

Essex County, NJ

LLPT 3 Meeting Notes

ATTENDEES

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Township of South Orange Village, NJ

DATE: Thursday, April 8, 2020 **TIME:** 10 - 11 AM

LOCATION: Virtual Webinar

Action Item	Owner
1. FEMA to address comments received on the draft levee plan and distribute final Levee Plan to LLPT.	FEMA/STARR II

FTP Site Information

Browser link:

[South Orange, NJ LLPT](#)

AGENDA

INTRODUCTIONS

LEVEE SYSTEM OVERVIEWS

LEVEE PLAN SUMMARY AND REVIEW

NEXT STEPS

MEETING OVERVIEW

On April 8, 2021, FEMA Region 2 held a Local Levee Partnership Team (LLPT) virtual meeting to discuss the draft plan for the Levee Analysis and Mapping Procedure (LAMP) process for the South Orange Flood Control Project in Essex County, NJ.

MEETING NOTES

LEVEE SYSTEM OVERVIEWS

- There are two levee systems in South Orange: Left Bank North Levee and Right Bank South Levee. This is part of the overall flood control project for South Orange that USACE constructed in the late 1970s.

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ATTENDEES *Continued*

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- There is one flood control channel system also included in the overall flood control project, but that is not the focus of this effort.
- Left Bank North Levee
 - Updated delineation of estimated levee impacted area based on current effective BFE elevations and updated refined levee area based on delineated levee crest elevations.
 - Would currently be considered “freeboard deficient” and therefore ineligible for levee accreditation. The levee system is currently depicted on the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) as accredited and reducing the flood risk associated with the base flood. Because the FIRM does not show the levee impacted area (due to the older style of the map) the levee system is noted to provide “implied protection.”
 - The exhibit prepared is based on currently available data but could change in the future with better data.
- Right Bank South Levee
 - Based on available data and the effective BFE, the levee system appears to have a minimum of 3 feet of freeboard, which could help support the riverine freeboard requirement for accreditation; however, the freeboard could change in the future based on new information (i.e., levee crest survey and updated BFEs).

LEEVE PLAN SUMMARY AND REVIEW

- Focuses on the two existing levee systems and explains the LAMP engagement and process so far.
- Captures concerns related to the flooding impacts to the Department of Public Works (DPW) building to be passed on to future study teams and points to mitigation resources including the Essex County Hazard Mitigation Plan and FEMA mitigation grants, including Building Resilient Infrastructures and Communities (BRIC).

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- Explains potential mapping and analysis procedures and those not applicable to this situation.
- As new data is developed, this plan can be updated.

NEXT STEPS

- Base Level Engineering (BLE) analyses are anticipated to be initiated later this year within the State of New Jersey, including within this study area. When completed, the analyses will provide an updated look at the flood risk in this area. The BLE analyses will not be as detailed as regulatory studies. After BLE analysis, FEMA may revisit the Levee Plan and update as needed. A full regulatory study is anticipated to follow the BLE analysis in the future.
- Meeting notes from this LLPT webinar will be included in the Levee Plan appendix. The LLPT is asked to review the plan and send feedback to the FEMA levee team by Friday, April 16, 2021.

DISCUSSION

LEFT BANK NORTH LEVEE

QUESTION: (Township of South Orange Village) Is the red line on the map the current levee or what is recommended?

RESPONSE: (FEMA Levee Team) It shows what is currently there based on what the USACE constructed and the as-built data they provided. In addition, the red hatching on the map shows what is not currently on FEMA flood maps but could be in the future if the BFEs were to remain close to their current elevation.

QUESTION: (Township of South Orange Village) Is the study recommending that the levee be improved?

RESPONSE: (FEMA Levee Team) The plan is to do further study on this particular area, so at this point it is premature to discuss improvements. FEMA's role is to map the flood risk associated with the levee system. In this case, the flood risk is not identified on the effective FIRM which is why it was

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estimated as part of this LAMP process. For this levee system, the cost-benefit may not support accreditation based on the effective BFEs since there are not structures impacted, but it is also good to know more information on how the levee system may or may not meet FEMA levee requirements. It is up to the levee sponsor (the community) to decide whether to pursue accreditation.

QUESTION: (Township of South Orange Village) Are the floodway and the floodplain going to be updated?

RESPONSE: (FEMA Levee Team) Yes. The levee plan mentions a BLE study FEMA is planning to begin later this year. The BLE study pulls together various inputs and does advanced modeling to provide an interim look at flood risk and to inform areas of priority for FEMA to then fund full regulatory studies/restudies. The LLPT will have the opportunity to reevaluate how to handle the levees and what analysis options will be available. FEMA will be transparent as new initiatives affect this area.

RIGHT BANK SOUTH LEVEE

COMMENT: (Township of South Orange Village) The Flood Control Project is channeling water south and causing flooding at the DPW garage on Walton Ave. This doesn't affect homes, but the Township of South Orange Village has lost money in damage to facilities and equipment, as well as the overtime hours spent moving equipment out of harm's way.

RESPONSE: (FEMA Levee Team) This is why FEMA has these meetings, so that they are made aware of issues that weren't previously noted. Additionally, the issues with flooding at the DPW garage have already been included in the Essex County HMP. In the future, better flood risk information should be available for assessing potential mitigation actions such as moving the DPW facilities or managing excess water flow in the nearby park or treed area.