REBUILD BY DESIGN

MEADOWLANDS

NEWS

July 2017

IN THIS ISSUE

NEPA TIMELINE

Key Milestones and Upcoming Events

July 6, 2016
Public Scoping Meeting

August 11, 2016
CAG Meeting #3
Public Scoping Results
Alternatives Screening

August 17, 2016
Final Public Scoping Document Published

September 20, 2016
CAG Meeting #4
Concept Component Development

October 24, 2016
CAG Meeting #5
Ecology and Drainage Basin Opportunity Areas

December 6, 2016
CAG Meeting #6
Alternative 1: Structural Flood Reduction

January 31, 2017
CAG Meeting #7
Alternative 2: Stormwater Drainage Improvements

March 29, 2017
CAG Meeting #8
Alternative 1: Structural Flood Reduction

May 24, 2017
CAG Meeting #9:
NEPA Process and Ecological Resources

June 27, 2017
CAG Meeting #10
Alternative 3 - Hybrid Alternative

September, 27 2017
CAG Meeting #11:
Alternative 1: Structural Flood Reduction, Alternative 2: Stormwater Drainage Improvements, Alternative 3: Hybrid Alternative

Please visit **www.rbd-meadowlands.nj.gov** to obtain current Proposed Project information and data, including confirmation of the above meeting dates.

Report from June's CAG Meeting

The June Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) meeting for the Rebuild by Design Meadowlands (RBDM) Flood Protection Project was held on June 27, 2017 at the Port Authority Building Conference Room at Teterboro Airport. The Project Team updated the CAG about the ongoing Alternative 1 (Structural Flood Reduction), Alternative 2 (Stormwater Management Improvements), and Alternative 3 (Hybrid) development and screening processes, including the selection of the Alternative 1 alignment to be carried forward for analysis in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Attendees of the June CAG meeting view a presentation by the Project Team about various project alternatives

The Meadowlands Challenge and the Building Blocks to Alternative 3 (Hybrid)

The Project Area is susceptible to both storm surge flooding, due to generally low elevations, and inland flooding, due to undersized and underperforming interior drainages and infrastructure. The Project Team is examining three Build Alternatives to address this challenge: Alternative 1 would protect against storm surge flooding; Alternative 2 would protect against stormwater flooding; and Alternative 3 would protect against both storm surge and stormwater flooding by implementing components of both Alternatives 1 and 2. As part of this process, the Project Team continues to develop flood protection strategies to achieve these goals.

Alternative 1 consists of a line of protection (LOP) constructed along the Hackensack River and Berry's Creek. This alternative was designed to protect the community by connecting the existing topographical high points in the Project Area to an elevation of 7 feet (NAVD88).

Upon further screening of the seven alignment tie-in concepts presented at the December 2016 CAG meeting, the Project Team identified the three final concepts. Northeast tie-in Option #3 was selected to extend the LOP to the Hackensack Riverwalk. Southeast tie-in Option #2 was selected, which extends along the south side of Commerce Boulevard in Carlstadt. This option is cost efficient and

minimizes impacts to the Kane Wetland Mitigation Bank berm. Berry's Creek Option #1 was selected, and it includes a storm surge barrier located immediately south of Paterson Plank Road. In all, this approximately 4-mile long LOP is anticipated to protect against the more frequent smaller storm surges as well as up to an approximately 50-year storm surge (i.e., a storm surge event with a 2 percent chance of occurring annually).

In addition to providing direct flood protection benefits, the Project Team designed Alternative 1 to cultivate the ecological systems that are essential to the Meadowlands. This approach includes minimizing disturbance, considering habitat improvements to fragmented systems, and creating new ecological habitats. Additionally, the Team designed Alternative 1 to energize the Project Area by connecting existing public parks and new public park space along the Hackensack River to provide waterfront access, increase recreational opportunities, and improve ecological systems within the Project Area.

The Project Team also presented the progress made towards developing Alternative 2 (Stormwater Drainage Improvements). The Team is designing Alternative 2 to protect the community by conveying stormwater away from flood-prone areas within the Project Area by deepening and regrading existing channels. The Team is examining ways to use native plantings and naturalized channel edges to provide habitat and improve water quality, and activate public space by creating new areas for recreation. The seven Alternative 2 concepts presented at the January 2017 CAG meeting have been screened down to five concepts that are still being refined. Components from the original 7 concepts still under consideration for Alternative 2 include new park space, green infrastructure along roadways, channel improvements, and new pump stations from the original Main Street, DePeyster Creek, Losen Slote, Carol Place, and East Riser concepts.

Building Alternative 3

Creating a Hybrid Alternative that addresses both storm surge flood reduction and stormwater drainage improvements is constrained by the Proposed Project's schedule, as it must be permitted and constructed by September 2022. The Project Team is developing the Hybrid Alternative by combining and revaluating previously-analyzed components from Alternatives 1 and 2 that meet the project's goals and have a schedule that aligns with the RBDM funding requirements.

The Alternative 1 LOP is considered a fixed component of the Hybrid Alternative, because it functions only as a complete system, while the Alternative 2 stormwater reduction components retain more flexibility because they can be implemented individually or in various combinations. The Project Team presented three broad Hybrid Alternative concepts: the Channel Focus Concept, Community Focus Concept, and Complete System Concept.

The Channel Focus Concept aims to maximize the conveyance capacity of stormwater channels, while integrating green infrastructure features and ecological enhancements that would capture and treat upland stormwater before it reaches the waterways.

The Community Focus Concept focuses on capturing and treating the stormwater runoff in green infrastructure features, such as rain gardens and bioswales, before it enters waterways. New and improved pump stations and inceptor pipes could also help move the stormwater from inland neighborhoods to the Hackensack River. This concept would emphasize improving community benefits, such as the drainage and aesthetics of public streets, access to the Hackensack River, or educational opportunities.

The Complete System Concept incorporates all the above listed features, creating a network of flood reduction and stormwater management systems with connected green infrastructure improvements, habitat enhancements, and public parks.

Next Steps

The next CAG Meeting is scheduled for September 27, 2017. The Project Team will present the selected alignments to be carried forward in the EIS for each of the Build Alternatives.

Get involved!

- ✓ If you would like to become a member of the CAG, please contact Alexis Taylor at **rbd-meadowlands@dep.nj.gov**. NJDEP welcomes your participation and input into this process!
- ✓ Share information from this newsletter with friends and neighbors.
- ✓ Educate your friends and colleagues on the Proposed Project and NEPA process.
- ✓ Continue to build interest in the Proposed Project.
- ✓ Subscribe to receive email updates on the Proposed Project at: **www.rbd-meadowlands.nj.gov**

Did you know... Depending on the soil and topographic features, a 500-square foot 4-inch deep rain garden could collect and enable the infiltration of as much as 380 gallons of stormwater from 1,000 square feet of impervious surfaces (i.e., pavement) during a 2-inch rain event.