

Draft Environmental Assessment

Public Assistance Grant Project

Alligator Point, Franklin County, Florida

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

APE	area of potential effect
ACM	asbestos-containing materials
BMP	best management practice
CCPRS	CH2M HILL - CDM PA-TAC Recovery Services
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	<i>Code of Federal Regulations</i>
County	Franklin County
dB	decibel
dba	A-weighted decibel
EA	Environmental Assessment
EO	Executive Order
ERP	Environmental Resource Permit
FDEP	Florida Department of Environmental Protection
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
GHG	greenhouse gas
LBP	lead-based paint
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
LED	light-emitting diode
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NOA	Notice of Availability
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PA	Public Assistance
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
Stafford Act	Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

1.0 INTRODUCTION

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 (Appendix A, Figure 1). 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 (Appendix A, Figure 2). 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 seven residential lots (Appendix A, Figure 3). Franklin County conducted a wetland delineation and cultural resources assessment to support the road layout and submitted an Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) application to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) 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.

Franklin County has applied for Public Assistance (PA) funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act), 42 United States Code 5121-5207, 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). In accordance with the Stafford Act and regulations promulgated pursuant thereto and codified in Title 44 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Part 206 (44 CFR 206), FEMA is required to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Action before making an informed decision about the project funding. FEMA has prepared this Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Action. This EA was prepared in accordance with the implementing requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Public Law 91-190, as amended) and regulations adopted pursuant to Department of Homeland Security Directive 023-01, Rev 01, and FEMA Directive 108-1.

2.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to afford Franklin County the means to provide safety and access to community services for residents directly impacted by Tropical Storm Debby and Hurricane Hermine along Gulf Shore Boulevard. A permanent solution that is economically feasible for taxpayers is required. The temporary access from Bald Point Road provides immediate access but is not considered a permanent solution.

The Proposed Action is consistent with Title IV of the Stafford Act, which directs PA disaster relief funds to be allocated to local, county, and state governments to repair or replace infrastructure damaged during a declared disaster.

3.0 ALTERNATIVES

Under NEPA, this EA is required to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Action, No Action Alternative, and reasonable alternatives. Reasonable alternatives are those that meet the underlying purpose of, and need for, the Proposed Action; are feasible from both technical and economic standpoints; and meet reasonable screening criteria (selection standards) that are suitable to a particular action. Screening criteria may include requirements or constraints associated with operational, technical, environmental, budgetary, and time factors. Alternatives that were determined not reasonable were eliminated from detailed analysis in this EA.

During project planning, Franklin County reviewed the potential access points in the vicinity of the seven lots.

3.1 Alternative 1 – Rebuild along the Original Gulf Shore Boulevard

Under Alternative 1, Gulf Shore Boulevard would be rebuilt in its original location (Appendix A, Figure 3). This section of road was 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.

3.2 Alternative 2 – Construct a Permanent Access Road Following the Existing Temporary Road (Preferred Alternative)

Under Alternative 2, a permanent access road would be constructed that follows the same path as the current temporary access road, extending south from Bald Point Road (Appendix A, Figure 3). 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.

3.3 Alternative 3 – Acquire Property and Demolish Structures

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 (Appendix A, Figure 3). 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.

3.4 Alternative 4 – No Action Alternative

Under Alternative 4, the Proposed Action would not be implemented. The existing temporary access road would be retained, and no new road construction or property acquisition or demolition would occur.

3.5 Alternatives Eliminated from Detailed Analysis

During initial project planning in 2014, Franklin County considered other road alignments to provide access to the seven lots from the west or north to the rear of the lots.

Alternative 5 consists of an access road from Bald Point Road starting at the same point where the existing temporary access road starts, with north-south and east-west segments to reach the northern side of the lots. This access road layout was eliminated due to excessive wetland impacts.

Alternative 6 consists of an access road from Bald Point Road starting farther west than the existing temporary access road, with north-south and east-west segments. This layout was eliminated due to excessive wetland impacts and impacts to undisturbed back-dune habitat.

Alternative 7 consists of an east-west access road from Alligator Drive through state-owned land to the northern side of the lots. This alternative was discussed at a meeting held at the FDEP State Lands office in 2014. The state did not support this alignment because the road would run through undisturbed back-dune habitat. In addition, from an engineering standpoint and for safety reasons, it was recommended that a road not be constructed off of the significant curve of Alligator Drive as it approaches the Point.

4.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This section addresses the Affected Environment (existing conditions) and Environmental Consequences (potential impacts) of the Proposed Action. The following terms are used to describe the magnitude of impacts described in this EA:

- No Effect: The action would not cause a detectable change.
- Negligible: The impact would be at the lowest level of detection; the impact would not be significant.
- Minor: The impact would be slight but detectable; the impact would not be significant.
- Moderate: The impact would be readily apparent; the impact would not be significant.
- Major: The impact would be clearly adverse or positive; the impact has the potential to be significant. The significance of adverse and positive impacts is subject to interpretation and should be determined based on the final proposal. In cases of adverse impacts, the impact may be reduced to less than significant by mitigation, design features, and other measures that may be taken.

4.1 Potential Environmental Consequences

The Proposed Action was determined to have no effect on geology; therefore, this resource was eliminated from detailed analysis in this EA. The Proposed Action would have no effect on geology because it would not involve any intrusive activity that would affect subsurface geological formations. Construction would be conducted using standard methods that would not impact geology. The potential environmental consequences, environmental protection measures, and required permits of Alternative 1, Alternative 2, Alternative 3 and the No Action Alternative are summarized in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1. Summary of Environmental Consequences, Environmental Protection Measures, and Required Permits

FEMA Franklin County EA

Resource	Environmental Consequences	Environmental Protection Measures and Required Permits
Air Quality See Section 4.2 for details.	Alternative 1: Negligible Impact – Not Significant Alternative 2: Negligible Impact – Not Significant Alternative 3: Negligible Impact – Not Significant No Action Alternative: Negligible Impact – Not Significant	Generated fugitive dust would be controlled using standard construction best management practices (BMPs), including watering of exposed surfaces and enclosing or covering stockpiled material.
Noise See Section 4.3 for details.	Alternative 1: Minor Impact – Not Significant Alternative 2: Minor Impact – Not Significant Alternative 3: Minor Impact – Not Significant No Action Alternative: No Effect	All construction and demolition activities would be conducted during daylight hours.
Soils See Section 4.4 for details.	Alternative 1: Negligible Impact – Not Significant Alternative 2: Negligible Impact – Not Significant Alternative 3: Negligible Impact – Not Significant No Action Alternative: Minor Impact – Not Significant	Appropriate BMPs and engineering controls would be implemented during construction to prevent and minimize soil erosion and sedimentation, per the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that would be prepared and implemented.

Resource	Environmental Consequences	Environmental Protection Measures and Required Permits
<p>Surface Waters and Wetlands See Section 4.5 for details.</p>	<p><u>Surface Water</u> Alternative 1: Minor Impact – Not Significant Alternative 2: No Effect Alternative 3: No Effect No Action Alternative: No Effect</p> <p><u>Wetlands</u> Alternative 1: No Effect Alternative 2: No Effect Alternative 3: Minor Beneficial Impact – Not Significant No Action Alternative: Minor Impact – Not Significant</p>	<p>Alternative 1: Re-construction of Gulf Shore Boulevard would require a federal Section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and an ERP from the Northwest Florida Water Management District, and potentially compensatory mitigation for the construction of a seawall or revetment to protect the road from future storms.</p> <p>Alternative 2: Construction of the permanent access road would require an amendment to the existing ERP issued for the project to satisfy the state’s permitting requirements pertaining to stormwater alteration and management.</p> <p>Under Alternatives 1, 2, and 3, the County would obtain a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) stormwater construction permit from the FDEP and implement an associated SWPPP for the proposed project. The SWPPP would outline the BMPs and engineering controls to be used to prevent and minimize erosion, sedimentation, and pollution impacts on water resources during construction activities.</p>
<p>Groundwater See Section 4.6 for details.</p>	<p>Alternative 1: Negligible Impact – Not Significant Alternative 2: Negligible Impact – Not Significant Alternative 3: Negligible Impact – Not Significant No Action Alternative: No Effect</p>	<p>Hazardous materials used and hazardous wastes generated during construction would be managed in accordance with applicable environmental compliance regulations to prevent releases to groundwater.</p>
<p>Floodplains See Section 4.7 for details.</p>	<p>Alternative 1: No Effect Alternative 2: Minor Impact – Not Significant Alternative 3: Minor Beneficial Impact – Not Significant No Action Alternative: No Effect</p>	<p>Coordination with the Franklin County Floodplain Administrator, Amy Kelly, is required.</p>

Resource	Environmental Consequences	Environmental Protection Measures and Required Permits
<p>Vegetation See Section 4.8 for details.</p>	<p>Alternative 1: Negligible Impact – Not Significant Alternative 2: No Effect Alternative 3: Minor Beneficial Impact – Not Significant No Action Alternative: No Effect</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>
<p>Wildlife See Section 4.9 for details.</p>	<p>Alternative 1: Negligible Impact – Not Significant Alternative 2: Negligible Impact – Not Significant Alternative 3: Negligible Impact – Not Significant No Action Alternative: No Effect</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>

Resource	Environmental Consequences	Environmental Protection Measures and Required Permits
<p>Threatened and Endangered Species See Section 4.10 for details.</p>	<p>Alternative 1: No Effect Alternative 2: No Effect Alternative 3: Negligible Beneficial Impact – Not Significant No Action Alternative: No Effect</p>	<p>Under Alternative 1 and the demolition of residential structures under Alternative 3, construction activities would not occur during sea turtle nesting season (May 1 through October 31).</p> <p>Under Alternative 2 and the removal of the temporary access road under Alternative 3, the following protection measures would be implemented during sea turtle nesting season (May 1 through October 31):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment staging areas would not be located within or adjacent to suitable sea turtle nesting habitat. • Construction activity, including vehicle operation, equipment use, and foot traffic would not occur within suitable sea turtle nesting habitat. • To prevent potential disorientation of sea turtle hatchlings, the southern portion of the access road would not be artificially illuminated during nighttime. If artificial lighting must be used to secure construction and staging areas at nighttime, light-emitting diode (LED) lights in true red, orange, or amber, as recommended by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission would be used.

Resource	Environmental Consequences	Environmental Protection Measures and Required Permits
<p>Cultural Resources See Section 4.11 for details.</p>	<p>Alternative 1: No Effect Alternative 2: No Effect Alternative 3: No Effect No Action Alternative: No Effect</p>	<p>FEMA would protect human remains or archaeological artifacts that could be unexpectedly discovered during ground-disturbing activities within the project area by including the following statement in the Engineering Plans: Applicant will monitor ground disturbance and, if any potential cultural resources are discovered, will immediately cease construction in that area and notify the State and FEMA. The State Division of Historic Resources contact number is (850) 245-6333, and the FEMA Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation compliance point of contact is Eric Thurston at (404) 536-4114.</p>
<p>Hazardous Materials/Waste and Solid Waste See Section 4.12 for details.</p>	<p>Alternative 1: Negligible Impact – Not Significant Alternative 2: Negligible Impact – Not Significant Alternative 3: Negligible Impact – Not Significant No Action Alternative: No Effect</p>	<p>Handling, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials and wastes during construction activities, including measures to prevent releases, would be conducted in accordance with applicable environmental compliance regulations. Under Alternative 3, asbestos-containing materials (ACM) and lead-based paint (LBP) surveys would be conducted before demolition of the residential structures. Any necessary ACM or LBP abatement would be conducted before demolition in accordance with applicable plans and regulations. Non-hazardous solid waste generated under Alternatives 1, 2, or 3 would be disposed of at an offsite landfill or recycled/reused as appropriate.</p>
<p>Utilities See Section 4.13 for details.</p>	<p>Alternative 1: Negligible Impact – Not Significant Alternative 2: Minor Impact – Not Significant Alternative 3: Negligible Impact – Not Significant No Action Alternative: Minor Impact – Not Significant</p>	<p>Utilities in the area would be located before construction, and Franklin County would coordinate construction activities with utility companies. If planned outages are necessary, utility customers would be given advance notice.</p>

Resource	Environmental Consequences	Environmental Protection Measures and Required Permits
<p>Land Use See Section 4.14 for details.</p>	<p>Alternative 1: No Effect Alternative 2: No Effect Alternative 3: No Effect No Action Alternative: No Effect</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>
<p>Transportation and Traffic See Section 4.15 for details.</p>	<p>Alternative 1: Moderate Impact – Not Significant Alternative 2: Moderate Beneficial Impact – Not Significant Alternative 3: Minor Impact – Not Significant No Action Alternative: Minor Impact – Not Significant</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>
<p>Occupational Health and Safety See Section 4.16 for details.</p>	<p>Alternative 1: Negligible Impact – Not Significant Alternative 2: Negligible Impact – Not Significant Alternative 3: Negligible Impact – Not Significant No Action Alternative: Minor Impact – Not Significant</p>	<p>To minimize occupational health and safety risks, workers would wear and use appropriate personal protective equipment and follow applicable Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 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.</p>
<p>Socioeconomics See Section 4.17 for details.</p>	<p>Alternative 1: Minor Beneficial Impact – Not Significant Alternative 2: Minor Beneficial Impact – Not Significant Alternative 3: Minor Beneficial Impact – Not Significant No Action Alternative: No Effect</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>

Resource	Environmental Consequences	Environmental Protection Measures and Required Permits
<p>Environmental Justice and Protection of Children See Section 4.18 for details.</p>	<p>Alternatives 1, 2, and 3, and the No Action Alternative would have no disproportionately high or adverse human health or environmental effects on minority or low-income populations, and they would have no disproportionate environmental health or safety risks to children.</p>	<p>All work areas would be secured against unauthorized entry to prevent environmental health or safety risks to children.</p>
<p>Cumulative Impacts See Section 5.0 for details.</p>	<p>When added to past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions, Alternatives 1, 2, and 3, and the No Action Alternative are not expected to have significantly adverse cumulative impacts on any resource.</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>

4.2 Air Quality

4.2.1 Existing Environment

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has established National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for the following criteria pollutants: carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, particulate matter, and sulfur dioxide. Areas that meet the air quality standard for the criteria pollutants are designated as being in attainment. Areas that do not meet the air quality standard for one of the criteria pollutants are designated as being in nonattainment for that standard. Franklin County currently is classified as being in attainment for all criteria pollutants stipulated under NAAQS (USEPA, 2017).

Greenhouse gases (GHGs) are emitted by both natural processes and human activities, and their accumulation in the atmosphere regulates temperature. GHGs include water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxides, and other compounds. There are no established thresholds or standards for GHGs. However, according to current guidance from the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), federal agencies should consider how GHG emissions from their proposed actions would impact the climate; the rule of reason should be applied to determine whether a quantitative or qualitative analysis of the GHG emissions is appropriate.

4.2.2 Environmental Consequences

The threshold level for a significant impact to air quality is defined as a violation of an ambient air quality standard or regulatory threshold.

Alternative 1 – Rebuild Gulf Shore Boulevard

Under Alternative 1, rebuilding Gulf Shore Boulevard in its original location would generate short-term construction equipment exhaust emissions and short-term fugitive dust emissions. These air emissions would vary daily, depending on the level and type of work conducted, and would be limited to the estimated 12-month construction period.

Pollutants that would be emitted from the internal combustion engine exhausts of construction vehicles and equipment include certain criteria pollutants, volatile organic compounds, and certain GHGs. Annual construction emissions are expected to be less than the federal *de minimis* thresholds for criteria pollutants and volatile organic compounds. Construction-related GHG emissions are expected to be negligible in terms of overall quantity and within the range expected for construction of this type and size.

Fugitive dust would be generated by construction vehicle and equipment operation on dirt surfaces and by wind action on stockpiled materials. Generated fugitive dust would consist primarily of non-toxic particulate matter and would be controlled at the sites using BMPs, including watering of exposed surfaces and enclosing/covering stockpiled material.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 1 would have a negligible impact on air quality. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 2 – Construct Permanent Access Road

Under Alternative 2, construction of a permanent access road over the existing temporary road would have construction-related impacts on air quality similar to those described for Alternative 1. Paving the temporary access road would eliminate the fugitive dust emissions currently generated by vehicle operation and wind action on the road; any associated beneficial impact on air quality would be negligible.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 2 would have a negligible impact on air quality. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 3 – Acquire Property, Demolish Structures, Remove Temporary Access Road

Under Alternative 3, demolition of the residential structures and removal of the temporary access road would have construction-related impacts on air quality similar to those described for Alternative 1. Removing the temporary access road would eliminate the fugitive dust emissions currently generated by vehicle operation and wind action on the road; any associated beneficial impact on air quality would be negligible.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 3 would have a negligible impact on air quality. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 4 – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the existing temporary access road would be retained, and no new road construction or property acquisition or demolition would occur. Fugitive dust would continue to be generated by vehicle operation and wind action on the temporary access road. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have negligible impact on air quality. The impact would not be significant.

4.3 Noise

4.3.1 Existing Environment

Noise is unwanted sound. Sound levels are measured in decibels (dB). A-weighted sound measurements emphasize the frequency range of human hearing and are expressed in terms of A-weighted decibels (dBA). The effects of noise on humans include annoyance, sleep disturbance, and health impacts. The primary source of ambient noise in the area of the Proposed Action is vehicular traffic. Franklin County does not have a noise ordinance.

4.3.2 Environmental Consequences

The threshold level for a significant noise impact is defined as a permanent increase in noise or prolonged periods of nighttime noise in noise-sensitive areas.

Alternative 1 – Rebuild Gulf Shore Boulevard

Under Alternative 1, rebuilding Gulf Shore Boulevard would temporarily increase ambient noise levels in and around the construction site. The nearest noise-sensitive receptors are the four houses immediately

adjacent to the damaged portion of Gulf Shore Boulevard, and houses along the undamaged portion of the road farther to the west.

Based on data presented in *Noise from Construction Equipment and Operations, Building Equipment, and Home Appliances* (USEPA, 1971), the main phases of outdoor construction typically generate noise levels that range from 78 dBA to 89 dBA, approximately 50 feet from the construction site. Noise levels are estimated to decrease by approximately 6 dBA with every doubling of distance from a noise source. Construction noise may at times be between 78 and 89 dBA outside the four houses located within the construction site, depending on the type of construction activity that is conducted; noise levels inside the houses would be approximately 30 to 40 dBA lower. Construction noise levels would be lower in the residential areas farther to the west. Based on the noise dissipation estimated to occur, noise levels between 66 and 77 dBA may occur outside houses 200 feet from the site, and noise levels between 54 and 65 dBA may occur outside houses 800 feet from the site; noise levels inside the houses would be approximately 30 to 40 dBA lower. Under Alternative 1, construction noise that is audible in the nearest residential areas would be heard only during daytime and only over the duration of the estimated 12-month construction period.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 1 would have minor noise-related effects. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 2 – Construct Permanent Access Road

Under Alternative 2, construction of a permanent access road over the existing temporary road would have construction-related noise impacts similar to those described for Alternative 1. Overall noise impacts under Alternative 2 may be less due to the shorter estimated construction period and the northern part of the access road being farther from the houses. The existing vegetation that surrounds the access road would also be a natural noise buffer and decrease propagation of construction noise.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 2 would have minor noise-related effects. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 3 – Acquire Property, Demolish Structures, Remove Temporary Access Road

Under Alternative 3, demolition of the residential structures and removal of the temporary access road would have construction-related noise impacts similar to those described for Alternative 1. The four houses that would be acquired and demolished would no longer be occupied by residents.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 3 would have minor noise-related effects. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 4 – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the existing temporary access road would be retained, and no new road construction or property acquisition or demolition would occur. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have no noise-related effects.

4.4 Soils

4.4.1 Existing Environment

According to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) soil survey data, soils underlying the project area include Corrolla sand, Dorovan-Pamlico complex, Leon sand, Mandarin fine sand, and Duckston sand (NRCS, 2012). These soil types are described as very deep and as ranging from poorly drained to very poorly drained. The depth to the water table in these soils ranges from 0 to as deep as 42 inches. These map units are not classified as prime farmland by the NRCS. Prime farmland is defined as land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops, and is available for these uses.

4.4.2 Environmental Consequences

The threshold level for a significant impact to soils is defined as (1) a substantial loss of soil, or (2) a rating of 160 or higher on the Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Form (AD-1006 Form), which would indicate further consideration for protection under the Farmland Protection Policy Act.

Alternative 1 – Rebuild Gulf Shore Boulevard

Under Alternative 1, soils within the footprint of the portion of Gulf Shore Boulevard to be rebuilt would be disturbed by excavation and paving. The soils are not prime farmland, and they have already been disturbed by the existing road and by Tropical Storm Debby and Hurricane Hermine. To prevent soil erosion during storms, a seawall or revetment would be constructed along Gulf Shore Boulevard. Appropriate BMPs and engineering controls would be implemented during construction to prevent and minimize potential soil erosion and sedimentation (discussed in Section 4.5).

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 1 would have a negligible impact on soils. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 2 – Construct Permanent Access Road

Under Alternative 2, construction of a permanent access road over the existing temporary road would have construction-related impacts on soils similar to those described for Alternative 1. Alternative 2 would not involve construction of a seawall or revetment.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 2 would have a negligible impact on soils. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 3 – Acquire Property, Demolish Structures, Remove Temporary Access Road

Under Alternative 3, demolition of the residential structures and removal of the temporary access road would have construction-related impacts on soils similar to those described for Alternative 1. Alternative 3 would not involve construction of a seawall or revetment.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 3 would have a negligible impact on soils. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 4 – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the existing temporary access road would be retained, and no new road construction or property acquisition or demolition would occur. If a permanent access road were not constructed, the temporary access road could slowly erode over time, particularly following storm events. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have a minor impact on soils. The impact would not be significant.

4.5 Surface Water and Wetlands

4.5.1 Existing Environment

Executive Order (EO) 11990, *Protection of Wetlands*, requires federal agencies to avoid, to the extent possible, the long- and short-term adverse impacts associated with the destruction or modification of wetlands and to avoid direct or indirect support of new construction in wetlands wherever there is a practicable alternative.

No surface water bodies or Outstanding Florida Waters are within the project area; however, the project area is adjacent to the Gulf of Mexico. Wetlands are located within the project area (Appendix A, Figure 5). Approximately 0.08 acre of freshwater wetland was impacted during construction of the temporary access road. These impacts were permitted through the Florida ERP and federal Nationwide Permit 18, *Minor Discharges*, and mitigated via purchase of a 0.08-acre Freshwater Wet Prairie/Wet Flatwoods credit from the St. Marks Mitigation Bank. In addition to dredging and filling in wetlands and surface waters, Florida's ERP program regulates activities in uplands that generate stormwater runoff or otherwise alter surface water flows.

In Florida, an NPDES stormwater construction permit is required from the FDEP for any proposed project that would disturb 1 acre or more of land. As part of this permit, the project proponent is required to prepare and implement a SWPPP, which outlines the BMPs and engineering controls to be used to prevent and minimize erosion, sedimentation, and pollution during construction.

4.5.2 Environmental Consequences

The threshold level for a significant impact to surface water and wetlands would be a violation of state water quality criteria, a violation of federal or state discharge permits, or an unpermitted dredge or fill within the boundary of a jurisdictional water body or wetland.

Alternative 1 – Rebuild Gulf Shore Boulevard

Under Alternative 1, rebuilding Gulf Shore Boulevard would have no direct impacts on wetlands, but would have a direct impact on waters of the Gulf of Mexico due to the construction of a seawall or revetment. To construct the structure, Franklin County would obtain a federal Clean Water Act Section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and a state ERP from FDEP, as well as provide any required compensatory mitigation. Franklin County would also obtain an NPDES stormwater construction permit from FDEP and implement an associated SWPPP for the project. The SWPPP would outline the BMPs and engineering controls to be used to prevent and minimize erosion, sedimentation, and pollution impacts on water resources during construction activities.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 1 would have a minor impact on surface water and no effect on wetlands. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 2 – Construct Permanent Access Road

Under Alternative 2, construction of a permanent access road where the temporary access road exists would have no direct impact on any surface water body. As discussed previously, wetland impacts incurred by construction of the temporary access road have been permitted and mitigated. The permanent access road would be constructed within the footprint of the temporary road and, therefore, is not expected to result in additional wetland impacts. However, Franklin County would amend the ERP issued for the project to satisfy the state's permitting requirements pertaining to stormwater alteration and management once the final design for the permanent access road is complete. Franklin County would also obtain an NPDES stormwater construction permit and implement an associated SWPPP for the project.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 2 would have no effect on surface water or wetlands. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 3 – Acquire Property, Demolish Structures, Remove Temporary Access Road

Under Alternative 3, demolition of the residential structures and removal of the temporary access road would have no direct impact on any surface water body. This alternative would involve removal of the dirt fill material placed in wetlands within the footprint of the temporary access road and, therefore, would have a minor beneficial impact on wetlands. Franklin County would obtain an NPDES stormwater construction permit and implement an associated SWPPP for the project. Based on the review conducted, Alternative 3 would have no effect on surface water and a minor beneficial impact on wetlands. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 4 – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the existing temporary access road would be retained, and no new road construction or property acquisition or demolition would occur. If a permanent access road were not constructed, the temporary access road could slowly erode over time and cause sedimentation in onsite wetlands. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have no effect on surface water and a minor impact on wetlands. The impact would not be significant.

4.6 Groundwater

4.6.1 Existing Conditions

Groundwater elevations measured during the geotechnical investigation conducted for the temporary access road during January 2014 ranged from 0 to 3.5 feet below land surface (Dewberry/Preble-Rish, 2016). In Franklin County, potable water is obtained from the Floridan aquifer.

4.6.2 Environmental Consequences

The threshold level for a significant impact to groundwater would be a release of contamination into groundwater that exceeds FDEP standards.

Alternative 1 – Rebuild Gulf Shore Boulevard

Under Alternative 1, rebuilding Gulf Shore Boulevard would not involve withdrawals from or discharges to groundwater. Shallow groundwater may be encountered during certain types of construction activities such as excavation. Any dewatering necessary during such construction activities would be conducted using standard methods and would have no effect on groundwater quality or flow. Hazardous materials used and hazardous wastes generated during construction would be managed in accordance with applicable environmental compliance regulations to prevent releases to groundwater.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 1 would have a negligible impact on groundwater. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 2 – Construct Permanent Access Road

Under Alternative 2, construction of a permanent access road over the existing temporary road would have construction-related impacts on groundwater similar to those described for Alternative 1. Therefore, Alternative 2 would have a negligible impact on groundwater. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 3 – Acquire Property, Demolish Structures, Remove Temporary Access Road

Under Alternative 3, demolition of the residential structures and removal of the temporary access road would have construction-related impacts on groundwater similar to those described for Alternative 1. Therefore, Alternative 3 would have a negligible impact on groundwater. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 4 – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the existing temporary access road would be retained, and no new road construction or property acquisition or demolition would occur. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have no effect on groundwater.

4.7 Floodplains

4.7.1 Existing Environment

EO 11988, *Floodplain Management*, amended January 29, 2015, and as implemented in 44 CFR 9, requires federal agencies to “avoid to the extent possible the long- and short-term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains and to avoid direct or indirect support of floodplain development wherever there is a practicable alternative.”

The 100-year floodplain is the area covered by water in the event of a 100-year flood, which is a flood that has a 1 percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in magnitude in any given year. The 500-year floodplain is the area covered by water in the event of a 500-year flood, which is a flood that has a 0.2 percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in magnitude in any given year. The 100- and 500-year floodplains are mapped on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps.

Based on the current FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map that covers the area of the Proposed Action, the entire project area is located within the 100-year coastal floodplain (Appendix A, Figure 4).

4.7.2 Environmental Consequences

The threshold level for a significant impact to floodplains would be an excessive loss of floodplain area with an associated increase in flooding potential.

Alternative 1 – Rebuild Gulf Shore Boulevard

Under Alternative 1, rebuilding Gulf Shore Boulevard would involve the replacement of impervious surface that was recently removed by storms and, therefore, would not result in net loss of floodplain area. The eight-step decision-making process, as described in 44 CFR Part 9, for projects within or that have the potential to impact a floodplain was completed for this alternative (Appendix B). The County would coordinate with the Franklin County Floodplain Administrator point of contact, Amy Kelly, at (850) 653-9783 extension 167.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 1 would have no effect on floodplains.

Alternative 2 – Construct Permanent Access Road

Under Alternative 2, construction of a permanent access road over the temporary access road would displace approximately 0.47 acre of floodplain. This amount of floodplain loss would be minor and is expected to have no effect on overall flooding potential in the general area. The eight-step decision-making process, as described in 44 CFR Part 9, for projects within or that have the potential to impact a floodplain was completed for this alternative (Appendix B). The County would coordinate with the Franklin County Floodplain Administrator point of contact, Amy Kelly, at (850) 653-9783 extension 167.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 2 would have a minor impact on floodplains. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 3 – Acquire Property, Demolish Structures, Remove Temporary Access Road

Under Alternative 3, demolition of the residential structures and removal of the temporary access road would reduce impervious area (residential structures) and semi-impervious area (temporary access road) and, therefore, would have a beneficial impact on floodplains. The eight-step decision-making process, as described in 44 CFR Part 9, for projects within or that have the potential to impact a floodplain was completed for demolition of residential structures and removal of the temporary access road (Appendix B).

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 3 would have a minor beneficial impact on floodplains. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 4 – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the existing temporary access road would be retained, and no new road construction or property acquisition or demolition would occur. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have no effect on floodplains.

4.8 Vegetation

4.8.1 Existing Environment

The temporary access road is located mostly within mixed upland forest that is dominated by longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*), live oak (*Quercus virginiana*), and saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*). The central and southernmost portions of the route also contain stands of slash pine (*Pinus elliottii*) that appear to have been severely impacted by saltwater inundation. The wetlands crossed by the access road are dominated by slash pine, wax myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*), and sawgrass (*Cladium jamaicense*). The damaged portion of Gulf Shore Boulevard consists mostly of exposed sand and sparse beach vegetation.

4.8.2 Environmental Consequences

The threshold level for a significant impact to vegetation is defined by (1) excessive loss or impairment of unique or sensitive vegetative communities or (2) introduction or spread of exotic plant species.

Alternative 1 – Rebuild Gulf Shore Boulevard

Under Alternative 1, rebuilding Gulf Shore Boulevard would impact little to no vegetation because the construction site consists mostly of exposed sand and sparse vegetation. Therefore, Alternative 1 would have a negligible impact on vegetation. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 2 – Construct Permanent Access Road

Under Alternative 2, construction of a permanent access road over the temporary access road would not impact vegetation because the temporary access road consists of dirt fill and contains no vegetation. Therefore, Alternative 2 would have no effect on vegetation.

Alternative 3 – Acquire Property, Demolish Structures, Remove Temporary Access Road

Under Alternative 3, demolition of the residential structures and removal of the temporary access road would allow the areas covered by the structures and access road to revegetate naturally following demolition activities. Therefore, Alternative 3 would have a minor beneficial impact on vegetation. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 4 – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the existing temporary access road would be retained, and no new road construction or property acquisition or demolition would occur. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have no effect on vegetation.

4.9 Wildlife

4.9.1 Existing Environment

The forested upland and freshwater wetland communities that surround the temporary access road may be used by a number of mammal, bird, reptile, and amphibian species known to occur in the

Florida Panhandle. These communities provide moderate quality habitat for wildlife. The overall habitat quality of these communities has been diminished by wildfire suppression, habitat fragmentation, vehicular noise, and human activity. The beach that is adjacent to the damaged portion of Gulf Shore Boulevard may be used by a variety of shorebirds and wading birds and potentially by nesting sea turtles. A number of birds that are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) have potential to occur in the project area.

4.9.2 Environmental Consequences

The threshold level for a significant impact to wildlife is defined by (1) a loss of individuals that negatively affects the regional population of a species or (2) the take of birds in violation of the MBTA.

Alternative 1 – Rebuild Gulf Shore Boulevard

Under Alternative 1, rebuilding Gulf Shore Boulevard would involve replacement of roadway that was recently removed by storms and, therefore, would not result in a net loss of wildlife habitat. Little to no vegetative habitat would be impacted because the site consists mostly of exposed sand and sparse vegetation.

Noise generated during construction may temporarily disturb wildlife; however, any disturbance experienced by wildlife would be limited to the construction period and is expected to be negligible. Impacts to migratory birds would be minimal because little to no habitat would be disturbed. Protection of nesting sea turtles is discussed in Section 4.10.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 1 would have a negligible impact on wildlife. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 2 – Construct Permanent Access Road

Under Alternative 2, construction of a permanent access road over the temporary access road would not impact vegetative habitat because the temporary access road consists of dirt fill and contains no vegetation. Noise generated during construction may temporarily disturb wildlife; however, any disturbance experienced by wildlife would be limited to the construction period and is expected to be negligible. Nesting birds or sea turtles would not likely occur within the construction footprint under Alternative 2.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 2 would have a negligible impact on wildlife. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 3 – Acquire Property, Demolish Structures, Remove Temporary Access Road

Under Alternative 3, demolition of the residential structures and removal of the temporary access road would have impacts on wildlife similar to those described for Alternative 2. Therefore, Alternative 3 would have a negligible impact on wildlife. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 4 – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the existing temporary access road would be retained, and no new road construction or property acquisition or demolition would occur. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have no effect on wildlife.

4.10 Threatened and Endangered Species

4.10.1 Existing Environment

Potential occurrence of threatened and endangered species in and near the area of the Proposed Action was evaluated using the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) Biodiversity Matrix Map Server, which is a screening tool that provides data on rare species occurrences in Florida. Based on the FNAI Map Server, there are no documented occurrences of any federally listed or state-listed threatened or endangered species in or within 1 mile of the project area (FNAI, 2017). Based on the FNAI Map Server, the federally threatened loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*) and the federally endangered green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) are likely to occur within or near the project area.

The beach that is adjacent to the damaged portion of Gulf Shore Boulevard has potential to be used as nesting habitat by loggerhead and green sea turtles. Due to sand deposition from Hurricane Hermine, potential nesting habitat for these sea turtle species currently extends landward of the former road into the areas of the adjacent residential lots. The southern portion of the temporary access road is just beyond the landward extent of suitable sea turtle nesting habitat.

4.10.2 Environmental Consequences

The threshold level for a significant impact to threatened and endangered species is defined by the take of an individual protected under the Endangered Species Act.

Alternative 1 – Rebuild Gulf Shore Boulevard

Under Alternative 1, rebuilding Gulf Shore Boulevard would involve replacement of roadway that was recently removed by storms and, therefore, would not result in a net loss of nesting habitat for loggerhead and green sea turtles. Given that the entire construction area under Alternative 1 is potential sea turtle nesting habitat, construction activities would not occur during sea turtle nesting season, which is May 1 through October 31. Provided that construction occurs outside sea turtle nesting season, Alternative 1 is expected to have no effect on the sea turtles.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 1 would have no effect on threatened or endangered species.

Alternative 2 – Construct Permanent Access Road

The southern portion of the temporary access road is just beyond the landward extent of suitable nesting habitat for loggerhead and green sea turtles. Therefore, construction of a permanent access road over the temporary access road under Alternative 2 would not result in loss of potential nesting habitat for these sea turtle species. To prevent potential impacts to nesting sea turtles, the following protection measures would be implemented during sea turtle nesting season (May 1 through October 31):

- Equipment staging areas would not be located within or adjacent to suitable sea turtle nesting habitat.
- Construction activity, including vehicle operation, equipment use, and foot traffic, would not occur within suitable sea turtle nesting habitat.
- To prevent potential disorientation of sea turtle hatchlings, the southern portion of the access road would not be artificially illuminated during nighttime. If artificial lighting must be used to secure construction and staging areas at nighttime, LED lights in true red, orange, or amber, as recommended by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, would be used.

Provided that these protection measures are implemented, Alternative 2 is expected to have no effect on the sea turtles.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 2 would have no effect on threatened or endangered species.

Alternative 3 – Acquire Property, Demolish Structures, Remove Temporary Access Road

Under Alternative 3, demolition of the residential structures would increase nesting habitat for loggerhead and green sea turtles; the associated beneficial impact on these sea turtle species would be negligible. Demolition of the residential structures would not occur during sea turtle nesting season (May 1 through October 31). The protection measures for nesting sea turtles described for Alternative 2 would be implemented during removal of the temporary access road under Alternative 3.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 3 would have a negligible beneficial impact on threatened or endangered species. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 4 – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the existing temporary access road would be retained, and no new road construction or property acquisition or demolition would occur. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have no effect on threatened or endangered species.

4.11 Cultural Resources

4.11.1 Existing Environment

Cultural resources include historic architectural properties (including buildings, structures, and objects), prehistoric and historic archaeological sites, historic districts, designed landscapes, and

traditional cultural properties. The primary federal authorities that apply to cultural resources are NEPA and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Cultural resources are specifically included under one of the mandates of NEPA: to “preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage....” (42 USC 4331).

The implementing regulation for the NHPA is the Protection of Historic Properties (36 CFR 800), which defines historic properties as any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object that is included in, or eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) (36 CFR. 800.16). Under the NHPA, a property possesses significance if it meets the NRHP criteria listed in 36 CFR 60.4 and retains sufficient integrity to convey that significance. Generally, properties must be at least 50 years old to be eligible for the NRHP, unless they are proven to have exceptional importance. When historic properties are present, federal agencies must assess the effect of the undertaking and consider ways to minimize or mitigate potential adverse effects. No important non-NRHP cultural resources were identified under NEPA; therefore, impacts under NEPA and effects under Section 106 are discussed only for historic properties.

FEMA determined that the area of potential effect (APE) for cultural resources was limited to areas within which construction and ground-disturbing activities would occur when constructing the temporary access road south of Bald Point Road, including the viewshed of the proposed project. The APE included 1,690 linear feet and a 15-foot width for the road and adjacent property within 200 feet of the right-of-way. No potential for indirect effects outside of the viewshed of the proposed project existed.

Before construction of the temporary road, Franklin County contracted Archaeological Consultants, Inc., to conduct a cultural resources assessment in September 2016. The assessment included reviewing existing information on previously identified historic properties and identifying additional resources that may be located within the APE. The 2016 cultural resources assessment included background research, an initial reconnaissance survey of the APE, and 17 systematic subsurface shovel tests (Archaeological Consultants, Inc., 2016).

Background research conducted by Archaeological Consultants, Inc., indicated that no architectural resources have been recorded within or adjacent to the APE. The APE is located within Camp Gordon Johnston (8FR00900), which is the site of a World War II Army Air Force Flexible Gunnery School established in 1942. Camp Gordon Johnston is eligible for listing in the NRHP. As a result of the 2016 survey, “No evidence of the World War II era Camp Gordon Johnston (8FR00900) was discovered along the alignment” (Archaeological Consultants, Inc., 2016). In addition, no architectural resources and no NRHP-eligible archaeological sites were identified within the APE (Archaeological Consultants, Inc., 2016). Based on the background research and 2016 field work, Archaeological Consultants, Inc. concluded that the proposed construction of a temporary access road south of Bald Point Road would result in no adverse effect on historic properties, and no further work was recommended (Archaeological Consultants, Inc., 2016).

A qualified FEMA cultural resources specialist conducted a literature review through the Florida Master Site File in November 2016. The literature review focused on the APE for the temporary access road and included an approximately 1.5-mile buffer around the APE, referred to as the study

area, to ensure that previously conducted cultural resources investigations and previously recorded cultural resources in the vicinity of the proposed project area were reviewed. The literature review indicated that, in addition to the 2016 cultural resources survey conducted by Archaeological Consultants, Inc., six cultural resources investigations have been conducted within the study area for the proposed project. The literature review confirmed that the only NRHP-eligible site within the APE for the Preferred Alternative was the Camp Gordon Johnston (8FR00900) archaeological district. Sixteen archaeological sites were identified outside of the APE for the temporary access road, within the 1.5-mile study area. Most of the previously recorded archaeological sites within the study area have not been evaluated for the NRHP.

No known sacred sites or traditional cultural properties have been identified within the APE or the study area. Four residential structures are adjacent to the original alignment of Gulf Shore Boulevard. All four buildings are less than 50 years old and therefore do not meet the age requirement generally necessary to be eligible for listing in the NRHP. The buildings do not have exceptional importance that would qualify them for the age exception.

4.11.2 Environmental Consequences

NEPA and NHPA Section 106 are parallel processes that are closely related in their findings of consequences for cultural resources. Therefore, this section presents the findings for both regulations. For clarity, this section uses the term “impact” when discussing NEPA and the term “effect” when discussing Section 106. The threshold level for significant impacts to cultural resources under NEPA would be those impacts that adversely affect any historic property that is eligible for or listed in the NRHP under Section 106, or has been identified by a federally recognized Native American tribe as a sacred site.

For all alternatives, if prehistoric or historic artifacts, such as pottery or ceramics, projectile points, dugout canoes, metal implements, historic building materials, or any other physical remains that could be associated with Native American, early European, or American settlement are encountered at any time within the project area, all project activities involving subsurface disturbance in the vicinity of the discovery would cease. Franklin County would contact the FEMA Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation compliance point of contact, Eric Thurston, at (404) 536-4114 and the Florida Department of State, Division of Historic Resources, Compliance Review Section at (850) 245-6333. Project activities would not resume without verbal or written authorization. If unmarked human remains were encountered during permitted activities, all work would stop immediately and the proper authorities would be notified in accordance with Section 872.05, Florida Statutes.

Alternative 1 – Rebuild Gulf Shore Boulevard

Alternative 1 would involve rebuilding Gulf Shore Boulevard in its original location. Alternative 1 would not involve alterations to architectural resources. Construction of the new road would occur within the footprint of the original road, which is previously disturbed. This section of Gulf Shore Boulevard is located within Camp Gordon Johnston (8FR00900), which is eligible for listing in the NRHP. No additional cultural resources have been previously identified along the original alignment of Gulf Shore Boulevard. Given the disturbance from previous work done to the original road,

archaeological resources are not expected to be present at this location. However, this alternative has not been formally evaluated for effects to cultural resources. If Alternative 1 were selected, additional consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), federally recognized tribes, and other interested parties would need to occur to assess the potential effects on cultural resources in compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA.

Based on the background research, Alternative 1 would be expected to have no effect on cultural resources under NEPA.

Alternative 2 – Construct Permanent Access Road

Alternative 2 would involve construction of a permanent access road that follows the same path as the current temporary access road. In a letter to the Florida SHPO dated February 10, 2017, FEMA determined that one previously recorded NRHP-eligible property, Camp Gordon Johnston, encompasses the Alternative 2 APE but that no evidence of this resource was identified within or adjacent to the APE during the 2016 survey. In addition, no architectural resources and no NRHP-eligible archaeological sites were identified within the Alternative 2 APE during 2016 fieldwork. FEMA determined that Alternative 2 would result in no adverse effect to historic properties.

In its letter to the Florida SHPO, FEMA specified the measures required to protect human remains or intact archaeological deposits that are unexpectedly discovered during ground-disturbing activities within the APE. FEMA also consulted with the following Native American Tribes on the proposed activities under Alternative 2 via letters dated February 10, 2017: Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas, Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town, Jena Band of Choctaw Indians, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Poarch Band of Creek Indians, Seminole Tribe of Florida, and Seminole Nation of Oklahoma. No responses have been received from the Native American Tribes consulted. In a letter dated March 23, 2017, the Florida SHPO concurred that the proposed project would have no effect on historic properties under Section 106 of the NHPA. On March 15, 2017, the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma stated that they concur that the Proposed Action would not affect historic resources and the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas and responded that they had no comments on the Proposed Action.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 2 would have no effect on cultural resources under NEPA.

Alternative 3 – Acquire Property, Demolish Structures, Remove Temporary Access Road

Under Alternative 3, the seven lots along the original alignment of Gulf Shore Boulevard would be acquired, and the four houses on those lots would be demolished. The four houses are less than 50 years old and therefore do not meet the age requirement generally necessary to be eligible for listing in the NRHP. The temporary access road is located within Camp Gordon Johnston (8FR00900), which is eligible for listing in the NRHP. No additional historic properties have been previously identified along or directly adjacent to its alignment. In a letter to the Florida SHPO dated February 10, 2017, FEMA determined that work along the temporary access road alignment (the APE for Alternative 2) would result in no adverse effect to historic properties. However, under Alternative 3, demolition activities would occur outside of the APE for the Preferred Alternative, within the lots along the original Gulf Shore Boulevard alignment. This alternative has not been

formally evaluated for effects to cultural resources. If Alternative 3 were selected, additional consultation with the Florida SHPO, federally recognized tribes, and other interested parties would need to occur to assess the potential effects on cultural resources in compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA.

Based on the background research, Alternative 3 would be expected to have no effect on cultural resources under NEPA.

Alternative 4 – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the existing temporary access road would be retained, and no new road construction or property acquisition or demolition would occur. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have no effect on cultural resources under NEPA and would result in a finding of No Historic Properties Affected under Section 106 of the NHPA.

4.12 Hazardous Materials/Waste and Solid Waste

4.12.1 Existing Environment

Hazardous materials have been declared hazardous through various regulations including 40 CFR 302.4 and 355 and 29 CFR 1910.1200. Hazardous waste is any solid, liquid, or contained gas waste that is dangerous or potentially harmful to human health or the environment. No known hazardous materials, waste, or solid waste are within the project area. One of the four houses adjacent to the damaged portion of Gulf Shore Boulevard was built in 1976. LBP was banned in the United States in 1977; therefore, it is possible that the one house contains LBP. Some houses may also have some form of ACM.

4.12.2 Environmental Consequences

The threshold level for a significant impact to hazardous materials and waste would include a release of hazardous materials or waste, or a violation of local, state, or federal regulations pertaining to hazardous materials or waste.

Alternative 1 – Rebuild Gulf Shore Boulevard

Under Alternative 1, rebuilding Gulf Shore Boulevard would involve the use of typical construction-related hazardous materials. Handling, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials and wastes during construction activities, including measures to prevent releases, would be conducted in accordance with applicable environmental compliance regulations. Non-hazardous solid waste generated during construction would be disposed of at an offsite landfill or recycled/reused as appropriate.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 1 would have a negligible impact on hazardous materials/wastes and solid waste. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 2 – Construct Permanent Access Road

Under Alternative 2, construction of a permanent access road over the existing temporary road would have construction-related impacts on hazardous materials/waste and solid waste similar to those

described for Alternative 1. Therefore, Alternative 2 would have a negligible impact on hazardous materials/wastes and solid waste. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 3 – Acquire Property, Demolish Structures, Remove Temporary Access Road

Under Alternative 3, demolition of the residential structures and removal of the temporary access road would have construction-related impacts on hazardous materials/waste and solid waste similar to those described for Alternative 1. ACM and LBP surveys would be conducted before demolition of the structures. Any necessary asbestos or LBP abatement would be conducted before demolition in accordance with applicable plans and regulations.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 3 would have a negligible impact on hazardous materials/wastes and solid waste. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 4 – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the existing temporary access road would be retained, and no new road construction or property acquisition or demolition would occur. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have no effect on hazardous materials/wastes or solid waste.

4.13 Utilities

4.13.1 Existing Environment

Existing utilities in or near the project area include electrical power, natural gas, communication, potable water, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer lines and systems.

4.13.2 Environmental Consequences

The threshold level for a significant impact to utilities would be an exceedance of the existing utility service capacity.

Alternative 1 – Rebuild Gulf Shore Boulevard

Under Alternative 1, rebuilding Gulf Shore Boulevard would not change the number of persons living in the local area and, therefore, would have no effect on energy or potable water consumption or domestic wastewater generation. Under Alternative 1, utility service disruptions could potentially occur during road construction. Planned outages would be avoided to the extent possible; if planned outages are necessary, utility customers would be given advance notice. To avoid accidental outages, utilities in the area would be located before construction, and Franklin County would coordinate construction activities with utility companies.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 1 would have a negligible impact on utilities. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 2 – Construct Permanent Access Road

Under Alternative 2, construction of a permanent access road over the existing temporary road would have construction-related impacts on utilities similar to those described for Alternative 1. Under this alternative, the power line operated by Duke Energy and the water line operated by Alligator Point

Water Resources District would be relocated from the damaged portion of Gulf Shore Boulevard to the permanent access road.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 2 would have a minor impact on utilities. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 3 – Acquire Property, Demolish Structures, Remove Temporary Access Road

Under Alternative 3, demolition of the residential structures and removal of the temporary access road would have impacts on utilities similar to those described for Alternative 1. Therefore, Alternative 3 would have a negligible impact on utilities. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 4 – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the existing temporary access road would be retained, and no new road construction or property acquisition or demolition would occur. Under this alternative, the power line operated by Duke Energy and the water line operated by Alligator Point Water Resources District would be relocated from the damaged portion of Gulf Shore Boulevard to the temporary access road. There would be no change in utility use under this alternative. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have a minor impact on utilities. The impact would not be significant.

4.14 Land Use

4.14.1 Existing Environment

The project area consists of state-owned and privately owned land. The state-owned land is undeveloped vegetated open space. Four of the seven privately owned lots consist of developed area (single-family houses) and undeveloped vegetated open space. The remaining three lots consist of undeveloped vegetated open space.

4.14.2 Environmental Consequences

The threshold level for a significant impact to land use is defined as the disruption or displacement of an existing or planned land use without providing a suitable means to replace or relocate the affected land use. .

Alternative 1 – Rebuild Gulf Shore Boulevard

Under Alternative 1, rebuilding Gulf Shore Boulevard would not change or adversely affect the land use of the site or land uses that border the site. Therefore, Alternative 1 would have no effect on land use.

Alternative 2 – Construct Permanent Access Road

Under Alternative 2, construction of a permanent access road over the temporary access road would not change or adversely affect the land use of the site or land uses that border the site. Therefore, Alternative 2 would have no effect on land use.

Alternative 3 – Acquire Property, Demolish Structures, Remove Temporary Access Road

Under Alternative 3, the acquired residential property and the temporary access road would be converted to open space. The residents would be compensated for their property and the access road would no longer be needed without the residents. Alternative 3 would not change or adversely affect land uses that border the sites. For these reasons, Alternative 3 would have no effect on land use..

Alternative 4 – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the existing temporary access road would be retained, and no new road construction or property acquisition or demolition would occur. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have no effect on land use.

4.15 Transportation and Traffic

4.15.1 Existing Environment

Transportation features in the project area include the unpaved temporary access road, which is approximately 1,690 linear feet, and the damaged portion of Gulf Shore Boulevard, which is approximately 785 linear feet. The northern end of the temporary access road intersects Bald Point Road. Bald Point Road and Gulf Shore Boulevard connect to Alligator Drive west of the project area. Traffic in the area is relatively light and consists primarily of residential and recreational users.

4.15.2 Environmental Consequences

The threshold level for a significant impact to transportation and traffic would be an elimination of a used road without suitable replacement; a permanent increase in traffic volume in a given area; or an increase in road hazards.

Alternative 1 – Rebuild Gulf Shore Boulevard

Under Alternative 1, rebuilding Gulf Shore Boulevard would result in a short-term increase in traffic in the area during construction. The overall associated impact on traffic is expected to be minor because traffic would be intermittent, localized, and temporary (limited to the construction period). Alternative 1 would not add or remove sources of vehicle traffic outside the construction period and, therefore, would have no net effect on traffic levels in the area.

Even with construction of a seawall or revetment, the rebuilt portion of Gulf Shore Boulevard would be susceptible to being re-damaged by future storms due to its location. Therefore, Alternative 1 is expected to have a moderate impact on transportation infrastructure over the long-term.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 1 would have a moderate impact on transportation and traffic. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 2 – Construct Permanent Access Road

Under Alternative 2, construction of a permanent access road over the temporary access road would have impacts on traffic levels similar to those described for Alternative 1. Alternative 2 would provide an access road that would have a relatively low probability of being severely damaged by future storms and, therefore, would have a moderate beneficial impact on transportation infrastructure.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 2 would have a moderate beneficial impact on transportation and traffic. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 3 – Acquire Property, Demolish Structures, Remove Temporary Access Road

Under Alternative 3, demolition of the residential structures and removal of the temporary access road would have construction-related impacts on traffic levels similar to those described for Alternative 1. Under this alternative, the access road would no longer be needed without the residents. The lack of residents would result in a negligible decrease in traffic levels in the immediate area.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 3 would have a minor impact on transportation and traffic. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 4 – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the existing temporary access road would be retained, and no new road construction or property acquisition or demolition would occur. Not paving the temporary access road would increase the potential for the road to be damaged by future storms. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have a minor impact on transportation and traffic.

4.16 Occupational Health and Safety

4.16.1 Existing Environment

Occupational health and safety hazards could include chemical agents (such as asbestos or lead), physical agents (such as noise or vibration), physical hazards (such as slip, trip, and fall hazards, electricity, or machinery), or biological hazards (such as infectious waste, poisonous plants, ticks, or other hazardous biota). Occupational health and safety concerns could affect both workers and non-workers near the project site. Franklin County employees and contractors are responsible for following applicable OSHA regulations and for conducting their work in a manner that does not pose any risk to other workers or the public.

4.16.2 Environmental Consequences

The threshold level for a significant impact to occupational health and safety would be (1) exposure of workers to health and safety hazards without proper protection or (2) creating health and safety hazards that could affect the public.

Alternative 1 – Rebuild Gulf Shore Boulevard

Occupational health and safety hazards under Alternative 1 would include those common to construction, such as loud noise, heavy machinery, debris, electricity, and hazardous materials used

or encountered during work. To minimize occupational health and safety risks, workers would wear and use appropriate personal protective equipment and follow applicable OSHA standards and procedures. A health and safety plan would be developed and implemented for work. 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.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 1 would have a negligible impact on occupational health and safety. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 2 – Construct Permanent Access Road

Occupational health and safety hazards under Alternative 2 would be similar to those for Alternative 1. Therefore, Alternative 2 would have a negligible impact on occupational health and safety. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 3 – Acquire Property, Demolish Structures, Remove Temporary Access Road

Occupational health and safety hazards under Alternative 3 would be similar to those described for Alternative 1. ACM and LBP surveys would be conducted before demolition of the structures. Any necessary asbestos or LBP abatement would be conducted before demolition in accordance with applicable plans and regulations.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 3 would have a negligible impact on occupational health and safety. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 4 – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the existing temporary access road would be retained, and no new road construction or property acquisition or demolition would occur. Not paving the temporary access road would increase the potential for the road to be damaged by future storms. Storm damage to the road could be a general health and safety risk if the road cannot be used by the residents or emergency service personnel. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have a minor impact on general health and safety.

4.17 Socioeconomics

4.17.1 Existing Environment

In 2010, the population of Franklin County was 11,549 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Based on American Community Survey 5-year estimates for 2011 to 2015, the median age in the County is 42.1, the total labor force is 4,780, the median household income is \$40,401, and the per capita income is \$20,868 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015).

4.17.2 Environmental Consequences

The threshold level for a significant impact to socioeconomics would be a substantial change in population, demographics, economic conditions, housing, or public services.

Alternative 1 – Rebuild Gulf Shore Boulevard

Under Alternative 1, rebuilding Gulf Shore Boulevard would not directly change the number of persons living in the local area; however, under this alternative, it is more likely that the undeveloped lots serviced by the rebuilt portion of Gulf Shore Boulevard would be developed. The new development could result in additional full-time residents or vacationers if used as rentals. Therefore, Alternative 1 would have a negligible impact on the demographics, number of persons living in housing, number of children attending schools, and demand for emergency services (medical, police, and fire-fighting) in the area.

Construction work under Alternative 1 would have a minor, short-term, beneficial impact on the local economy. Construction work would have a negligible impact on the total labor force and employment in the region due to the low number of jobs that would be created. Based on the review conducted, Alternative 1 would have a minor beneficial impact on socioeconomics. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 2 – Construct Permanent Access Road

Under Alternative 2, construction of a permanent access road over the temporary access road would have impacts on socioeconomics similar to those described for Alternative 1. Therefore, Alternative 2 would have a minor beneficial impact on socioeconomics. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 3 – Acquire Property, Demolish Structures, Remove Temporary Access Road

Under Alternative 3, demolition of the residential structures and removal of the temporary access road would result in a slight reduction in available housing within the community and would eliminate the need for the County to maintain an access road to the lots; the associated socioeconomic impacts would be negligible. Construction work under Alternative 3 would benefit the local economy as described for Alternative 1

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 3 would have a minor beneficial impact on socioeconomics. The impact would not be significant.

Alternative 4 – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the existing temporary access road would be retained, and no new road construction or property acquisition or demolition would occur. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have no effect on socioeconomics.

4.18 Environmental Justice and Protection of Children

4.18.1 Existing Environment

On February 11, 1994, the President issued EO 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations*. This EO requires federal agencies to address disproportionate environmental and human health impacts from federal actions on minority populations and low-income populations. The President directed all federal agencies to analyze the

environmental effects, including human health, social, and economic effects, on minority and low-income communities.

Guidelines for the protection of children are specified in EO 13045, *Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risk* (*Federal Register*, Volume 62, Number 78, April 23, 1997). This EO requires that federal agencies make it a high priority to identify and assess environmental health and safety risks that may disproportionately affect children and ensure that policies, programs, and standards address disproportionate risks to children that result from environmental health or safety risks.

In 2010, the population of Franklin County was 11,549 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Based on American Community Survey 5-year estimates for 2011 to 2015, children 14 years and younger in the County are 14.1 percent of the population; minorities are 23.1 percent of the population; and persons below the poverty level are 20.3 percent of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015).

4.18.2 Environmental Consequences

The threshold level for a significant impact to environmental justice are disproportionately high or adverse human health or environmental effects on minority or low-income populations. The threshold level for a significant impact to protection of children are disproportionate environmental health or safety risks to children.

Alternative 1 – Rebuild Gulf Shore Boulevard

Alternative 1 would have at most, minor impacts on the resources most relevant for assessing impacts on human populations, which are air quality, noise, groundwater, surface water, and hazardous materials/wastes. The potential impacts that Alternative 1 would have on these resources would not adversely affect human populations. Therefore, Alternative 1 would not have disproportionately high or adverse human health or environmental effects on minority or low-income populations. No activity under Alternative 1 would result in disproportionate environmental health or safety risks to children.

Alternative 2 – Construct Permanent Access Road

The impact analysis for Alternative 2 is the same as the impact analysis for Alternative 1.

Alternative 3 – Acquire Property, Demolish Structures, Remove Temporary Access Road

The impact analysis for Alternative 3 is the same as the impact analysis for Alternative 1.

Alternative 4 – No Action Alternative

The impact analysis for the No Action Alternative is the same as the impact analysis for Alternative 1.

4.19 Implementation and Maintenance Costs

This section analyzes the comparative cost levels for implementation and maintenance under each alternative. Table 4-2 presents a range of anticipated costs associated with the construction and maintenance of each alternative.

Table 4-2. Anticipated Construction and Maintenance Costs of Each Alternative
FEMA Franklin County EA

Alternative	Implementation Costs	Maintenance Costs
Alternative 1	HIGH (Construct new roadway and seawall/revetment.)	MEDIUM (Maintain asphalt road and sea wall/revetment along coastline.)
Alternative 2	MEDIUM (Construct permanent access road over temporary access road.)	LOW (Maintain asphalt access road.)
Alternative 3	HIGH (Acquire seven lots, demolish structures, and remove temporary road.)	NONE (No maintenance would occur.)
Alternative 4	NONE (No changes to existing conditions.)	LOW (Regrade and add gravel to the access road from erosion over time and after storm events.)

Alternative 1 – Rebuild Gulf Shore Boulevard

When compared to other alternatives, Alternative 1 would result in a high cost to implement and a medium cost to maintain. Cost information for this alternative was obtained from Franklin County.

Alternative 2 – Construct Permanent Access Road

When compared to other alternatives, Alternative 2 would result in a medium cost to implement and low cost to maintain. Cost information for this alternative was obtained from the FEMA Project Worksheet.

Alternative 3 – Acquire Property, Demolish Structures, Remove Temporary Access Road

When compared to other alternatives, Alternative 3 would result in a high cost to implement and no cost to maintain. Cost information for this alternative was obtained from the Franklin County tax assessor and from readily available information from real estate websites. If this alternative is selected, fair market value appraisals would be prepared to determine the acquisition cost.

Alternative 4 – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the existing temporary access road would be retained, and no new road construction or property acquisition or demolition would occur. Under this alternative, the temporary road would not be made permanent and could erode during future storms. This alternative would result in no additional costs to construct because the temporary road is already in place; however, maintenance costs to repair erosion would be minor to moderate depending on storm damages.

5.0 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impacts are defined in the CEQ regulations implementing provisions of NEPA (CEQ 1508.7) as “the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the

action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.”

Coastal areas of Franklin County regularly sustain damage from tropical storms and hurricanes. Over the past 12 years, the County has completed or initiated the following repair projects with assistance from the Florida Department of Transportation and FEMA. In 2004, Hurricane Ivan damaged approximately 2,800 linear feet of Alligator Point Road. The damaged road sections were replaced in 2007. In 2005, Alligator Point Road was damaged by Hurricane Dennis, and in 2008 it was damaged by Hurricane Gustav. The County repaired the damaged road sections. Between 2009 and 2011, vulnerable sections of Alligator Point Road were relocated to areas less susceptible to storms, and an enhanced rock revetment was constructed to protect another vulnerable segment of the road. In 2012, more sections of Alligator Road were damaged by Tropical Storm Debby, and in 2016 Hurricane Hermine caused damages to the toe of the rock revetment that had been built between 2009 and 2011. Franklin County is currently working on a project to replace the damaged road and to construct a seawall to protect the rock revetment, this is estimated to occur in the next 1-2 years.

The Florida Park Service is working with various partners to obtain funding to remove asphalt debris that is located along the coast north of the Proposed Action within Bald Point State Park. There is no immediate timeline available for when that removal will occur.

The boardwalk at the sunrise beach access point and the fishing pier in Bald Point State Park were seriously damaged during Hurricane Hermine. In the spring of 2017, the boardwalk and the pier were rebuilt in the same location as the original structures. Construction of the boardwalk was completed in May 2017. In April 2017, pylons at the fishing pier were reset, and wood planking on the pier was replaced.

The Proposed Action would have no effect, a negligible impact, or a beneficial impact on air quality, geology, soils, groundwater, vegetation, wildlife, threatened and endangered species, cultural resources, hazardous materials/waste and solid waste, land use, occupational health and safety, socioeconomics, environmental justice, or protection of children. Therefore, when added to past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions, the Proposed Action is not expected to have significantly adverse cumulative impacts on any of these resources.

Noise

Construction and demolition noise under the Proposed Action would be temporary and intermittent as would construction noise from other current and foreseeable future projects in the area. Therefore, significantly adverse cumulative impacts are not expected from potential concurrent construction noise from the Proposed Action and other planned projects.

Surface Waters and Wetlands

Construction of a seawall or revetment under Alternative 1 would have a minor direct impact on the waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Applicable federal and state permits would be obtained, and any required compensatory mitigation would be provided for the impacts. All unavoidable impacts to

surface waters and wetlands incurred by other current and future projects in the area would also be permitted and offset by compensatory mitigation. Alternative 1, 2, and 3, as well as all other projects in the area that disturb 1 acre or more of land, would obtain an NPDES stormwater construction permit from FDEP and implement an associated SWPPP. For these reasons, significantly adverse cumulative impacts on surface waters or wetlands are not expected when the Proposed Action is combined with other projects in the area.

Floodplains

Under Alternative 2, construction of a permanent access road over the temporary access road would displace a small amount of floodplain (0.47 acre); no associated increase in flooding potential is expected to result from this amount of floodplain loss. Current and foreseeable future projects in the area are not expected to result in major losses of floodplain. For these reasons, significantly adverse cumulative impacts on floodplains are not expected when the Proposed Action is combined with other projects in the area.

Utilities

The Proposed Action is expected to have no effect on overall energy or potable water consumption or domestic wastewater generation in the area. There could potentially be utility service disruptions during construction activities. Planned outages would be avoided to the extent possible; if planned outages are necessary, utility customers would be given advance notice. To avoid accidental outages, utilities in the area would be located prior to construction and Franklin County would coordinate construction activities with utility companies. Potential impacts on utilities from other current and foreseeable future projects in the area would be comparable and mitigated in a similar manner. Under Alternative 2, relocation of the power and water lines from the damaged portion of Gulf Shore Boulevard to the permanent access road would have beneficial cumulative impacts on utility service in the area.

Transportation and Traffic

The Proposed Action is expected to have no long-term effects on traffic in the local area. Construction would temporarily increase traffic. The associated impacts would be minor because traffic would be intermittent, localized, and temporary (limited to the construction period). Any cumulative impacts on traffic levels in the area that may result from other construction activity that occurs concurrently with construction under the Proposed Action would be temporary and not expected to be significantly adverse. Alternative 2 would provide an access road that would have a relatively low probability of being severely damaged by future storms and, therefore, would have a moderate beneficial impact on transportation infrastructure. A number of current and foreseeable future projects in the area specifically involve roadway improvements and, therefore, would have beneficial cumulative impacts on transportation and traffic in the area when combined with Alternative 2.

Conclusion for Cumulative Impacts

Based on the review conducted, when added to past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions, the Proposed Action is not expected to have significantly adverse cumulative impacts on any resource.

6.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

FEMA is the federal agency conducting the NEPA analysis for the permanent access to seven residential lots previously accessible from Gulf Shore Boulevard.

The County has engaged with the public during the site selection process for the permanent access road over the last 2 years. The County has provided the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners and the Alligator Point-Saint Teresa Association project updates during the project. Gulf Shore Boulevard was eroded and washed away during Tropical Storm Debby in 2012. Therefore, the County constructed an unpaved temporary replacement road just north of the old road to allow access to the privately owned residential lots located along the former Gulf Shore Boulevard. In September 2016, Hurricane Hermine washed away the temporary road that ran in front of the residential lots. 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 residential lots. Franklin County received approval from the state and the residents to construct the temporary access road.

The Draft EA and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) are being made available to the public for 30 days. FEMA will publish the Notice of Availability (NOA) for the EA public comment period in the *Apalachicola Times* and *Tallahassee Democrat* newspapers on June 29, 2017; a copy of the NOA is in Appendix C. Hard copies of the Draft EA and Draft FONSI will be available at the Franklin County Library, 311 St. James Avenue, Carrabelle, Florida, and the Franklin County Department of Planning and Building Department, 34 Forbes Street, Suite 1, Apalachicola, Florida. The Draft EA and Draft FONSI will be available on County and FEMA websites.

7.0 AGENCY COORDINATION

The following agencies and organizations were contacted during the preparation of this EA:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Panama City Ecological Services Field Office)
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District
- FDEP - Northwest District
- Board of Trustees of The Improvement Trust Fund
- Franklin County Board of County Commissioners
- Franklin County Floodplain Manager/Administrator
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Florida Park Service
- Carrabelle History Museum
- Bald Point State Park
- Florida State Clearinghouse
- Apalachicola Area Historical Society
- Camp Gordon Johnston WWII Museum
- Alligator Point Taxpayers Association
- Alligator Point Water Resources District

- Florida Division of Historical Resources (SHPO)
- Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas
- Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town
- Jena Band of Choctaw Indians
- Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians
- Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida
- Muscogee (Creek) Nation
- Poarch Band of Creek Indians
- Seminole Tribe of Florida
- Seminole Nation of Oklahoma

The Alligator Point Water Resources District stated in a response to the March 6, 2017 scoping letter that the water line easement along Gulf Shore Boulevard was now under water as a result of the recent storms and that the water main could not be rebuilt in that area. The Water Resources District recommended that the temporary access road would provide them with legal access to provide water to the seven lots.

The Florida State Clearinghouse provided comments to the March 6, 2017, scoping letter on April 24, 2017. The comments are summarized as follows:

- The state had no objections to Alternative 2 (Preferred Alternative) and determined it was consistent with the Florida Coastal Management Program. Final concurrence will be given during the environmental permitting process.
- The Florida Park Service, Division of Recreation and Parks noted the amount of beach debris that remains from previous roads extending north up the coastline within Bald Point State Park. The Park Manager is working with various partners to find funding to remove the debris. This is beyond the project limits of the Proposed Action covered by this EA, but this effort has been noted in Section 5.0, Cumulative Impacts.
- The Florida Park Service, Division of Recreation and Parks noted that stormwater runoff is a concern. Section 4.5, Surface Water and Wetlands, includes evaluation and protection measures for stormwater runoff.
- The Florida Park Service, Division of Recreation and Parks noted that fill from the previous temporary road material that was north of the original Gulf Shore Boulevard is still in place. Franklin County has removed the road base material that was used for temporary access north of the original Gulf Shore Boulevard and has stopped using that access along the beach. Old asphalt that was impacted during Hurricane Hermine and was exposed has been removed from the project area. Franklin County has communicated with the FDEP representative, Jim Martinello, about the removal of the required material and halting access along the beach.

Consultations with the SHPO and Native American Tribes are discussed in Section 4.11.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the review conducted in this EA, FEMA concludes that Alternative 2 would not have a significant impact on the natural or human environment either by itself or considering cumulative impacts. The environmental protection measures that would be implemented and the required permits that would be obtained for the Proposed Action are identified in this EA. The NEPA requirements for the Proposed Action have been fulfilled. An Environmental Impact Statement is not required and will not be prepared.

9.0 LIST OF PREPARERS

Name	Organization	Primary Responsibility
Stephanie Madson	FEMA	Project Manager
Andrea Naccarato	CCPRS	Project Manager/Quality Control
Tunch Orsoy	CCPRS	Senior Technical Lead
Laura Haught	CCPRS	Technical Lead
MaryNell Nolan-Wheatley	CCPRS	Cultural Resources/Support
Lori Price	CCPRS	Senior Reviewer/Cultural Resources
Eric Thurston	FEMA	Section 106 Coordination

10.0 REFERENCES

- Archaeological Consultants, Inc. 2016. *Cultural Resource Assessment Survey Gulf Shore Boulevard Relocation*, Franklin County, Florida. October.
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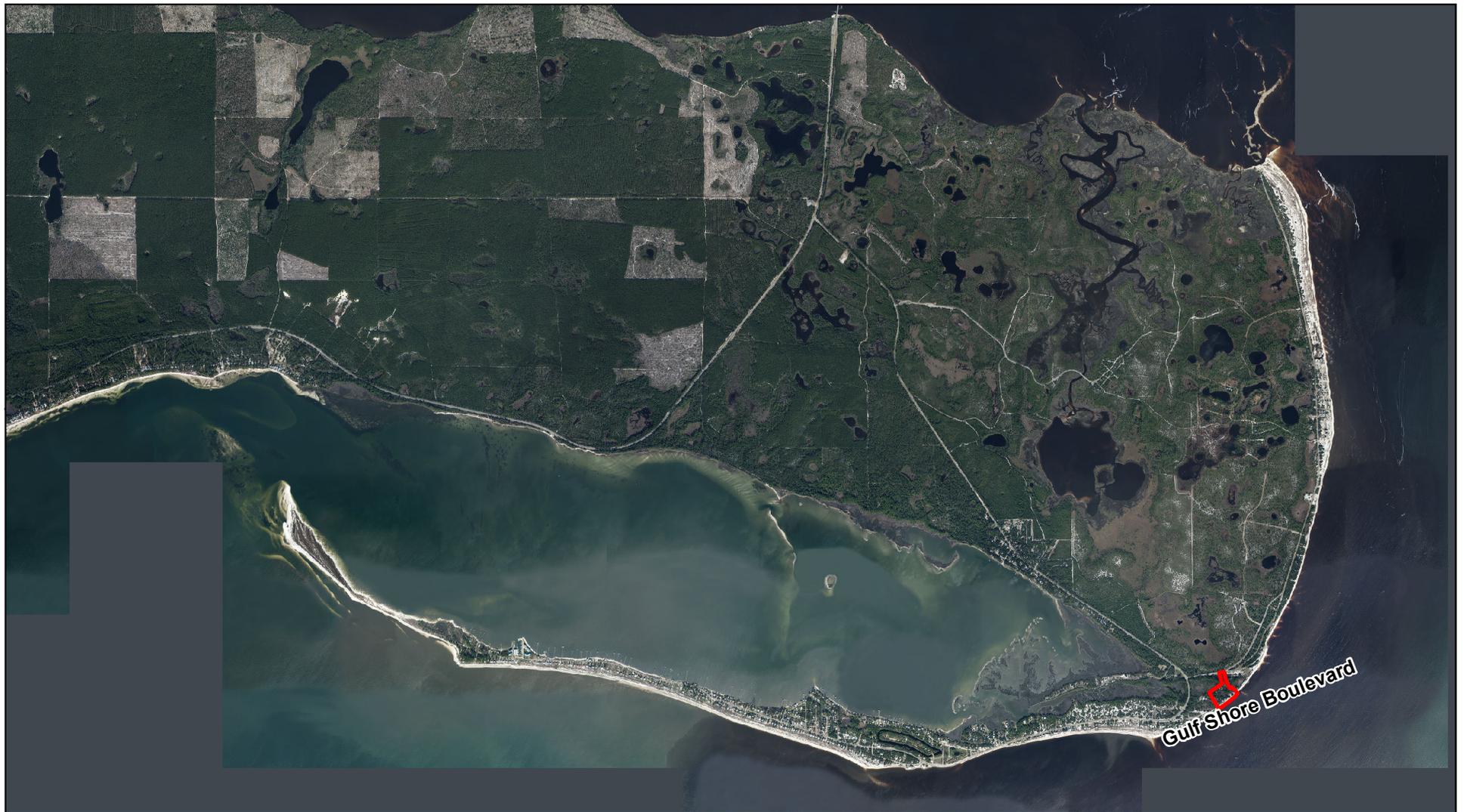
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Appendix A

Figures



Quad Name: Lighthouse Point

ArcGIS Publish Date 2015

Legend

 Approximate Project Area Location

Data Source:

1. Franklin County, 2016
2. FDOT Imagery, 2016

Notes:

1. Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, INCREMENT P, NRCan, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri Korea, Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, NGCC, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

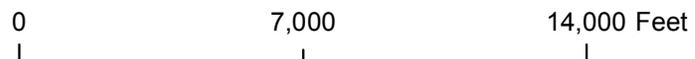
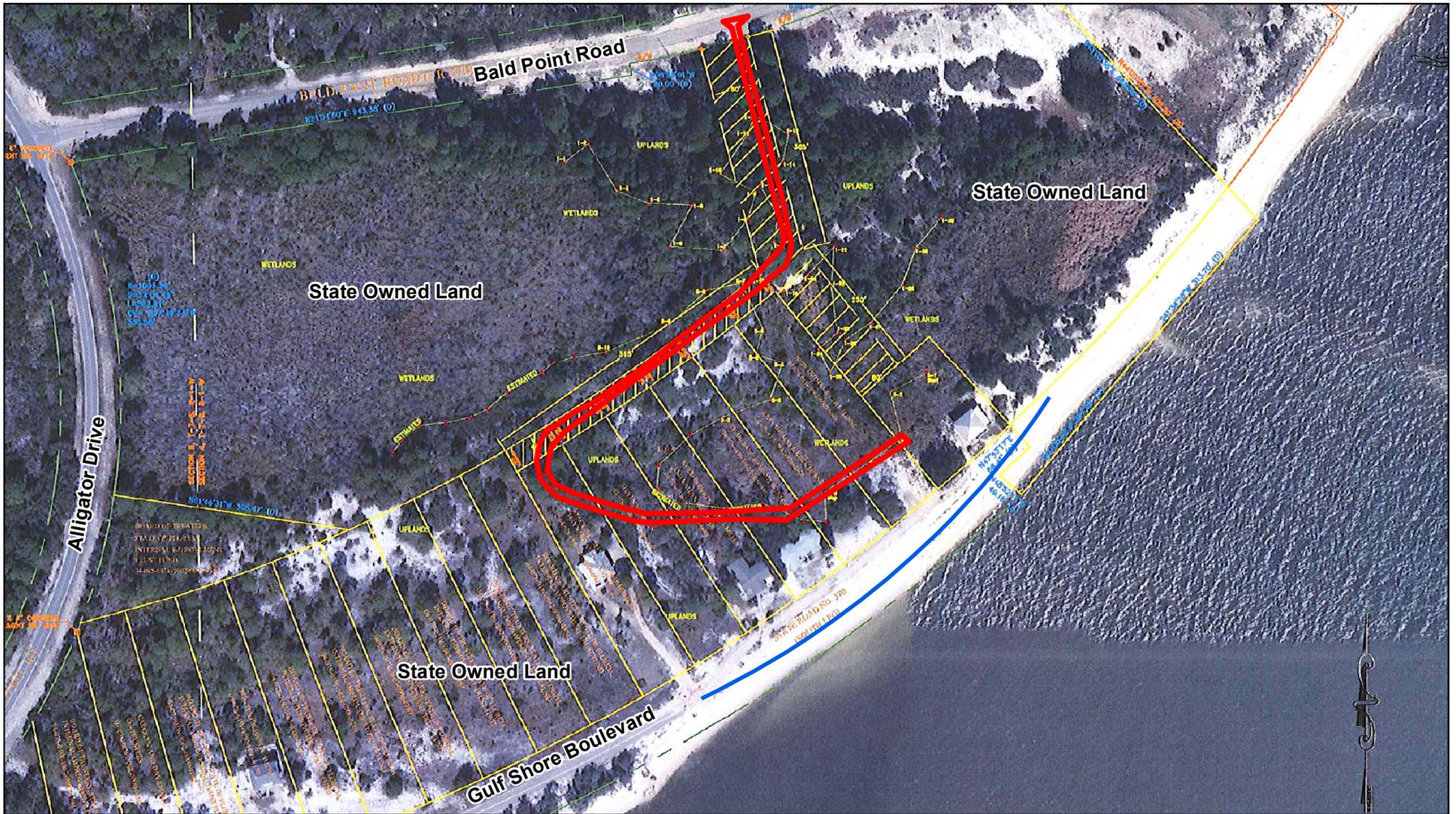


FIGURE 1
Approximate Project Area Location
FEMA 4068-FL EA



Legend

- Approximate Layout of Rebuild of Gulf Shore Boulevard (Alternative 1)
- Existing Temporary Access Road

Data Source:

1. Franklin County, 2016
2. Garlick Environmental Associates, Inc., 2014.

Notes:

1. Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, INCREMENT P, NRCan, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri Korea, Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, NGCC, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community
 Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

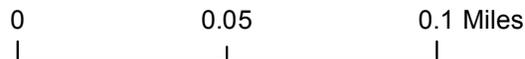


FIGURE 2
Approximate Project Location
 FEMA 4068-FL EA



Legend

-  Structures to be Demolished (Alternative 3)
-  Lots for Purchase (Alternative 3)
-  Parcels
-  Cultural Resources Area of Potential Effects (Preferred Alternative)
-  Existing Temporary Access Road and Layout for Permanent Access Road (Alternative 2)
-  Approximate Layout of Rebuild of Gulf Shore Boulevard (Alternative 1)

Data Source:

1. Franklin County, 2016
2. Garlick Environmental Associates, Inc., 2014.
3. FDOT Imagery, 2016

Notes:

1. Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, INCREMENT P, NRCan, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri Korea, Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, NGCC, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



FIGURE 3
Proposed Alternative Layouts
FEMA 4068-FL EA



Legend

- Approximate Project Area
- Wetlands and Marine
- Delineated Wetlands

Data Source:

1. Franklin County, 2016
2. National Wetland Inventory, October 2015
3. FDOT Imagery, 2016

Notes:

1. Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, INCREMENT P, NRCan, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri Korea, Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, NGCC, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

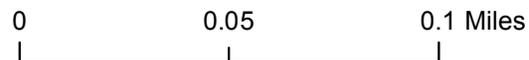


FIGURE 4
Wetlands and Surface Waters
FEMA 4068-FL EA



Legend

- Approximate Project Area
- Zone VE (Coastal 100 year Floodplain High Risk Areas)
- Zone AE (100 year Floodplain High Risk Areas)

Data Source:

1. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), February 2015.
2. FDOT Imagery, 2016

Notes:

1. Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, INCREMENT P, NRCan, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri Korea, Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, NGCC, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

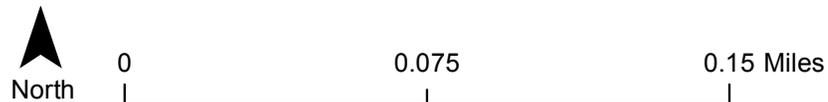


FIGURE 5
FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map
FEMA 4068-FL EA

Appendix B
Floodplain Management Checklist

EXECUTIVE ORDER 11988

FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT – CHECKLIST (44 CFR Part 9)

TITLE: Provide safety and access to community services for residents directly impacted by Tropical Storm Debby and Hurricane Hermine along Gulf Shore Boulevard.

An Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Action and its alternatives and to make this information available to the public as part of the federal decision-making process. Details of the alternatives are in the EA.

PROPOSED ACTION: Provide safety and access to community services for residents directly impacted by Tropical Storm Debby and Hurricane Hermine along Gulf Shore Boulevard in Franklin County, Florida. Three alternatives for replacement were considered. Alternative 1 consists of rebuilding Gulf Shore Boulevard. Alternative 2 (Preferred Alternative) consists of constructing a permanent access road from Bald Point Drive. Alternative 3 consists of purchasing the seven lots, demolishing the four houses, and removing the temporary access road. Alternative 4 is the No Action Alternative.

APPLICABILITY: Actions which have the potential to affect floodplains or their occupants, or which are subject to potential harm by location in floodplains.

YES **NO**

The proposed action could potentially adversely affect the floodplain.

Remarks: **Alternatives 1 and 2 would include road construction in the 100-year floodplain in a high-risk coastal area. Alternative 3 would remove structures from the floodplain.**

YES **NO**

The proposed action could potentially be adversely affected by the floodplain.

Remarks: **The County would look for mitigation measures to reduce future flooding risk and damage to the permanent access road (Alternative 2).**

IF ANSWER IS NO, REVIEW IS COMPLETED; OTHERWISE, CONTINUE WITH REVIEW.

Mark the review steps required per applicability: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

CRITICAL ACTION:

YES **Review against 500-year floodplain**

NO **Review against 100-year floodplain**

STEP NO. 1 Determine whether the proposed action is located in the 100-year floodplain (500-year floodplain for critical actions);

Flood Hazard data available (check the box that applies)

- YES** **NO** The project is located in a 100 Year floodplain as mapped by **Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) Panel No: 315, Dated: February 5, 2014 Lat: 29 54' 7.57" Long: 84° 20' 43.42"**
- YES** **NO** The project is located in a 500 Year floodplain as mapped by FIRM Panel No. , Dated .
- YES** **NO** The project is located in a floodplain as mapped by a FEMA draft/preliminary study. Name Dated .
- YES** **NO** The project is located in a floodplain as mapped by the local community. Name Dated .
- YES** **NO** The project is located in a floodplain as mapped by another Agency (State, Corps, USGS, NRCS, and etc.) Agency, Name Dated .

Flood Hazard data not available

- YES** **NO** The proposed action is subject to flooding based on evaluation from soil surveys, aerial photos, site visits and other available data. Evaluation material used in determination:
- YES** **NO** FEMA assumes the proposed action is subject to flooding based on previous flooding of the facility/structure.

IF ANY OF THE ANSWERS ARE YES, CONTINUE WITH THE FOLLOWING STEPS; OTHERWISE, REVIEW IS COMPLETE.

STEP NO. 2 Notify the public at the earliest possible time of the intent to carry out an action in a floodplain and involve the affected and interested public in the decision-making process.

- Notice was provided as part of a disaster cumulative notice.

Date of Public Notice: June 29, 2017

- Project-specific Notice was provided by: Please see Appendix C of the EA.
Type of Public Notice:
 - Newspaper (name: **Apalachicola Times and Tallahassee Democrat**)
 - Post Site (location:)
 - Broadcast (station:)
 - Direct Mailing (area:)
 - Public Meetings (dates:)
 - Other: **Discussed with property owners and discussed in public meetings with the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners and the Alligator Point-Saint Teresa Association.**

STEP NO. 3 Identify and evaluate practicable alternatives to locating the proposed action in a floodplain (including alternatives sites, actions and the "no action" option). If a practicable alternative exists outside the floodplain, FEMA must locate the action at the alternative site.

Alternative Options

- YES** **NO** Is there a practicable alternative site location outside of the 100-year floodplain?
Alternatives to providing an access road are not available because the residences are within the 100-year floodplain. One non-build alternative (Alternative 3) is to purchase the lots and demolish the structures.
- YES** **NO** For Critical Actions, is there a practicable alternative site location outside of the 500-year floodplain?
Site location:
- YES** **NO** Is there a practicable alternative action outside of the 100-year floodplain that will not affect the floodplain?
- YES** **NO** Is the NO Action alternative the most practicable alternative?
The No Action Alternative does not meet the purpose and need of providing permanent access to the houses.

IF ANY ANSWER IS YES, THEN FEMA SHALL TAKE THAT ACTION AND THE REVIEW IS CONCLUDED.

STEP NO. 4 Identify the potential direct and indirect impacts associated with the occupancy or modification of floodplains and the potential direct and indirect support of floodplain development that could result from the proposed action. 44 CFR Part 9.10

- YES** **NO** Is the Proposed Action based on incomplete information?
- YES** **NO** Is the proposed action in compliance with the NFIP?
- YES** **NO** Does the proposed action increase the risk of flood loss?
- YES** **NO** Will the proposed action result in an increased base discharge or increase the flood hazard potential to other properties or structures?
- YES** **NO** Does the proposed action minimize the impact of floods on human health, safety and welfare?
- YES** **NO** Will the proposed action induce future growth and development, which will potentially adversely affect the floodplain?
- YES** **NO** Does the proposed action involve dredging and/or filling of a floodplain?
- YES** **NO** Will the proposed action result in the discharge of pollutants into the floodplain?
- YES** **NO** Does the proposed action avoid long and short-term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains?

YES **NO**

Will the proposed action result in any indirect impacts that will affect the natural values and functions of floodplains?

Yes, if the vacant lots are developed or additional roads paved or other impervious areas created as a result of the Preferred Alternative.

NOTE: If wetlands are near or potentially affected, refer review to the Environmental Section.

YES **NO**

Will the proposed action forego an opportunity to restore the natural and beneficial values served by floodplains?

YES **NO**

Does the proposed action restore and/or preserve the natural and beneficial values served by floodplains?

YES **NO**

Will the proposed action result in an increase to the useful life of a structure or facility?

STEP NO. 5

Minimize the potential adverse impacts and support to or within floodplains to be identified under Step 4, restore and preserve the natural and beneficial values served by floodplains.

YES **NO**

Were flood hazard reduction techniques (see technical bulletins) applied to the proposed action to minimize the flood impacts if site location is in the 100-Year floodplain?

If No, Identify Flood Hazard Reduction Techniques required as a condition of the grant:

YES **NO**

Were avoidance and minimization measures applied to the proposed action to minimize the short and long term impacts on the 100-Year floodplain?

If no, identify measures required as a condition of the grant:

YES **NO**

Were measures implemented to restore and preserve the natural and beneficial values of the floodplain.

If no, identify measures required as a condition of the grant:

STEP NO. 6

Reevaluate the proposed action to determine first, if it is still practicable in light of its exposure to flood hazards, the extent to which it will aggravate the hazards to others, and its potential to disrupt floodplain values and second, if alternatives preliminarily rejected at Step 3 are practicable in light of the information gained in Steps 4 and 5. FEMA shall not act in a floodplain unless it is the only practicable location.

YES **NO**

The action is still practicable at a floodplain site in light of the exposure to flood risk and ensuing disruption of natural values;

YES **NO**

The floodplain site is the only practicable alternative.

YES **NO**

There is no potential for limiting the action to increase the practicability of previously rejected non-floodplain sites and alternative actions.

YES **NO**

Minimization of harm to or within the floodplain can be achieved using all practicable means.

YES **NO** The action in a floodplain clearly outweighs the requirement of EO 11988.

STEP NO. 7 Prepare and provide the public with a finding and public explanation of any final decision that the floodplain is the only practicable alternative.

Final Notice was provided as part of the floodplain notice. See EO 11988 checklist.

Notice will be provided as part of a disaster cumulative notice.

Project Specific Notice was provided by:

Type of Public Notice:

Newspaper, (name: **Apalachicola Times and Tallahassee Democrat**)

Post Site, (location:)

Broadcast, (station:)

Direct Mailing, (area:)

Public Meeting, (dates:)

Other:

Date of Public Notice: June 29, 2017

After providing the final notice, FEMA shall, without good cause shown, wait at least 30 days before carrying out the proposed action.

STEP NO. 8 Review the implementation and post-implementation phases of the proposed action to ensure that the requirements stated in Section 9.11 are fully implemented. Oversight responsibility shall be integrated into existing processes.

YES **NO** Was Grant conditioned on review of implementation and post-implementation phases to insure compliance of EO 11988? Coordination with the Franklin County Floodplain Administrator will be completed.

Appendix C
Public Notice

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Assessment and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact for the Proposed Replacement of Gulf Shore Boulevard in Franklin County, Florida (PA-04-FL-4068-PW-00591)

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) hereby notifies interested parties of the proposed replacement of Gulf Shore Boulevard in Franklin County, Florida. FEMA is considering providing funds to Franklin County for eligible costs to provide permanent access to the seven residential lots affected by Tropical Storm Debby and Hurricane Hermine. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), FEMA has prepared a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) and draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Proposed Action. The draft EA describes the Proposed Action and alternatives considered, analyzes the potential environmental impacts of alternatives, and identifies the environmental protection measures that would be implemented and required permits that would be obtained. Three alternatives were considered in the EA: Alternative 1: Rebuild along the original Gulf Shore Boulevard, Alternative 2: Construct a permanent access road following the existing temporary road (Preferred Alternative), and Alternative 3: Acquire Property and Demolish Structures. FEMA has determined that the Preferred Alternative would not have a significant impact on the natural or human environment either by itself or considering cumulative impacts. FEMA requests comments from the public so that issues and concerns of local residents are considered and addressed before implementing the Proposed Action. Hard copies of the draft EA and draft FONSI are available for review at the following locations:

Franklin County Public Library
Carrabelle Branch
311 St. James Avenue
Carrabelle, FL 32322
(850) 697-2366

Franklin County Planning and Building Department
34 Forbes Street, Suite 1
Apalachicola, FL 32320
850-653-9783

The draft EA and draft FONSI are also available on the FEMA and Franklin County websites:

FEMA website: <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/132540>

County website: <http://www.franklincountyflorida.com/category/county-news/>

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Assessment and Draft
Finding of No Significant Impact for the
Proposed Replacement of Gulf Shore Boulevard in
Franklin County, Florida (PA-04-FL-4068-PW-00591)

You may provide your comments on the documents by mailing or emailing them to the following address:

Dr. Stephanie Madson, Regional Environmental Officer
DHS/Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region 4
3003 Chamblee-Tucker Road, Hollins Building
Atlanta, GA 30341
Email: FEMA-R4ehp@fema.dhs.gov

Comments must be received by **July 28, 2017**. If no substantive comments are received following agency and public review, the draft EA will be considered the final EA and no additional information or modifications will be incorporated. We look forward to your input.