

**Eight-Step Planning Process for Floodplains and Wetlands  
City of Gulfport Police and Municipal Court Building**

<p><b>Step 1:</b> Determine whether the Proposed Action is located in a wetland and/or the 100-year floodplain (500-year floodplain for critical actions), and whether it has the potential to affect or be affected by a floodplain or wetland.</p>	<p><b>Project Analysis:</b> According to the Flood Insurance Rate Map for the project site (Panel Number 285253 0077 D, effective October 4, 2002), the proposed project is located in Flood Zone X, outside of both the 100-year and 500-year floodplain. However, according to the Preliminary Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (Map Number 28047C0377G, Preliminary November 15, 2007), the project site is located outside of the 100-year floodplain, but within the 500-year floodplain (Zone X, shaded).</p> <p>According to National Wetlands Inventory Maps and a site visit conducted by NISTAC and FEMA biologists on September 30, 2008, the proposed project site contains no wetlands.</p>
<p><b>Step 2:</b> Notify public at earliest possible time of the intent to carry out an action in a floodplain or wetland, and involve the affected and interested public in the decision-making process.</p>	<p><b>Project Analysis:</b> The City of Gulfport will notify the public of the availability of the draft EA through publication of a public notice in a newspaper of general circulation when the EA is made available for public review.</p>
<p><b>Step 3:</b> Identify and evaluate practicable alternatives to locating the Proposed Action in a floodplain or wetland.</p>	<p><b>Project Analysis:</b> The Applicant considered the following alternatives in selecting the proposed action:</p> <p><i>No Action Alternative:</i> Under the No Action Alternative, the Gulfport Police and Municipal Court building would not be built and the police department and municipal court would continue to utilize temporary facilities located on the former 28<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary School campus. Although no new construction would occur in the 100- or 500-year floodplain, the police department and municipal court would continue to utilize facilities that are of insufficient size and efficiency.</p> <p><i>Construct the Gulfport Police and Municipal Court Building in a Location Nearby, Outside the Floodplain (not included in EA because it does not meet the purpose and need):</i> Under this Alternative, the Gulfport Police and Municipal Court Building would be constructed outside the 100-year and 500-year floodplains. Although there are locations in Gulfport that are outside the 500-year floodplain, they are not within the downtown Gulfport area, where the majority of the City’s government offices and operations reside. This alternative did not meet the purpose and need because it did not provide the City</p>

	<p>with a suitable location that will efficiently serve the community.</p> <p><i>Construct the Gulfport Police and Municipal Court Building on the 2200 block of 15<sup>th</sup> Street (Proposed Action Alternative):</i> Under this alternative, the Gulfport Police and Municipal Court building would be built on a site outside of the 100-year floodplain, but within the 500-year floodplain.</p>
<p><b>Step 4:</b> Identify the full range of potential direct or indirect impacts associated with the occupancy or modification of floodplains and wetlands, and the potential direct and indirect support of floodplain and wetland development that could result from the Proposed Action.</p>	<p><b>Project Analysis:</b> The proposed project site is located in a downtown area, and currently has concrete paving covering approximately 95% of the land surface.</p> <p>The site is not located within the 100-year floodplain, so there will be no direct or indirect impacts to the regulatory base floodplain.</p> <p>The project site is bounded to the north by railroad tracks that create the inland boundary of the coastal 500-year floodplain. Although the proposed project is located within the 500-year floodplain, no direct impacts to the 500-year floodplain are anticipated as result of the project because the project site is already paved, limiting natural floodplain functioning. Additionally, no fill material will be used to elevate the site; the ground floor of the building will be elevated above the 500-year floodplain elevation using piers or similar devices. Flooding in Gulfport is primarily driven by inadequate drainage due to the flat topography and tidal storm surge.</p> <p>Constructing a building on a previously disturbed and paved lot on the boundary of the 500-year floodplain is not likely to result in appreciable increases in flood velocities or elevations upstream or downstream. Indirect impacts include supporting the ongoing occupancy of the 500-year floodplain that occurs in the Gulfport area.</p> <p>Although the project does not encourage additional development within the 500-year floodplain because it is located in an already developed downtown area, the project will provide civic support to populations living in the 500-year floodplain.</p> <p>The project has no direct or indirect wetland impacts.</p>
<p><b>Step 5:</b> Minimize the potential adverse impacts from work within floodplains and wetlands (identified under Step 4), restore and preserve the natural and beneficial values served by wetlands.</p>	<p><b>Project Analysis:</b> To minimize impacts to the floodplain, the proposed building would be built outside of the 100-year floodplain. Because the building will be located within the 500-year floodplain, it would be elevated above the 500-year flood elevation with a finished floor elevation at 26</p>

	<p>feet amsl.</p> <p>The proposed project has no wetland impact.</p>
<p><b>Step 6:</b> Reevaluate the Proposed Action to determine: 1) if it is still practicable in light of its exposure to flood hazards; 2) the extent to which it will aggravate the hazards to others; 3) its potential to disrupt floodplain and wetland values.</p>	<p><b>Project Analysis:</b> The Proposed Action remains practicable based on elevating the proposed building to an elevation above the 500-year floodplain. The project is not anticipated to aggravate hazards to others within the 500-year floodplain because the project site is already paved and no fill material will be imported to elevate the site. The building will be elevated using piers or other similar devices. Because the site is previously disturbed and paved, the proposed project has little potential to disrupt floodplain values.</p>
<p><b>Step 7:</b> If the agency decides to take an action in a floodplain or wetland, prepare and provide the public with a finding and explanation of any final decision that the floodplain or wetland is the only practicable alternative. The explanation should include any relevant factors considered in the decision-making process.</p>	<p><b>Project Analysis:</b> A public notice will be published informing the public of FEMA’s decision to proceed with the project. This notice will include rationale for floodplain impacts; a description of all significant facts considered in making the determination; a list of the alternatives considered; a statement indicating whether the action conforms to State and local floodplain protection standards; a statement indicating how the action affects the floodplain; and a statement of how mitigation will be achieved.</p>
<p><b>Step 8:</b> Review the implementation and post-implementation phases of the Proposed Action to ensure that the requirements of the EOs are fully implemented. Oversight responsibility shall be integrated into existing processes.</p>	<p><b>Project Analysis:</b> This step is integrated into the NEPA process and FEMA project management and oversight functions.</p>