



**ARANSAS COUNTY
PUBLIC COMMENTS AND RESPONSES
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT-MITIGATION (CDBG-MIT)
GRANT APPLICATIONS**

FIBER OPTIC LOOP COMMUNICATION SYSTEM PROJECT

PUBLIC HEARING – October 19, 2020

- 1) **Comment:** A County resident expressed support for the Fiber Optic Loop. The commenter indicated that the project benefits health and safety and differentiates Aransas County for economic growth. The commenter also noted it is a “no brainer opportunity” that will benefit all of us in our recovery.

Response: The County acknowledges this comment.

- 2) **Comment:** A County resident stated having a hard time paying for something [Fiber Optic Loop project] with tax dollars that the commenter is going to pay for a second time through a provider.

Response: The County acknowledges this comment. This issue was discussed among County staff and the County’s grant administrator and has taken into consideration as part of application development.

- 3) **Comment:** The Sheriff was called to the podium by a Commissioner. He was asked to address the project and benefits to the community. He spoke favorably and indicated the project saves lives and properties.

Response: The County acknowledges this comment.

RUBY ALLEN STREETS, DRAINAGE AND UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT – None received.

NEWCOMB POINT SHORELINE PRESERVATION

PUBLIC HEARING – October 19, 2020

- 1) **Comment:** A County resident provided the following statement which was read into the record by a Court Commissioner. “With the time I have left, I would like to touch on Newcomb Point Shoreline Preservation. It is also a breakwater solution. I am opposed to this solution as the only one presented to us. At a meeting, the Navigational District offered several other solutions. One brought the beach and sand back to the shoreline. Please go back to the drawing board and find solutions that work for our County and not just the flavor of the month offered by one engineering firm.”

Response: It was discussed at the meeting, if awarded, engineering design for the project and alternative solutions will be explored and that additional public input can be solicited during the design process, subject to federal and state design standards and requirements. As well, the County will review the footprint of the project to ensure that it is properly reflected by project area map.



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FULTON BEACH ROAD ELEVATION AND BEACH NOURISHMENT PROJECT

PUBLIC HEARING – October 19, 2020

- 1) **Comment:** A County resident provided the following statement which was read into the record by a Court Commissioner. “I would like to first speak to the Fulton Beach Road Elevation and Beach Nourishment project. This is for the northern section of FBR. I’ve read the package provided on the web page. There are several statements which are very concerning to me.
- The 3rd paragraph states 14,360 cars travel this road every day. That’s 10 cars every minute of the day. That is just not true. This is a small scenic byway that is mostly used by residents along FBR, fishermen, tourists hoping to catch a great photo of dolphins and birds, walkers, runners, cyclists and golf carts. As someone who walks this road, I can testify we don’t get that kind of traffic.
 - The 3rd paragraph also states this is the only evacuation route for businesses and properties on FBR. In most cases, Highway 35 is available as a primary route. For Hurricane Harvey I believe residents took alternate routes to leave the County.

Given two such obvious mistakes, I have to question the validity of this information. I also question the type of construction that is proposed. It sounds like this is very similar to the project that the County abandoned after several citizens voiced their concerns. If this grant application ties us to the breakwaters as designed for the southern end of FBR, I am against it.

FBR is used by fishermen who fish the shores to put supper on their family tables. Creating marshland will impede wade fishers and potentially create a trap for debris and garbage. This is a scenic road. It is not a major thoroughfare or evacuation route. It is a meandering trail that hugs the shoreline. The mitigation for this road should honor that history and preserve it. Please bring options to the Citizens which preserve the uniqueness of Aransas County.”

Response: During the public hearing presentation, it was noted that phrasing of the project description would be adjusted to clarify that Fulton Beach Road feeds into the evacuation route which is Highway 35 and that the car count is for Highway 35. It was discussed at the meeting, if awarded, engineering design for the project and alternative solutions will be explored and that additional public input can be solicited during the design process, subject to federal and state design standards and requirements.

ALL PROJECTS

- 1) **Comment:** A Court Commissioner made a request for all available background information on the CDBG-MIT proposals for which a public hearing is scheduled on October 19.

Response: All available information is currently posted on the Aransas County website during the Public Comment Period from October 5 through October 18, 2020. In addition, Judge Mills' Office has a book containing all available information on the projects. There is also a Power



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Point presentation being developed for the upcoming hearing. This will be posted on Aransas County's website following the hearing.

County staff asked the Commissioner in email correspondence what other background information is being requested such as copies of the notices published in the newspapers and noted that the grant administrator has been provided with dozens of documents required to be submitted with the application. These include the County's purchasing policy, annual audits, procurement documents for professional services, copies of mitigation plans, copies of various planning documents previously adopted by the County (such as drainage and resiliency plans), photos, and other documents. While available, these may not be what the Commissioner intends, nor would these be helpful to understanding the proposed projects.

PUBLIC HEARING – October 19, 2020

- 1) **Comment:** A County resident/Commissioner-Elect expressed that she liked the questions and answers at the public hearing and learned quite a bit to date about projects. The commenter is looking for an answer on how LMI percentages are determined and who has determined those figures.

Response: LMI data is provided by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). LMI percentages are calculated based on Census Block Groups and Census Tracts. HUD has a very stringent set of rules on determining the beneficiaries of a project. The requirement is that if there is a census tract that benefits, the entire census tract is included. We are following HUD guidelines and rules on how to reflect beneficiaries of projects. Data provided by HUD is available to the public on the web. The HUD link for LMI data and information is <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/acs-low-mod-summary-data/>.