

Final Notice and Public Explanation of a Proposed Activity in a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard Designated Floodplain and/or Wetland

To: All interested Agencies, Groups and Individuals

This is to give notice that the Orange County Housing and Community Development Division under 24 CFR Part 58 has conducted an evaluation as required by Executive Orders 11988, as amended by Executive Order 13690, and Executive Order 11990, 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 the Orange County Housing Rehabilitation Program (grant numbers B-21-UC-12-0003, B-22-UC-12-0003, B-23-UC-12-0003, and B-24-UC-12-0003), the Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Orange County Recovers Program for Hurricane Ian (grant number B-23-UN-12-0003), and the CDBG-DR Program for Hurricane Milton (grant number B-25-UU-12-0005). The proposed projects are located in Orange County, Florida and have the potential to be located in the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS) floodplain and/or wetland. The extent of the FFRMS floodplain was determined using 0.2 percent flood approach.

The Orange County Housing and Community Development Division is conducting a Tier I Broad Level environmental review of proposed single-family rehabilitation and reconstruction project activities. Project activities will include rehabilitation, reconstruction, replacement, and elevation of owner-occupied single-family homes. The proposed project(s) will be located in multiple locations throughout Orange County, with the exact location of site-specific projects determined at a later date. Site-specific project activities will be conducted on previously developed residential properties and no project activities will result in new construction in a wetland. According to the FEMA Flood Map Service Center there are approximately 210,769 acres of 100-year floodplain and 10,038 acres of 500-year floodplain, within Orange County. However, there are no Coastal High Hazard Areas (V Zone), or Limit of Moderate Wave Action (LIMWA) areas within the County. Additionally, Orange County contains approximately 250,511 acres designated as wetlands on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory. Floodplains and wetlands are beneficial for wildlife, creating a variety of habitats for fish and other animals. In addition, floodplains are important to the storage and conveyance of storm water, water quality protection, and recharge of groundwater.

The Orange County Housing and Community Development Division 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 floodplains/wetlands.

Alternative 1 (Selected Alternative): Perform Home Rehabilitation, Reconstruction, and Elevation in the FFRMS floodplain and wetland. No project work will be completed in the floodway, except for the removal of buildings and improvements from the floodway. Alternative 2: All Single-family homes selected for the Program must be outside the FFRMS floodplain and wetland. Alternative 3: Relocating homes outside the FFRMS floodplain and wetland, and Alternative 4: No-Action Alternative. It is the Orange County Housing and Community Development Division's determination that Alternative 1 is the only viable alternative. This is due to: 1) the need to provide relief from the effects of the Hurricanes Ian and Milton; 2) the need to support necessary repairs and rehabilitation to improve residents' health, safety, and well-being, and to enhance the structural integrity and preservation of owner-occupied homes; 3) the desire to avoid displacing residents who prefer to remain at their current location.; and 4) the ability to mitigate and minimize impacts on human health, public property, and floodplain/wetland values, as all rehabilitation and reconstruction work will involve existing homes on developed residential lots.

Homes located in the FFRMS floodplain, that receive assistance for reconstruction, repair of substantial damage, or substantial improvement, will be elevated with the lowest floor, including the basement, at least two (2) feet above the most applicable Base Flood Elevation. All homes assisted through the program within the 100-year floodplain will require the maintenance of floodplain insurance in perpetuity. When replacement of a mobile home unit (MHU) is not feasible at the same location as the original structure, the MHU will be replaced at an alternative location. The alternate location must be a previously developed residential property/parcel, zoned to allow for installation of an MHU and have ready access to sewer, water, and electric connections. Additionally, the alternate site cannot be located in the FFRMS floodplain. Project activities adjacent to wetlands will require implementation of best management practices to prevent impacts to water quality and wetlands ecosystems. Additionally, the project will comply with any state and local floodplain/wetland protection procedures, as required.

The Orange County Housing and Community Development Division has reevaluated alternatives to building in the floodplain/wetland and has determined that it has no practicable alternative to completing rehabilitation and reconstruction projects within the floodplain/wetland. Environmental files documenting compliance with Executive Order 11988, as amended by Executive Order 13690, and/or Executive Order 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 a floodplain and/or wetland 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 the floodplain/wetland 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 a floodplain/wetland, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

Written comments must be received by the Orange County Housing and Community Development Division at the following address on or before April 1, 2025: Orange County Housing and Community Development Division, 525 E. South St, Orlando, FL 32801 and (407) 836-5150, Attention: Byron Brooks, County Administrator. A full description of the project may also be reviewed from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm at the same address as above and www.ocfl.net/CDBG-DR. Comments may also be submitted via email at Inalbert.ramos@ocfl.net.

Date of Posting: **March 24, 2025 – April 1, 2025**