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LAKELAND, FLORIDA 33801
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Early Notice and Public Review of a Proposed Activity in a Floodplain and Wetland

To: All interested Agencies, Groups, and Individuals

This notice is to inform the public and all interested agencies and groups that the City of Lakeland (City), serving as the Responsible Entity under Title 24 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 58, has determined that the proposed action for the Lake Bonnet Drainage Basin Flood Hazard Mitigation Project (Agreement # MT047), funded through the Rebuild Florida Mitigation General Infrastructure Program, is located within floodplain and wetland areas. In accordance with Executive Order 11988, as amended by Executive Order 13690; Executive Order 11990; as well as U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 in Subpart C, "Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management and Protection of Wetlands," the City will be identifying and evaluating practicable alternatives to locating the action within the floodplain and wetlands and will assess potential impacts on the floodplain and wetlands from the proposed action.

The proposed project area encompasses approximately 814 acres within the City of Lakeland, Polk County, Florida. It lies west of Bonnet Springs Boulevard and Bonnet Springs Park, east of US 92 / North Wabash Avenue, and is bounded by SR 546 / West Memorial Boulevard to the north and by SR 600 / George Jenkins Boulevard to the south. Bonnet Springs Park is located at 400 Bonnet Springs Boulevard, Lakeland, Florida 33815.

The proposed project would fund a series of stormwater and flood mitigation improvements, including drainage upgrades, dredging, and wetland restoration, intended to reduce flooding at the May Manor and Sterling Mobile Home Parks. Key components include: constructing a pump station on Lake Bonnet with a gravity pipe to manage stormwater; dredging approximately 2,800 feet of Lake Bonnet Drain to remove sediment and maintain drainage capacity; replacing undersized culverts at Bridge Boulevard and Bird Avenue; enclosing a section of the Sterling Canal with a box culvert; installing a sump pump system to alleviate flooding in low-lying areas of May Manor Mobile Home Park; and conducting large-scale dredging and habitat restoration within Lake Bonnet using phased excavation and a temporary containment facility. Additional improvements include shoreline regrading, wetland replanting, embankment stabilization, replacement of sluice gates for improved water level control, and lowering Lake Bonnet's normal water level by one foot to increase stormwater storage capacity.

A portion of the project site lies within Zone AE (100-year floodplain), including 32.3 acres of the Lake Bonnet Drain area from North Brunnell Parkway downstream to North Wabash Avenue, as well as 6.2 acres of regulatory floodway. The project area contains forested and herbaceous palustrine wetlands, riverine wetlands, and lacustrine wetlands which provide beneficial ecological functions such as floodwater storage, flow conveyance, and habitat for plant and animal species. These natural resources also support recreation, tourism, and environmental education. Potential temporary and direct impacts to wetlands are estimated at approximately 85 acres.

This notice serves three primary purposes. First, individuals who may be affected by activities in the floodplain and wetlands, as well as those interested in the protection of the natural environment, are invited to submit comments. Input is encouraged regarding alternative sites outside of the floodplain and wetlands; alternative methods that could meet the same project purpose; and methods to minimize or mitigate project impacts on the floodplain and wetlands. Second, an adequate public notice program can be an important public educational tool. Providing information and requesting public comment about the floodplain and wetlands can help raise awareness of the risks and impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of these special areas and supports federal efforts to reduce those risks. Third, as a matter of fairness, when the federal government participates in actions taking place in floodplain and wetlands, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk as a result of these actions.

Written comments must be received by the City of Lakeland at the following address on or before March 5, 2026: City of Lakeland, Public Works Lakes & Stormwater, 228 S Massachusetts Avenue, Lakeland, FL 33801, Attention: Ms. Laurie Smith, Project Manager. A full description of the project may also be reviewed from Monday to Friday from 9AM to 5PM at the same address as above and at any time online at:

<https://www.lakelandgov.net/departments/public-works/lakes-stormwater/lake-bonnet-drainage-project/>.

Comments for consideration may also be submitted via email to Laurie.Smith@lakelandgov.net. Ms. Smith may be reached by telephone to (863) 834-6276.

Date: February 18, 2026