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Report from October’s CAG Meeting
The Meadowlands Challenge

NEPA TIMELINE
Key Milestones and Upcoming Events

- April 26, 2016
  CAG Meeting #2A Scoping/Data Gathering Meeting

- July 6, 2016
  Public Scoping Meeting

- August 17, 2016
  Final Public Scoping Document Published

- October 24, 2016
  CAG Meeting #5 Ecology and Drainage Basin Opportunity Areas

- January 31, 2017
  CAG Meeting #7 Alternative 2: Stormwater Drainage Improvements

- May 24, 2017
  CAG Meeting #9 NEPA Process and Ecological Resources

- October 17, 2017
  CAG Meeting #11 Alternative 1: Structural Flood Reduction, Alternative 2: Stormwater Drainage Improvements, Alternative 3: Hybrid Alternative

- March 23, 2016
  CAG Meeting #1 Introduction and Purpose/Need, NAPA Process Overview

- May 17, 2016
  CAG Meeting #2B Scoping/Data Gathering Meeting Part II

- August 11, 2016
  CAG Meeting #3 Public Scoping Results Alternatives Screening

- September 20, 2016
  CAG Meeting #4 Concept Component Development

- December 6, 2016
  CAG Meeting #6 Alternative 1: Structural Flood Reduction

- March 29, 2017
  CAG Meeting #8 Alternative 1: Structural Flood Reduction

- June 27, 2017
  CAG Meeting #10 Alternative 3: Hybrid Alternative

- January 2018
  Public Meeting

Please visit www.rbd-meadowlands.nj.gov to obtain current Proposed Project information and data, including confirmation of the above meeting dates.

The Meadowlands Challenge

The Project Area’s location in the Meadowlands District makes it subject to frequent flooding from both coastal storm surge and rain events. In addition, nearly all of the Project Area is located within the 100-year floodplain. To address these flood risks, the Project Team designed three Build Alternatives. Alternative 1 would include structural flood protection features to protect against coastal storm surges, while Alternative 2 would include stormwater management improvements to reduce inland flooding during heavy rain events. Alternative 3 would include a hybrid of the Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 components and address flooding from both coastal storm surges and heavy rain events.

During the development of these alternatives, the Project Team explored numerous initial concepts and implemented a rigorous screening process (i.e., the Concept Screening Criteria Matrix, originally developed in Fall 2016) to determine which concepts would best accomplish the Proposed Project’s goals of: (1) creating the best possible project with available funding, (2) meeting the Proposed Project’s mandate of providing flood reduction and co-benefits (i.e.,...
The Build Alternative for Alternative 1 (Structural Flood Protection) would provide a line of protection (i.e., floodwalls and a surge barrier) from storm surges up to an elevation of 7 feet (NAVD88), which represents an approximately 50-year coastal storm surge. Incorporated within this alternative would be co-benefits focused on new recreational opportunities along the Hackensack River, such as new parks, connecting pathways/riverwalks, and river access. The design further includes improvements to fragmented habitats, and the creation of new wetlands along the Hackensack River.

The Build Alternative for Alternative 2 (Stormwater Drainage Improvements) would provide a reduction in both the areal coverage and depth of flooding from frequent rainfall events. Based on a comprehensive stormwater basin analysis, the Project Team identified several grey infrastructure improvements within the lower East Riser Ditch and Losen Slote drainage basins. As such, Alternative 2 includes enhancements to both of these watercourses, including channel conveyance improvements (i.e., dredging) and a new pump station along East Riser Ditch, and two new pump stations and force mains along Losen Slote. These grey infrastructure components would provide enhanced stormwater drainage to residential, commercial, and industrial properties. In addition to these components, new public parks, open space improvements, and green infrastructure systems would be constructed throughout the Project Area to capture and treat stormwater, while also providing aesthetic and recreational co-benefits.

Alternative 3 (Hybrid Alternative) would provide flood protection from both storm surges and heavy rainfall events, and include components from both Alternative 1 and Alternative 2. However, due to the Proposed Project budget and schedule constraints, it is not feasible to construct this alternative in its entirety. As such, Alternative 3 encompasses two plans: the Build Plan and Future Plan. The Build Plan represents a feasible project that can be constructed by 2022. It incorporates the East Riser Ditch channel improvements and pump station, one of the Losen Slote pump stations, and the majority of the new parks, improved open spaces, and green infrastructure components from Alternative 2. The Future Plan includes the Alternative 1 line of protection and associated parks, pathways, and river access as well as additional channel improvements within East Riser Ditch. The Future Plan, while not specifically funded at this point, could be implemented by others over time as new funding becomes available.

Next Steps
The Project Team will hold a Public Meeting in January to present the Recommended Alternative. Until then, the Project Team will continue analyzing the socioeconomic, environmental, and cultural impacts of the three Build Alternatives and the No Action Alternative in the Draft EIS, which is due to be released for public review in early 2018.