

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA), 1969

WHAT IS NEPA?

- NEPA requires Federal agencies to analyze, document, and consider the potential environmental effects of their Proposed Projects, prior to making decisions to implement a Proposed Project.
- For this Proposed Project, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, or HUD, is the Federal decision-making agency; HUD is funding this Proposed Project. HUD has delegated the responsibility for NEPA compliance to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP).
- NEPA requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, or EIS, for those “major Federal actions having potential to significantly impact the quality of the human environment.”
- NEPA requires a statement of purpose and need for the Proposed Project, consideration and evaluation of alternatives, public and agency involvement, and documentation of the results.
- The process of preparing an EIS is prescribed by law and regulation, and includes requirements for specific public involvement and review events, including opportunities for the public to provide input and comments. This Public Scoping Meeting is the first such event.
- The Meadowlands Flood Protection Project is a “major Federal action,” and is therefore subject to NEPA. An EIS is being prepared.

THE NEPA PROCESS IS INTENDED TO:

- Inform decision-makers and the public of possible environmental consequences of a Proposed Project.
- Allow for public input into the decision-making process.
- Help decision-makers take actions to protect, restore, and enhance the environment.
- Document the environmental review and analysis process.

(PUBLIC INPUT AND INVOLVEMENT IS A KEY
ELEMENT OF THE NEPA PROCESS)



PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

HOW TO SUBMIT COMMENTS AT THIS MEETING

- Visit the Stenographer and dictate your comments.
- Fill out a Comment Card and place in the Comment Box, located at the Stenographer Station.

HOW TO SUBMIT COMMENTS AFTER THIS MEETING

Submit comments and questions about the Proposed Project directly to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) via:

Email: rbd-meadowlands@dep.nj.gov

Mail: NJDEP Office of Flood Hazard Risk Reduction Measures

ATTN: Mr. Dennis Reinknecht
RBD Program Manager
501 East State Street
Mail Code 501-01A, PO Box 420
Trenton, NJ08625-0420

WHERE TO FIND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For further information, please visit the Project Website:

www.rbd-meadowlands.nj.gov



PURPOSE + NEED

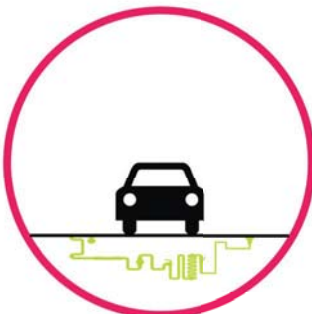
PURPOSE

The purpose of the Proposed Project, within this Project Area, is to:

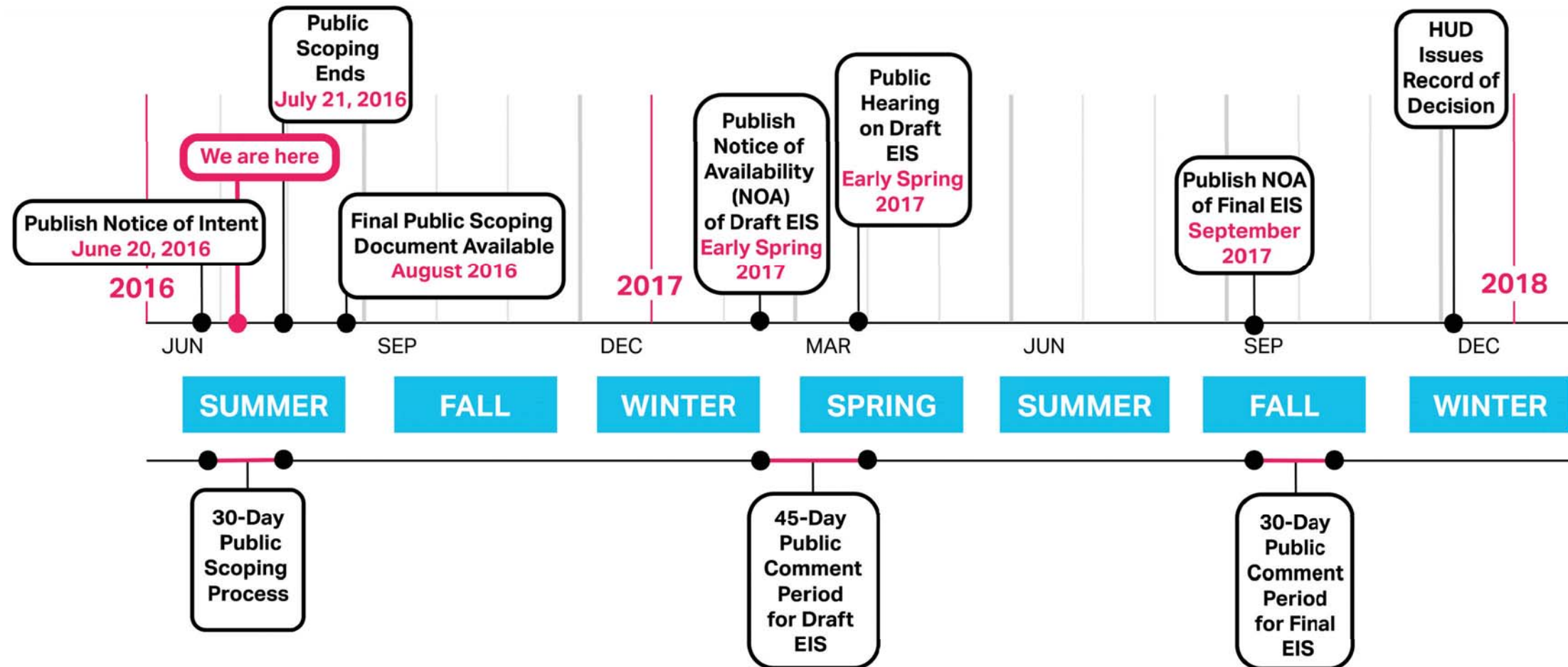


NEED

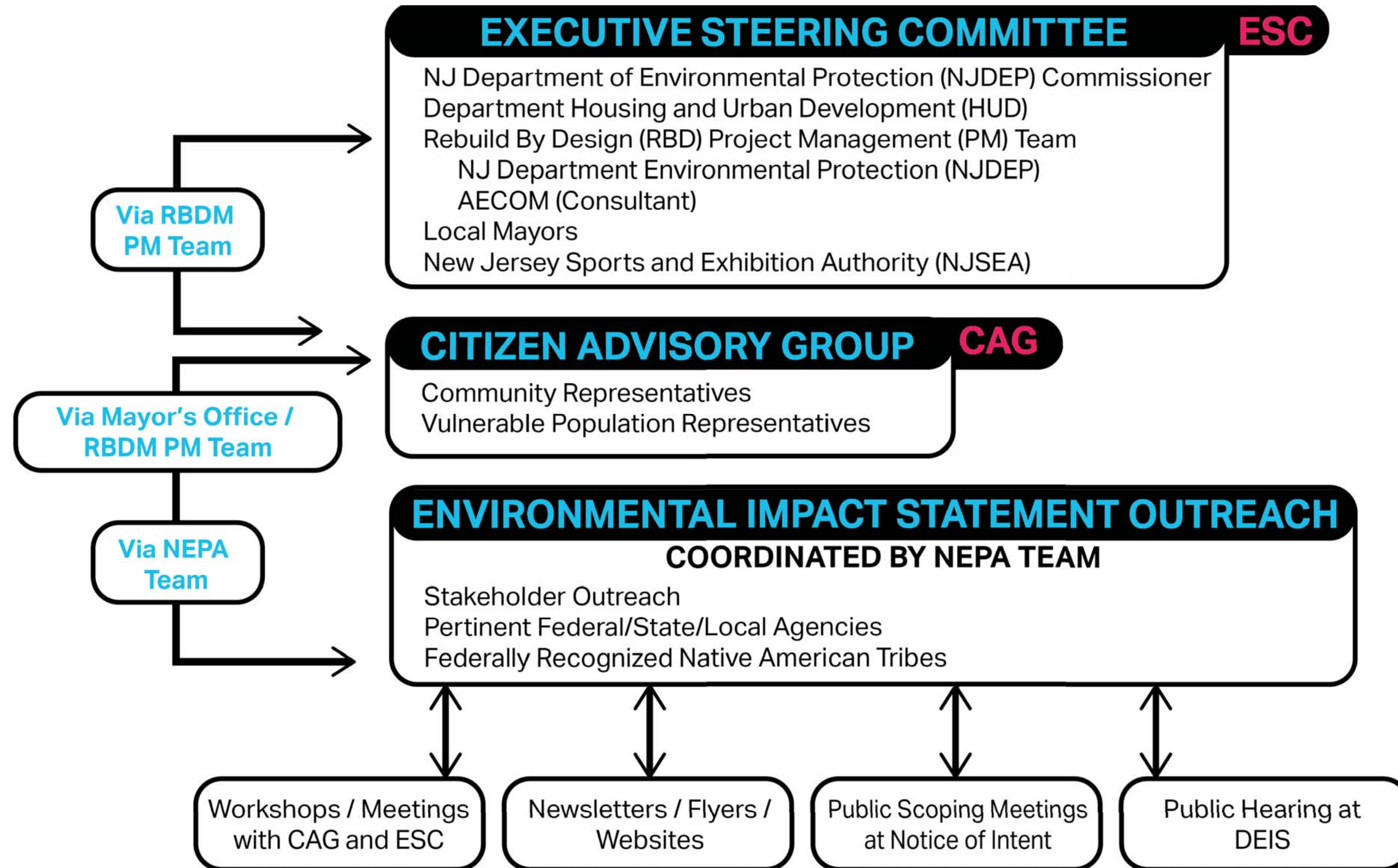
The Proposed Project, within this Project Area, is needed to:



NEPA TIMELINE



OUTREACH PROCESS



PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

TOP 40 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS 1-7

1) Why must this project comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)?

The Proposed Project is funded by a Federal Agency – the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); this triggers the NEPA requirement.

2) Why is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) being prepared?

An EIS must be prepared because the Proposed Project is considered a “major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment,” in accordance with NEPA. HUD has determined this is a major Federal action.

3) Who was the recipient of the HUD Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) grant funds?

The State of New Jersey through its Department of Community Affairs (NJDCA).

4) Why is New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) leading the EIS and not HUD?

NJDCA as the Grantee is the “Responsible Entity” with respect to the environmental review of the Proposed Project in accordance with HUD Regulations (24 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 58). NJDCA has delegated NEPA Lead Agency responsibility to NJDEP.

5) What is the Rebuild By Design (RBD) Competition?

HUD launched the RBD competition in the summer of 2013 to develop ideas to improve physical, ecological, economic, and social resilience in regions affected by Hurricane Sandy. The Proposed Project was one of the RBD award-winning concepts.

6) How much CDBG-DR funding is available for the Proposed Project?

\$150 Million was granted to the State of New Jersey by HUD.

7) How much funding will actually be available to build the Proposed Project, and when will it be built?

The NJDEP anticipates that approximately \$110M of the \$150 Million will be used to construct the Proposed Project. Approximately \$40M will be spent on pre-construction and planning activities, such as the feasibility analyses, project design, and permitting. The Proposed Project must be constructed in its entirety by September 30, 2022 as mandated by Federal requirements.



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TOP 40 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS 8-14

8) What happened to original New Meadowlands “Protect, Connect, and Grow” RBD award-winning concept?

The estimated cost of the original concept “Protect, Connect and Grow” was \$850M. However, the amount of CDBG-DR funding awarded for the Proposed Project was \$150M. NJDEP has determined that the Proposed Project will focus primarily on reducing flood risk within the Project Area (i.e., the “Protect” component of original concept).

9) What happened to the new bus terminal and other transportation improvements I heard about in the past few years?

These were additional components associated with the RBD concept that are not included in the Proposed Project; these components were not funded by the CDBG-DR grant.

10) What Towns in Bergen County, New Jersey are affected by the Proposed Project?

Boroughs of Little Ferry, Moonachie, Carlstadt, and Teterboro; and the Township of South Hackensack.

11) What is the Project Area Boundary?

The Hackensack River to the east; Paterson Plank Road and the southern boundary of Carlstadt to the south; State Route 17 to the west; and Interstate 80 and the northern boundary of the Borough of Little Ferry to the north.

12) Why is the Project Area not the entire Hackensack Meadowlands District?

The CDBG-DR funding was awarded specifically to address the original ‘Phase 1 Pilot Area’ from the RBD award-winning concept, which is limited to the five municipalities listed above.

13) What is the Purpose of the Proposed Project?

To reduce flood risk, increase the resiliency of the involved communities and ecosystems, and protect critical infrastructure, residences, businesses, and ecological resources from the more frequent and intense flood events anticipated in the future.

14) What is the Need for the Proposed Project?

- To address systemic inland flooding from high-intensity rainfall/runoff events and coastal flooding from storm surges and nor’easters.
- To help protect public life, health, and property.
- To increase community resiliency.
- To potentially reduce flood insurance rates, protect ecological resources, improve water quality, and incorporate active and passive recreational uses.



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TOP 40 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS 15-20

15) How many Build Alternatives to reduce flood risk will be analyzed in the EIS?

Three.

16) What are the three (3) Build Alternatives?

- **Alternative 1: Structural Flood Reduction** may include a range of new structures such as levees, berms, barriers, drainage structures, pump stations, and flood gates.
- **Alternative 2: Storm Water Drainage Improvement** may include development of drainage ditches, pipes, or pump stations at strategic locations; increased roadway elevations, new green infrastructure; and increasing and enhancing public space.
- **Alternative 3: Hybrid Alternative** could blend of new infrastructure and local drainage improvements.

17) How are the Build Alternatives being developed?

Through an Engineering Feasibility Study that is currently underway. This Study will determine the costs, benefits, and feasibility of a range of initially considered options.

18) Were there other Alternatives considered? How are Alternatives Eliminated?

Yes, other alternatives are being

considered, including various sub-alternatives to the three primary Build Alternatives. Alternatives eliminated from detailed study will be presented in the EIS along with a brief discussion of the reasons for eliminating them. These other alternatives are being developed and analyzed as part of the Engineering Feasibility Study. As part of the screening process, criteria and metrics are identified and used to evaluate how well initial alternatives meet the purpose and need of the Proposed Project. Those alternatives best meeting the purpose and need will be carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

19) How are Screening Criteria Determined?

The local community and government entities will be actively involved in providing input toward the development of screening criteria that will be used to determine how well each of the alternatives meets the Proposed Project's Purpose and Need.

20) Why is a Storm Surge Barrier, or Tide Gate, across the entire Hackensack River downstream not being considered?

The results of the early Engineering Feasibility Study determined that this option could induce flooding elsewhere in the region and would likely exceed available funding.



PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

TOP 40 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS 21-26

21) What is the No Action Alternative and why is it considered?

The No Action Alternative represents the status quo or baseline conditions without implementation of any of the improvements associated with the Proposed Project. Analysis of this alternative is required under in accordance with 40 CFR Part 1502.14.

22) What is the Preferred Alternative?

The alternative that the agency believes would best meet the purpose and need of the Proposed Project, while considering economic, environmental, technical, and other factors developed during the screening process described in FAQ #19.

23) What Technical Resource Areas will be considered in the EIS?

Land use and land use planning, visual quality/aesthetics, socioeconomic, environmental justice, cultural resources, transportation, noise, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, utilities and service systems, public services, biological resources, geology and soils, hydrology and flooding, water resources, coastal zone management, hazards and hazardous materials, mineral and energy resources, and agricultural resources and prime farmland.

24) Will other projects within or in the vicinity of the Proposed Project be considered?

The EIS will consider the combined effects of other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the Cumulative Impact analysis.

25) When does the public have the opportunity to provide input on the Proposed Project?

During the 30-day Public Scoping Period, the 45-day Public Comment Period for the Draft EIS, and the 30-day Public Comment Period for the Final EIS.

26) What is the 30-Day Public Scoping Period?

Scoping occurs early in the environmental review process and is meant to focus the NEPA analysis on specific alternatives, issues, concerns, and methods of analysis. The Draft Public Scoping Document now available provides draft information for public review and comment.



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TOP 40 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS 27-35

27) Why is a Draft Public Scoping Document prepared and what is discussed in this document?

To facilitate public review and focus early public input in a meaningful way. The Draft Public Scoping Document provides a description of the Proposed Project, potential alternatives, and a description of areas of potential impact to be analyzed in the EIS, as well as proposed methodologies to assess impacts to the extent known at this early stage in the planning process.

28) When did the 30-Day Public Scoping Period start and when will it end?

The publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) on June 20, 2016 initiated the 30-day public scoping period. This scoping period will formally conclude on **July 21, 2016**.

29) How can the public access Project-related documents during the NEPA process?

All public documents will be available online at www.rbd-meadowlands.nj.gov. Additionally, hard copies of the Draft EIS and Final EIS will be made available local libraries in the Project Area. The Notice of Availability of the Draft EIS and Final EIS will be published in local newspapers and the Federal Register.

30) When will the Draft EIS be available to the public?

Spring 2017.

31) Will all public comments on the Draft EIS be addressed?

A response to all comments will be provided. Substantive comments received on the Draft EIS will be addressed and/or incorporated within the Final EIS, as appropriate.

32) Where can the public receive more information?

Interested persons are encouraged to visit www.rbd-meadowlands.nj.gov. Additionally, they may contact NJDEP via email at rbd-meadowlands@dep.nj.gov, or join the Citizen Advisory Group (CAG).

33) What is the Citizen Advisory Group (CAG)?

The CAG is a group of local key stakeholders, including local citizens within, and in the vicinity of, the Project Area, as well as representatives from local governance and other organizations. Currently, the CAG has approximately 40 members.

34) What is the purpose of the CAG?

The CAG serves as the primary point of coordination between the Project Team and the local communities.

35) What is the Technical Coordination Team?

This group is composed of regulatory agencies having potential purview over the Proposed Project.



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QUESTIONS 36-40

36) How can I find out more about the overall Public Involvement and Outreach Process?

The Citizen Outreach Plan (COP) provides more details on the overall process and efforts that will be conducted throughout the NEPA process; the COP can be found online at www.rbd-meadowlands.nj.gov.

37) What is the Record of Decision (ROD)?

This document summarizes the Government's decision, identifies the Environmentally Preferable Alternative, selects the Alternative that will be implemented, and identifies the potential environmental impacts of that Alternative, as well as the mitigation measures that the Government will implement.

38) What if the public has comments on the Final EIS?

If additional substantive comments are received during the Final EIS comment period, NJDEP will address these comments in the ROD.

39) How long will the NEPA process be for the Proposed Project?

Approximately 19 months; through approximately December 31, 2017.

40) Do my comments really matter?

Absolutely! Comments received during the Public Scoping Process, for example, will be used to modify the Draft Public Scoping Document

into a Final Public Scoping Document that will, in turn, shape the content, focus, and analyses conducted for the EIS. The goal of the Proposed Project is to provide a long-term benefit to the involved municipalities and their citizens. NJDEP welcomes input from those who will be affected by this Proposed Project!

