federal agencies; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of the proposed project. The comments should be made in writing and addressed to 135 W Irvine St. Richmond KY 3rd Floor. All comments are due within 15 days of this notice. The Madison County Fiscal Court will forward comments to applicable regulatory agencies as needed. Interested persons may submit comments, obtain more detailed information about the proposed action, request to further inspect project area map, or request a copy of the findings by contacting:

Julian Corbin, Beaufort County Environmental Engineer at 803-255-2812 or
julianna.corbin@bcgov.net



Figure 1. Map of Shell Point Drainage Improvements Project Area