

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Notice of Availability of Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) 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.

SUMMARY: The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), on behalf of New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (NJDCA), announces the release of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for 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," 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 is located throughout the City of Hoboken and extending into Weehawken and Jersey City, New Jersey.

Project Description:

The NJDEP has prepared this FEIS for the Proposed Project located in the City of Hoboken, Township of Weehawken, and City of Jersey City, NJ. 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 has been allocated HUD Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds. 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 FEIS in accordance with HUD's procedures for NEPA found at 24 CFR part 58.

AVAILABILITY OF THE FEIS: The FEIS is available for public comment for a period of 30 days ending on July 17, 2017. Electronic copies of the FEIS are available for public review on the following websites: www.rbd-hudsonriver.nj.gov and www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/sandyrecovery/review. CDs and paper copies of the FEIS will also be available for review at the following locations during regular business hours:

- Hoboken City Hall: 94 Washington Street, Hoboken, New Jersey
- Hoboken Public 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 – Pavonia Branch: 326 8th Street, Jersey City, New Jersey
- Weehawken Town Hall: 400 Park Avenue, Weehawken, New Jersey
- Weehawken Public Library: 49 Hauxhurst Avenue, Weehawken, New Jersey

FEIS: The FEIS includes a detailed project description 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, community, technical and other factors. The Preferred Alternative consists of a Resist alignment that begins near the HBLR Lincoln Harbor Station, travels south along Weehawken Cove. The alignment travels down Garden Street and includes the use of the alleyway between Garden Street and Washington Street and then travels one and a half blocks south on Washington Street. The southern portion of the Resist alignment extends along and within the north side of the Hoboken Terminal rail yard and includes two options before extending westward along the rail embankment. Option 1 features an alignment south of Observer Highway, within the rail yard (south of the proposed Hoboken Yard Redevelopment Area). Option 2 includes an alignment along Observer Highway from Washington Street to Marin Boulevard. Alternative 3's Resist alignment travels primarily in inland areas to minimize impacts to waterfront open spaces and viewsheds and 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 along the Right of

Way 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;
- Results in the lowest annual maintenance cost among the three Build Alternatives;
- 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 three Build Alternatives; and,
- Is most effective in minimizing impact to waterfront access and views among the three Build Alternatives.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FEIS identifies several potential environmental impacts associated with the Preferred Alternative including but not limited to, the following: noise, vibration and traffic associated with construction of the Resist feature, as well as potential impacts to architectural and archaeological resources.

In compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, NJDEP has consulted with the NJ State Historic Preservation Office to develop a Programmatic Agreement (PA) which outlines measures to document the presence or absence of Historic Properties within the project's area of potential effect (APE). The PA defines avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures and the development of a cultural resources management protection plan to manage and protect affected cultural resources. In addition, monitoring of construction activities may be conducted to document the project's potential impact to archaeological resources.

The project involves new outfalls to the Hudson River. The NJDEP has completed consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and found that the Project will not adversely affect essential fish habitat (EFH) but may affect - but is not likely to adversely affect - shortnose or Atlantic sturgeon or adversely affect proposed critical habitat for Atlantic sturgeon.

DATES AND PUBLIC COMMENT: The FEIS will be available at the locations identified in the **AVAILABILITY OF THE FEIS** section starting on June 16, 2017. This date is the beginning of the public comment period. Any person wishing to comment on the FEIS may do so. The public comment period will be 30 days. All comments and related material must be submitted on or before July 17, 2017, using one of the methods in the **ADDRESSES** section of this NOA. Additional comments received on the FEIS will be addressed in the Record of Decision (ROD).

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

- (1) Email: rbd-hudsonriver@dep.nj.gov
- (2) online to the NJDEP website at www.rbd-hudsonriver.nj.gov or to the NJDCA website at 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 FEIS 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, 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.