

**Joint Federal, State, Local
Public Notice**

April 16, 2024

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) gives notice of its intent to provide Building Resilience Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) funding to the City of Hickory, North Carolina, through the North Carolina Department of Public Safety (NCDPS) for the construction of a natural protective berm and floodwall around the Northeast Wastewater Treatment Facility (NEWWTF) influent pump station, as well as the installation of natural and environmentally sensitive stream restoration and bank stabilization measures along approximately 1,400 feet of Falling Creek.

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), federal actions must be reviewed and evaluated for feasible alternatives and for social, economic, historic, environmental, legal, and safety considerations. Under Executive Order (EO) 11988 and EO 11990 FEMA is required to consider alternatives to and to provide public notice of any proposed actions in or affecting floodplains or wetlands. EO 12898 also requires FEMA to provide the opportunity for public participation in the planning process and to consider potential impacts to minority or low-income populations.

Funding for the proposed project will be conditional upon compliance with all applicable federal, tribal, state, and local laws, regulations, floodplain standards, permit requirements and conditions.

Applicant:

City of Hickory

Project Title:

EMA-2020-BR-100-0017, Northeast Wastewater Treatment Facility Hardening and Stream Restoration Project

Location of Proposed Work:

The area affected by this project consists of the follow location:

- 310 Cloninger Mill Road NE, Hickory, NC 28601 at approximately 35.788295 latitude and -81.305582 longitude.

Proposed Work and Purpose:

The key challenges experienced by the City of Hickory include sewer overflows caused by flooded wastewater facilities. This project addresses the risk of sewer overflows by constructing a berm and floodwall around the Northeast Wastewater Treatment Facility (NEWWTF) pump station that will protect the pump station from riverine flooding events equivalent to the 0.2% annual chance of flooding plus 2 (two) feet of freeboard. The berm will tie into the existing hillside and driveway in a manner to prevent floodwaters from reaching the pump station.

Another challenge experienced by the entity is erosion of streambanks within the NEWWTF service area. The project aims to stabilize streambanks and combat erosion through a combination of floodplain benching, bank regrading, bio-engineered structural enhancements, surface stabilization with natural fiber matting for reinforcement, and revegetation with native riparian plant species along approximately 1,400 feet of Falling Creek.

Project Alternatives:

Several alternatives were considered for this project, including the No Action alternative and the Relocation alternative. The No Action alternative was determined to be infeasible because it would not provide protection to the pump station or to the wastewater treatment facility from either flooding or erosion. As noted above, past events have directly impacted these assets and will continue to do so if no mitigation action is taken. Therefore, this alternative was considered unviable.

The other alternative considered was relocation of the existing pump station. Analysts investigated whether the station could be moved, either to a higher elevation or out of the floodplain entirely. However, it was determined that no appropriate location exists that would allow for the protection of the pump station while maintaining service to the WWTF. Additionally, relocating the pump station would not serve to assist in the mitigation of future erosion impacts so evident over the last several years. Therefore, this alternative was also considered unviable.

The mitigation action selected is perceived to be the best for both the NEWWTF and the influent pump station.

Comment Period:

Comments are solicited from the public; local, state, or federal agencies; and other interested parties to consider and evaluate the impacts of the proposed project. The comments should be made in writing and addressed to the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, 4236 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699. These are due within 30 days of this notice. The State will forward comments to the applicable regulatory agencies as needed. Interested persons may submit comments, obtain more detailed information about the proposed action, or request a copy of the findings by contacting:

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