

**8-Step Planning Process for Floodplains and Wetlands
City of Gulfport Small Craft Harbor**

<p>Step 1: Determine whether the Proposed Action is located in a wetland and/or the 100-year floodplain, or whether it has the potential to affect or be affected by a floodplain or wetland.</p>	<p>Project Analysis: The City of Gulfport is a participant in good standing with the NFIP. According to FEMA mapping, the proposed project is located within the 100-year floodplain, within zone VE (Coastal High Hazard Area, a flood zone with velocity hazard [wave action], Base Flood Elevations determined) on the 2002 FIRM and the 2007 Preliminary Digital FIRM.</p> <p>According to the National Wetlands Inventory Map, the Harbor and Sound are considered estuarine and marine waters of the U.S. (USFWS, 2009). No vegetated wetlands are located on or near the project site.</p>
<p>Step 2: 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>Project Analysis: A notice will be published by the applicant in a newspaper of general circulation when the EA is made available for public review.</p>
<p>Step 3: Identify and evaluate practicable alternatives to locating the Proposed Action in a floodplain or wetland.</p>	<p>Project Analysis: The Proposed Action is located within the 100-year floodplain.</p> <p>Other than the No Action Alternative, there are no practicable alternatives for rebuilding Gulfport Harbor that would not involve impacts to the 100-year floodplain.</p> <p>The following alternatives were evaluated in the EA:</p> <p><i>Alternative 1:</i> No Action</p> <p><i>Alternative 2:</i> Redevelop Gulfport Small Craft Harbor (Proposed Action)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of 3,065 linear feet of new bulkheads. • Replacement of the existing piers to provide 318 boat slips and 88,642 square feet of piers • Upgrades to the electrical system supporting the piers and slips including installation of transformers on elevated platforms intermittently spaced throughout the piers. • Dredging of approximately 34,000 cubic yards of sand and silt located within 50 feet of the existing harbor bulkheads. • Relocation of the Harbor Services Facility

	<p>building to the eastern side of the harbor/bulkhead. The new 5,061-square-foot building would be constructed on piers and elevated above the Coastal High Hazard Area to a finished floor elevation of 25.5 feet. A new bulkhead would be constructed around the building foundation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocation of the fueling dock and bait shop to the south side of the harbor. <p>Redevelopment of the Harbor also includes the following actions that would not utilize FEMA funding, but would rely upon the Harbor FEMA-funded redevelopment activities (construction of the new piers, bulkheads, boat slips, and dredging) to attract customers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widening of 20th Avenue to include new medians, a new traffic circle, and vehicle parking areas; 0.96 acre of fill will be imported for the expansion and stabilization of 20th Avenue and to restore approximately 50 feet of beach and shoreline on the eastern side of the harbor • Developing 0.96 acre of shallow water marine habitat adjacent to the shoreline east of the Fisherman’s Village • Construction of a Fisherman’s Village that would include an office, a restaurant, and retail business space • Construction of a Coast Transit Authority Rest Station that would provide park and ride services for the public • Improvements in Jones Park that include walking trails and an amphitheater
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<p>Step 4: 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>Project Analysis: Construction within the floodplain would not increase the impacts to the floodplain above the impacts that existed prior to Hurricane Katrina at the proposed project site. The docks and piers of the Proposed Action are categorized by FEMA as functionally dependent facilities, which by definition would not require elevation to the ABFE. Although the Proposed Action would result in development, modification, and occupancy of the floodplain, it would provide the same function and capacity of the previous facility. The transformers and electrical system supporting the piers and slip would be constructed on platforms that meet the Digital FIRM requirements and local ordinances, and would include burial of all electrical lines. The relocated Harbor Services Facility building would be constructed on piers and elevated above the 100-year floodplain to a finished floor elevation of 25.5 feet. Fuel tanks would be buried and anchored for protection from tidal storm surges.</p>
<p>Step 5: 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>Project Analysis: Under the Proposed Action Alternative, approximately 34,000 cubic yards of material would be dredged from the harbor under USACE Permit No. SAM-2006-2241-TMZ. Modifications to USACE Permit Application SAM-2007-1957-JWS, MDMR Permit DMR-070152, and MDEQ Water Quality Certification 2008073 would allow placement of 0.96 acre of fill material on the eastern side of the harbor to stabilize 20th Avenue and restore the shoreline; 0.96 acre of shallow water marine habitat would be created immediately east of the proposed project site as compensatory mitigation.</p> <p>The new 5,061-square-foot Harbor Services Facility building would be constructed on piers and elevated above the Coastal High Hazard Area to a finished floor elevation of 25.5 feet.</p> <p>The bottom of elevated platforms that will house the transformers for the electrical system would be elevated to meet the Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map requirements and local ordinances, and would include burial of all electrical lines.</p> <p>The Applicant must follow all applicable local, State, and Federal laws, regulations and requirements and obtain and comply with all required permits and approvals, prior to initiating work on this project. No staging of equipment or</p>

	<p>project activities shall begin until all permits are obtained. The Applicant must apply BMPs for soil erosion prevention and containment during staging of equipment and project activities. Should project activities be delayed for 1 year or more after the date of this EA, coordination and project review by the appropriate regulating agencies must be reinitiated.</p>
<p>Step 6: Re-evaluate 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>Project Analysis: The Proposed Action remains practicable based on the building standards and consolidation efficiencies.</p>
<p>Step 7: 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>Project Analysis: 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>Step 8: 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>Project Analysis: This step is integrated into the NEPA process and FEMA project management and oversight functions.</p>