

## LEE COUNTY HERTZ ARENA SHELTER HARDENING PROJECT DESCRIPTION (LeeCountyPD\_CFHP\_2)

### 1. (A). PROJECT PURPOSE

Lee County proposes to harden Hertz Arena (formerly Germain Arena), a 182,875 square-foot, 7,186-seat, multipurpose facility, which has been available to shelter Floridians during nine disasters since 2004. Out-of-county residents, mostly from Naples, the Keys, Miami and Fort Lauderdale, come to Lee County for shelter due to easy access from I-75, US 41 and SR 80.

During Hurricane Irma in 2017, more than 34,000 people sought refuge in Lee County shelters, including Hertz Arena. Because of the arena seating, available food vendor equipment, and sports physical training area that can be adapted to a medic station on site, additional people could shelter in Hertz Area during a dire event.

While the majority of the people who utilize this shelter are Lee County residents, out-of-county residents stayed in Hertz during Irma. The arena is available for use during host sheltering activations. Lee County has an agreement with arena owner KTB Sports Florida to provide host sheltering: "The County may use the Premises for hurricane-related emergency purposes in order to provide temporary emergency shelter for persons at risk due to an actual hurricane event or other impending emergency during the time when the Lee County Board of County Commissioners has formally declared a State of Local Emergency or the Governor of the State of Florida issues an Executive Order declaring a State of Emergency, in accordance with the provisions set forth in Chapter 252, Florida Statutes."

Proposed structural hardening includes:

- Provide and install roll-down shutter system to protect hardened portion of building from unprotected portions of the building;
- Replace lower flat roof surrounding arena domed area;
- Strengthen roof structure under existing roof-mounted equipment to counteract design uplift loads;
- Remove and replace all seals and expansion joints throughout the main hardened building to provide watertight structure; and
- Replace storefront windows and entry systems with systems meeting current code requirements.

The total construction estimate for this project is \$3,835,523 or an approximate one-time investment of \$767.10 per shelter space to help ensure the availability of 5,000 shelter spaces to serve residents of Southwest, South, and Southeast Florida for the next 20 years. In June 2018, FEMA's Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration reported that every dollar invested to harden facilities beyond wind storm code requirements will return \$5 in future cost savings.

As part of its regional mitigation planning, Lee County values Hertz Arena for its ability to broadly serve South, Southwest and Southeast Florida residents, especially those with low and moderate incomes who require access to shelters within reach of mass transit or a direct, low-cost drive.

In Lee County alone, 276,873 people, nearly 42 percent of the population, qualify for HUD's LMI category. Of the total LMI population here, nearly 40% live in FEMA's designated Special Flood Hazard

Area (SFHA) and are at risk of evacuation during flooding events. Hertz Arena provides a sheltering option for them. It is also easily accessible to Hendry County residents, 45% percent of whom qualify as LMI, and Charlotte County residents, 40% of whom qualify as LMI.

## 1. (B.) DESCRIPTION OF THE CRITICAL FACILITY

The Hertz facility includes the main arena and an adjacent, pre-engineered metal building (PEMB) with two recreational ice rinks. According to the original design drawings by Brisbin Brook Beyon Architects and Joseph B. Kaller & Associates, the facility was designed in 1997-1998. The arena portion of the existing facility and the ample parking lot has been utilized as a hurricane shelter and staging area for emergency response purposes through an agreement between Lee County and the building owner since August 10, 1999. Other important assets include food preparation areas and the athletic training rooms, which can be adapted to medic stations.

The arena was updated in June 2018 to provide additional hardening; this extended the term of the agreement for 30 years.

Hertz Arena, 11000 Everblades Pkwy., Estero, FL 33928, is located at 26 26' 24.41"N; 81 46' 43.5"W.

## 2. RISK MITIGATION

Lee County's vulnerability to tropical weather events and wildfires requires year-round planning with multiple agencies on how to safely shelter residents and visitors during storms like Hurricane Irma. Southwest Florida has an above normal storm surge risk, which limits the facilities that can serve as hurricane shelters. Hertz Arena is located outside FEMA's designated Special Flood Hazard Area. Its inland location, which is easily accessed from I-75 and US 41, coupled with its 5,000 shelter spaces makes its hardening a high-impact activity.

Because of the need for this high-impact risk mitigation after Hurricane Irma, Lee County established a base for a design/build contract to harden the arena. In December 2018, the County entered into a contract with Walker Contracting Group, Inc. to provide design/build services based on the established design criteria. Design drawings were completed by a structural engineer and a prioritized list of strengthening/hardening elements were prioritized. From this prioritized list, Lee County determined what work could be accomplished within existing fiscal resources. The County has already completed \$3,229,751 worth of hardening improvements, including reinforcing the roof structure in the main arena, hardening/replacing the main arena roof system, reinforcing wall to roof connections and hardening exterior walls as required. The remaining work identified in the design criteria package lacks funding and is being proposed for this CDBG-MIT grant. This includes replacing existing storefront window/entry systems, replacing a lower roof area roof system, reinforcing structural elements of the lower roof where existing equipment sits and repairing exterior expansion and stucco joints to maintain weather tightness during a storm.

An investment of CDBG-MIT funds ensures Hertz Arena's long-lasting capacity to provide 5,000 shelter spaces to reduce the risk of future injury or death during disasters. Hertz hardening specifically addresses Florida DEO's comprehensive Risk Based Mitigation Needs Assessment by providing accessible shelter for Floridians in the event of flooding, severe storms, tropical cyclones and wildfires.

This hardening specifically reduces risk during a disaster for low- and moderate-income individuals, elderly and disabled populations, who depend on shelters because the expense of evacuating or hardening their residence may not be feasible. Homeless populations also depend on shelters during emergencies, as they cannot remain in the outdoor locations in which they currently reside.

Hertz is accessible to ADA standards, and all proposed work will ensure continued accessibility.

### 3. WORK COMPLETION AND MANAGEMENT TEAM

Grant-supported work to complete the hardening will be overseen by Lee County Department of Facilities Construction and Management. 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.

### 4. DETERMINATION OF PROJECT FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

The amount of funds required for this proposal were drawn from the Walker Contracting Group, Inc. design/build estimates commissioned by Lee County. When final design has been completed, the Design Professional will provide an Opinion of Probable Cost which will be the basis of review for the establishment of the construction bid from the selected General Contractor. The General Contractor is required to secure a minimum of three (3) bids for each component of the project and these bids are shared and reviewed by County Facilities' staff prior to approving the construction bid.

### 5. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

This proposal to upgrade and harden Hertz Arena increases the level of safety for the residents who need County-provided shelter during an emergency event. This ensures sheltering capacity as recommended in the Florida DEO's comprehensive Risk Based Mitigation Needs Assessment. Specific anticipated outcomes include:

- Provide safe shelter for up to 5,000 persons in the general population evacuated from Lee County as well as other counties in Southwest, South and Southeast Florida during declared emergencies;
- Ensure the availability of safe shelter for LMI persons;
- Ensure the availability of this safe shelter for 15-20 years;
- Ensure the availability of this shelter location for staging critical inventory – including food, water and medical supplies – or housing first-responders;
- Provide options for the Governor of the State of Florida when issuing an Executive Order declaring a State of Emergency, in accordance with the provisions set forth in Chapter 252, Florida Statutes; and
- Provide a return on the investment in federal grant dollars to mitigate future losses by preventing structural damages or the increased cost of compensating for suspended or relocated operations.

### 6. MAINTENANCE

Because Hertz Arena is a continuing sports and entertainment venue for the region, the owner of the facility, through our long-term lease agreement in conjunction with these improvements, has agreed to maintain the improvements as part of their normal facility upgrades and maintenance program. It is important to note that many of the hardening improvements are passive in nature, and as such do not require maintenance. The upgraded roofing and storefront will be included in their normal maintenance programs, keeping the venue updated and attractive as regional destination for ongoing sports and entertainment programs at the facility.