

Final Notice and Public Explanation of a Proposed Activity in a 100-Year Floodplain or Wetland

To: All interested Agencies, Groups, and Individuals

This is to give notice that the County of Jasper, TX has conducted an evaluation as required by Executive Order 11988 and/or 11990, in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 Subpart C Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management and Wetlands Protection. The activity is funded under the Texas Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Program (CDBG-DR) and GLO 20-065-013-C049/HUD B-17-DM-48-0001. The proposed project will use CDBG DR funds to facilitate improvements to three (3) existing bridge spans (approximately 470 LF total) and a section of existing county road that were all severely damaged during Hurricane Harvey. The bridge improvements will involve the replacement of the existing spans and associated improvements to the approaches, pavement, and guardrails, and all associated appurtenances on CR 425 (30.801865, -93.898602) from 100 LF west of the bridge to 100 LF east of the bridge, on CR 443 (30.725100, -93.909478) from 100 LF west of the bridge to 100 LF east of the bridge, and on CR 826 (30.275716, -93.944664) from 35 LF west of the bridge to 35 LF east of the bridge. Work will also involve improvements to approximately 1,700 LF of existing roadway on CR 715 (30.448259, -94.001853) starting at CR 713 and proceeding west. All three of the bridge locations – approximately .1909 Acres/470 LF – are situated in areas designated as 100 year floodplain. The bridges also cross designated Freshwater Emergent Wetland and Riverine Wetland features – approximately .0611 Acres/156 LF total wetland area. The work zone on CR 715 does not intersect in floodplains or wetland features. The proposed project will take place along existing rights of way and is not anticipated to negatively impact any floodplain or wetland features. The project will not result in any changes to base flood elevations or residential densities. Improvements to the bridges and related appurtenances should result in improved drainage and less potential for flooding, as well as increased access to and from these areas. The proposed project sites are located at multiple locations throughout the County of Jasper, TX.

The County has considered the following alternatives and mitigation measures to be taken to minimize adverse impacts and to restore and preserve natural and beneficial values: These are existing thoroughfares so few practicable alternatives were available. The County briefly considered moving the bridges and rerouting the roadways, or possibly relocating area residents. These options were rejected as the available grant funds would not cover the work associated with the construction of new roads and bridges, abandonment of existing infrastructure, or property buyouts, and the environmental impact of these options would far exceed any risk posed by reconstructing these thoroughfares at their current locations. Removal of the bridges would only restrict traffic and would effectively trap those residents who use the bridges on a daily basis. The non-action alternative was considered, but also rejected. The bridges and roads are in need of repair, damage from flooding and seasonal extremes will only continue to worsen, posing a danger to those residents dependent on them. All work will be performed in accordance with all Federal, State, and Local guidelines to ensure minimization of impact.

The County has reevaluated the alternatives to building in the floodplain/wetland and has determined that it has no practicable alternative. Environmental files that document compliance with steps 3 through 6 of Executive Order 11988 and/or 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 floodplains/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. Second, an adequate public notice program can be an important public educational tool. The dissemination of information and request for public comment about floodplains/wetlands 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 floodplains/wetlands, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

Written comments must be received by the County of Jasper, Texas at the following address on or before Friday, April 10, 2020: County of Jasper, TX, 121 North Austin, Room 106, Jasper, TX 75951 and (409) 384-2612, Attention: Mark Allen, County Judge. A full description of the project may also be reviewed weekdays from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. at the above address unless precluded by current health concerns and restrictions. Individuals may request to have a project description sent via U.S. mail or may review the descriptions electronically at <http://www.co.jasper.tx.us/>. Comments may also be submitted via email at mark.allen@co.jasper.tx.us.

Date: April 1, 2020