**FINAL 8 STEP PUBLIC NOTICE FOR FFRMS FLOODPLAIN**

**NOTICE OF FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND**

**NOTICE OF INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS**

**wEST tUNNEL lOFTS**

**1368 W Tunnel Blvd**

**Date of Publication: October 29, 2024**

*Responsible Entity (RE):* Louisiana Housing Corporation (“LHC”)

*Address:* 2415 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70808

*Contact:* Stephen I. Dwyer, Chairman, LHC Board of Directors

(225) 763-8700

This notice shall satisfy three separate but related procedural notification requirements for activities to be undertaken by LHC, as well as satisfy two comment periods between LHC and HUD.

**REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS**. On or about **November 15, 2024** the LHC will submit a request to HUD for the release of Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds under the Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2022 (Public Law 117-43) and the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2023 (Public Law 117-180) for major disasters occurring in 2020 and 2021, detailed in Federal Register Docket No. FR-6303-N-01, FR-6326-N-01, and FR-6368-N-01, and Project Based Voucher Section 8(o) (13) of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f (o) (13)); and Housing Opportunity through Modernization Act of 2016 (Public Law 114-201) for the following project:

**2023 Piggyback Resilience Initiative – Mixed-Income (PRIME-3)**

New construction of forty (40) with residential units and involves the grading and fill of a vacant parcel of land to include a community room, fitness room and a picnic area. West Tunnel Lofts is located at 1368 West Tunnel Blvd in Houma, Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana. The total amount of funding requested is **$6,350,000.00** in **CDBG-DR funds and ten (10) Vouchers under the PBV**.

**Project Issues**: The project is located in the FFRMS Floodplain so it needs the 8 Step-process.

**Mitigation:** 1) the proposed building will have a finished floor elevation of 8.60 feet, which meets or exceeds any applicable local requirements, and have a footprint designed to further minimize any potential impacts.

**Final Notice and Public Explanation of a Proposed Activity in a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard Designated Floodplain**

This is to give notice that under the HUD rule for the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard, West Tunnel Lofts, LLC has determined that the following proposed action of constructing a 40-unit apartment building and associated improvements to be known as West Tunnel Lofts and located at 1368 West Tunnel Blvd in Houma, Louisiana is located in the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS) floodplain, as determined using the Climate-Informed Science Approach (CISA). Louisiana Housing Corporation and the Louisiana Office of Community Development will be identifying and evaluating practicable alternatives to locating the action within the FFRMS floodplain and any potential impacts from the proposed action, as required by Executive Order 11988, as amended by Executive Order 13690 and/or Executive Order 11990, in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 in Subpart C Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management and Protection of Wetlands.

The project involves the grading and fill of a vacant parcel of land and the development of a proposed three story 40-unit apartment complex to include a community room, fitness room and a picnic area. The proposed site is located in a FEMA Zone X and is defined as an area with reduced flood risk as protected by levees. The current elevation of the site as defined on the LSU Ag Center is at 6.4 feet above NAVD. A search of the National Wetland Map did not identify any wetland in the area and the proposed development will not impact any sensitive ecological areas.

The Louisiana Housing Corporation has considered the following alternatives and mitigation measures to minimize adverse impacts and to restore and preserve natural and beneficial functions and intrinsic values of the existing floodplain/wetland:

1. No Action Alternative – under the No Action Alternative, West Tunnel Lofts will not be constructed. However, this is impracticable as it will not satisfy local, state and federal objectives of providing much-needed affordable housing. Furthermore, the No Action Alternative fails to address the long vacant and undeveloped nature of the property, which is situated in a historically densely developed commercial and residential area. The No Action Alternative fails to meet the public best interest to meaningfully reintroduce the site into the surrounding community.
2. Proposed Action Alternative – under the Proposed Action Alternative, a three-story 40-unit apartment building and related improvements will be constructed and known as West Tunnel Lofts. The project site is located in FEMA Zone X (area with reduced flood risk as protected by levees) and does not occupy any wetland areas, so no adverse impacts to the FFRMS floodplain or wetlands are anticipated.

The project will have no significant impacts on the environment and/or the FFRMS floodplain for the following reasons:

1. The proposed building will have a finished floor elevation of 8.60 feet, which is above any applicable local construction requirements. Moreover, the building will have a footprint designed to further minimize any potential impacts, however unlikely, in an area that has been continuously developed with residential and commercial uses.
2. The project site will be designed to minimize any potential issues by meeting or exceeding any applicable stormwater requirements. Pervious areas will allow infiltration to prevent ponding and water stagnation. A stormwater retention pond and associated underground pipes will retain storm runoff onsite during rain events, which is expected to positively impact surrounding properties and the municipal stormwater system.

There are three primary purposes for this notice.

First, people who may be affected by activities in the FFRMS defined floodplain and those who have an interest in the protection of the natural environment should be given an opportunity to express their concerns and provide information about these areas. Commenters are encouraged to offer alternative sites outside of the FFRMS floodplain, alternative methods to serve the same project purpose, and methods to minimize and mitigate project impacts. Second, an adequate public notice program can be an important public educational tool. The dissemination of information and request for public comment about a FFRMS Floodplain can facilitate and enhance Federal efforts to reduce the risks and impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of these special areas. Third, as a matter of fairness, when the Federal government determines it will participate in actions taking place in a FFRMS floodplain, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:** LHC has determined that the project will have no significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is not required. An Environmental Review Record (ERR) that documents the environmental determinations for this project is on file at LHC, 4000 S. Sherwood Forest Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70816, (225) 763-8700 and may be examined or copied weekdays 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Any individual, group, or agency disagreeing with this determination, or wishing to comment on the project may submit written comments to this office by mail to the LHC Environmental Department or by email to Dr. Sue Chin at schin@lhc.la.gov. All comments received by **November 13, 2024** will be considered by this office prior to authorizing submission of a request for release of funds. Commenters should specify which part of this Notice they are addressing.

**RELEASE OF FUNDS:** LHC certifies to HUD that Marjorianna Willman, in her capacity as Executive Director, consents to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. HUD’s approval of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under NEPA and related laws and authorities, and allows LHC to use HUD Program Funds.

**OBJECTIONS TO RELEASE OF FUNDS**. HUD will consider objections to its release of funds and LHC’s certification received for a period of fifteen days following the anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if they are on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer of LHC approved by HUD; (b) LHC has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by HUD regulations at 24 CFR Part 58; (c) the grant recipient or other participants in the project have committed funds or incurred costs not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of a release of funds by HUD; or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures (24 CFR part 58, sec. 58.76) and shall be addressed to:

**Tennille Parker**

**Director Disaster Recovery & Special Issues, Office of Community Planning and Development**

**Department of Housing and Urban Development**

**451 Seventh Street SW, Room 7-272**

**Washington DC 20410**

Potential objectors should contact HUD to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

Stephen I Dwyer, Chairman, LHC Board of Directors

Louisiana Housing Corporation