

## DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

### Notice of Availability of Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Announcement of Public Hearing for the Rebuild By Design Hudson River: Resist, Delay, Store, Discharge Project in the City of Hoboken, Township of Weehawken, and City of Jersey City, New Jersey

**AGENCY:** Office of the Assistant Secretary for Community Planning and Development, HUD.

**ACTION:** Notice of Availability and request for comments; Notice of public hearing.

**SUMMARY:** The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), on behalf of New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (NJDCA), announces the availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and a public hearing in Hoboken, New Jersey (NJ) on the Rebuild by Design (RBD) Hudson River: Resist, Delay, Store, Discharge Project (Proposed Project). The Proposed Project has been allocated HUD Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) grant funds. The NJDCA, as the recipient of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant funds and "Responsible Entity," has designated the NJDEP as the Lead Agency to prepare the EIS for the Proposed Project in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Proposed Project was developed from a concept conceived through the Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force's Rebuild by Design (RBD) program, a design competition to promote the development of resiliency in the Sandy-affected region. The Proposed Project consists of a four-part comprehensive strategy, including (1) hard infrastructure and soft landscape for coastal defense (Resist); (2) policy recommendations, guidelines and urban infrastructure to slow storm water runoff (Delay); (3) green and/or grey infrastructure improvements to allow for greater storage of excess rainwater (Store); and (4) water pumps and alternative routes to support drainage (Discharge). The Proposed Project is located throughout the City of Hoboken and extending into Weehawken and Jersey City, New Jersey. A description of the Proposed Project is provided in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section. The DEIS includes a detailed project description at the project-level and a description of environmental impacts, including indirect and cumulative impacts, associated with three Build Alternatives as well as a No Action Alternative. We request your comments on the RBD Hudson River Project DEIS.

**AVAILABILITY OF THE DEIS:** Electronic copies of the DEIS are available for public review on the following websites: [www.rbd-hudsonriver.nj.gov](http://www.rbd-hudsonriver.nj.gov) and [www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/sandyrecovery/review](http://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/sandyrecovery/review). CDs and paper copies of the DEIS will also be available for review at the following locations during regular business hours:

- Hoboken City Hall: 94 Washington Street, Hoboken, New Jersey
- Hoboken Library: 500 Park Avenue, Hoboken, New Jersey
- Hoboken Housing Authority: 400 Harrison Street, Hoboken, New Jersey
- Jersey City City Hall: 280 Grove Street, Jersey City, New Jersey
- Jersey City Free Public Library, 472 Jersey Avenue, Jersey City, New Jersey
- Weehawken Town Hall: 400 Park Avenue, Weehawken, New Jersey
- Weehawken Library: 49 Hauxhurst Avenue, Weehawken, New Jersey

**DATES AND PUBLIC COMMENT:** The DEIS will be available at the locations identified in the **AVAILABILITY OF THE DEIS** section starting on February 24, 2017. This date is the beginning of the public comment period. Any person wishing to comment on the DEIS may do so. The public comment period will be 45 days. Comments and related material must be submitted on or before April 10, 2017, using one of the methods in the **ADDRESSES** section of this NOA. A public hearing will be held on Thursday, March 16, 2017 from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm to provide an opportunity for oral comments. The public hearing will be held at DeBaun Auditorium at 24 5th Street, Hoboken, New Jersey 07030. Additional details regarding the public hearing are provided in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section. Any oral comments provided at the meeting will be transcribed and considered for review by the NJDEP. Please note that the hearing may close early if all business is finished. Written comments and related material may also be submitted to NJDEP personnel identified at that meeting for consideration by the NJDEP.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments using any one of the following methods:

- (1) Email: [rbd\\_hudsonriver@dep.nj.gov](mailto:rbd_hudsonriver@dep.nj.gov)
- (2) online to the NJDEP website at [www.rbd-hudsonriver.nj.gov](http://www.rbd-hudsonriver.nj.gov) or to the NJDCA website at [www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/sandyrecovery/review/](http://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/sandyrecovery/review/);
- (3) Mail: New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) c/o Dennis Reinknecht, Program Manager, Bureau of Flood Resilience, 501 East State Street, Mail Code 501-01A, P.O. Box 420, Trenton, NJ 08625-0420.
- (4) Hand delivery: Same as mail address above, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

To avoid duplication, please use only one of these methods.

The NJDEP Bureau of Flood Resilience, 501 East State Street, Mail Code 501-01A, P.O. Box 420, Trenton, NJ 08625-0420, will maintain a paper copy of the DEIS for public review. The document will be available for inspection or copying at this location between 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** If you have questions regarding this notice or on the public hearing, write or e-mail Dennis Reinknecht, Program Manager, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Bureau of Flood Resilience, 501 East State Street, Mail Code 501-01A, P.O. Box 420, Trenton, NJ 08625-0420, email [rbd-hudsonriver@dep.nj.gov](mailto:rbd-hudsonriver@dep.nj.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Project Description:**

The NJDEP has prepared a DEIS for the Rebuild by Design Hudson River Project: Resist, Delay, Store, Discharge (the Proposed Project) in the City of Hoboken, Township of Weehawken, and City of Jersey City, NJ. The Proposed Project was developed as a concept through the Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force's Rebuild by Design (RBD) program, a design competition to promote the development of resiliency in the Sandy-affected region. The Proposed Project consists of a four-part comprehensive strategy, including (1) hard infrastructure and soft landscape for coastal defense (Resist); (2) policy recommendations, guidelines and urban infrastructure to slow storm water runoff (Delay); (3) green and/or grey infrastructure improvements to allow for greater storage of excess rainwater (Store); and (4) water pumps and alternative routes to support drainage (Discharge). The Proposed Project will occur throughout the City of Hoboken, with linkages to the adjoining communities in the Township of Weehawken and City of Jersey City. The Proposed Project was selected by HUD through the RBD competition, and HUD Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds have been allocated to it. CDBG-DR funding requires compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) as stated in HUD's regulations as outlined in 24 CFR part 58. The Proposed Project is also subject to the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA regulations at 40 CFR parts 1500-1508. HUD has further outlined the project's environmental review requirements in a Federal Register notice published on October 16, 2014 (79 FR 62182). The State of New Jersey, acting through the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, is the responsible entity that has assumed environmental responsibilities for the Sandy CDBG-DR programs in accordance with 24 CFR 58.1(b)(1). The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs has designated NJDEP to assist with the environmental review. NJDEP has prepared the EIS in accordance with HUD's procedures for NEPA found at 24 CFR part 58.

**DEIS:**

The DEIS has been prepared and is available for public comment. The DEIS is available for review on the project website at [www.rbd-hudsonriver.nj.gov](http://www.rbd-hudsonriver.nj.gov) or [www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/sandyrecovery/review/](http://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/sandyrecovery/review/) as well as at the locations listed above in ADDRESSES.

The DEIS includes a detailed project description at the project-level and describes environmental impacts, including indirect and cumulative environmental impacts, associated with three Build Alternatives as well as a No Action Alternative. A range of reasonable alternatives (Build Alternatives 1, 2 and 3) was evaluated in the DEIS. Build Alternative 3 was selected as the Preferred Alternative in consideration of environmental, technical and other factors. The Preferred Alternative consists of a Resist alignment that includes termination points located upland and includes the use of an alleyway between Garden Street and Washington Street in the City of Hoboken. The southern portion of the Resist alignment extends along and within the north side of the Hoboken Terminal rail yard before extending westward along the rail embankment. Alternative 3's Resist alignment travels primarily in inland areas to minimize impacts to waterfront open spaces. Alternative 3's Resist alignment would provide enhancements to approximately 2.55 acres of open space or parks. The Delay, Store, Discharge (DSD) features in Alternative 3 include three large stormwater detention facilities and approximately 61 small tanks (Right of Way {ROW} sites) that will include new and/or improved stormwater management techniques. The large stormwater detention facilities associated with the DSD features are planned to be developed for recreational use. Overall, the Preferred Alternative:

- Provides a high degree of flood risk reduction while integrating the flood risk reduction strategy with community values by considering public input, cost and urban amenities;
- Incorporates a Resist structure that can be constructed with available funds;
- Has the least impact to the built environment of the three Build Alternatives analyzed in the DEIS;
- Results in the lowest annual maintenance cost;
- Requires the fewest number of movable gates, which leads to having the lowest operation and maintenance costs and the highest level of reliability among the Build Alternatives; and,
- Is most effective in minimizing impact to waterfront access and views of the three Build Alternatives.

**Public Hearing:**

NJDEP will hold a public hearing from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm on March 16, 2017. The hearing location is DeBaun Auditorium at 24 5th Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030.

The DeBaun Auditorium is in Edwin A. Stevens Hall on the campus of the Stevens Institute of Technology. The main entrance is on 5th Street directly across from Stevens Park. The wheelchair entrance is located in the rear entrance of the building on River

Street with handicapped parking located behind the two buildings (McLean & Babbio) located directly across the street from the ramp.

The purpose of the public hearing is for NJDEP to receive comments on the information provided in the DEIS. NJDEP will not respond to any of the comments or take action on the project at the hearing. Comments and/or statements at the public hearing will become part of the public record during the comment period and will also be considered as part of the preparation of the Final EIS. The meeting facility is accessible to those with disabilities. Any individual who requires special accommodations, such as a sign language interpreter, accessible seating, or documentation in alternative formats, is requested to contact Sandy Recovery Division (SRD) Constituent Services at (609)-292-3750 or (609) 633-1328 or email of [sandy.recovery@dca.nj.gov](mailto:sandy.recovery@dca.nj.gov).