

PUBLIC NOTICE
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Assessment
Town of Betterton Shoreline Stabilization Project
PDMC-PJ-03-MD-2017-001

The Town of Betterton has applied through the Maryland Emergency Management Agency to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for a grant under the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant (PDMG) program, authorized by Section 203 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance, U.S. Code (U.S.C.) § 5133. The PDMG program is designed to assist states, territories, federally recognized tribes, and local communities in implementing a sustained pre-disaster, natural hazard mitigation program. The program goal is to reduce overall risks to the population and structures from future hazard events, while reducing reliance on federal funding in future disasters. FEMA requires that the state, local, territorial, and tribal governments develop and adopt a hazard mitigation plan as a condition for receiving funding for PDMG projects. These grants are funded annually by congressional appropriations and are awarded on a nationally competitive basis. The Town of Betterton's embankment stabilization proposed project was selected under the PDMG program during the 2017-year cycle, Project ID: PDMC-PJ-03-MD-2017-001. This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to analyze the potential environmental consequences associated with the proposed project and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

Recent changes to the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (40 Code of Federal Regulations [C.F.R.] §§ 1500–1508) became effective on September 14, 2020. 85 Fed. R. 43304-76 (July 16, 2020). As stated in 40 C.F.R. § 1506.13, the new regulations apply to any NEPA process begun after September 14, 2020. This EA substantively commenced prior to that date; therefore, this EA conforms to the CEQ NEPA implementing regulations that were in place prior to September 14, 2020, and procedures adopted pursuant to Department of Homeland Security Directive 023-01, Rev. 01, and FEMA Directive 108-1.

The purpose of the proposed project is to reduce the potential for future shoreline erosion damages to private homes and public property in the Town of Betterton. The primary cause of the shoreline erosion are waves undercutting the base of the shoreline leading to erosion of the entire bank. The shoreline associated with the Town of Betterton experiences atypical fetch lengths. Fetch is the distance over open water where wind can blow and generate surface waves. Fetch exposure to a shoreline creates higher wave energy thus increasing erosion along the shoreline. Fetch distances in the Chesapeake Bay, where the Town of Betterton is located, range from 1.6 miles to 12 miles long. This area is also a major navigation route for ships, barges, and other vessels traveling to the Delaware Bay. The movements of these vessels create wakes, which increase the potential for erosion at the project location.

Alternatives discussed in this EA include no action, the proposed action, and additional alternatives considered and eliminated from further consideration. The Proposed Action Alternative would stabilize a 1,382-foot section of Betterton's eroding shoreline through construction of a new riprap revetment and

enhancement of existing revetments. The total 1,382-foot riprap revetment project includes construction of 1,012 feet of new riprap revetment along the toe of the high bank slope and repair and enhancement of the remaining 370-feet of existing riprap revetment, which is comprised of two sections located 150 feet west and 220 feet east of the proposed new revetment. Under the Proposed Action, the new riprap revetment would extend channelward approximately 17 feet from the toe of the existing shoreline slope and would extend vertically beyond the mean high water mark to an elevation of 5 feet. The dimensions of the proposed revetment include a 5-foot wide top, an 8-foot wide slope section, and a 4-foot wide base buried 1.5 feet below the mean low water elevation. All riprap revetment and stone bedding would have geotextile fabric placed underneath. Select clearing of the embankment would be required to properly install the new stone revetment. The existing revetments would be repaired by placing additional stones of appropriate sizes to ensure consistent protection.

The Draft EA has been prepared in accordance with all requirements of NEPA, the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Executive Order 11988 (“Floodplain Management”), Executive Order 11990 (“Protection of Wetlands”), and the implementing regulations of FEMA, for the purpose of assessing the potential impacts of the Proposed Action on the human and natural environment. The Draft EA summarizes the purpose of and need for the project, alternatives considered, the affected environment, and potential environmental consequences of the project. It is available for review and comment and can be viewed on and/or downloaded from FEMA’s website at <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/environmental-historic/region/3>.

The comment period will conclude 30 days after the initial publication of this Public Notice on April 15, 2021. Written comments on the Draft EA can be mailed or emailed to the contact listed below. If no substantive comments are received, the Draft EA and associated FONSI will become final. Substantive comments received will be addressed as appropriate in the Final EA/FONSI.

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ATTENTION: Town of Betterton Shoreline Stabilization Project NEPA Comments

Email: FEMA-R3-EHP-PublicComment@fema.dhs.gov

FEMA works to ensure that information is accessible for all of our customers. If you are having issues obtaining any of the graphical information presented in the appendices, please contact us by email at FEMA-R3-EHP-PublicComment@fema.dhs.gov, so we may provide it in an accessible format.