

FEMA
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
ST. CROIX COASTAL INTERCEPTOR RELOCATION PROJECT
ESTATES LA GRANDE PRINCESS AND GOLDEN ROCK
ST. CROIX, U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS
PDMC-PJ-VI-2014-002

BACKGROUND

The Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority (VIWMA, Subgrantee) requested Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), to replace and relocate a 30-inch diameter line that transports sewage from the La Grande Princess and Golden Rock areas to the Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ) pump station in Estates La Grande Princess and Golden Rock, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. The Subgrantee has been awarded a Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) grant through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) program. The Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA) is the Grantee partner for the proposed action. The HMA Subgrant Application reference number is PDMC-PJ-VI-2014-002.

FEMA evaluated two alternatives in the Environmental Assessment (EA) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): 1) No Action: no federal funding would be provided, and the Subgrantee would leave the coastal interceptor in its existing location and not pursue relocation, and 2) Proposed Action: federal funding would be provided to relocate the coastal interceptor inland from manhole (MH) 0432 through vacant, undeveloped land and then within rights of way of existing roads to MH 0439. The No Action alternative has been rejected because erosion of the coastline would continue to expose the coastal interceptor to the open waters. Inflow of sea water, sand, sea shells, and other ocean debris into the sewer system would continue and result in the continued excessive wear and tear to the pumps at the lift station, resulting in an unreliable pump station. The Proposed Action would eliminate the risk of 144,000 gallons per day of raw sewage spilling into the sea and along the shore line. The Proposed Action also eliminates sea water and ocean debris from damaging the sewage pumps and forcing the LBJ Pump Station offline. Additionally, the Proposed Action has fewer impacts on the marine and human environments when compared to the other alternatives. Other alternatives such as the replacement of the coastal interceptor in its existing location, repair of the existing sewer line with a lining, and construction the lift station in other locations were considered but dismissed from full analysis due to cost and/or engineering feasibility constraints.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Subgrantee would relocate the coastal interceptor inland through vacant, undeveloped land and then within rights of way of existing roads. The reroute would begin at MH 0432 where a gravity line will extend approximately 300 feet westwards towards a new lift station. The new lift station would be located at the northern edge of an undeveloped parcel of land known as "Turquoise Bay" and would be accessed by an overgrown dirt path that lies along the northern boundary of the Turquoise Bay property. Force main piping would then extend through the undeveloped Turquoise Bay property approximately 885 feet in a southeasterly direction towards Route 752, passing just to the west of two pairs of tennis courts. The force main would continue along the right-of-way of Route 752 approximately 2,100 feet to a new transition manhole that would be constructed near the entrance of the Sugar Beach property. Approximately 600 feet of gravity line would be installed along the southeastern Sugar Beach property boundary from the

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transition manhole to MH 0439 where the reroute would be complete. MH 0432 and MH 0439 would be rehabilitated. Two lateral connections would also be installed at Mill Harbour and Colony Cove to reconnect current users.

Once the new line is brought online, the existing line from MH 0432 to MH 0439 (approximately 1,900 feet) would be flushed clean with a water hose at atmospheric pressure prior to any demolition. No chemicals would be used during the cleaning process to minimize any potential impact to the marine environment. The submerged sewer line would be abandoned in place. At each manhole, the ends of the sewer line would be capped off and the base would be filled with concrete flow fill. The remaining walls and top of manhole would be demolished in pieces, carried out of the water by hand, and placed in a truck for disposal. To minimize environmental impacts, all demolition would be executed with hand tools. The end product would result in a filled concrete top of structure located two (2) feet below the sea floor. The two ends of the sewer line that are connected to the manholes that will remain in service (MH 0432 and MH 0439) would be capped off with concrete. This would result in an abandoned pipeline where seawater and sand would move freely in and out of any cracks. Turbidity curtains would be installed around the manholes to contain dispersion of floating debris or silt in the water.

NEPA COORDINATION

An EA was prepared with the Subgrantee's participation to assess the proposed project's impacts on the human environment in accordance with NEPA, the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and FEMA regulations for environmental consideration pertaining to NEPA compliance at 44 CFR Part 10. An Eight-Step Decision-Making Process in accordance with Executive Order (EO) 11988 Floodplain Management and 44 CFR Part 9 was incorporated into the EA to inform alternative analysis and determination of the practicable alternative to incorporate flood damage risk reduction measures at the facility.

The project would have a beneficial effect on the water resources, coastal resources, wetlands, and floodplains by removing the existing sewer line from Christiansted Harbor and the 100-year and 500-year floodplains. The project would also result in reliable sanitary sewer service to area residents. During construction, short term temporary impacts to vegetation and topography would be expected along the relocation route but long term impacts would not be expected. Short term temporary impacts to threatened and endangered species may occur during the demolition of the manholes. Short-term impacts would be mitigated utilizing turbidity curtains when working within the water and best management practices, such as silt fences, proper equipment maintenance and appropriate signage.

A public notice was issued in the St. Croix Avis on June 3, 2015, to notify the public of the thirty-day public review and comment period. A flyer also notifying of the EA's availability was also posted in the common areas of the condominiums and apartments in the project area. The EA was posted to the FEMA website and a hard copy of the EA were made available for public review at

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the Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority's offices at 941-946 Estate Williams Delight, Frederiksted, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, 00840. Comments from two (2) federal agencies were received during the public review and comment period. The EA is adopted as final with issuance of this Finding of No Significant Impact statement and construction implementation may proceed in conformance with grant conditions presented herein.

CONDITIONS

The Subgrantee is responsible to obtain all applicable Federal, state, and local permits for project implementation prior to construction, and to adhere to all permit conditions. Any substantive change to the approved scope of work would require re-evaluation by FEMA for compliance with NEPA and other laws and executive orders. The Subgrantee must also adhere to the following conditions during project implementation and consider identified conservation recommendations:

1. The Subgrantee's contractor shall use Best Management Practices (BMPs) to include, but not limited to, stockpiling all trenching soils in areas that are not subject to erosion and if storing overnight, protect soils with erosion control fabric. When trenching undeveloped land (such as at Turquoise Bay), silt fencing would be properly placed and maintained between all excavation areas and Christiansted Harbor. BMPs would also minimize ground disturbance.
2. Excavated soil and waste materials will be managed and disposed of in accordance with applicable Federal, territory, and local regulations.
3. It is recommended that the Subgrantee restore disturbed construction areas of the site with native seed and/or plant species to minimize soil erosion and sedimentation, as well as enhance environmental habitat quality of project area. It is recommended that disturbed soil areas be planted with native plant material as soon as practicable after exposure to avoid or minimize growth of undesired and potentially invasive plant species that can potentially take hold without competition of native plant materials. Local landscape plant nurseries and soil conservation offices can assist with identification of suitable native plants for site location type. The following websites may also be useful to identification of native plant material for the proposed project site:
 - <http://plants.usda.gov/java/>
 - www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/plantsanimals/plants/
 - www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/nativeplantmaterials/rightmaterials.shtml
4. The Subgrantee will complete all applicable local land-use reviews in accordance with territory and local regulations.
5. The Subgrantee must comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's regulations on solid and hazardous waste as defined in 40 CFR 261 and in accordance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) during cleaning and demolition. The following websites provide additional guidelines for maintenance and cleaning:

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- http://water.epa.gov/polwaste/npdes/ss/upload/cmom_guide_for_collection_syst_ems.pdf
 - http://water.epa.gov/scitech/wastetech/upload/2002_06_28_mtb_sewcl.pdf
 - <http://water.epa.gov/polwaste/npdes/ss/index.cfm>
6. The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) may require a permit for the subject work that would involve wetland disturbance. The Subgrantee is responsible for obtaining all necessary permits and complying with all conditions of the permits including but not limited to notification and signature requirements to ensure validation of permits. The Subgrantee must submit a copy of the permit to VITEMA/FEMA at/or before project closeout in accordance with grant administration procedures.
 7. Demolition of manholes shall be done by hand. Turbidity curtains must also be used to minimize and contain dispersion of floating debris or silt in the water.
 8. The Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR) requires a permit for the subject work that occurs within the coastal zone. The Subgrantee is responsible for obtaining all necessary permits and complying with all conditions of the permits including but not limited to notification and signature requirements to ensure validation of permits.
 9. No heavy equipment shall be operated or stored on the beach.
 10. The Subgrantee must hire a qualified Archaeologist that meets the Secretary of the Interior Professional (SOI) Qualification Standards for Archaeology and Historic Preservation to monitor ground disturbing activities. The goal of archaeological monitoring would be to identify evidence of historic and/or prehistoric human/cultural activities that may inadvertently be displaced by excavation activities. The archaeologist would be present on site at all times during excavations. The Subgrantee would notify FEMA once the excavation schedule has been established and agreed upon with the SOI-qualified archaeologist. The archaeologist's work is to conform to the guidelines established for archaeological investigations in the United States Virgin Islands. Analysis of any cultural material recovered and report preparations are also to be under the supervision of a SOI-qualified archaeologist. The monitoring and all excavations shall follow standard archaeological practice and the level of description and documentation in the report submitted to FEMA for review shall be consistent with The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Documentation (http://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch_stnds_7.htm) and National Park Service publication, The Archaeological Survey: Methods and Uses (1978).
 11. In the event that unmarked graves, burials, human remains, or archaeological deposits are uncovered, the Subgrantee and its contractors would immediately halt construction activities in the vicinity of the discovery, secure the site, and take reasonable measures to avoid or minimize harm to the finds. The Subgrantee would inform the VITEMA, State Historic Preservation Office, and FEMA immediately. The Subgrantee must secure all archaeological findings and shall restrict access to the area. Work in sensitive areas may not resume until consultations are completed or until an archaeologist who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards determines the extent and

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historical significance of the discovery. Work may not resume at or around the delineated archaeological deposit until the Subgrantee is notified by VITEMA.

12. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards shall be followed during construction to avoid adverse impacts to worker health and safety.
13. The Subgrantee shall not initiate construction activities until fifteen (15) days after the date that the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been signed as "APPROVED." The FONSI serves as a final notice per 44 CFR Part 9.12. Any comments received from the public during this time will be considered by FEMA, the Grantee and Subgrantee before construction is implemented.

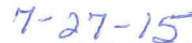
FINDINGS

In accordance with NEPA and 44 CFR Part 10, FEMA determined that the proposed action will have no significant adverse impact on the quality of the human environment. As a result of this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared, and the proposed project as described in the EA may proceed. This FONSI serves as the final public notice for the proposed project.

APPROVED



Katherine S. Zeringue



Date

Acting Regional Environmental Officer
Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region II