**Project Description**

Marion County, in coordination with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM), is seeking funding for a flood mitigation project within the Country Gardens subdivision. The project will mitigate the hazards associated with the existing flooding of the area which currently affects residential home sites and the public transportation network. The project proposes improvements to the stormwater management system and roadways, including the creation of additional flood storage capacity in the subdivision. The scope of work will include expansion of existing and proposed stormwater drainage retention areas (DRAs), construction of associated stormwater conveyance system infrastructure, and roadway improvements. The need for this project was recognized by the Local Mitigation Strategy committee due to the repetitive occurrence of flooding during severe storms and tropical cyclones. This project will benefit Block Group 1, Census Tract 24.02 which contains 3,225 residents, including 1,180 residents who are in the low-and-moderate income (LMI) group.

Marion County has historically faced flooding issues within Country Gardens, which is a County-maintained subdivision located south of Ocala. The subdivision has flooded during previous storm events including Hurricanes Frances (2004), Jeanne (2004), and Irma (2017) as well as Tropical Storm Debby (2012). Three homes within the subdivision have experienced flooding due to major storm events. Roadway flooding caused by these storm events also impacted SE 34th Place, effectively cutting off road access. A portion of the subdivision and SE 34th Place lies within a FEMA AE Floodplain. This designation is known as a FEMA Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) and is defined as an area that is subject to inundation during the one percent annual chance flood. According to the FEMA flood depth, SE 34th Place will be inundated with water to a depth of almost nine feet at the lowest road elevation during the 100-year storm event. The purpose of this project is to mitigate repetitive flooding by expanding the stormwater management system and thus improving the community resilience of this area.

In addition to mitigating the risks associated with flooded homes, the project aims to maintain road functionality and allow traffic to safely traverse the roadway during flood events such as severe storms and tropical cyclones. Additionally, the project intends to provide for the protection of property, and the health, safety and welfare of the citizens. Flooded roads can result in significant increases in response times for emergency vehicles and critical infrastructure repair crews. Residents living in the area may not be able to leave their subdivisions due to flooding or may be detoured several miles for days or weeks following a major storm event. Residents experiencing flooding in their homes will no longer be able to shelter in place and may be required to travel during major storm events. In addition to the issues of access by emergency vehicles and service industry repair crews, repeated inundation will reduce the effective life span of the roadway base and components. Water and moisture damage decrease the strength and durability of the asphalt due to the loss of the bond between the asphalt and the road base. Extended durations and frequencies of moisture penetration accelerate the deterioration of the roadway base. This underlying deterioration is reflected by cracking, stripping, rutting, bleeding and ultimately failure of the top asphalt surface. The drainage improvements proposed will help to prolong the lifespan of the rebuilt roadway resulting in less disruptions to transportation due to asphalt repair.
The proposed project has an anticipated outcome that will not only provide flood relief to Country Gardens and SE 34th Place, but it will also remove three homes from repetitive flooding. The County plans to accomplish this by expanding existing and proposed DRAs, installing pipes and swales for the stormwater conveyance system, as well as rebuilding SE 34th Place and raising the elevation of the road. One DRA will be located along the south side of SE 34th Place between SE 4th Avenue and SE 5th Court and will require land acquisition. The second DRA will be expanded on the north side of SE 34th Place between SE 4th Avenue and SE 5th Court and will require land acquisition. The associated stormwater conveyance system will be constructed along SE 4th Avenue, SE 5th Court, SE 34th Place, and SE 35th Place with stormwater flow directed to the expanded and existing DRAs. The system will consist of reinforced concrete pipe, stormwater inlets, swales, and mitered end sections. Approximately 380 linear feet of roadway construction will occur along SE 34th Place from SE 4th Avenue to SE 5th Court.

The CDBG-MIT grant for this project will be managed by the Marion County Community Services Department. The Marion County Office of the County Engineer – Stormwater Management Program (MCSMP), in conjunction with the County’s Procurement Department, will procure engineering design services and construction services in accordance with the grant and Federal Guidelines. MCSMP will manage the consulting firm through the design process as well as the Contractor through the construction phase.

The requested funding amount is based on historic costs for similar project scopes, as provided by Marion County bid tabulations. Plans for the proposed DRA have been provided as a reference. Construction of the proposed DRA will not be part of the CDBG-MIT funding agreement. Expansion of the proposed DRA and an existing DRA are included as part of this funding request.

Once the project is complete, the Contractor will be responsible for any issue arising from construction methods for a duration of one year. After this warranty period, the County will be responsible for repairing any defects within the system. The DRAs will be added to the annual maintenance list for routine inspection and mowing. The rebuilt roadway will be perpetually maintained by the Marion County Office of the County Engineer – Roads Department for right-of-way mowing and asphalt maintenance and repair.