

**COMBINED PUBLIC NOTICE
NOTICE OF FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND
NOTICE OF INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS AND FINAL NOTICE
AND PUBLIC EXPLANATION OF A PROPOSED ACTIVITY IN
A FEDERAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STANDARD
DESIGNATED FLOODPLAIN AND WETLAND**

September 15, 2026

Town of Esto, Florida
3312 2nd Avenue South
Esto, FL 32425
850-263-6521

To: All Interested Agencies, Groups, and Individuals:

These notices shall satisfy three separate but related procedural requirements for activities to be undertaken by the Town of Esto, Florida

**FINAL NOTICE AND PUBLIC EXPLANATION OF A PROPOSED ACTIVITY
IN A FEDERAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STANDARD DESIGNATED
FLOODPLAIN AND WETLAND**

This is to give notice that the Town of Esto, Florida, as the Responsible Entity (RE) under 24 CFR Part 58, has determined that the following proposed action under the Florida Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and Grant No. 26DB-N02 affects areas in the FFRMS floodplain and wetlands. The Town of Esto will be identifying and evaluating practicable alternatives to locating the action in the floodplain and wetlands and the potential impacts on the floodplain from the proposed action, as required by Executive Order 11988 and Executive Order 11990, and, in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 Subpart C Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management.

The proposed project is located within the limits of the Town of Esto's municipal limits except for short extensions into the right of ways of County Rd. 2 and SR79 which are located in Holmes County. The proposed activities will install an 8" waterline along the east right of way or the Town of Esto's stretch of State Road 79 from Joy Meadows Circle southerly toward the intersection of CR2 with extensions for service to the east, south and southwest. The Town also proposes to replace a storage building at the Town's water treatment and storage facility. Proposed unaddressed needs would resurface an existing paved walking path around a pond in John Clark Park.

Alternatives to impacts to the floodplain and wetland include routing the 8" waterline along the elevated shoulder of SR79 to avoid both the wetland and floodplain, subject to FDOT design approvals. This could be accomplished as either open cut or directional bore. If this is not possible, any routing east of the embankment would require placement in the floodplain and wetland. This could be mitigated by directional bore, saving both a USACE permit and disruption of the wetland. This choice may be made by the contractor selection process as cost is a prohibitive consideration to be made in the selection process. In either instance, permitting will or may be required by the USACE, and the Northwest Florida Water Management District.

At the recreational site, wetlands identified consist of the open water pond at John Clark Park. The encircling asphalt-paved recreational trail has one crossing at the eastern downstream overflow of the pond which is crossed by an existing wooden bridge. It is unlikely that work in this location will affect the pond itself as there is adequate separation between it and the walking trail.

The floodplain in this location is limited. The addition of an inch of asphalt to the existing surface would at most incur a de minimus reduction of storage in the pond that has approximately 18" of freeboard before

overland flow would stop significant water level rise. No alternatives are expected to be provided at this location due to absence of anticipated impacts.

The Town of Esto has re-evaluated and considered these alternatives with the design team who will be consulting with likely bidders to establish a cost effective methodology to minimize floodplain and wetland impacts within the limitations of the FDOT permitting process and the cost limitations of the scope of work. The Town has determined that it has no practicable alternative to the location of the waterline in the right of way as there is no path around it to provide additional fire flows and service south of CR2, the Town's primary commercial development location. The Town has also determined that the project is vital to the ongoing commitment to encouraging local job growth by attracting new businesses at the intersection. The elimination of the water extension will significantly limit its potential for economic and population growth. Environmental files that document compliance with steps 3 through 6 of Executive Order 11988 are available for public inspection, review and copying upon request at the times and location delineated in the last paragraph of this notice for receipt of comments.

There are three primary purposes for this notice: First, people who may be affected by activities in floodplains 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.

Second, an adequate public notice program can be an important public educational tool. The dissemination of information and request for public comments about floodplains 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 floodplains, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

Written comments must be received by Mr. Ben Tew, Town Clerk at 3312 2nd Avenue South, Esto, FL 32425, (850) 263-6521 on or before **October 1, 2026**. A full description of the project may also be reviewed from 8:30am to 12:00 pm at the Esto Town Hall at 1037 Hwy 79, Esto, FL 32425. Additional information may be obtained by contacting Mr. Ben Tew, Town Clerk at (850) 263-6521, before noon on weekdays. Comments may also be submitted by email to: EstoTownClerk@gmail.com

REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

On or about **October 2, 2026**, the Town of Esto will submit a request to FloridaCommerce for the release of its Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program funds under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, to undertake a project known as Town of Esto Water Improvements Project, No. 26DB-N02 for the purpose of the demolition and replacement of a deteriorated water plant building located next to the elevated water tank at 1037 Commerce Street. The project will also replace approximately 6,690 Linear Feet of water main between State Road 2 and the intersections of State Road 79 and Joy Meadows Circle. The improvements are intended to increase water pressure and improve fire protection throughout the Town. The project is estimated to cost \$949,692.00 in CDBG funds.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Town of Esto 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. Additional project information is contained in the Environmental Review Record (ERR) on file at the Esto Town Hall at 1037 Hwy 79, Esto, FL 32425 where the ERR can be examined for review and may be examined or copied weekdays 8:30 am to 12:00 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any individual, group, or agency may submit written comments on the ERR to the Town of Esto's Town Hall, attention, Ben Tew, Town Clerk at 1037 Hwy 79, Esto, FL 32425. Comments may also be submitted by email to EstoTownClerk@gmail.com. All comments received by **October 1, 2026** will be considered by the Town of Esto prior to authorizing submission of a request for release of funds. Comments should specify which Notice they are addressing.

ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION

The Town of Esto certifies to FloridaCommerce that Greg Wells in his capacity as Town Council President, 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. FloridaCommerce's approval of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under NEPA and related laws and authorities and allows the Town of Esto to use program funds.

OBJECTIONS TO RELEASE OF FUNDS

FloridaCommerce will accept objections to its release of fund and the Town of Esto's certification 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 the Town of Esto, Florida; (b) the Town of Esto 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 development process have committed funds, incurred costs or undertaken activities not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of a release of funds by FloridaCommerce; 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 FloridaCommerce, CDBG Program, MSC-400, 107 East Madison Street, Tallahassee, FL 32399-6508. Potential objectors should contact FloridaCommerce to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

Greg Wells, Esto Town Council President
Environmental Certifying Official