



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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Table of Contents

1.0 Welcome, Foundation, and Introductions	2
2.0 Overview of the Project and NEPA Process.....	3
2.1 Project Overview	3
2.2 NEPA Overview.....	5
2.3 Overview of Scoping Process	6
2.4 EIS Overview.....	7
2.5 What is Our Timeline for this NEPA Process?	8
3.0 Public Outreach Process and Tools.....	9
3.1 Public Outreach Objectives.....	9
3.2 Public Outreach Process.....	9
3.3 Public Outreach Tools.....	10
4.0 Roles and Responsibilities.....	12
4.1 Role of the NJDEP	12
4.2 Role of the CAG	13
4.3 CAG Meetings	13
5.0 Key Input Milestones.....	15
6.0 Where Are We Now?.....	16
6.1 Purpose and Need	16
6.2 Proposed Action	16
6.3 Initial Alternatives	16
7.0 Key Contact Information and Communication.....	19
8.0 Next Steps.....	20
8.1 NJDEP/AECOM Upcoming Activities	20
8.2 CAG Upcoming Activities	20
8.3 Critical Schedule Dates.....	21
9.0 Notes	22

List of Figures

Figure 1. New Meadowlands Rebuild by Design Concept Project Area – Phase 1 Pilot Area and Potential Expanded Project Area	4
Figure 2. Overview of the NEPA Process	5
Figure 3. Current Timeline for this NEPA Process	8
Figure 4. Key Input Milestones.....	15

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**
-

1.0 Welcome, Foundation, and Introductions

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

2.0 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?

2.1 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

2.2 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

2.3 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.

2.4 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.

2.5 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.

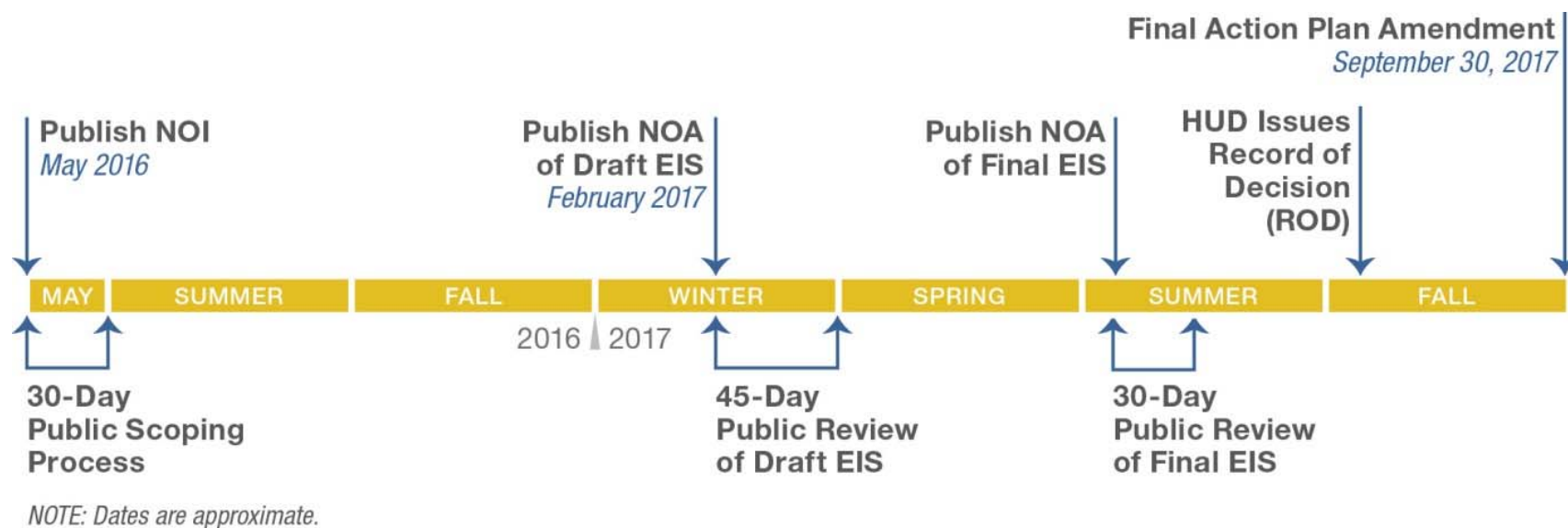


Figure 3. Current Timeline for this NEPA Process

3.0 Public Outreach Process and Tools

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

3.1 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.

3.2 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.

3.3 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.

4.0 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.

4.1 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).

4.2 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.

4.3 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.**

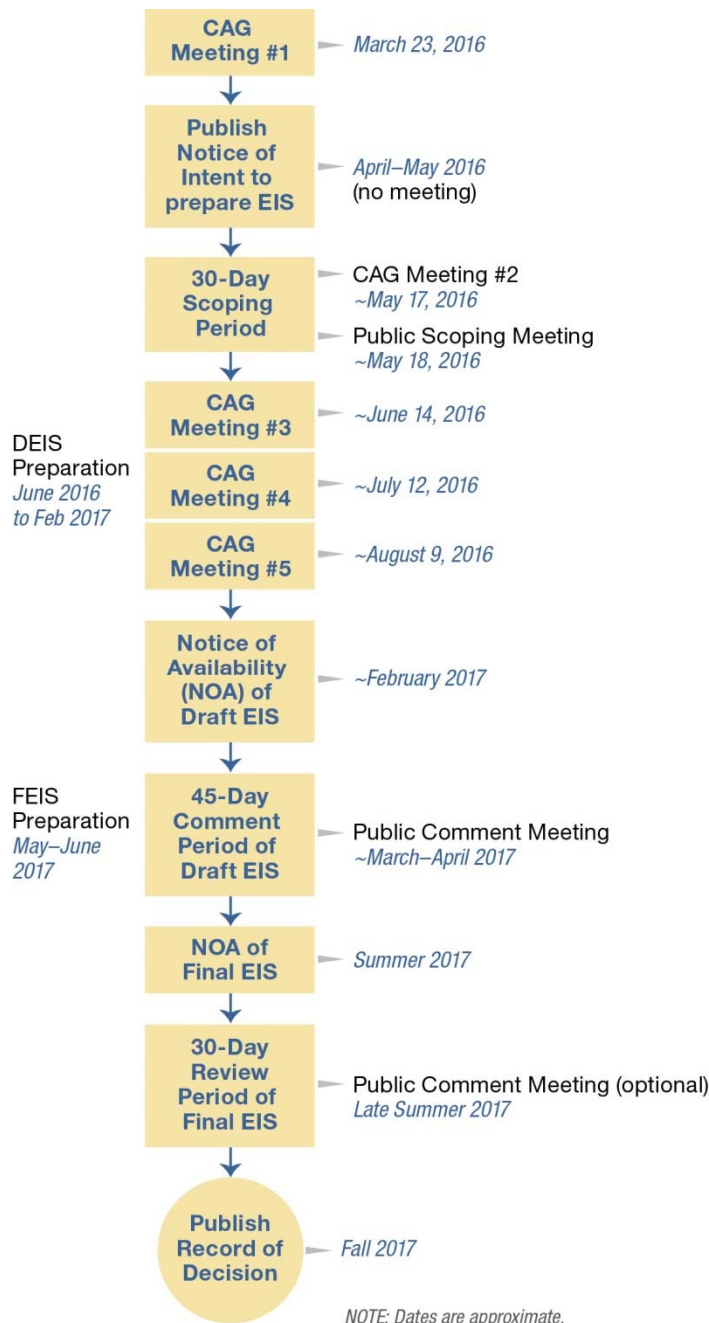


Figure 4. Key Input Milestones

6.0 Where Are We Now?

- Purpose and Need
- Proposed Action
- Initial Alternatives

6.1 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.

6.2 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.

6.3 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

8.0 Next Steps

8.1 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.

8.2 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.

8.3 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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