



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

100 East Erie Street
Chicago, IL 60611

Legislation Text

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TRANSMITTAL LETTER FOR BOARD MEETING OF AUGUST 7, 2014

COMMITTEE ON STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Mr. David St. Pierre, Executive Director

Authority to proceed with feasibility assessment of flood-prone property acquisition in Glenview, Illinois and in unincorporated Riverside Lawn

Dear Sir:

Public Act 98-0652 (P.A. 98-0652), signed into law by Governor Pat Quinn on June 18, 2014, amended the District's statutory authority for Stormwater Management in Cook County to allow for the acquisition of flood-prone properties. In accordance with the flood-prone property acquisition policy guidelines proposed for adoption under another item on this agenda, the District's first priority for expenditure of funds would be the Local Sponsor Assistance Program. Under this program, the District assists a local government to provide the required local cost share portion of a property acquisition project primarily funded with federal dollars and administered by the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA). The Engineering Department contacted IEMA and was advised that the local sponsor contributions for all approved Cook County property acquisition projects to be funded by IEMA this fiscal year have been obtained and indicated that participation from the District is currently not needed.

The next option for property acquisition is then the District Initiated Program. Under this option, the cost of a property acquisition alternative will be compared to the estimated cost of a structural flood control alternative, if any, arising from the feasibility study of a project previously approved by the Board of Commissioners. At the present time there are two Stormwater Phase I projects, identified under the Detailed Watershed Plans (DWP), which would qualify for an investigation on the feasibility of pursuing a property acquisition alternative.

Project WF-06 of the North Branch Chicago River Detailed Watershed Plan

The Board of Commissioners authorized preliminary engineering for Project WF-06 emanating from the North Branch Chicago River DWP. There are three repetitive flood damage areas in Glenview along the North Branch of the Chicago River that Project WF-06 was intended to address: Circles, Tall Trees, and Pine Street. During preliminary engineering, it was determined the conceptual DWP project, which consisted of a large storage reservoir upstream of Glenview, was infeasible. Our next step was to focus in on the three specific damage areas to determine if there were any feasible projects to significantly reduce flood damages. Currently, we are working with the residents of Tall Trees and the Village of Glenview on a solution that may prove feasible and expect to be able to report our findings to the Board of Commissioners in early 2015. The Engineering Department has conclusively determined no feasible structural alternative exists to address the flooding occurring in the Circles and Pine Street neighborhoods. The only potentially viable alternative is the acquisition of the flood-prone structures.

Project DPR-13 of the Lower Des Plaines River Detailed Watershed Plan

The Board of Commissioners authorized preliminary engineering for Project DPR-13, a conceptual project from the Lower Des Plaines River DWP. The purpose of Project DPR-13 is to reduce flood damages occurring in an unincorporated area in Cook County known as Riverside Lawn. The conceptual DWP project proposed

construction of a floodwall. As preliminary engineering progressed, numerous issues arose concerning the floodwall's location, either on private property or on Forest Preserve District of Cook County property, and its escalating cost in comparison to the roughly estimated value of the structures the floodwall would protect. The Engineering Department believes at this point the only potentially viable alternative is acquisition of the flood-prone properties.

Additionally, the Engineering Department is in the early stages of studying the feasibility of several projects identified under the Stormwater Phase II program, and will bring a recommendation to the Board at a subsequent meeting should a property acquisition alternative arise as the most cost-effective solution.

A property acquisition feasibility assessment will involve contacting local government agencies with jurisdiction in these selected areas to determine if one is willing to serve as a local sponsor. The requirements of the District and local sponsor will be discussed and if agreement can be reached in principal, a request to negotiate and enter into an intergovernmental agreement will be presented to the Board for approval.

It is hereby requested that the Board of Commissioners approve the initiation of feasibility assessments for acquisition of flood-prone property in Glenview, Illinois and in unincorporated Riverside Lawn.

Requested, Catherine A. O'Connor, Director of Engineering, WSS:JPM

Recommended, David St. Pierre, Executive Director

Respectfully Submitted, Michael A. Alvarez, Chairman Committee on Stormwater Management

Disposition of this agenda item will be documented in the official Regular Board Meeting Minutes of the Board of Commissioners for August 7, 2014