

**LEE COUNTY LEHIGH STREETS AND DRAINAGE
PROJECT DESCRIPTION (LeeCountyPD_GIP_2)**

1. PROJECT PURPOSE AND PROPOSED ACTIVITY

Lee County proposes to upgrade 46.5 miles of streets and reconstruct 23 miles of swales and outfalls to canals in Lehigh Acres, a 92-square-mile Census Designated Place in unincorporated Lee where 54% of the residents meet HUD standards defining low and moderate income. The funding request for this project is \$7,703.850.

These improved streets and new drainage systems will help ensure that Lee County is more resilient to future natural disasters. Lee County is a HUD-determined Most Impacted and Distressed (MID) County as a result of Hurricane Irma. The County is executing strategic and high-impact activities to minimize or eliminate risk and reduce losses from future disasters and is looking to CDBG-MIT funding to implement its current unfunded projects.

The 1500-mile roadway system in Lehigh Acres was platted in the 1960's with a typical pavement structure of 6 inches of aggregate base with a chip seal surface. Due to the slow growth of residential home construction through 2000, most roadways received minimal maintenance. The roadway condition rating for many of the roads within the proposed improvement area has fallen into the lowest condition category. Funding from this grant would regrade and augment the road base and replace the surface with a hot asphaltic pavement with a 20-year lifecycle. The proposed roadway improvement would include 46.5 miles of local roads.

In the early 1970's, Lee County began to assume maintenance and repair of the 1,500+ miles of private streets in Lehigh Acres. Upon full acquisition of these private roads, a commitment was made by the Board of County Commissioners to invest \$1 million annually in paving improvements. In 2017, the BoCC increased the Lehigh Acres Paving Program to \$5 million per year.

Later that same year, the area proposed for funding in this grant application sustained substantial flooding during Hurricane Irma. Inundated roadside swales were not adequate to direct flow to the canals maintained by the Lehigh Acres Municipal Services Improvement District (LAMSID). LAMSID is an independent taxing agency primarily responsible for surface water management in Lehigh Acres. The approach to improving the drainage in this area includes restoring the roadside swales to their original depth and capacity, replacing driveway culverts and adding storm sewer where required along a backbone system of roads through the improvement area. The outfalls into the LAMSID canals would also be improved to ensure the removal of the flood waters from this residential area. The proposed drainage improvement would include 23 miles of regraded swales, replaced culvert and added storm sewer on each side the backbone system of roads.

Funding from this grant program would assist in expediting the improvement of the worst roads and highest-risk drainage in an area of low to moderate incomes. Due to the sparse development in many areas of Lehigh, this program is constructing the first hard-surface pavement on many of the roads, providing significantly improved all-weather access to these Lee County homes, an important source of affordable housing.

No land acquisition or additional right-of-way agreements are required for this project.

Approximately 48,000 Lehigh Acres households – more than 54% of the community’s population – are LMI households. This area is in high demand as part of the county’s stock of affordable and attainable housing.

2. RISK MITIGATION

Hurricane Irma flooding revealed areas of concern in Lehigh Acres. These proposed road and drainage improvements will help Lee County address these risk mitigation objectives:

- A more resilient and longer-lasting transportation system for the needs of residential properties and for emergency services;
- Support for LAMSID canal and storm water management operations;
- Improve access of LMI households to evacuation routes and housing during a flood, which will in turn offset the relative cost of providing shelter and other social and government services resulting from the displacement of LMI populations;
- Reduce the chance of the recurrence of post-Hurricane Irma flooding; and
- Reduce economic risk by helping to assure that workers in Lehigh Acres – where the Census estimates that 46,000 employed persons reside, have resilient access to home and work after a declared disaster.

3. NATURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The current lack of adequate roadside swales is compromising the ability to store and convey the storm water runoff in this area of Lehigh Acres. The proposed improvements to the swales will control flooding, prevent erosion, provide a natural area for storm runoff and also provide water quality treatment that will reduce pollution.

4. WORK PLAN

A procurement and contract timeline implementation plan is attached to this proposal. Lee County also envisions that the final planning proposal will likely include elements of this work plan:

- Grant acceptance and negotiation of the grant agreement;
- Request for Proposal (RFP) advertisement, selection and contract negotiation process, including finalizing the scope, deliverables and tasks, and a timeline. Lee County Procurement will select a Design Professional and General Contractor through established Lee County Competitive Negotiation protocols and in compliance with all federal guidelines outlined in the Federal Register Notice 84 FR 45838 and Florida DEO requirements.
- Quarterly updates – This grant will be reviewed by Lee County’s CDBG-MIT Working Group specifically and in general through Lee County’s ongoing grant oversight process for compliance. This multi-departmental working group has been assembled to coordinate proposals, applications and management of CDBG-DR and CDBG-MIT grants. In addition, Lee County anticipates quarterly reporting to DEO. The Project Manager and Fiscal Manager will be responsible.
- Monitor the consultant for strict adherence to all contractual deliverable products, tasks and timelines; review/comment on construction documents at 60%, 90% and 100% stages of plan production; and coordinate closely with the consultant CEI for adherence with Lee County and FDOT specifications.

- Closeout – This will primarily be the responsibility of the Fiscal Manager.

At this time, Lee County expects the entire process – from notification of grant award to close out to be approximately 6 years.

5. DETERMINATION OF PROJECT FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

The funding requirements for this project were based on the tasks required on prior similar projects that Lee County has completed. Unit prices were based on Lee County's current Minor Paving, Drainage and Concrete Improvements – Annual Contract. The design specifications for the roadway and drainage improvements are based on the FDOT Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

This proposal to upgrade streets and related drainage systems in Lehigh Acres will have these outcomes:

- Improve resiliency and overall longevity of a 46.5-miles transportation system used by residential properties and emergency services;
- Improve 23 miles of swales and outfalls to canals to improve surface water drainage in support of LAMSID;
- Provide drainage for the roadbed structure to insure a maximum lifespan is achieved from the roadway improvements;
- Improve access by LMI households to evacuation routes and housing during a flood, which will in turn offset the relative cost of providing shelter and other social and government services resulting from the displacement of LMI populations;
- Protect the value of housing for the LMI population in Lehigh Acres; and
- Help assure that workers in Lehigh Acres – where the Census estimates that 46,000 employed persons reside, have resilient access to home and work after a declared disaster.

6. MAINTENANCE

The upgraded streets and drainage systems will be included in Lee County's normal maintenance programs. The maintenance of Lehigh roadways and drainage is currently budgeted at approximately \$3,350/mile annually. This allocation includes work to improve drainage, provide minor road maintenance and perform roadway upgrades such as hot asphalt paving. Funding from this grant would provide a rare opportunity to move a significant length of deteriorating roadway into a long term pavement structure that will require minimal maintenance over the next 10 to 20 years.