

**Early Notice and Public Review of a Proposed
Activity in a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard Designated Floodplain**

To: All Interested Agencies, Groups and Individuals

This is to give notice that **HUD under 24 CFR Part 50** has determined that the following proposed action under **Resilient Communities Infrastructure Program (RCIP) Project Number 55LDRC7801** is located in the **Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS) floodplain**, and **Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government (TPCG)** will be identifying and evaluating practicable alternatives to locating the action within the **floodplain** and the potential impacts on the **floodplain** from the proposed action, as required by **Executive Order 11988, as amended by Executive Order 13690**, in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 in Subpart C Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management and Protection of Wetlands. The proposed project location is at **200 Aviation Road in Houma, Terrebonne Parish**. The extent of the FFRMS floodplain was determined using a **0.2 percent flood approach**. The **Aviation and Avionics Workforce Development Training Program (AAWDTP)**” to train aviation maintenance technicians to boost economic opportunities in the area for skilled labor and one that reflects the industry needs in the area. The workforce development program plans to encompass airframe and mechanical training to support the local and regional need for aviation technicians. The curriculum will integrate hands-on experience, theoretical knowledge, and practical skills to prepare graduates for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) certification and real-world aircraft maintenance challenges. This new program will allow for a specialized workforce/career pathway for students while creating a sustainable economic boost to the hurricane-impacted area. The project will include the renovation of the interior of the three hangars on the existing footprint of the buildings. Approximately 3.20 acres of the project takes place within Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) Zone AE. There are no anticipated impacts to the floodplain, construction will be renovation of the interior of existing structures.

There are three primary purposes for this notice. First, people who may be affected by activities in the **floodplain** and those who have an interest in the protection of the natural environment should be given an opportunity to express their concerns and provide information about these areas. Commenters are encouraged to offer alternative sites outside of the **floodplain**, alternative methods to serve the same project purpose, and methods to minimize and mitigate project impacts on the **floodplain**. Second, an adequate public notice program can be an important public educational tool. The dissemination of information and request for public comment about the floodplain can facilitate and enhance Federal efforts to reduce the risks and impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of these special areas. Third, as a matter of fairness, when the Federal government determines it will participate in actions taking place in the floodplain, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

Written comments must be received by **TPCG** at the following email address on or before **January 8th, 2025: terrebonneenvironmental@csrsinc.com**. A full description of the project may be reviewed below.

Provide a comprehensive description of the problem this project will address. Including, but not limited to:

- What are the expected results?
- Is this a new/existing problem?
- What was the previous use of the site?
- Does the problem affect a historic area?

Terrebonne Parish experienced catastrophic damage as a result of Hurricane Ida with its 150mph winds of a Category 4 hurricane. For months after the storm, electricity and water utilities were not functioning and roads were blocked by down trees, utility poles and other debris, making them impassable. There was extensive damage to residences rendering many unsafe for immediate return. Several hospitals and medical facilities were forced to close in the Parish due to the lack of water pressure, electricity, blown-out windows and roof damage.

Terrebonne Parish has been grappling with the economic repercussions of successive hurricanes and flooding disasters, compounded by the challenges posed by the nationwide economic effects stemming from COVID-19 and financial instability. The unemployment rate in the Parish has seen an increase to 4.20% in March 2024, compared to 2.80% a year ago. While the current unemployment rate is lower than the long-term average of 5.10%, the Parish has seen a reduction in job opportunities and an exodus of young graduates in pursuit of opportunities elsewhere in the State and region. The overall civilian labor force in the Parish has been on a downward trend since 2019, estimated at about 42,000 people.*

* U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Civilian Labor Force in Terrebonne Parish, LA, retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/LATERR5LFN>, June 25, 2024.

Fletcher Technical Community College was originally established in 1948 for the purpose of providing vocational training in the area comprised of five parishes: Terrebonne, Lafourche, Assumption, St. James, and St. Charles. The school administration has proactively responded to the demand for skill training in emerging occupations by analyzing employment statistics and tailoring their programs accordingly. The College, an open-admission, public institution of higher education, actively engages with businesses and industry leaders to develop the workforce of South Louisiana and beyond. In the College's 2026 Strategic Plan, the number one goal states that by the end of spring 2026, Fletcher will serve 7,241 unique students during the academic year with a credit enrollment target of 3,361; a non-credit enrollment target of 1,950; and adult basic education target of 1,930. Additional goals include a target of 2,100 for IBC's (industry-based credentials).

Fletcher Technical Community College (FTCC) aims to create an "Aviation and Avionics Workforce Development Training Program (AAWDTP)" to train aviation maintenance technicians to boost economic opportunities in the area for skilled labor and one that reflects the industry needs in the area. The workforce development program plans to encompass airframe and mechanical training to support the local and regional need for aviation technicians. The curriculum will integrate hands-on experience, theoretical knowledge, and practical skills to prepare graduates for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) certification and real-world aircraft maintenance challenges. This new program will allow for a specialized workforce/career pathway for students while creating a sustainable economic boost to the hurricane-impacted area.

In the Terrebonne Economic Development Authority (TEDA) 2017 Economic Strategy for Terrebonne Parish, Aviation and Avionics was number four on a list of optimal target sectors to strengthen and support based on the region's competitive advantage and its growth potential. The Louisiana Workforce Commission estimates the national pay scale for Aviation Maintenance Technician to be about \$72,640 (\$34.92 per hour), the state average to be \$64,400 (\$30.96 per hour), and the Houma-Thibodaux average to be \$59,938 (\$28.82 per hour). The job outlook for this career path are as follows:

- *Employment in this field is projected to grow by 6% from 2021 to 2031.*
- *There is expected to be a consistent need for aircraft and avionics equipment mechanics and technicians, with approximately 13,100 job openings projected each year, on average, over the next decade.*
- *Southeast Louisiana's demand for these skills is expected to be in line with the national average with approximately a 5.8% increase in demand over the next decade. That would lead to an estimated 876 job openings across Southeast Louisiana, which includes the Houma-Thibodaux, New Orleans, and Baton Rouge areas.*
- *In Houma-Thibodaux, the average demand is expected to grow by 15.6% over the next decade, nearly ten percentage points above the national average. That would lead to an additional 66 job openings over the next decade in the Houma-Thibodaux area.*

The goal of this investment of federal recovery funds is to align disaster recovery efforts with local and regional economic revitalization strategies to assist Terrebonne Parish in its recovery through an effective public-private partnership. The program has high upfront investment costs for equipment and curriculum that is a challenge for regular operating budgets of a local college. The approval of CDBG-DR funds will enable FTCC will acquire the hangar space that is no longer in use to host the classes on the site of the Houma airport and to develop the training program that will continue into the future. The hangars are currently under private ownership formerly used to house aircraft and equipment. This project does not impact historic properties nor is in an historic area.

DISASTER RECOVERY ACTIVITY INFORMATION

Does the proposed project have a tie to at least one of the 2020/2021 disasters?

Yes

☒ [X]

No

Which disaster does the project tie back to? Select all that apply.

Hurricane Laura

Hurricane Ida

☒

Hurricane Delta

May Flood

Explain the project rationale for the tie-back to the disaster(s):

Hurricane Ida caused both physical and economic damage to Terrebonne Parish and the Parish is committed to increasing the economic opportunities of returning residents. To build career opportunities in the Parish and assist in the economic recovery of the Parish, FTCC is partnering with a private company, PHI Aviation, LLC, to begin the "Aviation and Avionics Workforce Development Training Program (AAWDTP)". As part of the long-term economic development strategy, this career path aims to secure well-paying jobs in the aviation industry, retain these skilled workers within the Parish, and contribute to its recovery and economic growth. Aircraft and Avionics Equipment Mechanics and Technicians are skilled professionals responsible for the repair and maintenance of aircraft and avionics equipment. They ensure the safe operation of airplanes and helicopters by conducting inspections, making repairs, and performing scheduled maintenance. Aircraft and Avionics Equipment Mechanics and Technicians typically work in hangars, in repair stations, or on airfields.

Establishing an aviation maintenance technician program in East Houma is expected to contribute to disaster recovery by creating skilled employment opportunities to foster economic growth and enhance the region's infrastructure resilience through aviation support service. This workforce development program has the potential to attract investment by offering specialized training for local residents, thereby supplying a skilled workforce to employers at the Houma airport and in the region. This initiative will significantly contribute to the area's long-term recovery and development.

Economic development enhances the overall standard of living in communities by increasing employment and income. This training program will introduce both benefits to the Parish. By establishing this program, FTCC will create opportunities for newly FAA-certified mechanics to remain in the Parish and contribute to its economic recovery.

Per FR-6303-N-01, HUD requires that grantees demonstrate that they have incorporated mitigation measures into CDBG-DR activities as a construction standard to create communities that are more resilient to the impacts of the recurring natural disasters and the impacts of climate change.

Describe the resiliency efforts and/or performance metrics applicable to this activity.

The hangars are currently operational and had minimal damage from Hurricane Ida, but once purchased by FTCC, the hangars will undergo vital renovations to maintain the integrity, enhance resiliency of the buildings and prepare the hangars for instructional purposes. Each hangar will have a specific purpose, one will be a general maintenance lab, one will be an airframe lab, and the third will be a powerplant lab. This is following the direction and guidelines for facility development and maintenance under the FAA guidelines and each hangar will be equipped with climate-controlled classroom space, electrical systems, water lines, and ventilation and HVAC systems.

In designing the improvements, consideration will be given to ways to strengthen the ability to withstand the impact of storm and hurricane events. Since the airplane hangars are supported by steel frame, focus will be on ensuring continued durability of materials and ability to withstand strong winds up to hurricane force.

MITIGATION ACTIVITY INFORMATION

Per FRN-6368-N-01, HUD defines mitigation activities as those activities that increase resilience to disasters and reduce or eliminate the long-term risk of loss of life, injury, damage to and loss of property, and suffering and hardship, by lessening the impact of future disasters.

Does the proposed project meet the definition of a mitigation activity?

Yes

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No

Describe the mitigation aspects, including performance metrics applicable to this activity.

In response to Terrebonne Parish's economic challenges exacerbated by recurring hurricanes, flooding, and the broader impacts of COVID-19, the proposed workforce development and training program at FTCC is designed to enhance the region's economic resilience through the creation of new, secure career pathways. By developing a skilled workforce in aviation maintenance, the initiative seeks to provide job security and reduce vulnerability to economic downturns caused by natural disasters. The project also entails the acquisition and improvements to three hangars on the airport site to house the training space. The training space will be built out for durability against adverse weather conditions and incorporate resilient building materials, safeguarding the training equipment and assets against potential storm damage. By equipping the workforce with in-demand skills, the initiative not only addresses immediate economic challenges but also establishes a foundation that can withstand and recover from the impacts of future storm events.