

Final Notice and Public Explanation of a Proposed Activity in a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard Designated Floodplain or Wetland

To: All interested Agencies, Groups and Individuals

This is to give notice that the County of Bucks under 24 CFR Part 58 has conducted an evaluation as required by Executive Order(s) 11988, as amended by Executive Order 13690, and/or Executive Order 11990, in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 in Subpart C Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management and Wetlands Protection. The activity is funded with Community Project Funding Program B-22-CP-PA-0786. The proposed project(s) is located in Upper Southampton and Richland Townships, Bucks County, PA, and is located in the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS) floodplain. The extent of the FFRMS floodplain was determined using freeboard value approach. The first project, Newtown Rail Trail, involves the construction of a 1.8-mile extension of the Newtown Rail Trail into Northampton Township. The project includes five tax map parcels, including 48-28-8-1, 31-21-4, 31-15-78, 31-15-79 and 31-15-85. Phase I of the Newtown Rail Trail in Upper Southampton Township was completed in fall of 2021. This segment ends at Bristol Road, the municipal boundary between Northampton and Upper Southampton townships. The trail extension will begin at Bristol Road and continue into Northampton Township along the former Fox Chase-Newtown SEPTA rail line corridor and will terminate inside the County-owned Churchville Nature Center. The project will potentially impact 0.09 acres of the FFRMS floodplain/wetland. The second project, Upper Bucks Rail Trail, involves the construction of a 0.75-mile extension of the Upper Bucks Rail Trail in Richland Township, Bucks County, PA. The new trail would provide a direct connection between two existing trails. The project includes four tax map parcels, including 36-17-33-2-41, 36-22-233, 36-22-68 and 36-22-181. The trail would cross Walnut Bank Farm Road in two locations and will utilize high visibility crosswalks to ensure user safety. The trail itself will be composed of asphalt, unless a more appropriate surface is determined during design and engineering. The project will potentially impact 0.04 acres of the FFRMS floodplain.

The County of Bucks has considered the following alternatives and mitigation measures to minimize adverse impacts and to restore and preserve natural and beneficial functions and intrinsic values of the existing floodplain/wetland: The only alternative considered was changing project locations; however, that is not feasible as the project activities are specific to these sites. The No Action Alternative was also not considered as the sites would remain under-utilized. The goal of this project is to preserve and share the history and natural beauty of Bucks County while providing recreational opportunities. Implementation of the projects will be designed so that no mitigation techniques are necessary to avoid adverse impacts on the floodplain and to restore and preserve the natural or beneficial values of the floodplain. This project will comply with all state and local floodplain/wetland protection procedures.

The County of Bucks has reevaluated alternatives to building in the floodplain and has determined that it has no practicable alternative to floodplain development. Environmental files documenting compliance with Executive Order 11988, as amended by Executive

Order 13690, and/or Executive Order 11990, are available for public inspection, review, and copying upon request at the times and location delineated in the last paragraph of this notice for receipt of comments.

There are three primary purposes for this notice. First, people who may be affected by activities in floodplain and those who have an interest in the protection of the natural environment should be given an opportunity to express their concerns and provide information about these areas. Second, an adequate public notice program can be an important public educational tool. The dissemination of information and request for public comment about floodplain/wetland can facilitate and enhance Federal efforts to reduce the risks and impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of these special areas. Third, as a matter of fairness, when the Federal government determines it will participate in actions taking place in floodplain/wetland, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

Written comments must be received by the County of Bucks at the following address on or before October 24, 2024 County of Bucks Planning Commission Office, 1260 Almshouse Road, Neshaminy Manor Center, Doylestown, PA 18901, 215-345-3427. Attention: Richard Brahler, Director of Transportation Planning. A full description of the project may also be reviewed from 9:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M. at the County of Bucks Planning Commission Office, 1260 Almshouse Road, Neshaminy Manor Center, Doylestown, PA 18901. Comments may also be submitted via email at rgbrahler@buckscounty.org.

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