



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Velmanette Montgomery

Integrated Flood Protection System Study & Design for Red Hook Announced

VELMANETTE MONTGOMERY December 18, 2014

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the study and design of an integrated flood protection system (IFPS) in the Red Hook neighborhood of Brooklyn. The project, for which the City and State are each committing an initial \$50 million, for a total of \$100 million, aims to make the waterfront community more resilient and better protected from future storms. The City and State have received some initial Federal Emergency Management Agency Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funding, to be drawn down from the \$100 million, to complete the project's feasibility and design.

The study and design advance a State and City commitment to develop a comprehensive flood management system for Red Hook, part of the City's comprehensive, five borough resiliency plan, focused on strengthening coastal defenses, upgrading buildings, protecting infrastructure and critical services, and making homes, businesses, and neighborhoods safer and more vibrant. The project was first announced in the City's comprehensive resiliency plan and by Governor Cuomo and Vice President Biden as part an innovative storm plan aimed at making the waterfront community more resilient and better protected from future storms.

The Red Hook IFPS study will be a comprehensive and detailed assessment of all aspects needed to advance the design of an integrated flood protection system, in collaboration with the community. The Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resiliency will lead the implementation of the Red Hook IFPS. The final measures will be developed in consultation with the Red Hook NY Rising Community Reconstruction Planning Committee, established by the Governor to provide additional rebuilding and revitalization assistance to communities severely damaged Superstorm Sandy.

The RFP will be executed by the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC), in close collaboration with the Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resiliency and the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery.

The project will include various elements and phases for a comprehensive long-term coastal protection plan for the community. These tactics may include a combination of partially deployable floodwalls and raised development, park retrofits and street raising, resilient building retrofits and redevelopment, and improvements to drainage and pumping facilities, among other resiliency measures. Once complete, this system will encompass 370 acres of land, safeguarding all Red Hook Houses and other key buildings and infrastructure in the 100-year floodplain.

"The commitment of the City and State of New York to develop the appropriate resiliency measures against major storms is essential to the re-development of our local housing, and economy," said Councilmember Carlos Menchaca. "Red Hook was hit disproportionately hard by Hurricane Sandy, and while our community has worked tirelessly to rebuild, the implementation of an integrated flood protection system (IFPS), will guarantee a more prepared and better protected community. I look forward to continuing to work with the Mayor, the Governor, and with the local stakeholders that will be engaged in the planning and implementation of this program".

The Red Hook peninsula, which is bound by the Buttermilk Channel, Gowanus Bay, and the Gowanus Canal to Hamilton Avenue, suffered significant building damage, power outages, and transportation disruptions during Hurricane Sandy. Stillwater flooding came from multiple water bodies, including the contaminated Gowanus Canal, which overflowed.

With the exception of a few elevated blocks in the vicinity of Coffey Street in the south, a half block of central Van Brunt Street, and Hamilton Avenue in the north, nearly all areas within Red Hook experienced flooding, in some cases exceeding six feet. In many cases, ground floors and basements were fully submerged, resulting in prolonged, month-long power outages for entire buildings and the displacement for residents and businesses on the lower levels. Areas within Red Hook that regularly experience flooding during more frequent storms, such as Pioneer Street and Richards Street, experienced particularly high flood levels. Storm sewer backups compounded the coastal flooding, sending sewage into the streets and basements. The Red Hook Houses, the second largest public housing projects in New York City and largest in Brooklyn, were especially hard hit by Sandy. Schools and community centers also suffered severe impacts and the Hugh L. Carey Tunnel between Brooklyn and Manhattan was inundated and closed for nearly three weeks.

The Red Hook IFPS will cost approximately \$200 million in total, as announced in January.

In March 2014, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced the establishment of the Office of Recovery and Resiliency (ORR). This Office leads the City's efforts to build a stronger, more resilient New York by implementing recommendations laid out in A Stronger, More Resilient New York, the City's climate resiliency program. The plan builds on the foundation of public collaboration and rigorous analysis set forth by PlaNYC. ORR will guide the City's work as it strengthens coastal defenses, upgrades buildings, protects infrastructure and critical services, and makes homes, businesses, and neighborhoods safer and more vibrant.

Established in June 2013, the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery coordinates statewide recovery efforts for Hurricane Sandy, Hurricane Irene, and Tropical Storm Lee. Through its NY Rising Housing Recovery, Small Business, Community Reconstruction, and Infrastructure programs, GOSR invests more than \$4 billion made available through the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development's (HUD) Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program to better prepare New York for future extreme weather events.