The goal of this project is to provide flood relief for SE 34th Place and the Country Gardens subdivision during severe storms and tropical cyclones. By providing flood relief to these areas, the County will improve the level of service for emergency personnel and mitigate the risks to human safety and security. Marion County and the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) will work in conjunction with the St. John’s River Water Management District (SJRWMD) and the most qualified engineering firm to design and permit the project. Major work tasks for this project include engineering design and analysis, acquisition of three residences that have flooded during previous storm events, construction of one new drainage retention areas (DRAs), expansion of an existing DRA, expansion of a proposed DRA, construction of additional stormwater conveyance infrastructure, and roadway construction. The budget for this project will be provided by several funding sources including Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds, Community Block Development Grant – Mitigation (CDBG-MIT) funds, and County funds.

This project will serve several community lifelines including: safety and security; food, water, shelter; health and medical; energy; communications; and transportation.

The County’s resources include the Stormwater staff team comprised of five members, the consulting engineering team, the Community Services dedicated grant managing team, and the Contractor. The Country Gardens Flood Relief project design and construction will have quality assurance and controls in place such as review by the dedicated Marion County Stormwater Staff, inspection by County Stormwater Inspectors, and inspection by the Florida-licensed professional engineer of record.

The consulting team will coordinate with stakeholders including Marion County, SJRWMD, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), FDEM, the Contractor and the public. The flood relief project will be analyzed and designed by the most qualified engineering consultant team, which will be determined through a RFQ process. This team shall include, but not be limited to, professional licensed engineers, professional licensed surveyors, registered project managers, staff geologists and engineers, CADD designers, GIS technicians, and administrative assistants.

The project will be managed by the Marion County Community Services Department in conjunction with the Marion County Office of the County Engineer – Stormwater Management Program. The Marion County Community Services Department will manage the application submission on behalf of the Marion County Office of the County Engineer – Stormwater Management Program and administer the awarded funds for each general infrastructure project according to the accepted budget plan. Community Services will also oversee project progression, ensure compliance with the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) and the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines, provide updates to DEO and HUD on project completion and met objectives, and the review and payment of invoices. The Community Services team is led by Cheryl Martin, the Marion County Director of Community Services. Cheryl earned her BBA from Saint Leo University and has over ten years of history administering CDBG, SHIP, and other HUD grant funding. Cheryl is assisted by Nicholas Bennett, PMP. A veteran of the Air Force, Nick earned a BS in Public Administration with a minor in Project Management from the University of the Incarnate Word.

The Office of the County Engineer – Stormwater Management Program will manage the engineering consulting team and review the work produced in accordance with the scope of work, project
deliverables, and SJRWMD permit guidelines. The Stormwater Staff will also manage and inspect the Contractor during construction of the improvements. Jocelyn Nageon de Lestang currently manages the Stormwater Management Program for Marion County. Jocelyn has been a Florida-licensed professional engineer for twenty years and holds a Bachelor’s in Civil Engineering from the University of Florida. Christine Vrabic is a Florida-licensed professional engineer and has been working for Marion County in an engineering role for five years. She holds a Bachelor’s in Environmental Engineering Sciences from the University of Florida. James Hulsey has been a Stormwater Project Manager with the County for four years and holds a Bachelor’s in Agricultural Operations Management from the University of Florida. Roberto Lasaga is the Stormwater GIS Technician Analyst for the Office of the County Engineer with Bachelor’s degrees in Religious Studies and Anthropology & Sociology from Florida International University. He recently obtained his GIS certification from Esri in ArcGIS Desktop Associate 19-001. One of three County Stormwater Inspectors will also be assigned to the job to inspect construction in accordance with the Marion County Land Development Code, the design, and SJRWMD guidelines.

The Country Gardens Flood Relief Project will be advertised for public bidding by the Marion County Procurement Department in accordance with grant requirements and Federal Guidelines. The construction contract will be awarded by the Board of County Commissioners to a Contractor following a competitive public bid.