

Early Notice and Public Review of a Proposed Activity in a 100-Year Floodplain and Wetlands
Texas General Land Office
Community Development Block Grant – Mitigation (CDBG-MIT)
DETCOG LMI Broadband Telecommunications Infrastructure Project

To: All interested Agencies, Groups, and Individuals

This is to give notice that the Texas General Land Office (GLO), on behalf of the Deep East Texas Council of Governments (DETCOG) has determined that the following proposed action under the Regional Mitigation Program and Hurricane Harvey State Mitigation Competition (B-18-DP-48-0002) is located in the FFRMS floodplain and wetland. The GLO will be identifying and evaluating practicable alternatives to locating the action in the floodplain and wetlands and the potential impacts on the floodplain and wetlands from the proposed action, as required by Executive Orders 11988 and 11990, in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 Subpart C Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management and Protection of Wetlands.

The project will involve the installation of approximately 758,611 linear feet (LF) of a new fiber-optic cable line within public road rights-of-way (ROW) and the installation of point-to-point microwave links and tower attachments at 71 towers in Jasper, Newton, Polk, San Jacinto, and Tyler Counties, Texas. All activities will be limited to the existing ROW and land owned by the tower company. The cable line will be placed 5 feet from the outer edge of the road ROW easements, which will serve as a control point due to ROW width changes. There will be a construction buffer from the edge of the ROW that averages 30 feet in width. The cable will be installed using a small backhoe in a 6-inch (15-centimeter [cm]) wide by 36-inch (91-cm) deep continuous trench, except at tower connections or at roadway/stream crossings where horizontal boring will be conducted to cross underneath it. The bore dimensions will be the same width and depths as those used for the trench, except at their originating and exiting handhole/bore pits, which will typically involve 4-foot square (1.5 meters [m]²) by 6-foot (2-m) deep holes for equipment. Activity at the towers themselves will be limited to mounting attachments that consist of “arms” that hold the antenna, base stations, and microwave dishes on the tower. The microwave dishes and base stations will be installed on towers, and cables that are less than 1 inch wide will run to the cabinets below. Any equipment staging areas will be confined to the cleared ROW with no ground disturbance required, and the ground surface at all trenches and bores will be returned to their original levels upon completion. Staging areas will not occur in or around wetlands. The project will benefit 140,583 people, 55.34 percent (77,802 people) of whom are low to moderate income. The project is not considered a critical action. The purpose of the project is to ensure that these critical rural areas are made more resilient and can (1) reliably function during and after future disasters; (2) reduce the risk of loss of life, injury, and property damage; and (3) accelerate recovery following a disaster.

The project will occur within existing rights-of-way and land owned by the tower company, and there will not be a significant increase in impervious surfaces throughout the project. The floodplain provides drainage for surrounding areas as well as the opportunity for natural wetlands and habitats to thrive. Maintaining the floodplain is an invaluable service to the community. Natural benefits of the floodplain and wetland will not be significantly impacted. The 0.2 percent flood approach was used in conjunction with the following FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps: Community Panels 48407C0250C, 48407C0375C, and 48407C0275C effective on 11/4/2010, 48373C0575C, 48373C0475C, 48373C0455C, 48373C0460C, 48373C0325C, 48373C0350C, 48373C0200C, 48373C0225C, 48373C0205C, 48373C0050C, 48373C0065C, 48373C0400C, 48373C0075C, 48373C0250C, and 48373C0600C effective on 9/3/2010, 48291C0025C

effective on 5/2/2008, 48407C0400D and 48291C0050D effective on 1/19/2018, 48005C0550E effective on 9/29/2010, 48457C0150C, 48457C0300C, 48457C0325C, 48457C0425C, 48457C0350C, 48457C0375C, 48457C0475C, 48457C0500C, and 48457C0175C effective on 4/4/2011, 48241C0300D, 48241C0425D, 48241C0325D, 48241C0350D, 48241C0240D, 48241C0220D, 48241C0230D, 48241C0250D, 48241C0175D, 48241C0275D, 48241C0050D, and 48241C0400D effective on 12/17/2010, 48351C0225D, 48351C0125D, 48351C0025D, and 48351C0250D effective on 11/16/2018. The maps show 40.54 acres of the project footprint is located within 100-year floodplain, including 0.59 acres within the Zone AE regulatory floodway, and 0.40 acres of the project footprint is located within 500-year floodplain. The project crosses approximately 8.80 acres of National Wetland Inventory (NWI) wetlands (including approximately 0.48 acres of Freshwater Emergent wetlands (PEM), 4.40 acres of Freshwater Forested/Shrub wetlands (PFO), 0.49 acres of Freshwater Pond (PUB), and 3.42 acres of Riverine). The project is not a critical action. The proposed project is located throughout Newton County along various county roads: 223,562 ft along U.S. Hwy 190 from the Newton County boundary southwestward to the Tyler County boundary; and along U.S. Hwy 96 from intersection of U.S. Hwy 190 and U.S. Hwy 96 northward to the Sabine County boundary; 2,517 ft along U.S. Hwy 190 from the Jasper County boundary northeastward; 266,752 ft along U.S. Hwy 287 from the Tyler County boundary northwestward to Kati Drive; and along U.S. Hwy 59 from intersection of U.S. Hwy 287 and U.S. Hwy 59 southward to the San Jacinto County boundary; 52,088 ft along U.S. Hwy 59 from the Polk County boundary southward to a Transmission Lines easement, thence southward along easement to FM 233, thence westward to Dirden Road; and 213,692 ft along U.S. Hwy 190 from the Polk County boundary southwestward to U.S. Hwy 287, thence southward to County Road 1065; and along U.S. Hwy 287 from the Polk County boundary southeastward to County Road 2770, thence eastward to County Road 3000, thence southward to a Transmission Line easement, thence southward to U.S. Hwy 190.

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 sites outside of the floodplains and wetlands, alternative methods to serve the same project purpose, and methods to minimize and mitigate impacts. Second, an adequate public notice program can be an important public educational tool. The dissemination of information and request for public comment about floodplains and 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 and wetlands, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

Written comments must be received by the GLO at the following address on or before July 29, 2025: Texas General Land Office, P.O. Box 12873, Austin, Texas 78711-2873. Attention: Mr. David Camarena, Director of Environmental Oversight. A full description of the project may also be viewed from 8 am-5 pm at the GLO: 1700 Congress Ave. Austin, TX 78701. Comments may also be submitted via email at env.reviews@recovery.texas.gov.

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