

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

GOVERNOR PHIL MURPHY

GOVERNOR MURPHY AND DEP ANNOUNCE MAJOR STEP FORWARD FOR THE REBUILD BY DESIGN PROJECT

The flood resistance structure alignment will provide vital flood protection for residents in many low-lying areas of Hoboken

HOBOKEN – Governor Phil Murphy today announced a critical step forward for a flood-resistant system to protect Hoboken and parts of Weehawken and Jersey City from flooding that often accompanies storms and other weather events. The final alignment of the project –funded by the federal government’s Rebuild By Design project —will be constructed along Weehawken Cove to the north, and in and around NJ TRANSIT’s Hoboken Rail Yard, located at the southern portion of Hoboken’s waterfront.

“This design selection is a win for Hoboken – now and in the future,” **said Governor Murphy**. “It provides a reasonable, cost-effective system that will protect the city’s residents from flooding from the next major storm.”

The southern alignment is a “middle ground” between the two alignments considered in the feasibility phase. It was chosen after careful review of the project’s budget and federally-mandated 2022 completion deadline, as well as discussions with NJ TRANSIT and local officials. It will afford critical flood protections to key portions of the rail yard, while also minimizing impacts to tracks and rail service during construction. The option selected will protect the NJ TRANSIT Maintenance of Way building, parking areas and other infrastructure without permanently removing any tracks from service. This option will also reduce the visual impacts of the structure on Observer Highway and provide a redevelopment opportunity in the area.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development is funding the \$230 million project through its national Rebuild By Design competition, which promotes projects that improve the resilience of urban coastal areas while providing infrastructure that improves quality of life, such as parks and recreation areas. HUD created the Rebuild by Design competition and approved \$930 million for Rebuild by Design projects in New Jersey, New York City, and New York State. As the State’s designated HUD-grantee for Sandy recovery, the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) will be involved in the project’s execution.

“Developing innovative solutions for flood resiliency in our communities has been a priority since New Jersey was so adversely affected by Superstorm Sandy six years ago,” **said Lieutenant Governor Sheila Y. Oliver, Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs**. “The DEP and DCA together ensure that projects like Rebuild By Design Hudson River will address the unique environmental challenges we are facing while working collaboratively with our affected communities.”

The Hudson River project calls for construction of flood structures and storm water control systems to protect areas vulnerable to flooding. The border between Hoboken and Weehawken, and the southern end of Hoboken, adjacent to Jersey City, are low-lying areas that, during Superstorm Sandy nearly six years ago, acted as funnels for flooding. Storm surge rushed through these two areas and joined to cause flooding from the inland side of Hoboken, effectively creating a temporary island.

“Protecting New Jersey residents from flooding is a major element of responding to climate change, which is a top priority for the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection,” **said DEP Commissioner Catherine R. McCabe**. “This decision is critical to keep Hoboken residents safe from future floods.”

The design and selection process was closely coordinated with the communities involved and accommodated the desire to provide storm surge protection while preserving waterfront access and views of the river and New York City skyline. The DEP has worked closely with a local steering committee to ensure robust public input in the design and selection process. The DEP is continuing to work designing the project, with construction expected to begin in early 2020.

“The Rebuild By Design project in Hoboken will help us build a Hudson County that is stronger and more resilient than ever before,” **said Hudson County Executive Tom DeGise**. “I look forward to working with all our partners at the federal, state, and city levels to move this project forward and protect our waterfront neighborhoods.”

“Hoboken’s residents and businesses must be protected from flooding and other residual effects of future storms,” **said Hoboken Mayor Ravi Bhalla**. “This alignment will help protect our city and support our economic goals. We believe that Hoboken can truly become a national model for innovatively dealing with the impacts of global climate change. I thank Governor Murphy, the Administration, and our federal partners for moving this project forward.”

“As the former Mayor of Hoboken during Superstorm Sandy, I am incredibly grateful to Governor Murphy and his Administration for prioritizing the public safety and resiliency of our region with this carefully evaluated decision,” **said former Hoboken Mayor Dawn Zimmer**. “This is truly a win/win for Hoboken and the State of New Jersey. It ensures that Rebuild by Design will remain on track for completion by 2022, protects the operations of our State’s critical transportation system, and enables substantial commercial economic development to move forward.”

The DEP will update the public on the option selection and provide other project updates during a meeting from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. this evening at the Stevens Institute of Technology Howe Center. The meeting will be in the Bissinger Room on the fourth floor.

For more project information, visit: www.nj.gov/dep/floodresilience/rbd-hudsonriver.htm
(<http://www.nj.gov/dep/floodresilience/rbd-hudsonriver.htm>)

For more on HUD’s Rebuild by Design effort, visit: <https://www.hud.gov/sandyrebuilding/rebuildbydesign>
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