

COMBINED PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS AND NOTICE AND PUBLIC EXPLANATION OF A PROPOSED ACTIVITY IN THE 100-YEAR FLOODPLAIN

MONMOUTH COUNTY

August 14, 2014

New Jersey Economic Development Authority
36 West State Street
PO Box 990
Trenton, NJ 08625-0990
609-858-6700

This notice shall satisfy two separate but related procedural requirements for activities to be undertaken by the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (EDA).

Per 24 CFR 58.33, and 24 CFR 55.20(b)(1), the Notice of Intent to Request Release of Funds (NOI-RROF) and the Notice and Public Explanation of a Proposed Activity in a 100-Year Floodplain will be published simultaneously with the submission of the RROF. The funds are needed on an emergency basis due to a declared disaster from the impacts of Superstorm Sandy, which made landfall on October 29, 2012. As a result, the comment periods for the NOI-RROF, 100-Year Floodplain and RROF have been combined.

REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

On or about August 16, 2014, the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) on behalf of EDA will submit a request to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the release of Federal funds under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program pursuant to the Disaster Relief (DR) Appropriations Act of 2013 (Public Law 113-2, approved January 29, 2013) for the Neighborhood and Community Revitalization (NCR) program. EDA expects to fund the project using approximately \$1,499,081 of NCR funds.

The following information pertains to this project:

Project Title: Highlands Borough Bay Avenue Renaissance Streetscape Project

Location: Bay Avenue from South Street to Valley Avenue (generally) and Washington Avenue to Central Avenue; Waterwitch Ave. from Bay Avenue to Shore Drive (generally); Shore Drive near Waterwitch Avenue, Borough of Highlands, Monmouth County, NJ

Estimated Cost: \$1,499,081

Project Description: The project is located along Bay Avenue from South Street to Valley Avenue (generally) and from Washington Avenue to Central Avenue; along Waterwitch Avenue from Bay Avenue to Shore Drive (generally); and along Shore Drive near Waterwitch Avenue, in the Borough of Highlands in Monmouth County, New Jersey. The Highlands Borough Bay

Avenue Renaissance streetscape project will involve the installation of new crosswalks, ADA compliant intersections, new street trees, street lights, and street furniture. The project involves the blocks of Bay Avenue, Waterwitch Street, and Shore Drive which make up the majority of the commercial district of Highlands Borough. This project is part of a larger revitalization effort that was articulated in the Borough's recently completed Community Recovery Plan.

The Stronger NJ Neighborhood and Community Revitalization (NCR) Program supports the long-term recovery of small businesses and communities by funding projects that contribute to the economic revitalization throughout New Jersey, but focusing on the nine most impacted counties. NCR supports projects that retain or hire new employees, contribute to the State's economy, serve Low or Moderate Income (LMI) areas, create or maintain LMI jobs, remove slum or blight, or address an urgent need related to Superstorm Sandy. These projects are commercial or mixed use projects, typically development and public improvement or streetscape revitalization.

EDA has determined that the proposed project is Categorically Excluded SUBJECT to §58.5 authorities per 24 CFR 58.35(a)(4)(i). As such, a Statutory Checklist has been completed in order to determine whether the project is in compliance with the authorities cited at 24 CFR§50.4 and 58.5.

Additional project information is contained in the Environmental Review Record (ERR) on file at the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, 36 West State Street, PO Box 990, Trenton, New Jersey 08625. The record is available for review and may be examined or copied weekdays 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. by contacting Erin B. Gold at 609-858-6718 or may be viewed online at <http://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/sandyrecovery/review/>.

NOTICE AND PUBLIC EXPLANATION OF A PROPOSED ACTIVITY IN A 100-YEAR FLOODPLAIN

This is to give notice that the EDA has conducted an evaluation as required by Executive Order 11988, in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 Subpart C Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management and Wetlands Protection. The activity is funded under the NCR program under (B-13-DS-34-001). The proposed project is located along Bay Avenue from South Street to Valley Avenue (generally) and from Washington Avenue to Central Avenue; along Waterwitch Avenue from Bay Avenue to Shore Drive (generally); and along Shore Drive near Waterwitch Avenue, in the Borough of Highlands in Monmouth County, New Jersey. The Highlands Borough Bay Avenue Renaissance streetscape project will involve the installation of new crosswalks, ADA compliant intersections, new street trees, street lights, and street furniture. The project involves the blocks of Bay Avenue, Waterwitch Street, and Shore Drive which make up the majority of the commercial district of Highlands Borough. This project is part of a larger revitalization effort that was articulated in the Borough's recently completed Community Recovery Plan. The project is located entirely within the Special Flood Hazard Area Zones "AE (EL 11)" and "AE (EL 12)" floodplains, as shown on Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) Panel 88 of 457, Map Number 34025C0088G, revised January 31, 2014.

DCA has considered the following alternatives and mitigation measures to minimize adverse impacts and to restore and preserve natural and beneficial values. Relocating the Proposed Action outside of the 100-year floodplain was considered, however, the entire central business district (CBD) and neighborhood business district (NBD) of the borough is within a designated flood hazard area. A No Action alternative was considered and rejected because the No Action alternative would not address the post-Sandy economic revitalization needs of Highlands Borough. Similarly, no alternative actions that would serve the same purpose and would avoid construction within the 100-year floodplain were identified, as the entire CBD and NBD of the borough is within a designated flood hazard area. The project would involve repair and reconstruction of sidewalks and crosswalks and replacement of street furniture, lighting, and landscaping. The project would not result in a net change in impervious area or floodplain development within the CBD/NBD.

DCA has reevaluated the alternatives to building in the floodplain and has determined that it has no practicable alternative. Environmental files that document compliance with steps 3 through 6 of Executive Order 11988 are available for public inspection, review and copying upon request at the times and location delineated in the last paragraph of this notice for receipt of comments.

DCA has determined that construction and operation of the proposed project would not result in significant adverse impacts to flood levels, flood risk, or the flow of floodwaters on the project site or surrounding areas. The project would reduce flood level, flood risk, and the flow of floodwaters onto the project area. Therefore, the proposed project would be compliant with the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (44 CFR § 59) and EO 11988 on Floodplain Management (42 FR 26951).]

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any individual, group, or agency disagreeing with this determination or wishing to comment on this project may submit written comments to Stacy Bonnaffons, Assistant Commissioner, Sandy Recovery Division, New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, 101 South Broad Street, PO Box 800, Trenton, NJ 08625-0800 or online at <http://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/sandyrecovery/review/> and to Tennille Smith Parker, DRS, Acting Division Director, HUD, 451 Seventh Street SW, Washington, D.C. 20410. All comments received by August 23, 2014 will be considered by DCA and EDA. Comments should specify which Notice (Notice of Intent to Request Release of Funds [NOI-RROF] or Notice of Public Review of a Proposed Activity in a 100-year Floodplain) they are addressing.

RELEASE OF FUNDS

DCA certifies (on or about August 23, 2014) to HUD that Richard E. Constable, III, in his capacity as Commissioner of DCA consents to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. HUD's approval of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act and related laws and authorities, and allows DCA to use Program funds.

OBJECTIONS TO RELEASE OF FUNDS

HUD will accept objections to its release of funds and DCA's certification for a period of seven (7) days following the anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if they are on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer of DCA; (b) DCA has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by HUD regulations at 24 CFR Part 58; (c) the grant recipient has committed funds or incurred costs not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of a release of funds by HUD; or (d) another Federal agency, acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504, has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures (24 CFR Part 58) and shall be addressed to Tennille Smith Parker, DRS, Acting Division Director, HUD, 451 Seventh Street SW, Washington, D.C. 20410. Potential objectors should contact HUD to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

Commissioner Richard E. Constable, III
New Jersey Department of Community Affairs