

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

To: All interested Agencies:

Federal: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) /

State: Texas Water Development Board / Local: Local Floodplain Administrator

Groups and Individuals:

This is to give notice that HUD under 24 CFR Part 58 has conducted an evaluation as required by Executive Order(s) 11988, as amended by Executive Order 13690, 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 Texas General Land Office HUD MID Infrastructure Competition funding program, GLO Contract #24-067-E215 is located in the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS) floodplain and the City of Mercedes will be identifying and evaluating practicable alternatives to locating the action within the floodplain and the potential impacts on the floodplain from the proposed action, as required by Executive Order 11988, as amended by Executive Order 13690, in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 in Subpart C Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management. The proposed project location is located in the City of Mercedes, Hidalgo County within the following locations listed: Drainage Improvements Site 1 Along Easement - From intersection of North Street and North Vermont Avenue westward to the outfall west of Mile 1 West Road (26.161699, -97.924254), 2. Detention Pond Site 2 - An area from south of intersection of Mile 1 West Road and Levee Road 3 southward to a point where the existing irrigation easement intersects with Mile 1 West Road, westward to Levee Road 3 (26.161179, -97.927170), and 3. Drainage Improvements Site 3 Along Levee Road 3 - From the northeast corner of intersection of Mile 1 West Road and Levee Road 3 northward to channel (26.165508, -97.925092) in City of Mercedes, Hidalgo County. The extent of the FFRMS floodplain was determined using a 0.2 percent flood approach.

The proposed activities consist of tying into the existing storm water infrastructure located at the intersection of North St. and North Vermont Ave. The flow will begin heading west with a 30" HDPE pipe extending 20 linear feet then connected through an adapter, upsizing the pipe to a 36" HDPE for 180 linear feet into two 60" proposed grated manholes. The water will then continue to be conveyed via two 48" HDPE pipes falling into the proposed open cut ditch section within a proposed 80-foot drainage easement with total volume of approximately 5 AC-FT. The proposed open cut ditch section will consist of two concrete canastas out falling with two 48" HDPE pipes into the proposed Detention Pond to hold a total of approximately 35 AC-FT of water. The flow from the detention pond will then be directed towards the northern section of the pond and head northeast, following the levee, discharging through a 36" HDPE pipe for a span of 642 feet into an open ditch consisting of one 24" pipe paving crossing and total volume of approximately 1.59 AC-FT. For this project all the storm water will outfall into Hidalgo County Irrigation District No.9's Interlocal Drain Ditch "80", which ultimately outfalls into the IBWC floodway. This proposed project will fall under mitigation assistance.

The purpose and need for this project are due to the heavy rain events that occur within the residential area east of the project which become inundated with water. This is due to the full pilot channel that crosses "Interstate 2" which becomes easily full allowing water to back-up into the system. When heavy flooding occurs, 2-3 feet of water stands on N. Vermont Ave., which prevents the residents from reaching the Mercedes Emergency Dome Shelter. With the construction of this project, all back flow water will be conveyed to the detention pond and ultimately outfall into the IBWC floodway thus alleviating the surrounding residential population from flooding.

The proposed project area falls within a floodplain under FFRMS – 0.2 PFA Approach and will act as a floodwater storage and conveyance for the surrounding community that struggles with flood water during heavy rain events. The proposed project falls within open and undisturbed public owned land which generates no cash flow and therefore no intrinsic value can be generated. The total acreage that will be disturbed is approximately 12.92 acres.

The City of Merced has considered the following alternatives and mitigation measures to minimize adverse impacts and to restore and preserve natural and beneficial functions and intrinsic values of the existing floodplain:

The purpose of this project is not to hinder nor create disturbance to the community, the purpose of the project is to alleviate the community of flood rain during heavy rain events and allow residents to reach the Merced Emergency Dome Shelter, it being the only shelter in the area, when needed. The proposed project components will be built and constructed underground and will have both minimal disturbance and major benefits to the community.

Proposed Alternative 1: The storm drainage system in the area is composed of various storm sewer lines that drain towards a detention area and drainage ditch nearby in the vicinity, which are adjacent to the existing floodway levee. The Merced Emergency Dome Shelter Storm Water Mitigation project will begin by tying into the existing storm water infrastructure located at the intersection of Armory Road and Vermont Ave. It will begin with a 30" HDPE storm pipe extending 1,045 linear feet north ultimately out falling into proposed Detention Pond that should hold approximately 41 AC-FT of water. The discharge point will be in the northern section of the pond and will be discharged through a 36" HDPE storm pipe for 110 linear feet into Hidalgo County Irrigation District No.9's Interlocal Drain Ditch "80", which ultimately outfalls into the IBWC floodway. The detention pond will be constructed on City's property and no land acquisition will be required.

No Action Alternative 2:

The last alternative would be "No Build". This alternate would cause further critical drainage infrastructure damage in this high-risk area. This alternative would also continue to hinder The City of Merced Emergency Dome Shelter, it being the only Emergency Shelter within City limits. The high-risk area, chosen to be avoided by this alternate, will also continue to encompass residential neighborhoods that endure the aftereffects of flooding in the area. The "No Build" alternate is not feasible and would cause further sequential damage ultimately leading to an increase in future repairs to be done.

View Mitigation Measures Listed below:

Law, Authority, or Factor	Mitigation Measure
Land Use	Best management practice to mitigate any adverse effects on land use will include coordination with the City of Merced regarding site compatibility of land use and zoning requirements.
Soils	Best management practices to mitigate soil erosion control include silt fencing, re-vegetating soils immediately after construction activities, soil compaction, and building a drainage system (which this project is comprised off) which will be all be embodied into the proposed project.
Floodplains	Best management practices to mitigate any adverse impacts on mapped floodplains, required measures to ensure conveyance of floods upon completion of construction activities will be taken place such as the Early and Final Public Notice and an 8-step decision process required by HUD for the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS) floodplain – under the 0.2 PFA. The City of Merced will publicly publish and post to the required locations and notify (through coordination letters) required entities as stated in the Notices and 8-step decision process.
Water Quality	Best management practices to mitigate impacts to water quality will include compliance with TCEQ rules for stormwater discharges during and after construction.
Air Quality	Best management practices to mitigate and minimize dust generated from construction activities will include coordination with contractors to make sure all reasonable steps to control dust, particularly near residences, are practiced. Control practices may include periodic wetting of soils and limiting working hours in residential areas.
Noise	Best management practices to mitigate construction activities that impair normal activities of the residents or compromise worker safety include taking reasonable actions to minimize construction noise, which may include controlling work hours, locations, and/or performing continuous monitoring for integrity of equipment muffler systems.
Transportation	To mitigate any temporary transportation impacts because of construction activities, the City of Merced will implement traffic controls and/or detours as directed by TxDOT. Appropriate signage would be posted on affected roadways.

No final or conditional LOMR's or LOMA's from FEMA where applicable.

Coordination letters to notify state and local floodplain entities were submitted on October 18th, 2024. The entities have a window of 30 days to respond with feedback on the proposed project.

The City of Mercedes has reevaluated alternatives to building 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, 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 City of Mercedes at the following address on or before **November 28th, 2024** [a minimum 7 calendar day comment period will begin the day after the publication and end on the 8th day after the publication]: City of Mercedes, 400 S Ohio Ave, Mercedes, Tx, 78570 and (956) 565-3114, Attention: Oscar D. Montoya Sr., Mayor. A full description of the project may also be reviewed from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM at 400 S Ohio Ave, Mercedes, Tx, 78570 and at the following web address: <https://cityofmercedes.com/> . Comments may also be submitted via email at jcastillo@cityofmercedes.com

Date: November 20th, 2024