

Final Notice and Public Explanation of a Proposed Activity in a Floodplain

Executive Order 11998: Floodplain Management

This is to give notice that the City of Union under Part 58 has conducted an evaluation as required by *Executive Order 11998* in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 Subpart C *Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management and Wetlands Protection*. The City has been awarded \$525,000 in grant funding from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. The proposed project concerns the replacement and rehabilitation of the existing gravity sewer system in portions of three mill villages in Union County, SC. Buffalo Mill in the Town of Buffalo refers to work that will take place in four locations which primarily concern Clifford Drive, Flat Drive, Church Street, Hill Street, South Street, Mill Street, Westville Street. Excelsior Mill in the City of Union refers to work that will take place primarily on College Street. Union Mill in the City of Union refers to work that will take place primarily on North Enterprise Street and West Main Street.

The proposed project will consist of at least two phases. This environmental review is intended to cover activities of all phases and locations. Activities for current and future phases concern abandoning and/or demolishing at least 25 manholes plus associated sewer pipe and the installation of least 6389 LF of new or rehabbed gravity sewer mains and at least 24 new or rehabbed manholes. No acquisition is anticipated.

It is anticipated that all work will occur in existing public rights of way or sewer easements on previously-disturbed land with minimal new ground disturbance. The project area is approximately 50 acres in size. Approximately .20 acres of the project area near Mill Street and South Street in the Buffalo Mill area are in the floodplain (Zone A and Zone D) including 165 LF of sewer line and one manhole. Natural floodplains provide fish and wildlife habitat protection, natural flood and erosion control, surface water quality maintenance, groundwater recharge, and biological productivity. These natural and beneficial values could potentially be adversely affected by the project.

The City of Union considered the following alternatives and mitigation measures to minimize adverse impacts and to restore and preserve natural and beneficial values: (1) The no-action alternative was considered and rejected as it would not address or alleviate any of the identified issues and would allow the safety and environmental concerns to continue. (2) The alternative of implementing the project without impacts to the floodplain via cured-in-place pipe lining and manhole rehabilitation or lining was considered and rejected because the poor condition of the pipes and manholes may not allow for successful implementation throughout the entire project. It may be implemented where feasible. (3) The alternative of implementing the project via pipe bursting or spot repairs was also considered which would have a greater impact on the environment than lining but less than the dig and replace method of construction. These alternatives were rejected because pipe bursting cannot correct sags in the sewers and spot repair is not a long-term solution. (4) The alternative of upgrading the sewer system by completely replacing the existing sewer lines and manholes through the dig and replace method was considered and selected. This alternative will achieve a comprehensive solution to the identified problem in the project area. This alternative was deemed the most logical, feasible, and beneficial alternative to address the identified problems of infrastructure deterioration. Impacts to the floodplain were deemed unavoidable to ensure that all potential risks to community residents were addressed and mitigated. Impacts to the floodplain due to the improvements would be minor and temporary.

The City of Union has reevaluated the alternatives to disturbing the floodplain area and has determined that it has no practicable alternative. Environmental files that document compliance with *Executive Order 11998: Floodplain Management* 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. This activity will have no significant impact on the environment for the following reasons:

- The floodplain is located on property owned by the City. No acquisition is anticipated.

- The project entails temporary impacts to the floodplain. No permanent impacts are anticipated.
- The area will be returned to its original state at the conclusion of the project.
- This area was previously disturbed by the initial installation of the sewer line.

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 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 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 Union at the following address on or before July 18, 2023: City of Union, PO Box 987, 101 Sharpe Avenue, Union, SC 29379 and 864-429-1700, Attention: Mary Jo Sanders. A full description of the project may also be reviewed during the hours of 9 AM – 5 PM, Monday – Friday at the same address. Comments may also be submitted via email at cschwartz@catawbacog.org

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