

**FINAL NOTICE AND PUBLIC EXPLANATION
OF A PROPOSED ACTIVITY IN A 100-YEAR/500-YEAR FLOODPLAIN**

To: All interested Agencies, Groups and Individuals

This is to give notice that the City of Columbia has conducted an evaluation as required by Executive Order 11988 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 CDBG Disaster Recovery Program grant B-16-MH-45-0001. The proposed projects are located at unidentified scattered sites in the incorporated city limits of Columbia, located in Richland and Lexington Counties, South Carolina.

The Columbia Homeowner Assistance, Small Rental Repair, Elevation Reimbursement, and Minor Repair Programs will provide financial assistance to eligible property owners of single family (1-4 units) residences damaged by the October 2015 Flood to rehabilitate, elevate, remediate, and repair their homes. All program activities will be completed on existing residential structures within the city limits with no increase in density or change in land use. No adverse effects are anticipated on the natural environment or the related natural and beneficial functions and values of Columbia's approximately 8454 acres of floodplain.

At this time, the exact locations of properties eligible for Columbia's CDBG Disaster Recovery housing programs have not been identified. The City is targeting the most heavily damaged areas with concentrations of low and moderate income households (80% or less than AMI) to prioritize housing rehabilitation assistance for those with the greatest need. Of the 1489 potentially eligible applicants for the Homeowner Assistance (76), Small Rental Repair (193), Elevation Reimbursement (22), and Minor Repair (1198) Programs, 197 are located in the floodplain; of that number 59 appear to be low to moderate income (LMI) households. All applicants for the major and minor rehabilitation programs must meet LMI criteria; applicants for elevation reimbursement are not income qualified.

The City of Columbia has considered the following alternatives and mitigation measures to be taken to minimize adverse impacts and to restore and preserve natural and beneficial values:

Locating the major rehabilitation, minor rehabilitation, and reimbursement of elevation cost activities within the floodplain is the only viable option for the rehabilitation of existing structures on previously developed sites. The no action alternative is also impracticable because it denies assistance to families that suffered the greatest damage from the October 2015 storm, ignores the long-term safety and stability of the community, and increases the potential impact of future storms and floods. There are no alternatives for homes within the floodplain that serve the same purpose.

Any major rehabilitation activities on structures in the floodplain will have minimal environmental impact because all structures must comply with local flood ordinances, be elevated a minimum of two feet above the BFE, retain the existing footprint and land use, and maintain flood insurance protection for the life of the property. All improvements located in the floodway will be subject to National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Floodplain Management requirements (44 CFR 60.3), which will be determined on a site-specific basis. Hydrologists and engineers will be consulted and technical analyses will identify physical measures affecting the hydrologic or hydraulic characteristics of a flooding source that may result in modifications of an existing floodway. Requests for Conditional Letters of Map Revisions (CLMAR) will be made if necessary, and documentation obtained for a no-rise certification, if applicable.

Minor rehabilitation activities on single family residences will occur on existing structures within the disturbed area of the previously developed parcel and will have no direct or indirect impact on floodplain development. No adverse effects are anticipated on the natural environment or the related natural and beneficial functions and values of Columbia's floodplain.

Columbia has adopted comprehensive building standards incorporating flood mitigation measures that promote long-term community resiliency, preserve the lives of residents, and protect the environment. Potential adverse impacts to lives, property and natural values will be minimized by requiring the following provisions for new construction and substantial improvements in all special flood hazard areas (SFHA):

- All improvements shall be anchored to prevent flotation, collapse or lateral movement; constructed with materials and utility equipment resistant to flood damage; and constructed by methods that minimize flood damage.
- Electrical, plumbing, and HVAC equipment shall be designed and/or located to prevent water from entering or accumulating within the components during flooding.
- New and replacement water supply and sanitary sewage systems shall be designed to minimize or eliminate infiltration of floodwaters into the systems or discharges from the systems into floodwaters.
- On-site waste disposal systems shall be located and constructed to avoid impairment to them or contamination from them during flooding.
- Encroachments are prohibited in floodways located in SFHA unless a professional engineer certifies that encroachment will not result in increased flood levels during the base flood discharge.

Where practicable and on a site-specific basis, the City will modify proposed actions to minimize any adverse effects on water resources through the use of permeable surfaces, bioswales, stormwater capture and reuse, flood proofing, and elevating structures, among others. Impacts to the floodplain will also be limited due to construction occurring within the previously developed site.

The City of Columbia has reevaluated the alternatives to building in the floodplain and has determined that it has no practicable alternative. Environmental files that document compliance with steps 3 through 6 of Executive Order 11988, 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 and those who have an interest in protecting 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 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, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

Written comments must be received by the City of Columbia at the following address on or before July 10, 2017: City of Columbia, 1225 Lady Street, Suite 102, Columbia, SC 29201; 803-545-4688 Attention: Gloria Saeed, Director of Community Development. A full description of the project may also be reviewed from 8:30-5 pm at the address above and at <http://dr.columbia.gov>. Comments may also be submitted via email to magorman@columbiasc.net.

Date: June 30, 2017