

Municipal Roads Repaired with FEMA Funds

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Projects included flood, erosion, and hazard mitigation works

Guaynabo, PUERTO RICO — The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) allocated nearly \$2.6 million to repair important roads and bridges in the municipalities of Barranquitas and Caguas after Hurricane María, helping to restore road infrastructure and reduce the risk of future damage in the area.

“These bridge and road repairs strengthen the island's resilience, allowing it to not only repair damage, but also increase its capacity to meet future challenges through federal FEMA assistance that includes measures to prevent future damage and protect critical infrastructure,” highlighted the Director of Public Assistance, Al Gómez Rivera.

One of the projects in this obligation was the repair of the Maneco Bridge in the Cañabón neighborhood of Barranquitas, which consists of a road and a culvert built in 1960. The planned work had over \$579,000 in funds and included the repair of the asphalt, base material and subbase of the road and the 27-foot-long corrugated metal pipe culvert.

FEMA's Public Assistance director, Al Gómez Rivera, explained that one of the main damages was to the sewer pipes through which the river basin passed. The funds for the project made it possible to widen the sewer to mitigate damage to the structure in the event of future rains.

The bridge, which now bears the name of “Maneco” — as Manuel Colón Santos is affectionately known — benefits some 200 families. Maneco is a leader at the Cañabón neighborhood, known for the help he provides to his neighbors: his home was available to the community and was a space where food and other aid was offered after Hurricane María. Maneco also works with other residents to maintain the neighborhood's community center, which serves as a shelter and a space for social events.



“Our past perils are over; sometimes you would go to an event and, if it rained, you had to wait on the other side, spend two or three hours [waiting] for the river water to decrease to be able to go through. I am very grateful because it is good for the community and, not only for us, but also for many communities in particular,” Maneco said.

Moreover, FEMA allocated over \$2 million for repairs to the Los Ramos bridge in the Las Carolinas community in Caguas. This grant supported the construction of a new one-span concrete bridge with galvanized steel beams, as well as the installation of erosion protection in the river. The project also included repairs such as the removal of damaged sections of the bridge and the installation of a temporary asphalt surface while the new bridge is being built.

To reduce the risk of future flooding, gabions were installed to protect the bank and bridge foundations from erosion. A geotextile fabric was also placed under the gabions to stabilize the soil and prevent erosion due to rainfall.

Hazard mitigation funding includes an allocation of over \$26,000 to reduce the risk of future damage. These include the installation of curbs and gutters, drainage ditches and a network to stabilize the road and prevent erosion. These works are expected to prevent long-term damage to the road and protect the environment.

The measures also include planting vegetation and installing a netting to prevent bank erosion, which will help protect the area from future damage caused by heavy rains and flooding.

FEMA has allocated nearly \$34.9 billion for over 11,050 recovery projects following Hurricane María. Of this total funding, over \$2.7 billion are earmarked for over 3,000 bridge and road projects across the island.

For more information about Puerto Rico’s recovery, visit fema.gov/disaster/4339, fema.gov/disaster/4473 and recovery.pr. Follow us on our social media at Facebook.com/FEMAPuertoRico, Facebook.com/COR3pr and Twitter @COR3pr.

Maneco Bridge, Barranquitas, PR



FEMA



Barranquitas, Puerto Rico (October 10, 2024) – The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) allocated nearly \$2.6 million to repair important roads and bridges in the municipalities of Barranquitas and Caguas. One of the projects in this obligation was the repair of the Maneco Bridge in the Cañabón neighborhood of Barranquitas. The planned work had over \$579,000 in funds and included the repair of the asphalt, base material and subbase of the road and the 27-foot-long corrugated metal pipe culvert. Photo FEMA/Eliezer Hernández

