

EARLY NOTICE AND PUBLIC REVIEW OF A PROPOSED ACTIVITY IN A 100-YEAR FLOODPLAIN AND WETLAND

September 30, 2016

To: All Interested Agencies, Groups & Individuals

This is to provide notice pursuant to 24 CFR Part 55 that the proposed federally-funded action (Hudson River Project: Resist, Delay, Store, Discharge) is located within the 100-year floodplain and wetlands. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) will be identifying and evaluating practicable alternatives to locating the actions in the floodplain and wetlands and the potential impacts from the proposed actions, as required by Executive Orders (EO) 11988 (Floodplain Management) and 11990 (Protection of Wetlands).

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). Of this, the Build Alternatives would impact between approximately 5.76 and 7.57 acres of floodplain through the placement of permanent above-ground structures (i.e., the Resist barrier). 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 5,735 linear feet of bulkhead work and Alternative 2 and Alternative 3 would potentially require approximately 555 linear feet of bulkhead work.

There are three primary purposes for this notice. First, people who may be affected by activities in floodplains and 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 education tool. Commenters are encouraged to offer alternative methods to serve the same project purpose, and methods to minimize and mitigate impacts. The dissemination of information and request for public comment about floodplains and wetlands can facilitate and enhance Federal efforts to reduce the risks 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 and wetlands, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

Written comments must be received by NJDEP on or before October 17, 2016, or fifteen (15) days from the actual date of publication, whichever is later. Written comments to this Notice can also be submitted to the NJDEP via (1) electronic submittal of comments to rbd-hudsonriver@dep.nj.gov, (2) mail to: Dennis Reinknecht, RBD Program Manager, Engineering and Construction, Office of Rebuild by Design, 501 East State Street, Mail Code 501-01A, P.O. Box 420, Trenton, NJ 08625-0420 or (3) submitted to the DCA website at <http://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/sandyrecovery/review/>. In the alternative, comments may be submitted on paper to: Laura Shea, Assistant Commissioner, Sandy Recovery Division, New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, 101 South Broad Street, P.O. Box 800, Trenton, NJ 08625-0800. Documentation is also available for public review on the project's website at www.rbd-hudsonriver.nj.gov.

Dave Rosenblatt, Assistant Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection