

**COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANAS ISLANDS
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION**

PUBLIC NOTICE

This Notice is paid by NMHC with HUD funds

05/12/2021

Early Notice and Public Review of a Proposed Activity in a 100-Year Floodplain

This is to give notice that the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC), as the Responsible Entity under Part 58, has conducted an evaluation as required by Executive Order 11988, in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 Subpart C -Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management and Wetlands Protection, to determine the potential effect that its activity in the floodplain will have on the human environment for the Road Improvement Project on Route 33, Beach Road, Saipan. The activity is funded through theThe Community Development Block Grant –Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program grant number B-19-DV-69-0001 & B-19-DV-69-0002.

The public may view the information and provide comments regarding the proposed activity by visiting the NMHC website at www.nmhc.gov.net by clicking on the public notice/announcement tab and selecting the Environmental Review Records or you may visit the NMHC CDBG-DR website at <https://www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com>.

Written comments shall be submitted on or before May 27, 2021, no later than 4:00 p.m. Comments may be submitted from the following submission methods: email at nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp; or facsimile to (670)234-9021; or hand deliver to the NMHC Central Office located in Garapan, Saipan. Attention: CDBG-DR Project Team.

/s/

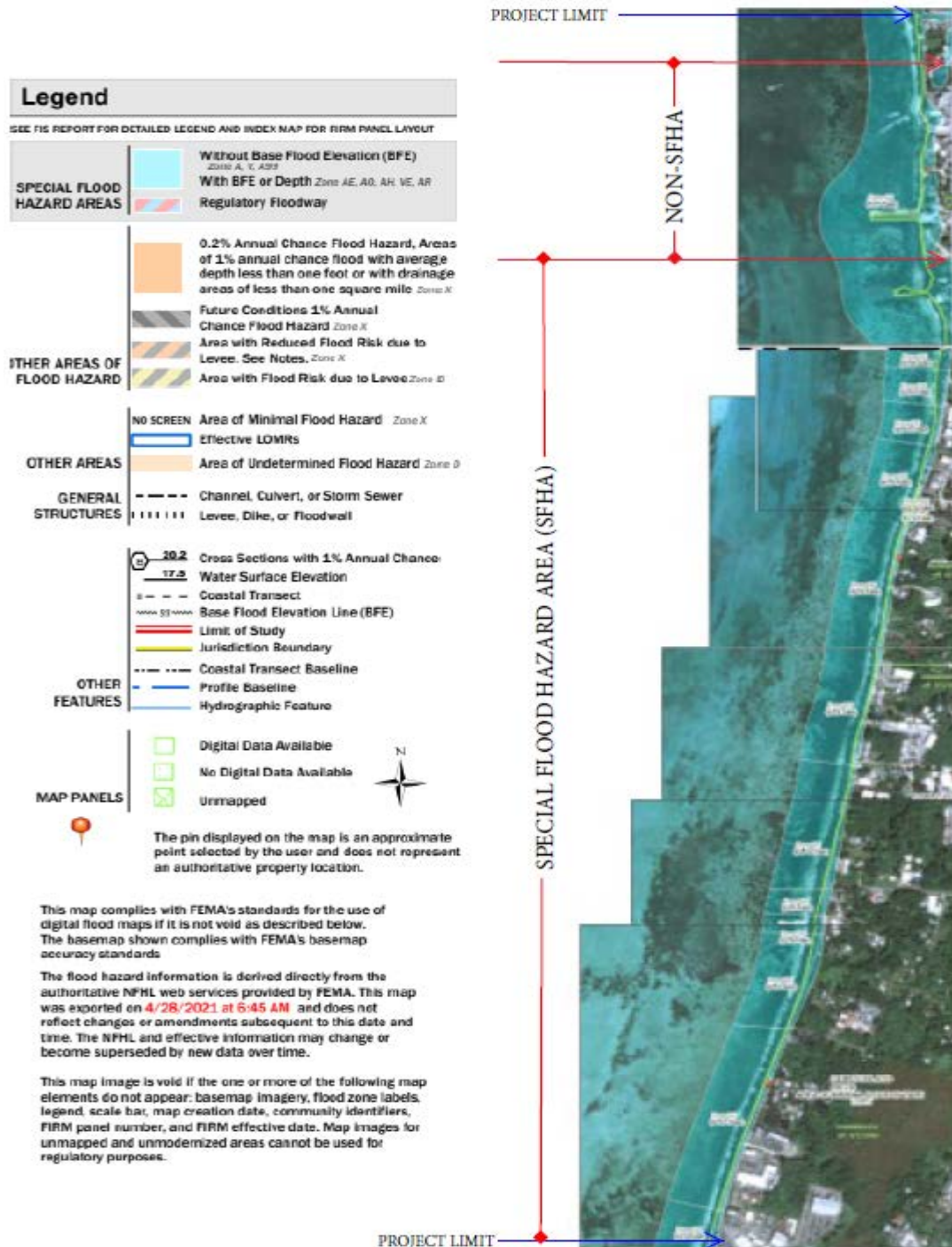
Ralph DLG. Torres
Governor, CNMI

NMHC/CDBG-DR 8-Step decision Making Process for Projects in the Floodplain

Project Name: Beach Road Improvement

1. Determine whether the action is located in a 100-year floodplain (or a 500-year floodplain for critical actions).

This is not a critical facility/structure. Section of the proposed project is in a 100-year flood zone (Special Flood Hazard Area – SFHA). The flood zone designation is VE (Coastal areas associated with storm waves) with a Base Flood Elevation (BFE) of 10 ft. See map below.



2. Notify the public for early review of the proposal and involve the affected and interested public in the decision-making process.

DPW has submitted its proposal to DCRM for review. As part of the review process, DCRM will notify the public and conduct a public hearing for all to voice their concern(s). Additionally, and in compliance with funding requirements, DPW/NMHC will avail the public for comments. As such, the public will have two opportunities to voice their concerns.

3. Identify and evaluate practicable alternatives. Identify the project site selection criteria and consider several alternative sites and actions:

This is an improvement to an existing road and there are no National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), Federal or local floodproofing requirements necessary. However, one alternative is to elevate the road above the base flood elevation and request for FEMA Letter of Map Revision, based on Fill (LOMR-F). A second alternative is to employ wet flood proofing by constructing a raised wall on the west side of the road. This will minimize sea water flooding unto the road but rain runoff may be restricted and accumulation compounded.

Some of the site selection criteria that we considered are location, topography, existing road configuration, cost and practicability. With a small size island like Saipan, there are no other site alternative that can replace the services this road provides. To the west is an ocean and immediately to the east are homes and business. As a result, we decided that there are no alternative sites that can provide accessibility and functions that the proposed road would.

A. Locate the project within the floodplain

The project limit begins at Lat. 15.170823°N, long. 145.710655°E and ends at 15.214939°N, Long. 145.720624°. It is located on the island of Saipan. See map on the previous page.

B. Consider modifying the project

The project proposes to resurface the existing road to correct pockets of settlements and replace the delapidated and deteriorating asphalt surface. By improving the road, road hazards are greatly reduced. The alternatives aforementioned are impractical for the following reasons:

1. Elevating the road above the base flood elevation requires tremendous amount of fill and time, considering the amount of work required to fill and compact each lift.
2. Wet floodproofing by constructing a wall to minimize sea water flooding will not prevent rain runoff from flooding the road.

As mentioned before, the National Flood Insurance Program does not have flood zone requirements for roads. However, we must ensure that this project does not adverse effects on future flooding. This is not the case.

C. Obtain a Letter of Map Amendment (LOMA) or Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) – LOMA and LOMR necessary when removing the area from SFHA and are used primarily for buildings and other structures, never roads.

4. Identify Potential Direct and Indirect Impacts of Associated with Floodplain Development.

Ninety percent of the proposed project is in flood zone VE. About three percent is in zone AE and the rest is not in a flood zone. Although there are no clear requirements of road construction in a SFHA,

VE zones are subject to a greater hazard than those in other zones. In addition, Beach road defines the boundary of the VE flood zones. In other words, the east side of the road is outside the flood zone and only the road and a narrow (30 to 50 feet) shoreline is within. By constructing a raised concrete wall or elevating the road may have minimal effects on flooding and development but it may have considerable effects on the environment. A raised wall may constrain and create unintended runoff diversion. An elevated and exposed road is much more susceptible to erosion which can have significant and adverse effect on the lagoon ecology.

5. Where practicable, design or modify the proposed action to minimize the potential adverse impacts to lives, property, and natural values within the floodplain and to restore, and preserve the values of the floodplain.

The existing road is old (35+ years) and its intended drainage function is significantly reduced. The proposed road is essentially a re-surfacing project which will enhance the community in its everyday activities. Placement of new and smooth surface benefits motorists and residents. It reduces the risk of accidents. New surface will complement the existing drainage by ensuring the runoff are diverted to an intended point and discharged. The current condition of the road fails to do these.

6. Re-evaluate the Alternatives.

To be completed after public comments

7. Determination of No Practicable Alternative

To be completed after public comments

8. Implement the Proposed Action

To be completed after public comments