

# **PUBLIC NOTICE**

EPB is applying for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) funding through the Tennessee Emergency Management (TEMA) as a sub-applicant.

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), federal actions must be reviewed and evaluated for feasible alternatives and for social, economic, historic, environmental, legal, and safety considerations. EO 12898 requires FEMA to provide the opportunity for public participation in the planning process and to consider potential impacts to minority and low-income populations. This notice may also fulfill requirements under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

Funding for the proposed project will be conditional upon compliance with all applicable federal, tribal, state, and local laws, regulations, permit requirements and conditions.

**Applicant:** EPB

**Project Title:** EPB Chattanooga Community Network Conversion for Critical Infrastructure

**Location of Proposed Work:** Within the boundaries of the EPB service territory which includes Hamilton County and portions of the surrounding nine counties in TN and GA and the campus of multiple emergency response and safety facilities at 3410 Amnicola Hwy, Chattanooga, TN 37406

**Name of Structure: EPB Power and Communication Network Conversion**

Approximately two hundred and fifty (250) segments of the EPB power and communications network that support a combination of Critical Community Buildings/Facilities and Severe Repetitive Loss Properties within the boundaries of the EPB service territory and

**Power to Protect MG – Public Safety Campus – Microgridding of Public Safety Campus**

**Point of Contact:** Kelli Grimes-Ballard; (423) 648-1218 / grimeskl@epb.net

**Flood Hazard Area Zone:** This first portion of this project is for the conversion of overhead to underground of approximately 250 properties located in various flood zones (some areas may take place in Special Flood Hazard Areas). Confirmation of locations will be made in the latest Flood Insurance Rate Map-FIRM. The proposed work will conform to all applicable State of Tennessee and local floodplain regulations. The proposed work will be to convert overhead properties to underground in previously disturbed public right of way property and is not expected to have any effect on the local floodplain. The action will be mitigated by leaving the structures in place if the infrastructure remains in use by other utilities otherwise removed, returning the property to open space to prevent future loss of property.

This second portion of this project is for the completion of a microgrid for public safety and emergency response properties located in flood zones (Areas of Minimal Flood Hazard AMFH). Confirmation of location in an AMFH was made by reference to the latest Flood Insurance Rate Map (02/03/2016), Panel 47065C0334G. The proposed work will conform to all applicable State

of Tennessee and local floodplain regulations. The proposed work will include the installation of a combination of solar, energy storage and propane generation assets on the property and will not have any effect on the local floodplain. The action will be mitigated by ensuring adherence to all state and local building codes to ensure continuity of service of the property.

### **Proposed Work and Purpose:**

EPB is requesting funds to convert existing electric and communications network from overhead to underground and to build a microgrid for the Public Safety campus located on Amnicola Hwy. The purpose of these projects is to ensure continuity of local safety and emergency services for the local community and to emergency communications systems across the state of Tennessee as well as prevent recurring replacement of power and communications network property from vegetation impact.

### **Project Alternatives:**

#### **Power and Communication Network Conversion**

**Alternative #1:** The most feasible action is to convert approximately two hundred and fifty (250) power and communication network properties from overhead to underground, and by doing so it would lessen the loss of life and property in this area. It will also reduce the disruption of power and communication services to critical community facilities, residents and business. Another advantage to this action is that the conversion increases the rerouting capacity of EPB's existing Smart grid operations. This action would not put our public safety officers at risk in future flooding events.

**Alternative #2:** Another alternative includes installation and continued maintenance of emergency power generators at critical facilities supported by the undergrounding. This solution has less favorable impacts to costs due to assets shorter useful life, reoccurring replacement and maintenance. It also poses a less favorable impact to the environment, and does not mitigate above ground utility damage.

**Alternative #3:** (no action alternative): Taking no action would result in these circuits remaining highly prone to all adverse weather conditions. Repetitive weather related impacts to vegetation and natural hazards could still occur, placing a burden on EPB customers impacted by the loss of power and other customers impacted by socialized replacement and circuit management costs as well as critical local government resources. If the structures remain, it would remain subject to ongoing and repeated vegetation impacts from all-weather events and continue to contribute to ongoing increasing mitigation costs. It will also continue disrupting power and communication services to critical community facilities and residents and business to the extent the Smart grid operations can currently minimize.

#### **Power to Protect MG – Public Safety Campus**

**Alternative #1:** The most feasible action is install the generation assets and Microgrid controllers onsite ensuring continuity of local safety and emergency services for the local community and to emergency communications systems across the state of Tennessee.

**Alternative #2:** An alternate action might consider adoption of electric load shedding equipment, re-engineering internal circuits and processes maximizing current backup generators capabilities to support all necessary functions for safety response to the local community and to emergency communications systems across the state of Tennessee. This alternative poses high impact to existing operational complexities in emergency and safety coordination.

**Alternative #3** (no action alternative): Taking no action on providing a Microgrid of the Chattanooga Public Safety would place some aspects of continuity of operations for emergency response and safety at risk.

**Comment Period:**

Comments are solicited from the public; local, state or federal agencies; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of the proposed project. The comments should be made in writing and addressed to EPB. All comments are due within 30 days of this notice. EPB will forward comments to applicable regulatory agencies as needed.

Interested persons may submit comments, obtain more detailed information about the proposed action, or request a copy of the findings by contacting:

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**POSTED ON:** December 20, 2020

**End of Notice**