



Subject	Meeting Minutes - Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) Meeting #1
Date	March 23, 2016
Time	6:00 pm – 8:00 pm ET
Location	Robert L. Craig Elementary School, 20 W Park Street, Moonachie, NJ07074
Attendees	Attendee list available, <i>for internal use only</i>

- The power point slide presentation utilized at the meeting is attached to the meeting minutes (see **Attachment 1**).
- A CAG meeting packet was provided to all attendees and is also attached to the minutes (see **Attachment 2**).
- Introductions – Dennis Vaccaro, Mayor of Moonachie, started the meeting by thanking the Superintendent of the school for the accommodations.
- Mr. David Rosenblatt, Assistant Commissioner, NJDEP, provided an overview of the Rebuild By Design (RBD) contest and the original project concept. The State has been awarded \$150M in Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funding to implement the Project by 2022.
- Based on the amount of HUD funding available, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) has determined that the project will focus primarily on reducing flood risk (“Protect” component) within the Phase 1 Pilot Area.
- Mr. Christopher Benosky, AECOM Project Manager (PM), then introduced the AECOM team and briefed the attendees of the work performed to-date. He outlined the criteria that will be utilized in developing the range of alternatives, while stressing that input from the CAG members and the public is key to the entire process.
- A detailed overview of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and key milestones was provided by Brian Boose, AECOM NEPA PM. He stated that throughout the NEPA process there will be several opportunities for public input and that all requests for public input will be disseminated in several languages (English, Spanish, Korean) to reach a wider audience.
- CAG members were requested to provide suggestions on: (1) possible venues for future CAG and public meetings, (2) the need for additional public workshops, and (3) widely read



newspapers in or near the project area that could be used for publishing advertisements/notices regarding the project.

- The entire public outreach process and some of the outreach tools currently being developed were outlined by Ms. Linda Fisher, NJDEP Project Team Manager. A project website and listserv will be deployed and can be accessed at: www.rbd-meadowlands.nj.gov shortly to keep the public and all stakeholders informed of the project.
- Ms. Fisher outlined the responsibilities of CAG members and requested the Mayors to provide information on other interested individuals.
- The Mayor of Moonachie suggested individual towns add a link of the project website to their town websites. All members and the NJDEP thought that was a great suggestion and it was immediately accepted.
- A dedicated email address: rbd-meadowlands@dep.nj.gov will be used to receive all public input throughout the duration of the project.
- The meeting was then opened for a Q&A and Discussion session. Questions and answers are reported below.
 - Question – Will all Right-of-Way (ROW) purchases be made from the \$150 million, or are additional funds available? Also, the Project Team should be aware that this takes time to complete.
 - Response – No additional funds are available and all purchases will be made using the \$150 million. The Project Team is aware of the efforts and time required to conduct ROW acquisitions.
 - Question – Will the presence of the Superfund site (Berry's Creek) within the Project Area be considered in the development of Alternatives?
 - Response – Yes, the Project Team is aware of the site and several other areas of concern in the project area.
 - Question – Are the three alternatives presented at this meeting preliminary?
 - Response – Yes. These alternatives are very preliminary and subject to change, including based on CAG and community input, which is critical to this process.
 - Question – What is the role of the NJ Sports and Exhibition Authority?



- 1 ▪ Response – The NJSEA is involved in this Project as part of the Executive
2 Steering Committee and has a representative at this meeting.
3
- 4 ○ Question – What are some of the screening criteria for selection of Alternatives for
5 further analysis?
6 ▪ Response – The Project Team has identified cost, schedule, ROW acquisitions,
7 easements, benefit-cost analysis, wetlands, the potential to induce off-site
8 flooding, and several other criteria for screening initial alternatives.
9
- 10 ○ Question – Is there any funding available for CAG members to conduct public outreach
11 activities?
12 ▪ Response –No additional funding is available. The NJDEP can provide written
13 materials and data for the CAG members to circulate
14
- 15 • Suggestions provided by the CAG members included the following items:
16 ○ The Project should avoid wetlands and other Waters of the US; filling of these
17 jurisdictional features is expensive and can require mitigation of up to a ratio of 10:1;
18 the Project needs to avoid existing wetland mitigation sites in the Meadowlands – these
19 areas are off limits. Commuter rail lines should be avoided.
20 ○ The Meadowlands Commission conducted a questionnaire within the affected towns;
21 the Team should use these data. The Team determined these data are included in the
22 2006 FEMA Flood Study/Management Plan, which is already under evaluation by the
23 Team.
24 ○ Project Team should take in to account the proposal to construct a hangar at Teterboro
25 (along Fred Wehran Drive) Airport and its effect of surface water runoff into the West
26 Riser Ditch.
27 ○ Citizens in the project area may request additional public meetings and the Project
28 Team should accommodate their request.
29 ○ The condition of existing ditches and drainage structures/flood control infrastructure in
30 the project area is poor. The Project Team should be aware of these current conditions,
31 and consider improvements to existing drainage facilities into Alternative 2. For
32 example, a \$1.4M tidal gate at the East Riser Ditch in Moonachie is not operating
33 properly. Dredging of existing ditches should be considered; the West Riser Ditch and
34 East Riser ditch were specifically mentioned. A CAG member noted that dredging the
35 East Riser Ditch by the Chrysler dealership at Route 46 would drain the area north to
36 Interstate 80. Commenter stated that “Water Viaducts” should be created.



- The next CAG meeting should focus on identifying problem drainage areas in the project area; members should be asked to photograph problem areas in advance and bring to that meeting.
- The Project Team should consider long-term Operations and Maintenance (O&M) of any built improvements.
- The Project Team should avoid the use of acronyms in public materials.
- The Project Team should be aware that several members of the local public have had NEPA experience related to the SAMP EIS and the Meadowlands Mills Mall EIS, which were extensive, controversial projects.
- \$7M has been spent to protect Little Ferry from a 25-year flood event.
- Public participation in this NEPA process may be increased if the Project Team identifies that the Proposed Action would improve lost real estate values and decrease flood insurance rates. These are very important issues locally.
- The Project Team could conduct walk-throughs of problem drainage areas with members of the CAG.
- All CAG members provided e-mail addresses at the meeting; e-mail is the best way to contact CAG members.
- Prior to the next CAG meeting, the Project Team will send CAG members a Top 10 list of initial questions concerning the Project and project area to which the CAG members will respond and provide data.
- The Project Team will send the CAG members a copy of the Preliminary Draft Public Scoping Document, prior to release to the general public, on or about April 1, 2016.

The meeting adjourned promptly at 8 pm ET. Various attendees stayed after the meeting until about 9 pm to discuss general topics.



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Attachment 1. Power Point Slide Presentation (as delivered)

State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Citizen Advisory Group (CAG)
Meeting #1**

Introduction and Purpose/Need
NEPA Process Overview

NEW MEADOWLANDS REBUILD BY DESIGN

PHASE 1 PILOT AREA
BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

MARCH 23, 2016

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Agenda

- 1 Welcome and Introductions
- 2 Overview of the Project, NEPA Process, & Timeline
- 3 Public Outreach Process and Tools
- 4 Roles and Responsibilities
- 5 Key Input Milestones
- 6 Where Are We Now?
- 7 Key Contact Information and Communication
- 8 Next Steps
- 9 Citizen Outreach Plan and Public Involvement Plan
- 10 Questions and Answers

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1 Welcome and Introductions

- **Welcome** - Dennis Vaccaro, Mayor of Moonachie
- **Introduction** - NJDEP Team Members
- **Introduction** - Elected Officials
- **Introduction of CAG Members** - by Mayors and NJDEP

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2 Project Overview - Foundation

Dave Rosenblatt, Assistant Commissioner, NJDEP

The Challenge:


- The New Jersey Meadowlands are subjected to extreme, repetitive flooding, as highlighted by Hurricane Sandy
- Flood waters in the project area come from:
 - Rainfall and "fluvial" flooding from the Hackensack River
 - Tidal surge flooding during strong storm events
- Most of the project area is < 6 feet above sea level
- We have \$150M to find a viable solution that reduces flooding in the project area to the extent possible

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Project Overview

Proposed RBD Project (award-winning concept)

- New Meadowlands: Protect, Connect, Grow
 - Protect: flood protection
 - Connect: transportation improvements
 - Grow: re-development
- Cost Estimate (by MIT): **\$850M+**



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Project Overview

Where We Stand

- HUD awarded State of New Jersey **\$150M** for Phase I Pilot Area, only
 - Project must be functional, and completed by 2022
- Planning, feasibility studies, designs cost (approx.): **\$30M**
- That leaves **\$110-120M** to construct a flood risk reduction solution
- Comparison:
 - FEMA Certifiable Levees: **\$35M** per mile
 - Large Storm Surge Barrier across the Hackensack River: **\$250M+**

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Project Overview

Where We Stand

- NJDEP is:
 - Focusing on "Protect" component – foundation for "Connect" and "Grow"
 - Developing Alternatives that provide the most flood protection to the largest portion of the Phase 1 Pilot Area as possible
 - Focus on Low and Moderate Income (LMI) communities
 - Considering options that would allow vertical expansion with additional funding in the future
 - Seeking public input on the best methods and locations
- Please help us identify viable solutions that best help your communities!

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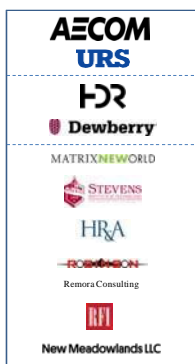
The AECOM Team

Christopher Benosky, AECOM Project Manager

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The AECOM Team



- Local expertise and experience
- Long history of working together
- Can meet the diverse requirements of the project
- Will develop a buildable and implementable plan

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Our Project Team

Tom MacAllen
Project ExecutiveChris Benosky
Project ManagerWerner Mueller
Executive CommitteeJohn Boulé
Executive CommitteeMichael Cannon
Feasibility StudyBrian W. Boose
NEPA Process (EIS)Barbara Barnes
Ecological DesignJohn Bianco
Flood Risk Mitigation DesignGonzalo Cruz
Urban Planning & DesignBrian Beckenbaugh
Public Outreach

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Challenges and Preliminary Studies



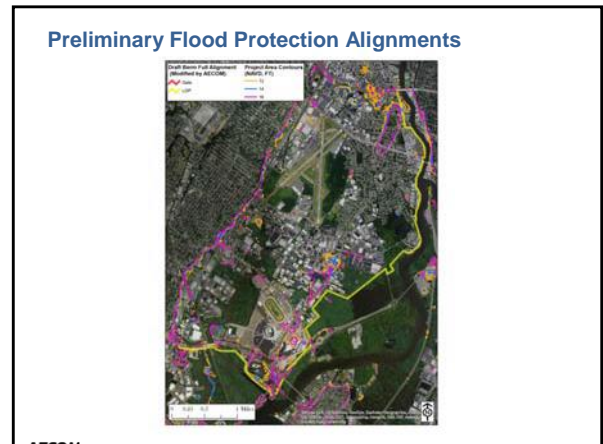
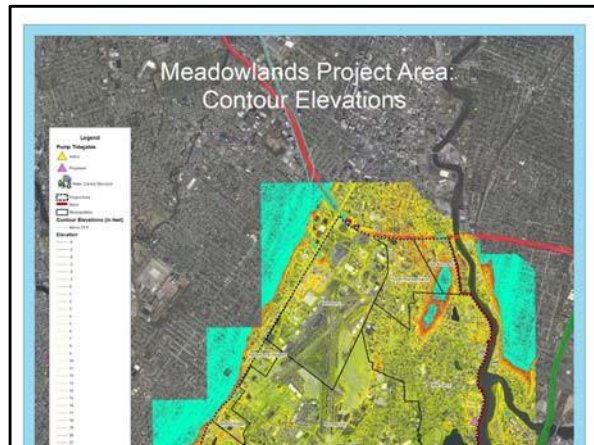
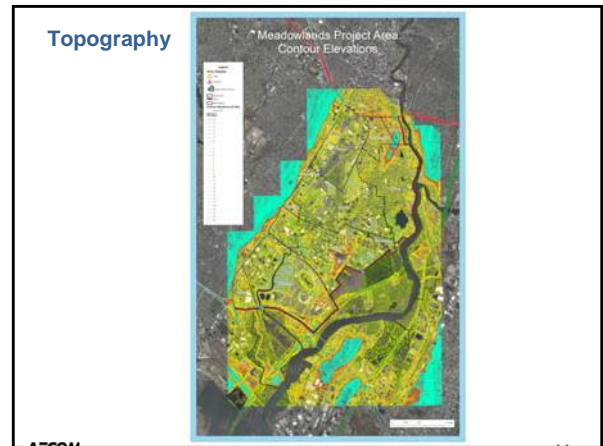
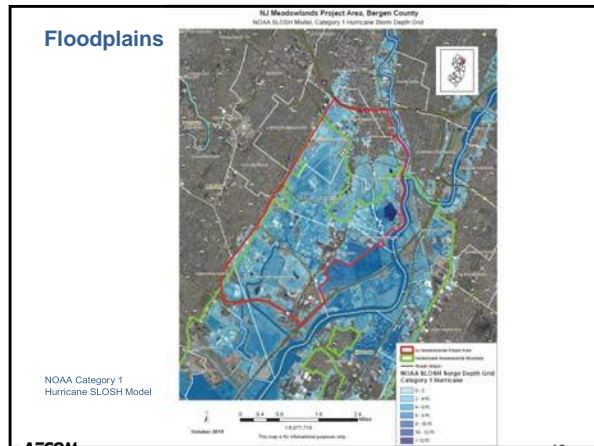
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Floodplains



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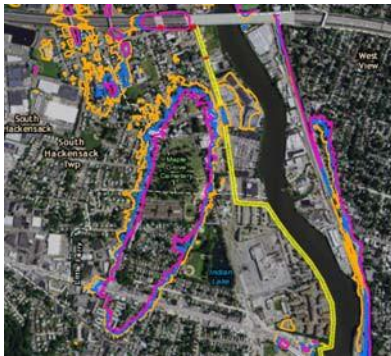
Preliminary Flood Protection Alignments



Preliminary Flood Protection Alignments



Preliminary Flood Protection Alignments



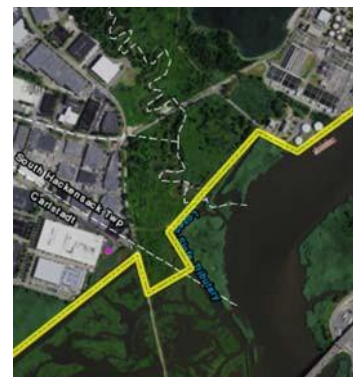
Preliminary Flood Protection Alignments



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Preliminary Flood Protection Alignments



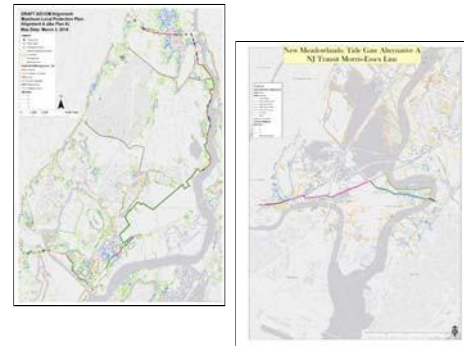
Preliminary Flood Protection Alignments



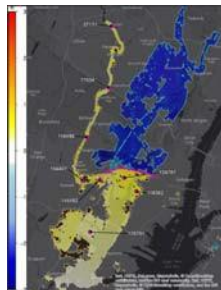
Preliminary Flood Protection Alignments



Preliminary Flood Protection Alternatives



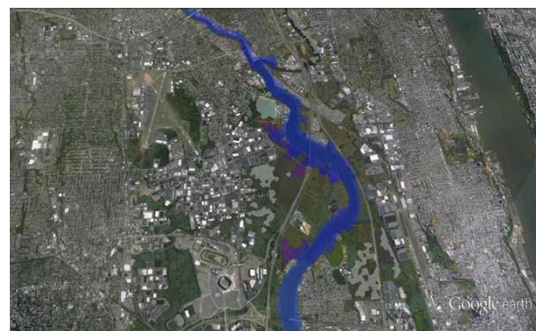
Hydrodynamic Modeling



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MIKE21 - Hydrodynamic Modeling

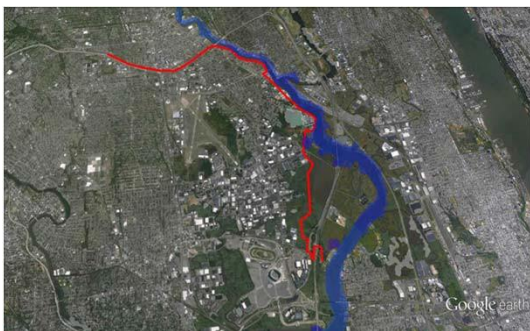


Existing Conditions

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MIKE21 - Hydrodynamic Modeling



With Line of Protection

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3 – Technical Approach

NEPA Process

Brian W. Boose, Team NEPA Manager

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NEPA Overview

National Environmental Policy Act (1970)

- Purpose: Ensures the Federal government considers the environmental effects of all projects, prior to implementation
- Applies to all projects with a Federal connection (e.g., funding)
- Requires an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for "major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the environment"
- EIS process has several procedural steps to ensure public input is obtained and considered

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NEPA Overview



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Scoping Process Overview

- "Scoping" – process by which meaningful public input is sought to focus the NEPA analysis
- 30-day Public Scoping Period
 - Formally begins with publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS
 - *Federal Register, Little Ferry Local, Hackensack Chronicle, South Bergenite*
 - Occurs early in the NEPA (environmental review) process to focus the NEPA analysis on specific alternatives, issues, concerns, and methods of analysis
 - A Public Scoping Meeting occurs at least 15 days after publication of the NOI

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Scoping Process Overview

- Draft Public Scoping Document
 - Describes the purpose and need of the project
 - Identifies an initial range of alternatives
 - Identifies resource areas that should be analyzed
 - Outlines methods to assess resources and effects
- Will be made available when the NOI is published
 - On project website; Listserv will be notified
- Oral and written comments will be invited from the public during the 30-day scoping process, and at the Public Scoping Meeting

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EIS Overview

- Major components:
 - Consideration of Alternatives – analyzes potential options for increasing flood protection in the project area
 - Detailed social, economic, and environmental analysis of three Build Alternatives, as well as the No Action Alternative
 - A program of public participation and interagency coordination throughout development of the EIS
- Coordinates with Federal, State, and local agencies; stakeholder groups; and general public

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EIS Overview

- Draft EIS
 - 45-day public comment period
 - Public meeting
- Final EIS – responds to comments on Draft EIS
 - Initiates another 30-day public comment period
- Record of Decision (ROD) – identifies Federal decision made

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NEPA Timeline



Note: Dates are approximate and subject to change

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3 Public Outreach Process and Tools

- To engage a diverse group of public and agency participants to provide timely and relevant information throughout the NEPA process
 - Establish two-way communication between NJDEP and the public
 - Regular meetings and informative data exchanges
 - Educate the public about the NEPA process
 - Roles of the government, stakeholders, and the general public
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of outreach and public involvement activities on a continual basis

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Public Outreach Process

- Citizen Outreach Plan (COP); Public Involvement Plan (PIP)
- Public Outreach coordinated through the Citizen Advisory Group (CAG)
 - Notably includes underserved and vulnerable populations
- Accommodations at public meetings for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency
 - Documents available in Spanish, Korean; other languages upon request

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Public Outreach Tools

- Project Branding
- Project Website and E-mail
- NJDEP Listserv
- Monthly Updates/Newsletters
- Meeting Announcements
- Media Relations
- Social Media
- Other Tools



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4 Roles and Responsibilities

Linda Fischer, NJDEP Project Manager

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Roles and Responsibilities

NJDEP (with AECOM)

- Spearhead the NEPA process, prepare the EIS, and explain the different phases to the public
- Provide public with updates and lead public meetings
- Receive and consider comment from stakeholders and public
- Specific to CAG participation, the NJDEP will:
 - Develop information materials that can be used by CAG members to inform and educate the broader public
 - Provide agenda and other information regarding meeting content
 - Distribute all materials provided at the meeting on the project website
 - Distribute summary of meeting to public for comment
 - Collect CAG comments on meeting summary and revise accordingly

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Roles and Responsibilities

Citizen Advisory Group (CAG)

- Attend CAG and public meetings
- Serve as the liaison between NJDEP and the community
- Share with the NJDEP and the Mayors:
 - Issues, concerns, and priorities of the public
 - Inform the NJDEP of best local networks of communication
- Share with community:
 - Information about project goals and objectives
 - Processes and procedures of the project
 - Responses to issues and concerns

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Citizen Advisory Group Meetings

CAG Meetings

- **CAG Meeting #1** – Purpose and Need – ***This meeting***
- **CAG Meeting #2** – Scoping/Data Gathering – May 17, 2016
- **CAG Meeting #3** – Screening Criteria/Metrics – June 2016
- **CAG Meeting #4** – Alternatives Screening – July 2016
- **CAG Meeting #5** – Alternatives Analysis – August 2016
- **Subsequent CAG Meetings** – September 2016 – September 2017, as appropriate and needed

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5 Key Input Milestones

Brian W. Boose, Team NEPA Manager

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Key Input Milestones



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6 Where Are We Now? Purpose and Need

- **Purpose:** to reduce the flood risk within the project area
 - Minimize the impacts from coastal storm surge and rainfall flood events on the community
 - Provide benefits and improve the quality of life/standard of living of the area's residents
- **Need:** to provide increased flood protection to the residents, businesses, and critical community infrastructure within the project area
 - Decrease costs
 - Increase public health and safety
 - Provide opportunities for additional quality of life improvements

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Where Are We Now? Proposed Action

Proposed Action:

- Refine RBD vision to provide a level of flood protection that satisfies local needs and Federal funding requirements
- Focus on the Phase 1 Pilot Area
 - Possibly expanded to include the Boroughs of East Rutherford and Rutherford, and the Township of Lyndhurst, among others

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Where Are We Now? Initial Alternatives

- Alternative 1: Modified/Reduced Phase 1 Pilot Area RBD Concept
 - Appropriate levees, berms, drainage structures, pump stations, floodgates, storm surge barrier, and/or other hard and soft infrastructure, to achieve flood protection
- Alternative 2: Phase 1 Pilot Area Fluvial/Rain Event Drainage Improvement
 - Series of projects that would reduce the regular, small-scale flooding events that disrupt the local communities
- Alternative 3: Hybrid
 - Hard and soft infrastructure
 - Local drainage improvement projects
- No Action Alternative

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7 Key Contact Information and Communication

Linda Fischer, NJDEP Project Manager

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Key Contact Information and Communication

Name	Affiliation
Alyson Beha	HUD Region II Senior Regional Planner
Linda Fisher	NJDEP Project Team Manager
Alexis Taylor	NJDEP Outreach Team Leader
Christopher Benosky	AECOM – Project Manager
Garrett Avery	AECOM – Deputy Project Manager
Brian Beckenbaugh	AECOM – Outreach
Brian W. Boose	AECOM – NEPA Project Manager

Website: www.rbd-meadowlands.nj.gov
 E-mail: rbd-meadowlands@dep.nj.gov

The NJDEP will be the key agency responsible for receiving, publicly distributing (including via the CAG), and coordinating all information relative to this NEPA process

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8 Next Steps

NJDEP/AECOM Upcoming Activities

- Prepare Meeting Summary for this meeting
- Continue developing:
 - Initial Alternatives
 - Feasibility Study
 - Draft Public Scoping Document
- Provide CAG with Preliminary Draft Public Scoping Document for review and comment over a 15-day period (approx. April 1-15, 2016)
- Prepare for Public Scoping Period and Public Meeting
- Implement Public Involvement Plan, including website, newsletter, etc.
- Prepare for Scoping/Data Gathering CAG Meeting in May 2016 (approx.)
- Publish the NOI in April or May 2016

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Next Steps

CAG – Call to Action:

- Review and comment on Meeting Summary for this meeting
- Share information from this Meeting with constituents
- Educate constituents on the project and NEPA Process
- Build interest in the project
- Assist in disseminating information concerning the Public Scoping Process and Meeting
- Review the Preliminary Draft Public Scoping Document over a 15-day period; provide comments by April 15, 2016
- Begin obtaining information, ideas, and potential concerns from constituents

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Next Steps

Critical Schedule Dates (approximate)

- **Late April – early May** – Publish NOI
- **At NOI Publication** – Make Available Draft Public Scoping Document
- **May 17** – CAG Meeting #2 – Scoping/Data Gathering (tentative)
- **May 18** – Public Scoping Meeting (tentative)
- **June 14** – CAG Meeting #3 – Screening Criteria/Metrics (tentative)
- **July 12** – CAG Meeting #4 – Alternatives Screening (tentative)
- **August 9** – CAG Meeting #5 – Alternatives Analysis (tentative)

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9 Citizen Outreach Plan and Public Involvement Plan

COP and PIP

- Finalizing the Draft COP
- 30-Day Public Comment Period
 - COP posted on project website at www.rbd-meadowlands.nj.gov
 - Submit comments via rbd-meadowlands@dep.nj.gov



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10 Questions and Answers

Question & Answer Session



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Attachment 2. CAG Meeting Packet #1 (provided as handout at meeting)



CITIZEN ADVISORY GROUP MEETING #1 PACKET

Introduction and Purpose/Need
NEPA Process Overview

NEW MEADOWLANDS REBUILD BY DESIGN

PHASE 1 PILOT AREA
BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

MARCH 23, 2016

Prepared by

AECOM

Sources: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, IGP, Swirex, and the GIS User Community

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List of Acronyms

CAG	Citizen Advisory Group
CDBG-DR	Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
ESC	Executive Steering Committee
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NJDEP	New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
NOA	Notice of Availability
NOI	Notice of Intent
OSC	Outreach Subcommittee
ROD	Record of Decision

Agenda

Introduction and Purpose/Need CAG Meeting NEPA Process Overview

6-8 PM, March 23, 2016

**Robert L. Craig School
20 West Park Street
Moonachie, NJ 07074**

- **Welcome** – Dennis Vaccaro, Mayor of Moonachie
- **Foundation and Introductions** – Dave Rosenblatt, Assistant Commissioner, NJDEP
 - NJDEP Team Members
 - Elected Officials
- **CAG Members Introductions** - by Mayors and NJDEP
- **AECOM Presentation** – Christopher Benosky, AECOM Project Manager
 - AECOM Team Members
 - Overview of the Project, NEPA Process, & Timeline
 - Public Outreach Process and Tools
 - Roles and Responsibilities (NJDEP)
 - Key Input Milestones
 - Where are we now?
 - Purpose and Need
 - Proposed Action
 - Initial Alternatives
 - Key Contact Information and Communication
 - Next Steps
- **Citizen Outreach Plan and NEPA Public Involvement Plan (COP and PIP)**
 - Finalizing Draft COP
 - 30-day Public Comment Period
 - COP posted on project website www.rbd-meadowlands.nj.gov
 - Submit comments to rbd-meadowlands@dep.nj.gov
- **Q & A**

1.1 Welcome, Foundation, and Introductions

- Introduce NJDEP Team Members
- Introduce Elected Officials
- Introduce CAG Members
- Sign-in Sheet

2.1 Overview of the Project and NEPA Process

- Project Overview
- NEPA Overview
- Overview of the Scoping Process
- EIS Overview
- What is our Timeline for this NEPA Process?

2.2 Project Overview

- History of extreme, repetitive flooding in the New Jersey Meadowlands highlighted by Hurricane Sandy.
- First phase of the award-winning, three-phase “Protect, Connect, Grow” project centered on the Meadowlands – comprehensive flood resiliency plan.
- Goal is to reduce flooding risks in the Phase 1 Pilot Area (**Figure 1**), with potential ancillary benefits.
- Phase 1 Pilot Area includes Boroughs of Little Ferry, Moonachie, Carlstadt, and Teterboro, and the Township of South Hackensack.
- Awarded \$150M in Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funding to implement by 2020.
- Based on the amount of HUD funding, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) has determined that the project will focus primarily on reducing flood risk (“Protect” component) within the Phase 1 Pilot Area.
- Potential ancillary “Connect” and “Grow” components, while not funded at this point, could be logical and reasonable future outcomes of implementing the critical “Protect” function.

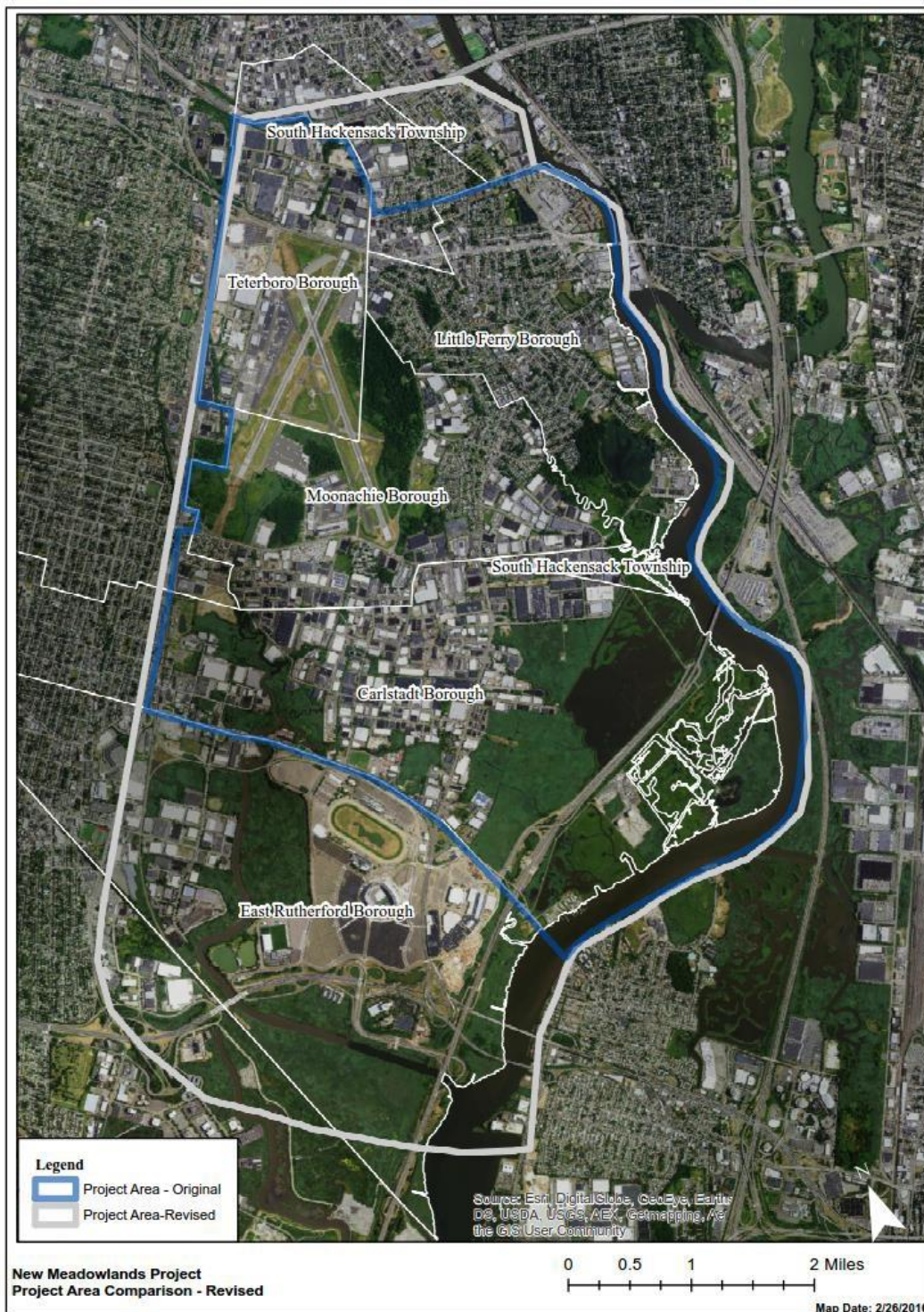


Figure 1. New Meadowlands Rebuild by Design Concept Project Area – Phase 1 Pilot Area and Potential Expanded Project Area

2.3 NEPA Overview

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), originally signed into law by President Nixon in 1970, is a procedural act.
- Compliance is required for all proposed actions that have a Federal connection (e.g., funding).
- Goal is to ensure environmental effects are considered, prior to making a Federal decision.
- Requires an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for “major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the environment.”
- EIS process (**Figure 2**) has several required procedural steps to ensure public input is obtained and considered.

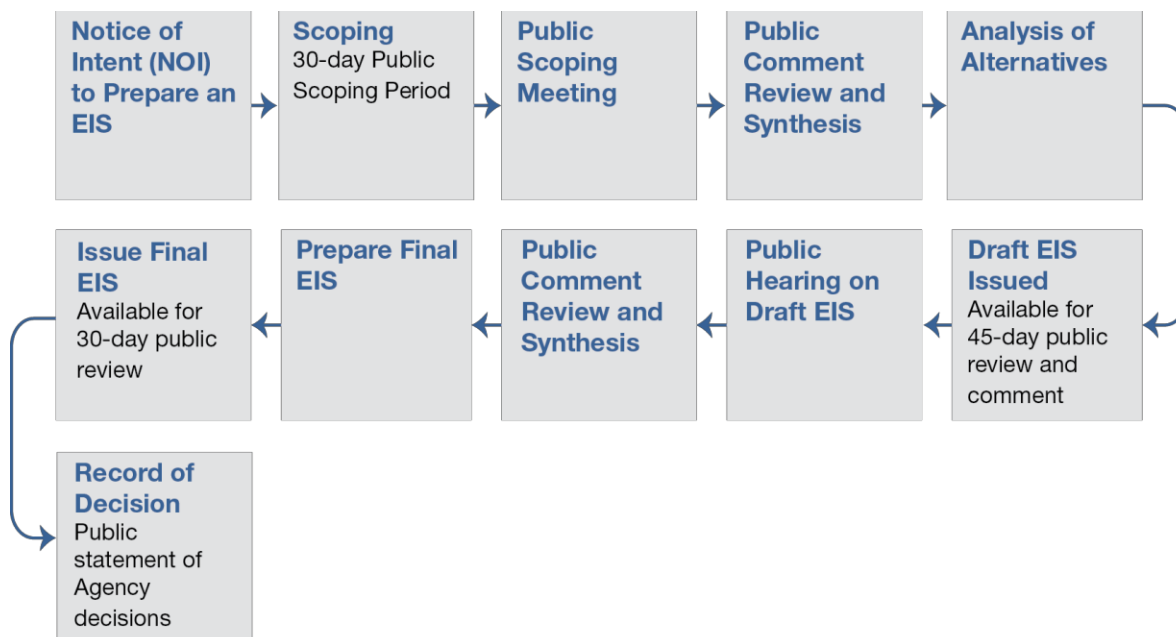


Figure 2. Overview of the NEPA Process

2.4 Overview of Scoping Process

- “Scoping” is the process by which meaningful public input is sought and obtained from the NJDEP and HUD to focus the NEPA analysis.
- Formally starts when the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS is published in the *Federal Register*. The NOI is also published in local newspapers, potentially including the *Little Ferry Local*, *Hackensack Chronicle*, and the *South Bergenite*. Publication of the NOI initiates a formal, 30-day Public Scoping Period.
- Occurs early in the NEPA (environmental review) process to focus the NEPA analysis on specific alternatives, issues, concerns, and methods of analysis.
- A Public Scoping Meeting occurs at least 15 days after publication of the NOI.
- The Draft Public Scoping Document will be made available on the project website at the same time the NOI is published. The entire project Listserv will be notified at this time.
- The Public Scoping Document describes the purpose and need of the project, identifies an initial range of alternatives that will be considered, identifies resource areas that should be analyzed, and outlines methods to assess resources and effects.
- The Public Scoping Document facilitates public review and input.
- Oral and written comments will be invited from the public during the 30-day scoping process, and at the Public Scoping Meeting.

2.5 EIS Overview

- Demonstrates compliance with environmental laws and authorities as stated in HUD Regulations (24 CFR Parts 58.5 and 58.6).
- Coordinates with Federal, State, and local agencies; stakeholder groups; and general public.
- Consists of the following major components:
 - An alternatives analysis of potential options for increasing flood protection in the project area
 - A detailed social, economic, and environmental analysis of three Build Alternatives that are reasonable and feasible for satisfying the purpose of and need for the proposed project, as well as the No Action Alternative
 - A program of public participation and interagency coordination throughout development of the EIS
- Draft EIS is published via a Notice of Availability (NOA) in the *Federal Register* and local media for public review. Formal, 45-day public comment period on Draft EIS, including a public meeting; public review comments submitted orally or via written submissions.
- Final EIS developed, responding to substantive public comments, and published via an NOA for another 30-day review period.
- Process concludes with the preparation and publication of a Record of Decision (ROD), documenting the Federal decision made concerning the Proposed Action.

2.6 What is Our Timeline for this NEPA Process?

Figure 3 presents the anticipated timeline for this NEPA process.

Please note that this timeline is PRELIMINARY; dates are approximate and subject to change over the course of the NEPA process.

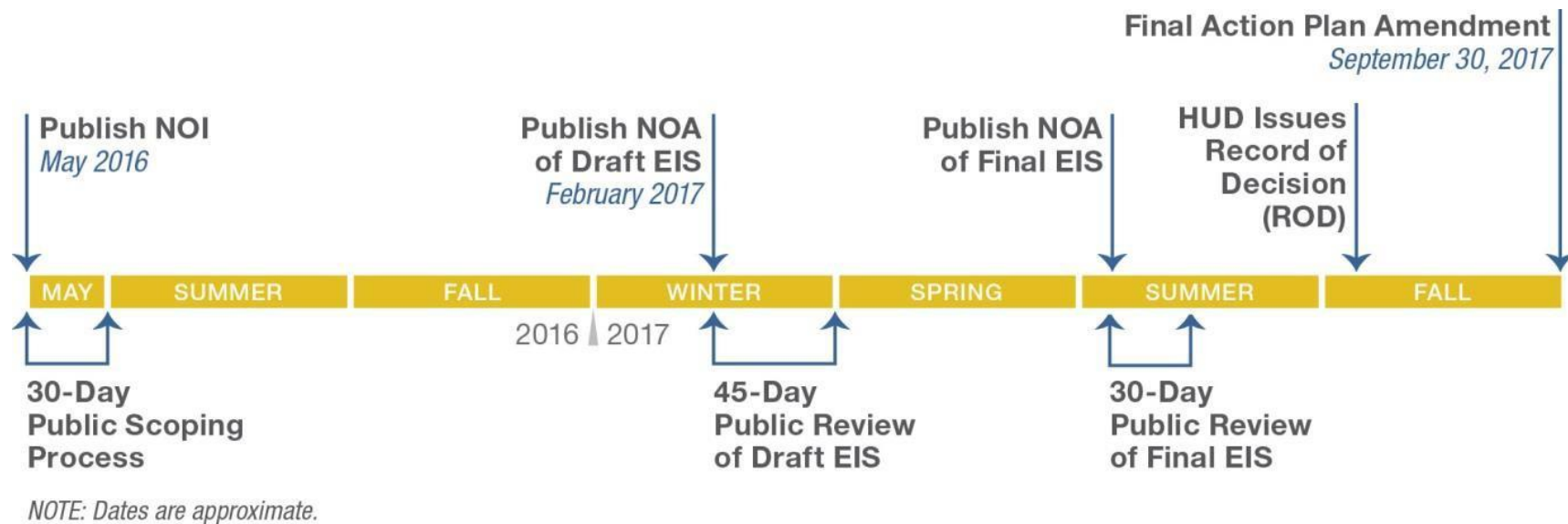


Figure 3. Current Timeline for this NEPA Process

3.1 Public Outreach Process and Tools

- Public Outreach Objectives
- Public Outreach Process
- Public Outreach Tools

3.2 Public Outreach Objectives

The overarching goal of the public involvement effort is to engage a diverse group of public and agency participants to provide timely information and solicit relevant input throughout the NEPA process. To accomplish this, the following objectives will be pursued:

- Establish two-way communication between NJDEP and the public by having regular meetings and informative data exchanges throughout the life of the project.
- Educate the public about the NEPA process and the roles of the government, stakeholders, and the general public in this process.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of outreach and public involvement activities on a continual basis.

3.3 Public Outreach Process

- Thoroughly described in the project-specific Citizen Outreach Plan and NEPA Public Involvement Plan (soon to be available at www.rbd-meadowlands.nj.gov).
- Public Outreach coordinated through the Citizen Advisory Group (CAG).
- Notably includes underserved and vulnerable populations.
- Information will be made available to persons with disabilities and persons of limited English proficiency at public meetings and hearings.
- All documents that request input and participation from the public will be translated into Spanish and Korean, as well as made available in other languages listed in the Language Assistance Plan (LAP) upon request.

3.4 Public Outreach Tools

The following public outreach tools will be used to engage and inform stakeholders throughout this NEPA process.

- **Project Branding.** To assist the public in identifying project-related materials that will be produced and disseminated during this NEPA process.
- **Project Website and E-mail.** The project website at www.rbd-meadowlands.nj.gov will include information on the NEPA process, project activities and progress, public participation opportunities, and project contact information. The website also will have downloadable documents (in .pdf format) for information and/or review. The NJDEP has also established an email address at rbd-meadowlands@dep.nj.gov for the public to ask questions and submit comments.
- **NJDEP Listserv.** A listserv mailing list will be developed for the purpose of publicizing public meeting opportunities and for keeping interested parties apprised of developments throughout the NEPA process. This mailing list will be updated regularly throughout the process as additional interested parties are identified, such as via the various public meetings that will be held.
- **Monthly Updates/Newsletters.** Monthly updates will be produced and posted on the project website at www.rbd-meadowlands.nj.gov to educate the public about the EIS process, provide information on the NEPA analysis as it progresses, announce public participation opportunities, and provide study contact information. The NEPA monthly updates will begin at the publication of the NOI and announce the public scoping meeting; the NEPA monthly updates will terminate upon signature of the ROD.
- **Meeting Announcements.** Meeting flyers will be used to publicize public meetings. These flyers will be mailed to the listserv mailing list, posted on the project website, and published in local newspapers; these flyers will also be widely distributed within the community via an appropriate method.
- **Media Relations.** Press releases may be issued by the NJDEP in advance of public meetings and to announce the availability of project

materials. It is anticipated there will be press releases to announce the Public Scoping Meeting, the availability of the Draft EIS and the conduct of the Public Hearing, and the availability of the Final EIS. The NJDEP also may conduct a Public Meeting on the Final EIS. Per HUD regulations and at a minimum, the NJDEP will post a public notice in the local media at least 15 days prior to the date of the Public Scoping Meeting and the Draft EIS Public Hearing. NJDEP will be responsible for coordinating all media engagements and follow-up. Local publications that are being considered include the *Little Ferry Local*, *Hackensack Chronicle*, and the *South Bergenite*.

- **Social Media.** To further public outreach efforts during the NEPA process, the NJDEP may use social media (e.g., the NJDEP Facebook portal).
- **Other Tools.** The NJDEP will use other public outreach tools as needed or suggested by stakeholders.

4.1 Roles and Responsibilities

- NJDEP's (and AECOM's) Role
- CAG's Role
- Key Input Milestones

As the project sponsor, the NJDEP (with assistance from AECOM) has specific responsibilities. As the local communities' representatives, the CAG and its members also have responsibilities.

4.2 Role of the NJDEP

The NJDEP will be responsible for:

- Spearheading the NEPA process and preparing the EIS.
- Providing the public with project updates, including leading public meetings in collaboration with the Mayors and project team.
- Explaining the different phases of the NEPA process to the public (with assistance from NEPA consultant AECOM).
- Receiving and considering comment from stakeholders and the public.

Specific to CAG participation, the NJDEP will:

- Develop information materials (with assistance from NEPA consultant AECOM) that can be used by the CAG members to inform and educate the broader public.
- Ensure CAG members are informed about upcoming meetings (10 days prior to CAG Meeting).
- Provide agenda and other information regarding meeting content (2 days prior to CAG Meeting).
- Distribute all materials provided at the meeting on the project website (within 2 days after each CAG Meeting).
- Distribute summary of meeting to public for comment (5 days after each CAG Meeting).

- Collect CAG comments on meeting summary (for 10 days after each CAG Meeting).
- Prepare and distribute revised meeting summary (15 days after each CAG Meeting).

4.3 Role of the CAG

The CAG will be responsible for:

- Attending CAG and public meetings.
- Serving as the liaison between NJDEP and the community at large.
- Notifying the Mayors of issues and concerns from the public, as well as relaying information from the NJDEP back to the local citizens.
 - Share information about project goals and objectives with local citizens.
 - Share processes and procedures with their constituents that will be followed when carrying out the project.
 - Determine community priorities or concerns as the project develops.
 - Inform the NJDEP of local networks that should be used to establish and maintain communication.

4.4 CAG Meetings

The following provides a *tentative* schedule for CAG Meetings, as also shown in **Figure 4**.

- ✓ **CAG Meeting #1** – Purpose and Need – ***This meeting.***
- ✓ **CAG Meeting #2** – Scoping/Data Gathering – May 17, 2016
- ✓ **CAG Meeting #3** – Screening Criteria/Metrics – June 2016
- ✓ **CAG Meeting #4** – Alternatives Screening – July 2016
- ✓ **CAG Meeting #5** – Alternatives Analysis – August 2016
- ✓ **Subsequent CAG Meetings** – September 2016 – September 2017, as appropriate and needed

The following page provides additional information on the focus of each CAG Meeting.

1

Purpose and Need CAG Meeting

- Obtain input on project's Purpose and Need to continue planning within NEPA framework
- Facilitate effective development of the remainder of the project
- Design team and NEPA Team, will listen, collect, and review concept/alternative ideas from stakeholders for the feasibility analysis

2

Scoping/Data Gathering CAG Meeting (draft Public Scoping Document will be available)

- Initiate the scoping process (frame project as it moves forward)
- Goal: obtain input on the broad project goals
- Summary of existing data gaps in the project area will be presented by the Project Team for input from the public
- Introduce baseline environmental data for public input on areas of further analysis and/or concern
- Inform stakeholders of the resources that will be researched and the methods that will be used to obtain baseline data and analyze impacts

3

Screening Criteria/Metrics CAG Meeting (input will be used to frame alternatives screening matrix)

- Stakeholders gather information and contribute to the development of criteria to be used during the alternatives screening process
- Goal: obtain public input on what constraints (i.e., construction cost, environmental impacts, property values, etc.) will be included in the alternatives screening matrix, and determine which metrics will be utilized for each constraint criterion

4

Alternatives Screening CAG Workshop

- Present a detailed review and screening of the alternatives developed to date
- Develop an alternatives screening matrix with input from stakeholders informed by the NEPA Team to evaluate each alternative's impacts on resources within project area
- Allow for the elimination of alternatives that do not meet the project's Purpose and Need (in Draft EIS as "Alternatives Considered but Dismissed from Further Analysis")
- The three alternatives ranked highest will become the Project's Build Alternatives (analyzed in depth within the Draft EIS, as well as the No Action Alternative)

5

Alternatives Analysis CAG Workshop (develop Alternatives Analysis Matrix)

- Present a review of the three Build Alternatives advanced for further analysis
- This matrix will be more nuanced than the alternatives screening matrix in comparing key areas of environmental and engineering constraints
- Ultimate outcome: enable and inform the identification of the Preferred Alternative

6

Subsequent CAG Meetings

- These meetings will occur as necessary and appropriate throughout the remainder the NEPA process, and will coincide with key analytical and procedural milestones

5.0 Key Input Milestones

Figure 4 identifies key input milestones and dates within the context of this NEPA process, including public meetings and CAG Meetings. **Please note that the below dates are approximate and subject to change.**

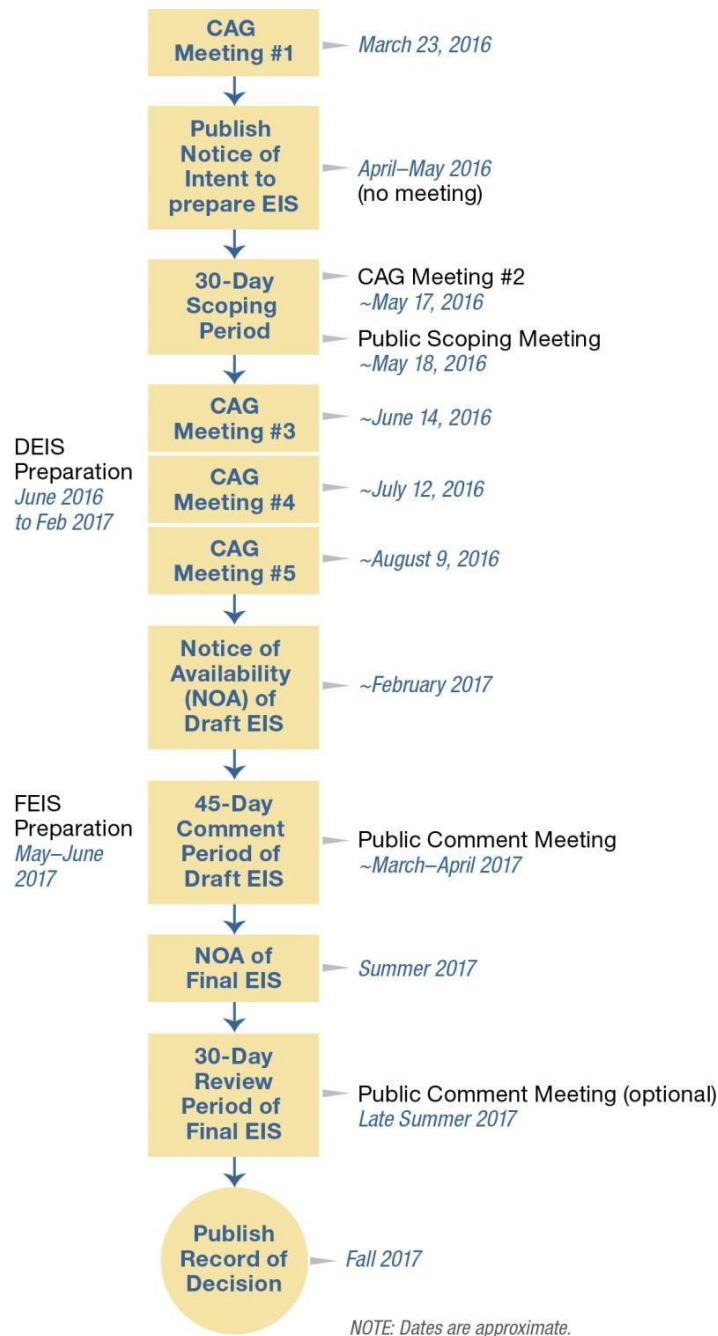


Figure 4. Key Input Milestones

6.1 Where Are We Now?

- Purpose and Need
- Proposed Action
- Initial Alternatives

6.2 Purpose and Need

The **purpose** of the Proposed Action is to reduce the flood risk within the project area. The project is intended to minimize the impacts from coastal storm surge and rainfall flood events on the community, while providing benefits and improving the quality of life and standard of living of the area's residents.

The Proposed Action is **needed** to provide increased flood protection to the residents, businesses, and critical community infrastructure within the project area, thereby decreasing costs, increasing public health and safety, and providing opportunities for additional quality of life improvements.

6.3 Proposed Action

- Refine the Rebuild by Design vision that satisfies the community's needs and Federal funding requirements.
- Focus on the Phase 1 Pilot Area, and possibly include additional areas.
- Provide a level of flood protection to the project area commensurate with available funding based on the results of the ongoing feasibility study and preliminary cost estimating.
- May include additional areas protected, including the Boroughs of East Rutherford and Rutherford, and the Township of Lyndhurst, among others.

6.4 Initial Alternatives

The EIS will examine three build alternatives, as well as a No Action Alternative. Each of the three build alternatives will address the purpose and need of protecting the project area from flooding.

These alternatives vary in the "Protect" infrastructure that is proposed. Alternative 1 relies on use of levees, berms, floodwalls, and potentially a storm surge barrier on the Hackensack River; Alternative 2 focuses on drainage improvements through a series of local projects within the Phase 1 Pilot Area; and Alternative 3 consists of a

combination of infrastructure and drainage improvements within the Phase 1 Pilot Area, a hybrid of Alternatives 1 and 2.

The three build alternatives, as currently contemplated, are summarized as follows. Each primary alternative currently has a variety of sub-alternatives that are being evaluated through the ongoing engineering feasibility analysis. These sub-alternatives will be further developed and modified as this analysis proceeds.

- ✓ **Alternative 1**, or a reduced and modified version of the **Phase 1 Pilot Area RBD Concept Alternative**, will analyze a Protect alignment, comprised of various infrastructure solutions, that is constructed to accomplish the goals envisioned by the original RBD award-winning design, and provide a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Certifiable level of flood protection to some portion of the project area. This level includes protection up to an elevation of 12.6 feet, which includes protection that accounts for anticipated sea level rise, tidal and fluvial (river) flooding, and associated wave action through design year 2075. This alternative consists of appropriate levees, berms, drainage structures, pump stations, and floodgates, and other hard and soft infrastructure to achieve the required level of flood protection. A storm surge barrier on the Hackensack River may also be included. Due to budgetary constraints, sub-alternatives with different routing alignments and different levels of flood protection are being evaluated; these sub-alternatives also may provide flood protection to a smaller area than the original Phase 1 Pilot Area.
- ✓ **Alternative 2**, or the **Phase 1 Pilot Area Fluvial/Rain Event Drainage Improvement Alternative**, will analyze a series of projects that would function to reduce the regular, small-scale flooding events that continue to disrupt the local communities' way of life. These projects may include: installing drainage ditches, pipes, and pump stations at strategic locations; increasing roadway elevations; installing green infrastructure (e.g., wetland drainage basins, bioswales), water storage areas, and water control structures; cleaning and de-snagging existing waterways; and increasing and enhancing public open space. These projects would focus on the Phase 1 Pilot Area.
- ✓ **Alternative 3**, or the **Hybrid Alternative**, will analyze a Protect component that includes a strategic, synergistic blend of new infrastructure and local drainage improvements to reduce flood risk in the Phase 1 Pilot Area. Components of each of Alternatives 1 and 2 will be combined to provide an integrated, hybrid solution that employs a combination of appropriate levees, berms, drainage structures, pump stations, and/or floodgates, coupled with local drainage improvement projects, to achieve the maximum amount of flood

protection in the Phase 1 Pilot Area for the funding available.

The No Action Alternative will also be evaluated as part of the Draft EIS in accordance with CEQ Regulations at 40 CFR Part 1502.14(d). The No Action Alternative represents the *status quo* or baseline conditions with no improvements proposed or implemented.

7.0 Key Contact Information and Communication

A table showing the key HUD, NJDEP, and AECOM personnel involved in this NEPA process is presented below. The NJDEP will be the key agency responsible for receiving, publicly distributing (including via the CAG), and coordinating all information relative to this NEPA process.

The NJDEP has established an email address at rbd-meadowlands@dep.nj.gov, and will be monitoring this email regularly. Stakeholders interested in joining the CAG or providing comment to the NJDEP should use this email address.

These communication protocols will be clearly identified on the project website at www.rbd-meadowlands.nj.gov.

Members of the public can join the project listserv on this website. The NJDEP will have a laptop available at public meetings for members of the public to see the website and join the project listserv immediately.

Name	Affiliation
Alyson Beha	HUD Region II Senior Regional Planner
Linda Fisher	NJDEP Project Team Manager
Alexis Taylor	NJDEP Outreach Team Leader
Christopher Benosky	AECOM – Project Manager
Garrett Avery	AECOM – Deputy Project Manager
Brian Beckenbaugh	AECOM – Outreach Manager
Brian W. Boose	AECOM – NEPA Manager

8.1 Next Steps

8.2 NJDEP/AECOM Upcoming Activities

- ✓ Prepare Meeting Summary for this meeting.
- ✓ Further develop Initial Alternatives.
- ✓ Continue developing the Feasibility Study.
- ✓ Provide CAG with the Preliminary Draft Public Scoping Document for review and comment over a 15-day period (approximately April 1-15, 2016).
- ✓ Develop the Draft Public Scoping Document.
- ✓ Prepare for Public Scoping Period and Public Meeting.
- ✓ Implement Public Involvement Plan, including website, newsletter, etc.
- ✓ Prepare for Scoping/Data Gathering CAG Meeting in approximately May 2016.
- ✓ Publish the NOI in April or May 2016.

8.3 CAG Upcoming Activities

- ✓ Review and comment on Meeting Summary for this meeting.
- ✓ Share information from this Meeting with constituents.
- ✓ Educate constituents on the project and NEPA Process.
- ✓ Build interest in the project.
- ✓ Assist in disseminating information concerning the Public Scoping Process and Meeting.
- ✓ Review the Preliminary Draft Public Scoping Document over a 15-day period (approximately April 1-15, 2016), and provide comment by April 15, 2016.
- ✓ Begin obtaining information, ideas, and potential concerns from constituents.

8.4 Critical Schedule Dates

Please note that the following dates are approximate and subject to change.

- **Late April – early May** – Publish NOI
- **At NOI Publication** – Make Available Draft Public Scoping Document
- **May 17** – CAG Meeting #2 – Scoping/Data Gathering (tentative)
- **May 18** – Public Scoping Meeting (tentative)
- **June 14** – CAG Meeting #3 – Screening Criteria/Metrics (tentative)
- **July 12** – CAG Meeting #4 – Alternatives Screening (tentative)
- **August 9** – CAG Meeting #5 – Alternatives Analysis (tentative)

Project (NEPA) Listserv email address:

www.rbd-meadowlands.nj.gov

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