

**Raritan Bay and Sandy Hook Bay
Highlands, New Jersey
Coastal Storm Risk Management
Feasibility Study**

**Appendix F
Pertinent Correspondence
November 2015**

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HIGHLANDS.NJ.COM

Highlands Pertinent Correspondence Appendix

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Introduction

Public involvement is integral to the USACE Civil Works Planning Process. As described in the USACE Planning Guidance Notebook, the goal of public involvement is to “open and maintain channels of communication with the public in order to give full consideration to public views and information on the planning process.”¹ Although the public’s views on the proposed action are important to document and consider, it must also be noted that USACE cannot relinquish its legislated decision-making ability, in accord with its policies and institutional mandates. The other decision maker in the process for the Highlands study is the non-Federal partner, NJDEP, who in turn has an agreement with the Borough of Highlands. Both the Borough of Highlands and NJDEP must support the plan for it to move into implementation. Letters of support from NJDEP and the Borough are attached to this appendix as Exhibits 1 and 2.

Submitted Comments

Public involvement was conducted through meetings with the public and through solicitation of public and agency comments on the draft feasibility report. A summary of the public meetings held at Highlands for the study is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Public Meetings held for the Highlands Study

| Date | Purpose |
|--------------------|--|
| February 09, 2004 | NEPA Scoping Meeting |
| October 28, 2013 | Status update to public, announcement of study completion using P.L. 113-2 funds |
| February 10, 2014* | Outreach to explain how project would affect existing access to water |
| March 12, 2014* | Outreach to explain how project would affect existing access to water |
| April 28, 2014* | Outreach to explain how project would affect existing access to water |
| July 22, 2015 | Announcement of public review period for draft report package |

* The study team also met with waterfront business owners between February and April 2014 on site to discuss business operations with a view toward minimizing impacts.

The draft feasibility report was released on the USACE New York District website on July 17, 2015 at <http://www.nan.usace.army.mil/Missions/CivilWorks/ProjectsInNewJersey/RaritanBayandSandyHookBay,Highlands.aspx>. A public meeting to announce the report release, with an overview of the proposed action and explanations on how to submit comments, was held on July 22, 2015 at the Henry Hudson

¹ The Planning Guidance Notebook, Engineering Regulation (ER) 1105-2-100, Appendix B – Public Involvement, Coordination and Collaboration, paragraph B-3.

Regional High School in Highlands (see Table 1). Representatives from Congressman Frank Pallone (NJ-6), in whose district Highlands is located, were in attendance. The public review period was from July 17, 2015 to August 17, 2015, and was extended to September 17, 2015 to provide the agencies with more review time. Study team contact information was provided for questions about the report or study process, and it was made clear that only written comments (by mail or electronic mail) would be included in the study documentation.

Agency Comments

The USEPA made two (2) comments. They commented on the lack of a complete Clean Air Act analysis and disagreed with the initial qualitative analysis of comparing Highlands to a similar Corps project on Raritan Bay. The District anticipated this comment and will be completing a quantitative Clean Air Analysis once the project is optimized. The second comment addressed the cumulative impacts section stating the District did not address all current and future projects in the area. The District has revised the report to include these projects.

Public Comments

Comments were received from 35 households, predominantly from the community of Highlands (based on the comments that included addresses). These letters and emails are transcribed in the following pages. Names of the individuals who sent in comments are listed in alphabetical order, along with street names if provided, in Table 2. In cases where multiple parties sent in the same letter, such letter is shown once with all of the senders' names.

Clarifications

Some factual misunderstandings, as well as questions, on the proposed action were found in the comments. The study team addressed these questions and misunderstandings, which have been collated and paraphrased, in Table 3. The number designating each clarification is marked in the text of the comments where the misunderstanding is detected. The pertinent text from the report is extracted to show what the report says on the topic.

In addition to submitted comments, a flyer was posted throughout Highlands. This flyer was not officially submitted to USACE, but Congressman Chris Smith's office (NJ-4) forwarded it to USACE. The author of the flyer, who is not identified, opposes the project. The flyer contains a number of misunderstandings as to the scope and components of the project, which are flagged in this appendix. The study team's clarifications on the misunderstandings, citing the pertinent text from the report, are provided as appropriate.

Table 2: Comment Submitters

| Name(s) | Street | Page in appendix |
|------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Borgobello, Eileen | Cedar St. | 25 |
| Bucco, Carol | Shore Drive | 12 |
| Carney, Josephine | Cedar St. | 25 |
| Caulfield, Edward T. | Fifth St. | 25 |
| Clark, Barbara | Fifth St. | 25 |
| Clarke, Maryann | Cedar St. | 25 |
| Coffin, Martin. | Cedar St. | 25 |
| Cohen, Ira & Sharon | Not provided | 12 |
| DaRocha, Roberta M. | Fifth St. | 25 |
| Davis, Robert J. | Recreation Place SeaDrift Ave. Ocean Ave. Huddy Ave. Waterwitch Ave. | 14 |
| Dowling, Ronald E. | Fifth St. | 25 |
| Erickson, T. | Not provided | 11 |
| Frantzen, Elizabeth | Cedar St. | 25 |
| Gibbons | Cedar St. | 25 |
| Gordon, Julie | Huddy Ave. | 13 |
| Hennesey, Jane | Cedar St. | 25 |
| Horan, Michael & Gina | Cedar St. | 25 |
| Horan, Patricia | Cedar St. | 25 |
| King, Ann Marie | Fifth St. | 25 |
| King, Neal | Fifth St. | 25 |
| Knox, Rob | Bay Avenue | 10 |
| Kushnir, Vitaly A. | Beach Blvd. | 13 |
| Luzzi, Pete | Fifth St. | 25 |
| Mahoney, Dianne | Cedar St. | 25 |
| McCorey, Eileen | Cedar St. | 25 |
| McKevitt, Patrick | Cedar St. | 25 |
| Moynihan, K. | Not provided | 13 |
| Neely, Deborah | Cedar St. | 25 |
| O'Leary, Kathleen | Cedar St. | 25 |
| Rice, Kevin P. | Cedar St. | 25 |
| Rivera, Paschal | Waterwitch Ave. | 11 |
| Rosiak, Fred | Not provided | 14 |
| Scarano, Gerard & Patricia | Seadrift Ave. | (August 10) 18 |
| Scarano, Gerard & Patricia | Seadrift Ave. | (August 12) 20 |
| Schiff, Eileen | Ocean Ave. | 24 |
| Sienkiewicz, Patrick | Fifth St. | 25 |
| US Environmental Protection Agency | 290 Broadway, New York, NY | 27 |

Table 3: Clarifications on comments

| No. | Description | Page(s) in Appendix | Clarification |
|-----|--|---------------------|---|
| H01 | Why can't the town be completely elevated, which would remove the need for a wall? | 13, 20, 24 | Some structures in Highlands are not appropriate to elevate, as described on page 42 of the report (Alternative 2: Nonstructural Plan). Some structures may be too large to elevate safely. When a structure cannot be lifted, the alternate treatment is a ringwall or surface floodwall. As described on page 42 of the report, approximately 12, 820 linear ft of ringwalls and surface floodwalls would be required in addition to the structure elevations to have a similar level of performance that the TSP provides. Note that the floodwall/bulkhead alignment in the TSP has a shorter length at 10,636 linear ft, making it the more cost effective option. |
| H02 | How high will the walls be from current ground level? 10-12 foot high berms, floodwalls, and dunes will make access to water difficult | 18, 20, 25, 26 | The 10-12 ft elevation referenced is not the height above current grade. It is the height of the project referenced to the North American Vertical Datum of 1988. Factoring in the current grade elevations within Highlands, the height of the project will range from two to eight ft above existing grade (p 66 of report). Walkover access in the form of earthen ramps or timber stairs may be provided for publicly owned parcels along the alignment, or private property owners may receive financial compensation for the estimated amount that it would take to build the appropriate form of walkover access. |

| No. | Description | Page(s) in Appendix | Clarification |
|-----|--|---------------------|---|
| H03 | What will the visual effect of the wall be? Will there be landscaping to soften the look? Is a conceptual rendering available? | 15, 18, 20 | The visual effect of the wall is dependent on the final dimensions, which will be determined through the plan optimization (ongoing). USACE has shown images of similar projects it has built throughout the nation at prior public meetings in Highlands. The slide presentation from these prior meetings can be posted at the Highlands page. |
| H04 | How will the wall affect stormwater drainage? The wall will trap the stormwater. | 15, 18, 20, 25, 26 | The current stormwater management system is currently under the existing bulkheads and will remain below the potential project. During optimization, the team will identify the necessary interior drainage measures for stormwater management, as the project is not allowed to exacerbate existing drainage problems. Measures to be considered include pumps and gravity-fed outlets. These features will be included in the final report. |
| H05 | What is the relationship between the first cost and fully funded cost? Does "first cost" mean that other budgets will be needed to complete the project? | 15, 18, 20, 25 | The first cost is not an increment. The first cost is the construction estimate in current price levels – the report uses the October 2014 price level. Considering that construction is estimated to be complete in 2021, the team needs to account for inflation, which leads to the fully funded cost. |
| H06 | When will the detailed cost breakdown be available to the public? | 20 | A cost estimate breakdown is available in Table 16 on page 62 of the report. Further details are not approved for general distribution, to protect the integrity of the bidding process if the project goes into contracting for construction. |

| No. | Description | Page(s) in Appendix | Clarification |
|-----|--|---------------------|--|
| H07 | What portion of the wall will be funded by the Borough? How will it be funded? Who will pay the annual maintenance costs on the project? | 15, 18, 20 | The Highlands project right now is in the Feasibility Study phase, which is being funded at 100% Federal Cost as a result of Public Law 113-2; the Sandy Disaster Relief Appropriations Act. If the project moves forward to the Design phase and then to construction, it is projected to be at the typical cost share for federal projects, which is 65% federal/ 35% state, and the State then will cost share that 35% with the municipality at a 75% State/25% municipal breakdown, which translates to about 9cents on the dollar for the municipality. |
| H08 | The annual maintenance costs will be too high – either \$2.3M or \$4M for the town. | 15, 20, 25, 26 | The annual maintenance cost for the proposed project is \$92,000, as described in Section 4.4 on page 65 of the report. The figures of approximately \$2 million in annual costs (Table 8 on page 52) or around \$3.5 million in annual costs (Table 12 on page 57) reflect the annualization of the total project implementation cost, currently estimated at \$78,905,000 in FY15 price levels. The term “annual costs” does not refer to additional costs incurred on an annual basis after the project is built; it refers to how much the construction estimate of \$78,905,000 would cost on an annual basis spread out over the 50 year period of analysis, accounting for interest rates. In summary, \$92,000 is the estimated annual cost of operations and maintenance. |
| H09 | Who will manage the public works project? | 20 | The construction of the project will be managed by USACE personnel. |
| H10 | USACE is raising streets and yards for businesses, that should also be considered for individual homeowners | 18, 25 | The raising of streets and yards was identified for technical reasons, to match the existing ground cover. It was not for distinctions between commercial and private properties. |

| No. | Description | Page(s) in Appendix | Clarification |
|-----|---|---------------------|--|
| H11 | Construction of the project will cause sand to leach into private marinas | 18 | The proposed project will have no impact on the littoral drift (sand flow). The shoaling of marinas is expected to be the same with or without a project in place. |
| H12 | The wall will not prevent flooding from another Sandy type event. The project will not function against flooding, only wave damage. | 13, 26 | USACE practice is not to design to a specific event such as Hurricane Sandy, but to consider the probability of future events to determine the optimal project dimensions to maximize the Federal investment. Two things worth noting: 1) assumptions about future storm events, on which the economic analysis is based, do include historic events such as Hurricane Irene and Hurricane Sandy; and 2) during Hurricane Sandy, municipalities that had flood projects in place fared better than the ones that did not. Even though the existing projects were not designed to Hurricane Sandy levels, they still lessened the amount of flooding and wave damage. In Highlands, an implemented project would result in substantial reductions in flooding and wave damage |
| H13 | The bulkhead/seawall on the new condominium development will not be built to standard. | 13, 26 | Construction of the development is already underway, and the developer is expected to meet all required Federal and State design standards. |

| No. | Description | Page(s) in Appendix | Clarification |
|-----|---|---------------------|--|
| H14 | Residents of the higher elevation part of Highlands will not benefit from the project. | 26 | There are businesses, local institutions (Borough Hall) and critical infrastructure (police, first aid, fire department, public works) within the study area that serve everyone within the Borough of Highlands. |
| H15 | All houses in Highlands will be elevated in the next 4 years, so a wall is no longer needed. | 26 | The requirement to elevate existing homes applies to substantial improvements, where the estimated value of the repair is more than 50% of the value of the property in question. USACE has accounted for structures that were elevated or required to be elevated as a result of Hurricane Sandy. |
| H16 | \$78.9M seems low for a project of this scope. What is the plan to complete the project if the construction goes over budget? | 20 | The estimate of \$78.9M is based on the available information. Following the review of the draft report, the team will determine the optimal height for the project, identify the interior drainage (stormwater management) plan, and refine the contingency amount for the construction cost – the cost estimate may grow as these additional details are worked out. |
| H17 | Why was Bahrs and southern end of Highlands waterfront, which also is flooded, excluded from TSP? | 20 | The TSP reflects the most cost effective alignment, based on current information. In this case, the location of the alignment was determined by the local topography and available construction techniques. |

| No. | Description | Page(s) in Appendix | Response/Clarification |
|-----|---|---------------------|--|
| H18 | <p>Real estate requirements (p. 81 of report) – which 92 private properties will be affected, have they been identified and notified?</p> <p>1- How will the permanent easement affect private property?</p> <p>2- What type of access will be provided for those who lose easy access to the water?</p> <p>3- How will loss of water views affect quality of life and property values?</p> | 15,18, 20 | <p>The affected parcels are the ones with waterfront access. Public meetings were held in the spring of 2014 for affected homeowners to provide feedback on the proposed action. The property owners would be contacted individually by staff from NJDEP if the project moves forward into implementation. No homes are included in the permanent easement. As Section 8.3 on page 81 states, private property owners will receive financial compensation if their existing access needs to be removed for construction. It is up to the homeowner what they wish to do with the compensation. As for the question of property values, property values may fall because of the loss of the water view, but they may also rise because the properties are less vulnerable to flooding. USACE cannot predict the real estate market, as there are many factors that impact property value.</p> |
| H19 | <p>Document does not provide information necessary to support a General Conformity Applicability Analysis for the Clean Air Act.</p> | 27 | <p>The information needed for a quantitative analysis to support the required Clean Air Act documentation will be available in project optimization. It will be included in the final report.</p> |
| H20 | <p>The cumulative impacts section of the report should include more than just USACE projects.</p> | 27 | <p>The description of projects in the area has been expended to include non-Federal efforts and other Federal initiatives to inform the cumulative impacts analysis.</p> |

Text of Comments

The text of emails is presented first, in the order that they were received by USACE staff. Scanned images of written letters and the flyer follow the emails. Personal details (house numbers on street addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses) have been partially redacted to protect the senders' privacy.

-----Original Message-----

From: Rob Knox [mailto: [REDACTED]]
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2015 2:28 PM
To: Shea, Jason A NAN02
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Robert Knox Highlands NJ

Hi Jason,

My name is Rob Knox and I live at [REDACTED] Bay Ave Highlands NJ. First of all, I want to thank you for your efforts in our flood project. Secondly, as one of the younger residents to attend these meetings (I am 44 years old) I can clearly see this project is vital to the future of Highlands. I am pointing out my age and also want to point out that I am a father raising my two daughters along with my wife in Highlands. Many of the "NO" comments you are no doubt going to get are going to be from the older/retired folks of Highlands. Many of our senior citizens fail to acknowledge that these storms are going to continue and from most accounts get worst. I have heard time and time again that this storm was a once in a life time event. Well maybe for them but not for our children and young families in Highlands. It always surprises me that flood after flood many people in my town simply brush it off. I have heard Highlands always floods and always will. The general mentality of some of the older folks is to just clean up after a flood and go on. These people have become so used to several inches or more water coming into their house that it has become somewhat normal. They are not concerned with mold, loss of property or moving. I have several neighbors that own their home outright and carry no insurance. They simply look for hand outs and locals to help them clean up.

There are streets in Highlands that flood several times a year. All it takes is the right moon, wind and tide to put several inches of water on the road or more. After the storm of 1992, when the town had 3+ feet of water on Bay Ave there was talk. After hurricane Irene the town had somewhere of about 4+ feet of water there was more talk. After Sandy, it was still more talk except there were limited places to talk about the storm. Our municipal building, post office and community center were destroyed and remains that way. (post office is open now) Sandy has changed the game and I hope and pray that something is done other than more talk. We need to be able to rebuild and stay rebuilt. We can not rely on Flood insurance and charity to keep Highlands going. We need to do something to insure our future and the future of our children. If nothing is done we are sitting ducks. We can raise our homes and pray, but that is not going to help in the long run. Only a project like this will do the trick.

Once Highlands becomes "dry" businesses will come back and flourish. Families will move in and stay to raise their children and the town will prosper.

Without this project the town will continue to struggle and one more Sandy type event will finish off this town for good. Many of our residences have left already and will never come back. Businesses are too scared to move in and our town is dying a slow death. Taxes are going up and resources are going down. So please lets make this project a full go. I am afraid without this project Highlands will become a ghost town after the next storm, because there will be a "next storm".

Thank you
Rob Knox

-----Original Message-----

From: Tricianyc [mailto: [REDACTED]]
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2015 9:31 PM
To: Shea, Jason A NAN02
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Highlands Nj Ace plan

Dear Jason,

I wanted to reach out to express my great support for the Army Corp project in Highlands NJ. We desperately need the help as we have had the same issues for years with no assistance. Thank you for all the hard work you all put in to try to bring this project to fruition.

Regards,
Paschal Rivera
[REDACTED] Waterwitch Ave
Highlands, NJ 07732

-----Original Message-----

From: terickson61 [mailto: [REDACTED]]
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2015 10:53 PM
To: Shea, Jason A NAN02
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Highlands

Thank you so much for all of your professional ideas for the Highlands community
And planning out the perfect solution to our flooding we appreciate all the hard work, time and knowledge.

Hope Highlands takes your advice and work starts soon.

Resident of waterwitch Ave wet side .. (the flooding is getting worse we need you the army , corps of engineer)

Thanks for everything

-----Original Message-----

From: IRA COHEN [mailto: [REDACTED]]
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2015 11:16 AM
To: Shea, Jason A NAN02
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Corp of Engineers Report

We are residents of Highlands NJ and feel the Army Engineering report has shown the work that should be done.

We have lived here for over 20 years and have seen no improvements in lessening our exposure to heavy rains. High tides and of course hurricanes.

We had heavy losses because of Hurricane Sandy, not only physically but financially.

Hopefully we will see the work proposed to take place.

We thank the Corps of Engineers for their effort.

Ira & Sharon Cohen

-----Original Message-----

From: cbucco1 [REDACTED]
To: Jasen.a.shea <Jasen.a.shea@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Fri, Aug 7, 2015 5:14 pm
Subject: seawall

I hope this is the correct address as I misplaced the paper work. I would like to say that as president of the Bayview Condominium Association I am very much in support of the army corps proposal to build a bulkhead on our property. I think the majority of our residents would also support this endeavor.

Someone has just delivered a note to our property denouncing the project. I have attended nearly every meeting you have held on the project and "the facts" stated in this notice are not correct. It sounds like the former Bridge opposers rising again from the ashes with misinformation and scare tactics.

We have not been able to stem flooding in at least 70 years of my life in Highlands so I am willing to give your valid proposal a shot and I hope you get the go ahead.

Carol Bucco

[REDACTED] Shore Drive [REDACTED]
Highlands, NJ 07732

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.
From: kmoynyhan@[REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, August 9, 2015 7:15 PM
To: Gentile, David T NAN02
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Highlands Plan

The proposed plan to build a wall in the Highlands will ruin other town. We live in townhouse on the bay it will destroy our property values and raise our taxes which are already high. This is a terrible plan and must not happen.

I am 100% against this.

Sent 8/10/15

Dear Olivia and David,

I live in Highlands NJ near the Beach and want to make sure my opinion about the planed project is heard. I believe that its important to raise houses in lower Highlands and to improve Beach and Dune Fill. However, constructing a large seawall which blocks views of the bay will be counterproductive and costly both to the government and to the residents of Highlands by decreasing property values and desirability of the town. The sections of town that already have a seawall (Snug Harbor) not only look awful but the beach is inaccessible to residents.

Thank you for the consideration,

H01

Vitaly A. Kushnir, MD
[REDACTED] Beach Blvd.
Highlands, NJ, 07732
mobile: 801-[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]@ [REDACTED]
www.centerforhumanreprod.com

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]@ [REDACTED] [mailto:[REDACTED]@ [REDACTED]]
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2015 11:00 AM
To: Shea, Jason A NAN02
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Proposed Seawall in front of Highlands, NJ

H01, H12, H13

Dear Mr. Shea,

I am writing to you today to stenuously object to the proposed seawall in front of Highlands, NJ. I live at 11 Huddy Avenue, Highlands, NJ.

I believe this seawall would:

(1) destroy Highlands as a town

- removing our waterfront views which are the primary reason people buy properties here. Property values and rentals will decline precipitously throughout the town.
- destroying our local access to the water from lower highlands, local marinas, waterfront restaurants, marine repair, fishing, water taxi, and other marine businesses, and clamming industries.
- increase not only implementation costs but ongoing maintenance costs which the town cannot afford to pay.
- the current town is plagued by citizens unable to afford to even tear down their homes wrecked by Sandy. Many have been unable to afford to raise their homes and have been forced into foreclosure/fire sales of their homes. The rest of the homeowners are certainly not able to come up with enough money to properly plow the roads when it snows or pay for police, little 'lone a new seawall.
- cripple the real estate business which has just started to recover from Hurricane Sandy

(2) This seawall would not solve the problem

- this seawall would not prevent flooding which is the reason why houses are being raised in Highlands
- this seawall would not solve the flooding which occurs by having the Shrewsbury River rise in storms
- wave damage: this seawall would only partially prevent the velocity of wave action during a hurricane. Given that some of the seawall would need to be built by a private builder and maintained by private firms with low margins, the likelihood is failure of the north seawall and excessive costs of maintaining similar walls and dunes. The failure to maintain the wall is guaranteed given the current state of the current wall implemented at the end my street. This is even more true if Highlands was not economically viable as a town anymore (as I assert would be the impact of this seawall). This would result in part of the seawall failing which would defeat the purpose of it in the first place.

Please do not build this seawall.

Julie Gordon

■ Huddy Avenue
Highlands, NJ 07732

From: Frederic Rosiak [mailto:]
Sent: Friday, August 28, 2015 11:43 AM
To: Shea, Jason A NAN02
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Highlands Draft Feasibility Report release (UNCLASSIFIED)

Hi Jason:

wanted to compliment you guys on your plan and its presentation. It would sure be great to finally do something to protect this town from all of the nuisance flooding and most of the catastrophic storms. Those op[posed seem to zero in on the fact that the proposed height wouldn't protect from the Sandy event which we all know to be a lame basis for objections, but non the less will have to be strongly addressed up front prior to a vote.

Thanks again for a great job at the meeting and presentation.

Fred Rosiak

-----Original Message-----

From: Robert Ddavis [mailto: [REDACTED]@ [REDACTED]]

H03, H04, H05, H07, H08, H18

Sent: Thursday, September 17, 2015 11:57 AM

To: Shea, Jason A NAN02

Cc: Gentile, David T NAN02; Cackler, Olivia N NAN02; [REDACTED]@verizon.net

Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: Coastal Storm Risk Management Feasibility Study: Raritan Bay and Sandy Hood Bay, Highlands

Dear Mr. Shea:

My wife and I own several properties in the flood zone in Highlands, NJ. We came to Highlands before the storm and love the fantastic views and waterfront access.

One property we own was purchased on Seadrift Avenue along the marina. It was purchased primarily as a result of the access to the marina with the intention of building our home there and enjoying the beautiful views offered on this part of the eastern shore and having convenient access to the marina (and our boat.)

We are thankful for the excellent report that was prepared by the Corp of Engineers and appreciate the amount of effort that has been put forth.

Having had an opportunity to review the proposal, we have several questions and concerns that we are hopeful that you can help to clarify and/or consider as you advance in the process.

- The budget refers to a total First Cost of \$78,905,000. What does "First Cost" mean? Does this imply that additional funds will be needed to complete the project? \$78.9M seems very low for a large-scale engineering project covering 10,636 linear feet of seawall. Further, the plan suggests that 35% of the cost will come from non-federal funds. How much of the budget will the town and its residents be expected to pay?

The town currently has insufficient funds to meet the immediate needs of its residents. How will the taxpayers be impacted? Taxes are already highly disproportionate to property sizes and to the quality of services provided when compared to surrounding neighborhoods.

- Previous engineering projects within the town of Highlands have been left unfinished due to budget over-runs. This has left the town's residents and taxpayers with additional tax, maintenance and other burdens. What is the plan to complete the project if it goes over budget?

- Who will pay the annual maintenance costs for ensuring the bulkheads are maintained? The wall proposal cites these costs at close to \$4M per annum. Historically, the town has not maintained the existing bulkheads it was responsible for and consequently many were in disrepair prior to Sandy. There is a concern that over 10,636 feet of seawall (comprising bulkheads, floodwalls, closure gates etc.) is more than the current administration can manage, or the town's already strained budget is able to sustain. Will the funds for wall maintenance be allocated and managed? Perhaps an independent committee could be established post-project to endure proper maintenance and manage the costs.

- There is a concern that the wall will block the current natural drainage of water that runs off the hill and enters the town from underground drains and other sources. There is a mention of using pumps

to remove this water, however the understanding is that the pumps project is at present unapproved and unfunded. Blocking the natural release of tidal and rain waters could result in the majority of lower Highlands properties becoming waterlogged, as there would be no way of releasing flood waters back into the waterways. It seems that the pumps are critical – currently, water routinely comes through the existing storm drains, flooding the streets, and not over the existing seawall.

· Page 81 of the proposed plan – “Real Estate Requirements” reads as follows:

The total lands and easements required in support of the project is approximately 32.7 acres; 9.3 acres required in permanent easements, 18.4 acres required in temporary easements, and 5 acres of fee simple purchase for environmental mitigation purposes. The project impacts approximately 107 parcels, affecting approximately 92 private owners and 2 public owners (15 parcels). In some instances, more than one estate is required to be obtained over the lands of an owner.

Which 92 private properties will be affected and in what way? Has a list of 92 impacted private properties been published, and have those 92 homeowners been made aware, so as to ensure they have ample time to review the proposal and to respond appropriately? The 2 impacted businesses in Highlands have been individually made aware of the wall project and proposals have been included to raise those properties as part of this proposed public works budget. Should the same courtesy not be extended to the 92 private property owners?

Some examples of concerns that impacted private property owners may have are:

- o How will the loss of immediate access to water be handled?
- o How will the loss of water views impact quality of life and property values for impacted private properties and Highlands residents in general?
- o Does the budget include accommodations to be made to impacted homes e.g. homes raised that were not given grants to raise? Decks built to extend across the wall? Stairs and ladders provided to ensure continued access to marinas and beaches?
- What will the wall look like? How will the water be accessed? Will views be limited? Access to the water is critical to the future of Highlands. We want to ensure that the wall is aesthetically pleasing and will not hinder the physical access to or views of the water. We are particularly concerned related to our property on Seadrift and our ability to immediately access the marina and our boat, which is located directly adjacent to property. We are concerned that the wall will prohibit us from accessing the marina and may limit our views of the water.

How will the small beaches and the adjacent bay waters in the Borough be accessed and maintained? We are concerned that may be limited or obstructed. How will the equipment necessary to maintain the beaches gain access?

As you are likely aware, access to the waterways surrounding Highlands is critical to the town’s future. We appreciate the time taken to evaluate the flooding problem and look forward to your response.

Best regards,

Bob Davis

Robert J. Davis

215- [REDACTED]

Having a vested interest in Highlands, NJ and the following properties:

[REDACTED] Recreation Place

[REDACTED] SeaDrift Avenue

[REDACTED] Ocean Avenue

[REDACTED] Ocean Avenue

[REDACTED] Huddy Avenue

Waterwitch Avenue

August 10, 2015

H02, H03, H04, H05, H07,
H10, H11, H18

Seadrift Avenue
Highlands, New Jersey 08872

US Army/Corp of Engineers
26 Federal Plaza
New York, New York 10278

Attention: Mr. Jason Shea, Planning Director

Dear Sirs:

We are concerned about the currently released Draft Proposal on the Floodwalls in the Town of Highlands, New Jersey. We realize it is intended to protect the town from future events but are uneasy about many things.

Our personal concerns are following:

The height seems to be excessive.

Our yard will be contained by floodwall on three sides.

Access to our marina will be extremely difficult.

Fear that the Corp construction of wall will limit our navigability in our marina.

Our view which is our biggest asset will be lost.

Fear that Corp construction will damage our bulkhead, docks, breakwater, pilings, and slips.

Fear that Corp construction will cause leaching of sand into our marina as construction of existing floodwall did without state correcting.

Confusion that permanent easement will include our house.

Leary about how the wall will look. How can we agree to something that might, may or could look like your examples. Drawings would be helpful.

While it is great that Congress is willing to pay 65%, the leftover 35% that the town and NJDEP amount is questionable. Is it .09 on a dollar or 25%?

And, the cost, is it \$85,532,000 or \$78,905.00? And, what about increase due to inflation?

Are the pumping stations being addressed properly?

The town cannot afford their portion. Resident of Highlands cannot afford raised taxes. Maintenance is a big burden on taxpayers.

Highlands is a shore town. The biggest asset is the view. Accessibility to the water will be compromised and both lost.

The floodwall will be built economically by the Corp which means the least expensive. It is predicted by Corp that water will still come over. So why can't the wall be lower and keep the integrity of a shore Town intact? Personally, that is our biggest concern. The height.

Along the street side and across our yard and bulkhead will be a 12 ft floodwall and then an 11ft floodwall on the other side. As we are probably the only property in the Highlands that is affected by 3 sides we would like the Corp to please work with us. We have a 75 ft opening which has a breakwater. The marina next door has an opening of about the same width without a breakwater and their height is 11ft. Hopefully, the breakwater will be considered and the height across our yard could be lower to the 11ft.

The Corp is raising streets and yards for businesses in towns so to please be considered for this also would be great as we will be so greatly affected by floodwall on three sides.

We have grave concerns that our property value will be greatly depreciated after floodwall is built. Having three sides of floodwall around our house will deflate the value drastically. And, then the cost of access to water and yard will be a hardship.

It would be great if the Corp could please work with us on this which would make us more in favor of the floodwall. We just have too much to lose.

Thank you very much for your time and any consideration.

Sincerely,


Gerard and Patricia Scarano

H01, H02, H03, H04, h05, H06, H07,
H08, H09, H16, H17, H18

August 12, 2015

Attn: Jason Shea
Planning Division, US Army Corp of Engineers
26 Federal Plaza
New York, NY 10278

We have personally send a letter of comments to the Corp but would also like to submit the following comments from a group of neighbors who met and discussed what we collectively felt about the proposed Highlands, NJ Draft Report on the floodwalls proposed for the town of Highlands.

We am grateful for the excellent report that the Corp of Engineers has written, and the extensive time and effort they have put into this study. It is great to know that someone cares and is willing to go to bat for us.

It is hoped that the questions we are raising will help foster a productive working relationship between us and the proposers of this bill and to ensure that there is integrity and accuracy in the ask that we make to congress and that (should a proposal be adopted), we will be able to execute the project on time and budget, and within scope.

Questions raised were as follows:

1. Has a study been conducted to determine whether it would be cheaper to fund the raising of individual properties (not yet raised), thus placing the responsibility of ongoing insurance and maintenance on individual property owners vs. the general population of Highlands' taxpayers? This would also retain the much-loved water access for all residents and visitors, which is so integral to Highlands? Could this potentially be an Alternative 6 worth considering?

2. Page 81 of the proposed plan – “Real Estate Requirements” reads as follows:

The total lands and easements required in support of the project is approximately 32.7 acres; 9.3 acres required in permanent easements, 18.4 acres required in temporary easements, and 5 acres of fee simple purchase for environmental mitigation purposes. The project impacts approximately 107 parcels, affecting approximately 92 private owners and 2 public owners (15 parcels). In some instances, more than one estate is required to be obtained over the lands of an owner.

Which 92 private properties will be affected and in what way? Has the list of 92 impacted private properties been published, and have those 92 homeowners been made aware, so as to ensure they have ample time to review the proposal and to respond appropriately?

The 2 impacted businesses in Highlands have been individually made aware of the wall project and proposals have been included to raise those properties as part of this proposed public works budget. Should the same courtesy not be extended to the 92 private property owners?

Some examples of concerns that impacted private property owners may have are:

- How will the loss of easy access to water be handled?
- How will the loss of water views impact quality of life and property values for home owners and Highlands residents in general?
- Does the budget include accommodations to be made to impacted homes e.g. homes raised that were not given grants to raise? Decks built to extend across the wall? Stairs and ladders provided to ensure continued access to marinas and beaches?

3. Why has Bahrs and the southern end of the Highlands waterfront been excluded from the wall plan? This section of Highlands was also flooded.
4. How high will the walls be (specifically around Seadrift Avenue) from current ground level? What will this do to current views and water access for impacted private property owners?

5. What will the visual effect of the wall be? Will there be landscaping to soften the starkness of a steel wall? Is there an artist's rendition so that homeowners can understand the aesthetic impact to their homes?
6. There is a concern that the wall will block the current natural drainage of water that runs off the hill and enters the town from underground drains and other sources. There is a mention of using pumps to remove this water, however the understanding is that the pumps project is at present unapproved and unfunded. Blocking the natural release of tidal and rain waters could result in the majority of lower Highlands properties becoming waterlogged, as there would be no way of releasing flood waters back into the waterways.
7. The budget refers to a total First Cost of \$78,905,000. What does "First Cost" mean? Does this imply that other budgets will be needed to complete the project? \$78.9M seems very low for a large-scale engineering project covering 10,636 linear feet of seawall.
8. The town currently has insufficient funds to meet the immediate needs of its residents. What portion of the wall construction costs will the town be expected to pay? How will this be funded? And what will the impact be to taxpayers? Taxes are already highly disproportionate to property sizes and to the quality of services provided when compared to surrounding neighbourhoods.
9. Who will pay the annual maintenance costs for ensuring the bulkheads are maintained? The wall proposal cites these costs at close to \$4M per annum. Historically the town has not maintained the bulkheads it was responsible for and consequently many were in disrepair prior to Sandy. There is a concern that over 10,636 feet of seawall (comprising bulkheads, floodwalls, closure gates etc.) is more than the current administration can manage, or the town's already strained budget is able to sustain.
10. Who will manage the public works project? Will there be an independent committee to oversee the appropriate allocation of funding and report progress to the town's taxpayers?
11. Will an independent committee also be established post-project to ensure that funds are put aside in the Highlands annual budget to manage annual maintenance costs and to ensure that the allocation

of funding for repairs is fair, appropriate and always dedicated strictly to seawall repairs?

12. What legal structures will be put in place to encapsulate the wall project to ensure that both pre-and-post-project operations (build, maintenance, loan repayments, loan interest and other financial and physical requirements) are separated from other town commitments and governed effectively?
13. Previous engineering projects within the town of Highlands have been left unfinished due to budget over-runs. This has left the town's residents and taxpayers with additional tax, maintenance and other burdens. What is the plan to complete the project if it goes over budget?
14. Where is the detailed cost break-down of the budget so that taxpayers can review it, raise questions and respond appropriately?

Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Jerry Scarano
Patricia H. Scarano
Jerry and Pat Scarano
■ Seadrift Ave
Highlands, N.J. 07732

why did we have to
raise our houses?
This was not only an
expense, but it caused
undue stress at this
time in our lives.

Thank you -

Eileen Schiff
[REDACTED] Ocean Avenue
Highlands, N.J.
07732
732-[REDACTED]

Dear Jason:

It was a pleasure to
speak to you this
morning. I am definitely
against this seawall.
I feel it will ruin
the character of the
town. As I said to
you, the bulkhead
wall is a disgrace.
It is rusted & corroded.
It is not maintained
by any one.
If this wall is to
prevent flooding, then

Text reads:

H01

Dear Jason:

It was a pleasure to speak with you this morning. I am definitely against this seawall. I feel it will ruin the character of the town. As I said to you, the bulkhead wall is a disgrace. It is rusted and corroded. It is not maintained by anyone.

If this wall is to prevent flooding, then why did we have to raise our houses? This was not only an expense, but it caused undue stress at this time in our lives.

Thank you -
Eileen Schiff
[REDACTED] Ocean Avenue
Highlands, NJ 07732
732-[REDACTED]

An individual copy of this letter was sent by the following 23 individuals:

August 3, 2015

H02, H04, H05, H08, H10

To: US Army/Corp of Engineers
26 Federal Plaza
New York, NY 10278

Attention: Mr. Jason Shea, Planning Director

Comments on Highlands Draft Report
Raritan Bay and Sandy Hook Bay, Highlands, NJ, Coastal Storm Risk Management Feasibility Study

Please be advised that the following are concerns about the Highlands Flood Wall.

It is a concern and comment that cost of the wall will be a hardship on the taxpayers and townsfolk of Highlands, NJ. The portion the town of Highlands is responsible for is at the present time unobtainable.

This town has suffered quite a bit since Superstorm Sandy and although the Highlands Draft Report is supposed to protect the town it is questionable if it indeed will do just that. The pumping stations need improvement and the storm sewers need improvement. Without that, the floodwall will just hold in the waters.


Accessibility to the water will have a huge impact on the town of Highlands, NJ. It is a seashore town with access to the waters. Twelve, eleven and ten foot berms, floodwalls and dunes will make access to the water very difficult.

It seems the businesses, marinas, and restaurants in Highlands, NJ have been considered and have been promised many accommodating solutions to their access but the residents have not.

Maintenance on such a project will be the responsibility of Highlands, NJ and quite expensive. This town cannot afford that cost.

It is also unclear as to the total costs. Is it \$78,905,000 or \$85,532,000? What are the costs the town is responsible for? Sixty-five per cent is to be paid by Congress, thirty-five per cent to be paid by NJ DEP and the town. What portion of that 35% will the town pay?

Thank you.


Name
Address

ROBERTA M. DA ROCHA

From Cedar Street: Eileen Borgobello, Josephine Carney, Maryann Clarke, Martin Coffin, Elizabeth Frantzen, Gibbons, Jane Hennesey, Michael & Gina Horan, Patricia Horan, Dianne Mahoney, Eileen McCorey, Patrick McDevitt, Deborah Neely, Kathleen O'Leary, and Kevin P. Rice.

From Fifth Street: Edward T. Caulfield, Barbara Clark, Roberta M. DaRocha, Ronald E. Dowling, Ann Marie King, Neal King, Pete Luzzi, and Patrick Sienkiewicz.

This flyer was posted throughout Highlands, referenced in Ms. Carol Bucco's comment on page 11, and forwarded to USACE by Congressman Smith's office:

H02, H04, H08, H12,
H13, H14, H15

Clear facts about seawall from friends of Highlands

--ACT NOW TO SAVE OUR TOWN AND YOUR MONEY!!!!

--This project will irreversibly change the look and feels of highlands. Who will want to live, buy, rent, shop or eat in a town surrounded by an ugly wall that prevents you from seeing the water or Sandy Hook while walking or riding in your car from any street, beach or park in lower highlands. Any questions or doubts just go to Snug Harbor, on the street or the adjoining beach, and look at the black, rusted wall that is in your view; then imagine it 2 FEET HIGHER! (And across the entire beach, across the entire town, with no breaks (yes, some small areas of dunes-but not where the beach is), which is the current plan. NO VIEW OF ANYTHING! And the view of us from Sandy hook will be less than desirable. PROPERTY VALUES WILL DROP EVERYWHERE IN TOWN; RENTALS WILL GO DOWN. WILL YOU WANT TO LIVE HERE?

--per the army corps; the wall is not designed to, and WILL NOT PREVENT FLOODING FROM ANOTHER SANDY TYPE EVENT: There will be flooding and the wall is to prevent wave damage.

--FLOOD INSURANCE RATES DO NOT DROP when the wall is built (since they still expect flooding.) (Elevation of houses does significantly lower costs)

--HIGHER TAXES ARE almost certain for everyone. The army corps of engineers estimates cost to highlands is at least 5 MILLION (9 % of total cost of wall) there is some talk of the state picking up this portion. Then estimated ANNUAL maintenance cost at least 2.3 MILLION which Highlands is responsible for. We can't pay to run the town now, - how will they maintain the wall; they can't and they won't especially without significant increases in revenue. (TAXES).. therefore more flooding.

--All houses are required to be raised in next 4 years, with or without the wall.-why do we need the wall then??

--People on the hill get no benefit from the project but still have the costs above.

--we are relying on private builder on north side of town to build and maintain their portion of wall. If they don't the wall fails.

--If any aspect of wall fails, we end up in a "soup bowl" full of water and pray that the pumps and other aspects of water management system were maintained and get power or we'll be under water for a long time-think Katrina in New Orleans.

--all facts above from slides and discussions presented by army corps of engineers, (other statements just common sense.)

--SPECIALISTS from Rutgers, at one of the meetings, stated that destroying our views and beaches and marinas by building a seawall is the worst thing for town.

--e-mail your comments now (august 17th cutoff for public comment) and tell those in power to stop the nonsense!!!! Tell your Highlands council and Mayor also Jason.a.shea@usace.army.mil 1(917)790-8727 or oliver Crocker senior planner 1(917)790-8705 US army Corps of Engineers, 26 Federal Plaza, Ny, NY 10278 c/o Jason Shea

<http://www.nanusace.army.mil> to see plan, drafts etc



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 2
290 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, NY 10007-1868

SEP - 3 2015

Mr. Matthew Voisine
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District
Planning Division, Environmental Branch
26 Federal Plaza
New York, NY 10278-0090

RE: Draft Feasibility Report and Environmental Assessment, Raritan Bay and Sandy Hook Bay, Highlands, NJ Coastal Storm Risk Management

Dear Mr. Voisine:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Draft Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Assessment for Raritan Bay and Sandy Hook Bay, Highlands, New Jersey Coastal Storm Risk Management dated July 2015. This study has determined that periodic coastal storms pose a severe threat to life and property in the Borough of Highlands, Monmouth County, New Jersey. The purpose of the feasibility study was to propose and evaluate several coastal protection plans, and determine the tentatively selected plan (TSP) for coastal protection of the project area. The TSP will be optimized after public and agency review, to become the recommended plan. The TSP for this project is a hybrid plan that matches the existing ground surface. Existing bulkheads will be elevated and existing beach areas will be amended with reinforced dunes, consisting of a buried sheet pile seawall covered with sand, and with an impervious earthen core installed along the backside of the seawall. The total length of the project is 10, 636 linear feet, and will tie into high ground at the north and south ends.

H19, H20

Generally, EPA finds that the EA supports a finding of no significant impact; however, the document does not provide the information necessary to support a General Conformity Applicability Analysis. Without more information that the "comparable project" is using similar mobile source equipment, for a similar time period, EPA does not concur with the Corps finding that construction emissions for this project will be within de minimis levels. EPA recommends that the analysis should provide estimates of mobile source equipment types (i.e., cranes, backhoes, dredges, marine equipment) to be used during construction, the emissions factors for that equipment, and total emissions.

Also, EPA disagrees with the Corps definition of cumulative impacts on page 76. As per the Council of Environmental Quality, Section 1508.7 "Cumulative impact is the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-

Federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time." The EA modifies that definition by adding "closely related" to the definition and only looks at other Corps projects in its assessment of cumulative impacts. The cumulative impacts section should include any other past or reasonably foreseeable projects, such as construction of the new condominium project on the north side of the project, or any of the Borough of Highlands planned projects as discussed in the Strategic Recover Planning Report, September 2014.

While the document states that the proposed coast storm risk management action for the Highlands would not affect or be affected, due to the lack of geographical contiguity, by the existing Corps projects at Union Beach, Keansburg, North Middletown, Laurence Harbor, Port Monmouth, Belford, Leonardo, Atlantic Highlands, the Shrewsbury and Navesink Rivers, or along the Atlantic Coast of New Jersey from Sea Bright to Manasquan, we would like to see the document reference the model, or discuss the reasoning behind this statement.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions, please call Lingard Knutson of my staff at (212) 637-3747.

Sincerely,



Grace Musumeci, Chief
Environmental Review Section

Summary of Comments

The public and agency comments documented herein do not affect plan selection for the Highlands project. Although some comments asked why the study team did not pursue a nonstructural alternative in more detail, the nonstructural alternative is not as cost effective as the Tentatively Selected Plan. The public comments do factor into the non-Federal decision to support the project for implementation. Letters of support from the Non-Federal partners are contained in Exhibits 1 and 2 of this appendix.

Exhibit 1 - Letter from NJDEP



State of New Jersey

CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
NATURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES
Office of Engineering and Constructions
501 East State Street
Mail Code 501-01A
P. O. Box 420
Trenton, NJ 08625-0420
Tel. 609-292-9236 FAX 609-984-1908

BOB MARTIN
Commissioner

November 6, 2015

Colonel David A. Caldwell
Commander, New York District
Jacob K. Javits Federal Building
26 Federal Plaza
New York, NY 10278

Re: Raritan Bay and Sandy Hook Bay, Highlands, NJ Coastal Storm Risk
Management Feasibility Study

Dear Colonel Caldwell:

I am writing this letter in support of the NY District Army Corps of Engineers' Raritan Bay and Sandy Hook Bay, Highlands, NJ Coastal Storm Risk Management Feasibility Study. The Bureau of Coastal Engineering is fully in support of completing the feasibility study for the project and will serve as the Non-Federal sponsor. We acknowledge that Public Law 113-2 put in place Sandy Disaster Relief Appropriations to complete existing studies at 100% federal cost.

We look forward to participating with you to complete this feasibility study. If you have any questions, please contact Debbie Voelbel of my staff at 732-255-0784 or Deborah.voelbel@dep.nj.gov.

Sincerely,

Dave Rosenblatt, Administrator
Office of Engineering and Construction

Cc: Dave Gentile, USACE Project Manager
Bill Dixon, Manager, Bureau of Coastal Engineering
Debbie Voelbel, Project Manager, Bureau of Coastal Engineering

Exhibit 2 – Letter from the Borough of Highlands

BOROUGH OF HIGHLANDS, N.J.

INCORPORATED 1900

171 BAY AVENUE
07732
COUNTY OF MONMOUTH
PHONE: 732-872-1224
FAX: 732-872-0670
WWW.HIGHLANDSNJ.COM



HISTORIC "TWIN LIGHTS"

FRANK L. NOLAN
MAYOR
CAROLYN M. CUMMINS
BOROUGH CLERK
TIMOTHY HILL
BOROUGH ADMINISTRATOR

September 16, 2015

Mr. David Gentile, Project Manager
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District
Programs and Project Management Division, Civil Works Branch
26 Federal Plaza, Room 2118
New York, NY 10278-0090

Dear Mr. Gentile:

I am submitting this letter on behalf of the Borough of Highlands Mayor & Council to express our full support regarding the completion of the Raritan Bay and Sandy Hook Bay Highlands, New Jersey Coastal Storm Risk Management Feasibility Study.

We understand and appreciate the extensive time, work involved and all of the efforts that the USACE, NJDEP and other offices have committed to this process. I would also like to add that the staff assigned to this project has always made themselves available to the governing body and residents of our community to discuss and review any areas of concern.

In closing, we look forward to the finalization of the tentatively selected plan and further working with you on behalf of Highlands.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Hill', written over a large, faint watermark that says 'HIGHLANDS.NJ.COM'.

Timothy Hill,
Borough Administrator,
Highlands, NJ
thill@highlandsborough.org

cc: file