



## **Discussing the first phase of federal approval for flood protection systems**

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Governor Andrew Cuomo, mayor Bill de Blasio and congressman Gregory Meeks today announced the first phase of federal approval for a comprehensive flood protection system in Breezy Point, Queens. As part of the federal government's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), the undertaking - proposed by the City and part of its comprehensive resiliency plan - will establish a double dune barrier system, along with other bayside flood and erosion protection measures, to safeguard the community from future instances of extreme weather. The federal government has awarded \$1.2 million to support technical and feasibility analyses and permitting for the project, with the potential for more than \$56 million in design, engineering and construction funds to follow.

"Securing approval of this comprehensive plan is a victory for the Breezy Point community," said governor Cuomo. "We are continuing to learn from recent storms so we can build a stronger, more resilient New York. This plan will help Breezy Point build back from Sandy and be better protected against the threats of extreme weather moving forward."

Mayor Bill de Blasio said, "The City prioritized a Breezy Point coastal protection plan because we know the risks we face, made clear in our comprehensive resiliency plan. Today's approval is another step toward building stronger, more resilient communities around New York City - so that we're better prepared next time we need to be. From the dune barrier system to other critical flood and erosion protections, this project will provide critical resiliency to the Breezy Point community. We'll continue to move forward projects like this around the city to protect against the impacts of climate change, while reducing our contributions to its causes. Thank you to governor Cuomo, FEMA, congressman Meeks, and all of our partners who helped make this a reality."

In March, governor Cuomo joined congressman Meeks to call upon the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to approve the important proposal. Through the HMGP Program, FEMA assists local governments and non-profit organizations to rebuild stronger, more sustainable communities by increasing resiliency, mitigating the risk of loss and damage associated with future disasters, and reducing hardship.

Located on the westernmost end of the Rockaway Peninsula in the borough of Queens, Breezy Point suffered significant damage during Superstorm Sandy. Waves struck from the Atlantic Ocean, while rising waters poured into the community from Jamaica Bay. The storm also damaged electrical power systems, sparking fires that ultimately consumed 135 homes. Overall, approximately 350 homes were lost as a result of Sandy, more than 10% of the community's roughly 2,700 houses. The proposed dune system, which would continue the existing dune line located on the Atlantic side

of the Cooperative's property, will provide sustainable, natural flood and erosion protection utilizing the area's natural features. The plan is comprised of an ocean side double dune system and complementary set of bayside flood and erosion protections that are designed to safeguard the community from future storm events. The dune will be designed to withstand the forces associated with a 100-year flood height as indicated on FEMA's latest maps and the projected risk of sea level rise (2.58 feet) at that location over the life of the project. It will provide long-term, sustainable protection without the need for frequent maintenance. The estimated cost of the double dune system is \$20.6 million. Many of the projects adopted by Breezy Point's NY Rising Community Reconstruction (NYRCR) Committee will work together with the proposed comprehensive coastal protection system to further protect this community.

These measures will be complemented, on the bayside in Breezy Point and Roxbury, by the construction of bay walls and groins which are proven to combat flood and erosion respectively. The estimated cost of bayside protection is \$37.6 million.

As part of the HMGP Program, FEMA funds provide 75 percent reimbursement of eligible costs, up to the amount of the award. To off-set the financial burden of Breezy Point, New York City has committed its disaster recovery resources for the remaining 25 percent.

Following a Presidential disaster declaration, as in the case of Sandy, FEMA provides HMGP funds for states to administer grant programs that support local hazard mitigation planning and long-term hazard mitigation measures to reduce the loss of life and damage to improved property from natural disasters.