REBUILD BY DESIGN

MEADOWLANDS

NEWS

October 2017

IN THIS ISSUE

NEPA TIMELINE

Key Milestones and Upcoming Events

- **March 23, 2016** — CAG Meeting #1: Introduction and Purpose/Need, NAPA Process Overview
- **April 26, 2016** — CAG Meeting #2A: Scoping/Data Gathering Meeting
- **May 17, 2016** — CAG Meeting #2B: Scoping/Data Gathering Meeting Part II
- **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
- **October 17, 2017** — CAG Meeting #11: Alternative 1: Structural Flood Reduction, Alternative 2: Stormwater Drainage Improvements, Alternative 3: Hybrid Alternative
- **January 2018** — Public Meeting

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

Report from October's CAG Meeting

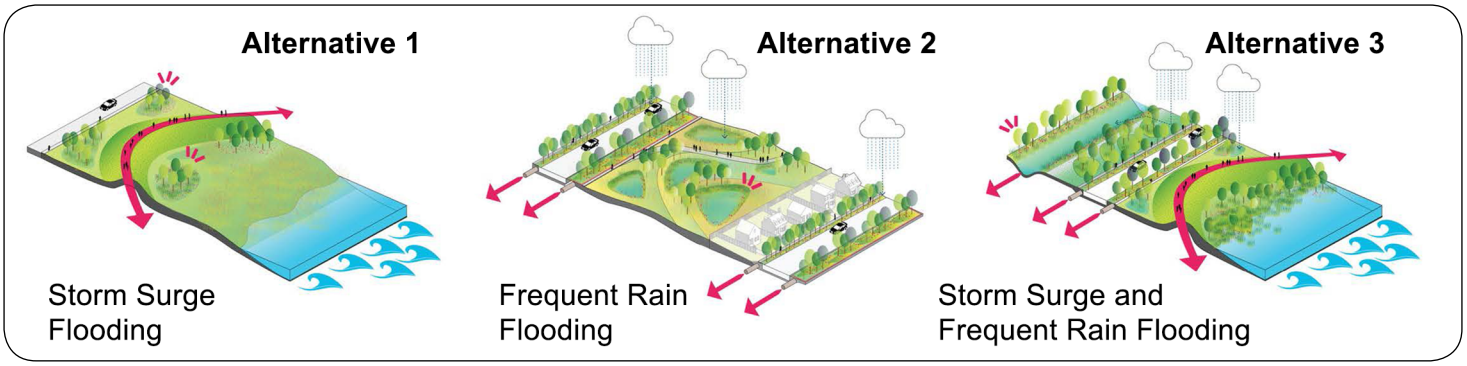
The Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) meeting for the Rebuild by Design Meadowlands (RBDM) Flood Protection Project was held on October 17, 2017 at the Carlstadt Borough Council Chambers. During the meeting, the Project Team updated the CAG about the ongoing alternatives development and screening process, and revealed the final three Build Alternatives to be analyzed in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Project Team also recapped its charge to design and construct a fully functional project by September 2022 that reduces flood risk and enhances resiliency in the Project Area, in accordance with the Purpose and Need for the RBDM Project. Additionally, per conditions tied to the Proposed Project's federal funding, the Proposed Project must operate with independent utility without relying on future projects or funding.

Attendees of the October CAG meeting view a presentation by the Project Team about the three Build Alternatives.

The Meadowlands Challenge

The Project Area's location in the Meadowlands District makes it subject to frequent flooding from both coastal storm surge and rain events. In addition, nearly all of the Project Area is located within the 100-year floodplain. To address these flood risks, the Project Team designed three Build Alternatives. Alternative 1 would include structural flood protection features to protect against coastal storm surges, while Alternative 2 would include stormwater management improvements to reduce inland flooding during heavy rain events. Alternative 3 would include a hybrid of the Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 components and address flooding from both coastal storm surges and heavy rain events.

During the development of these alternatives, the Project Team explored numerous initial concepts and implemented a rigorous screening process (i.e., the Concept Screening Criteria Matrix, originally developed in Fall 2016) to determine which concepts would best accomplish the Proposed Project's goals of: (1) creating the best possible project with available funding, (2) meeting the Proposed Project's mandate of providing flood reduction and co-benefits (i.e.,



Conceptual Views of the Three Build Alternatives.

water quality improvements), and (3) providing storm protection and allowing for a quicker recovery. Concepts that satisfied these goals, with benefits that exceed Proposed Project costs, and with the ability to be constructed within the budget and schedule constraints, were carried forward through the screening process and developed as Build Alternatives to be evaluated in the EIS.

The Build Alternative for Alternative 1 (Structural Flood Protection) would provide a line of protection (i.e., floodwalls and a surge barrier) from storm surges up to an elevation of 7 feet (NAVD88), which represents an approximately 50-year coastal storm surge. Incorporated within this alternative would be co-benefits focused on new recreational opportunities along the Hackensack River, such as new parks, connecting pathways/riverwalks, and river access. The design further includes improvements to fragmented habitats, and the creation of new wetlands along the Hackensack River.

The Build Alternative for Alternative 2 (Stormwater Drainage Improvements) would provide a reduction in both the areal coverage and depth of flooding from frequent rainfall events. Based on a comprehensive stormwater basin analysis, the Project Team identified several grey infrastructure improvements within the lower East Riser Ditch and Losen Slote drainage basins. As such, Alternative 2 includes enhancements to both of these watercourses, including channel conveyance improvements (i.e., dredging) and a new pump station along East Riser Ditch, and two new pump stations and force mains along Losen Slote. These grey infrastructure components would provide enhanced stormwater drainage to residential, commercial, and industrial properties. In addition to these components, new public parks, open space improvements, and green infrastructure systems would be constructed throughout the Project Area to capture and treat stormwater, while also providing aesthetic and recreational co-benefits.

Alternative 3 (Hybrid Alternative) would provide flood protection from both storm surges and heavy rainfall events, and include components from both Alternative 1 and Alternative 2. However, due to the Proposed Project budget and schedule constraints, it is not feasible to construct this alternative in its entirety. As such, Alternative 3 encompasses two plans: the *Build Plan* and *Future Plan*. The Build Plan represents a feasible project that can be constructed by 2022. It incorporates the East Riser Ditch channel improvements and pump station, one of the Losen Slote pump stations, and the majority of the new parks, improved open spaces, and green infrastructure components from Alternative 2. The *Future Plan* includes the Alternative 1 line of protection and associated parks, pathways, and river access as well as additional channel improvements within East Riser Ditch. The *Future Plan,* while not specifically funded at this point, could be implemented by others over time as new funding becomes available.

Next Steps

The Project Team will hold a Public Meeting in January to present the Recommended Alternative. Until then, the Project Team will continue analyzing the socioeconomic, environmental, and cultural impacts of the three Build Alternatives and the No Action Alternative in the Draft EIS, which is due to be released for public review in early 2018.

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...

All bioretention systems proposed will be designed per the NJDEP stormwater quality design guideline, to capture and filter approximately 1.25 inches of rainfall in two hours.