

Publication Date: Thursday August 12,2021

FINAL PUBLIC NOTICE

Resilient Infrastructure: Coastal Flood Protection for Bridgeport Connecticut PDMC-PJ-01-CT-2019-006

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) proposes to provide federal financial assistance under the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program to the Connecticut Department of Housing in Bridgeport, Fairfield County, Connecticut, to construct a coastal flood defense system (Proposed Action) to protect the South End area of the City of Bridgeport. Pursuant to Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management) and FEMA's implementing regulations at Title 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 9, FEMA hereby provides interested parties with a notice of its final decision and an explanation of the alternatives that were considered.

The purpose of the project is to reduce the risk of flooding in the South End area. The Proposed Action would construct a floodwall that would protect an approximately 64-acre area from the 100-year storm event plus 2.5 feet of sea level rise. The Proposed Action would also install a pump station and green infrastructure for internal drainage of stormwater during coastal storm conditions and to reduce stormwater flooding. The pump station would discharge stormwater outside of the area protected by the floodwall through a bioswale and rain garden in Seaside Park. There are two sections of the coastal flood defense system flood wall. The first alignment would be located primarily on private, industrial, and utility properties east of Main Street. This alignment would start south from the railroad tracks and run south and connect to the power plant at the southeastern edge of the South End neighborhood. The second section would run west from the southwestern corner of the power plant through a vacant lot and connect to University Avenue at Main Street where the road would become elevated to a point adjacent to Knight's Field at the University of Bridgeport.

The alternatives below were identified through the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) NEPA process and the preparation of an EIS. With FEMA's adoption of the HUD EIS the alternatives identified were carried over into FEMA's 8-Step analysis to satisfy both NEPA and Executive Order 11988 alternatives identification and analysis requirements.

Four alternatives to the proposed action were considered and all are variations of the proposed coastal flood defense system alignment. Alternative 1 would only partially pass through the site at 60 Main Street before turning north to meet Russell Street. It would then follow the Bridgeport Energy property line to Singer Avenue, then follow the western edge of the future United Illuminating (UI) Pequonnock Substation site before crossing Ferry Access Road and tying into the New Haven Line railroad viaduct. The Alternative 2 alignment would also only partially pass through the 60 Main Street site before turning north to meet Russell Street, continuing to Atlantic Street. The alignment would run west along the north side of Atlantic Street and turn north along the eastern edge of the Public Service Enterprise Group property, which is currently occupied by a brick warehouse, then cross Whiting Street and continue through the public right-of-way along Singer Avenue. It would then follow the western edge of the future UI Pequonnock Substation

site before crossing Ferry Access Road and tie into the railroad viaduct. Under Alternative 3, the alignment would turn north within the 60 Main Street site to the east side of 57 Henry Street and continue across Henry Street along the east side of Russell Street. After turning west at Atlantic Street, the alignment would continue on the east side of Main Street for one block between Atlantic and Whiting Streets heading north before turning east to Singer Avenue. Thereafter, the alignment would follow the western edge of the future site of the UI Pequonnock Substation, cross Ferry Access Road, and tie in at the elevated railroad viaduct. Under Alternative 4, there would be no action to mitigate flooding in the South End. These alternatives were ultimately dismissed as the Proposed Action alignment was found to provide the most benefits while protecting the South End neighborhood. FEMA has determined that the proposed project is the only practicable alternative available; the proposed action must be located in the floodplain to protect the South End neighborhood. The proposed action is functionally dependent on the project location and will facilitate open space use while benefiting the area through a reduction in the risk of flooding and flood damage. Connecticut Department of Housing has declared that the proposed action conforms to local floodplain standards, and would be responsible for the management, construction, and maintenance of the proposed action.

The project area is depicted on the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM), Map Numbers 09001C0437G and 09001C0441G, effective July 8, 2013. The proposed action lies within Zone AE, an area that has a 1-percent probability of flooding every year and where predicted floodwater elevations have been established.

A map of the project area and its location within the floodplain is available for public inspection upon request. Parties interested in receiving a copy of the map, or additional information, should contact FEMA Region I:

Karen Vale, Environmental Specialist
Federal Emergency Management Agency, Boston, MA
FEMA-R1-HMA-EHP@fema.dhs.gov

and

Eric Kuns, Senior Environmental Protection Specialist
Federal Emergency Management Agency, Boston, MA
eric.kuns@fema.dhs.gov; (202) 805-9089

FEMA will take no action until 15 days after the publication of this notice.