

**FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
GULF SHORE BOULEVARD
FRANKLIN COUNTY, FLORIDA
PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
PA-04-FL-4068-PW-00591**

BACKGROUND

Between June 23 and June 26, 2012, Tropical Storm Debby produced high winds, wind-driven rain, and severe widespread flooding in Franklin County on the eastern end of Gulf Shore Boulevard in the Lighthouse Point area of Alligator Point, Franklin County, Florida. The tidal surge and large waves severely eroded and washed away Gulf Shore Boulevard. Approximately 785 linear feet of road including the road base, bituminous concrete, and asphalt were washed away as a result of the storm. For this reason, Franklin County constructed an unpaved temporary replacement road just north of the old road to allow access to the privately owned residential property lots located along the former Gulf Shore Boulevard. The temporary replacement access road ran along the front of the residential lots.

In September 2016, Hurricane Hermine washed away the temporary replacement access road. In November 2016, Franklin County installed another temporary access road, which was unpaved and extended south from Bald Point Road to the rear of the seven residential lots. Franklin County conducted a wetland delineation and cultural resources assessment to support the road layout and submitted an Environmental Resource Permit application to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection on October 18, 2016. The temporary road is partially within an easement granted by the State of Florida and partially within the private lots that it accesses. Franklin County received approval for construction of the temporary road from the residents and is currently in the process of acquiring the formal easements through the private lots. Four of the lots have houses on them and three are vacant.

The County applied for Public Assistance funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide a permanent access road to replace the original Gulf Shore Boulevard damaged by the 4068-FL storm event (PA-04-FL-4068-PW-00591). The proposed permanent road would provide a safe method of access to the seven residential lots affected by the damage to Gulf Shore Boulevard.

FEMA prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze the potential environmental impacts of providing a permanent access road to replace the original Gulf Shore Boulevard damaged by the 4068-FL storm event. The EA was prepared in accordance with the implementing requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Public Law 91-190, as amended) and FEMA regulations adopted pursuant thereto (Department of Homeland Security Directive 023-01, Rev 01, and FEMA Directive 108-1).

Based on the alternatives analysis conducted, four alternatives were analyzed: rebuild Gulf Shore Boulevard in its original location (Alternative 1); construct a permanent access road following the existing temporary access road (Alternative 2 – Preferred Alternative); and government acquisition of the seven lots, demolition of the four houses, and removal of the temporary access road (Alternative 3). These alternatives, along with the No Action Alternative (Alternative 4), are analyzed in detail in the EA.

Under Alternative 1, Gulf Shore Boulevard would be rebuilt in its original location. This section of road had been damaged previously, and it is not deemed economically feasible to continue to rebuild the road in that location due to the risk of future damage from storms and hurricanes. If this alternative were selected, construction is estimated to take approximately 12 months and would include construction of a seawall or revetment to protect Gulf Shore Boulevard from further storm damage.

Under Alternative 2 (Preferred Alternative), a permanent access road would be constructed that follows the same path as the current temporary access road, extending south from Bald Point Road. The new access road would run along the rear of the seven lots that require access. If this alternative were selected, construction is estimated to take approximately 6 months.

Under Alternative 3, either the state, federal government, or a combination of entities, would purchase the seven lots along the original alignment of Gulf Shore Boulevard, which would eliminate the need to maintain access to the lots. All residential structures would be demolished and the property would be converted to open space use. The temporary access road would be removed and the area would be left as open space. If this alternative were selected, demolition is estimated to take approximately 18 months.

The No Action Alternative (Alternative 4) is to maintain existing conditions. The existing temporary access road would be retained, and no new road construction or property acquisition or demolition would occur.

FINDINGS

Based on the findings of the EA, Alternatives 1, 2, or 3 would have either no effect or impacts that range from negligible to moderate in magnitude on air quality, noise, geology, soils, wetlands, surface water, floodplains, groundwater, vegetation, wildlife, threatened and endangered species, cultural resources, hazardous materials and wastes, solid waste, utilities, land use, transportation and traffic, occupational health and safety, and socioeconomics. The impacts that each alternative would have on these resources would not be significant. Alternatives 1, 2, or 3 would not have disproportionately high or adverse human health or environmental effects on minority or low-income populations and would not result in disproportionate environmental health or safety risks to children. No significantly adverse cumulative impacts would occur when each alternative is combined with past, present, or reasonably foreseeable actions.

MITIGATION, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION MEASURES, AND REQUIRED PERMITS

Compensatory mitigation is likely to be required only for Alternative 1, which includes construction of a seawall or revetment.

The environmental protection measures that would be implemented and the required permits that would be obtained for the Proposed Action are summarized below; further details are included in the EA.

- Generated fugitive dust would be controlled using standard construction best management practices, including watering of exposed surfaces and enclosing/covering stockpiled material.
- Appropriate best management practices and engineering controls would be implemented during construction to prevent and minimize soil erosion and sedimentation, per the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan that would be prepared and implemented.
- A federal Section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would be obtained (Alternative 1).
- An amended Environmental Resource Permit from the Northwest Florida Water Management District would be obtained.
- A stormwater construction permit from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection would be obtained and an associated Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan would be prepared and implemented.
- Specified measures to protect human remains or intact archaeological deposits that are unexpectedly discovered during ground-disturbing activities would be implemented.
- Handling, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials and wastes during construction activities, including measures to prevent releases, would be conducted in accordance with all applicable environmental compliance regulations.
- Construction activities would not occur during sea turtle nesting season.
- Utilities in the area would be located before construction and the County would coordinate construction activities with utility companies. If planned outages are necessary, utility customers would be given advance notice.
- To minimize occupational health and safety risks, workers would wear and use appropriate personal protective equipment and follow applicable Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards and procedures.
- A health and safety plan would be developed and implemented.
- Work areas would be clearly marked with appropriate signage and secured against unauthorized entry. Standard construction traffic control measures would be used to protect workers, residents, and the travelling public.
- Asbestos and lead-based paint surveys would be conducted before potential demolition of any existing structures on the seven residential lots. Any necessary asbestos or lead-based paint abatement would be conducted before demolition in accordance with applicable plans and regulations.

PUBLIC REVIEW AND INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

A 30-day public review and comment period for the draft EA and the draft Finding of No Significant Impact was announced in a Notice of Availability placed in the *Apalachicola Times* and *Tallahassee Democrat* newspapers on **June 29, 2017**. The draft EA and the draft FONSI were available for public review on the FEMA and Franklin County websites and at the Franklin County Public Library and Franklin County Department of Planning and Building Department, 34 Forbes Street, Suite 1, Apalachicola, Florida. FEMA consulted with federal, state, and local agencies on the Proposed Action. Comments received will be addressed in the EA as appropriate.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis in the EA, FEMA concludes that Alternative 2 (Preferred Alternative) would not have a significant impact on the natural or human environment either by itself or considering cumulative impacts. The NEPA requirements for the Proposed Action have been fulfilled, and an Environmental Impact Statement is not required and will not be prepared. If there is a change in the scope of the Proposed Action, FEMA must be notified to determine whether the change in scope warrants further NEPA analysis.

APPROVAL

_____ Date _____
Stephanie Madson, Ph.D.
Regional Environmental Officer
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_____ Date _____
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