

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

July 14, 2017

To: All Interested Agencies, Groups and Individuals

This is to give notice that the NJDEP has conducted an evaluation as required by Executive Orders 11988 and 11990, 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 with Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds under HUD grant number B-13-DS-34-0001. This notice is in addition to the already provided comment period provided for the publication of the FEIS, which ran from June 16 2017 to July 16 2017

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 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, and will extend into Weehawken and Jersey City, with the following approximate boundaries: the Hudson River to the east; Baldwin Avenue (in Weehawken) to the north; the Palisades to the west; and 18th Street, Washington Boulevard and 14th Street (in Jersey City) to the south.

The Study Area includes approximately 1,020 acres of land, as well as about 233 acres of the Hudson River, and includes portions of FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) 34017C0043D, 34017C0044D, 34017C0106D, and 34017C0107D. Approximately 745 acres of land within the Study Area are included within the FEMA 100-year flood zone (including the AE and VE zones). Permanent floodplain impacts could occur through the placement of permanent above-ground structures (i.e., the Resist barrier). Permanent floodplain impacts would range from 3.2 acres (for Alternative 1) to 2.8 acres (for Alternatives 2 and 3). In addition, six freshwater wetland areas have been delineated within the Study Area, located primarily along or within close proximity to the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail (HBLR) tracks. The total delineated wetland acreage (within the Study Area) is approximately 2.48 acres. Approximately 230 square feet of freshwater wetlands would be impacted by all three Build Alternatives. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetland Inventory (NWI) also identifies the open waters of the Hudson River as Estuarine and Marine Deepwater wetland. Bulkhead work associated with the placement of Resist structures and outfalls could impact these areas. Alternative 1 would potentially require approximately 8,500 linear feet of bulkhead work and Alternative 2 and Alternative 3 could potentially require approximately 500 linear feet of bulkhead work.

NJDEP has considered the following alternatives and mitigation measures to be taken to minimize adverse impacts and to restore and preserve natural and beneficial values: Four alternatives were proposed in the 8-step process including the three Build Alternatives (Alternative 1 through 3) and a No Action Alternative. The three Build Alternatives vary based on the placement of their Resist infrastructure; all three contain the same Delay, Store, and Discharge components. Alternative 1 would have the greatest impact to floodplains and wetland (including open water) because it would include the longest length of Resist infrastructure and would be located along the waterfront. Alternatives 2 and 3 both contain similar impacts to floodplains and wetlands because they would be located upland and would have Resist infrastructure of similar length.

NJDEP has reevaluated the alternatives to building in the floodplain and wetlands and has determined that it has no practicable alternative. Since the project is meant to provide flood risk reduction to the community within the coastal floodplain, it was determined that no practicable alternative existed to locating outside of the floodplain. Because the project tie-ins required meeting high ground in the southwest portion of the Study Area in the immediate vicinity of wetlands, it was also determined that there was no practicable alternative to locating within wetlands; however, although Alternative 2 and Alternative 3 (the Preferred Alternative) reduce impacts to open waters by locating the structures in upland areas. Environmental files that document compliance with steps 3 through 6 of Executive Orders 11988 and 11990, are available for public inspection, review and copying upon request at the times and location described in the Public Comments section of this notice.

There are three primary purposes for this notice. First, people who may be affected by activities in floodplains/wetlands and those who have an interest in the protection of the natural environment should be given an opportunity to express their concerns and provide information about these areas. Second, an adequate public notice program can be an important public educational tool. The dissemination of information and request for public comment about floodplains/wetlands can facilitate and enhance Federal efforts to reduce the risks and impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of these special areas. Third, as a matter of fairness, when the Federal government determines it will participate in actions taking place in floodplains/wetlands, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

Public Comments

Written comments must be received by NJDEP on or before July 21 2017, or seven (7) days from the actual date of publication, whichever is later. NJDEP encourages electronic submittal of comments at <http://www.rbd-hudsonriver.nj.gov> or to rbd-hudsonriver@dep.nj.gov. In the alternative, comments may be submitted on paper to: 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. Additional project information is contained in the Environmental Review Record on file at the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, 101 South Broad Street, PO Box 800, Trenton, NJ 08625-0800. The record is available for review and may be examined or copied weekdays 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. or can be viewed online at the address provided above.

Commissioner Charles A. Richman
New Jersey Department of Community Affairs