

DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)
CIVIL WORKS, SECTION 408 NEPA COMPLIANCE
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS NEW ENGLAND DISTRICT
PROPOSED FLOOD CONTROL SYSTEM ALONG CHICOPEE FALLS
PROJECT PROPONENT: CITY OF CHICOPEE

Description of Action

An Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and USACE Engineering Regulation 200-2-2. This EA describes the potential environmental consequences resulting from approving, pursuant to 33 U.S.C. 408, (referred to as Section 408), modifications to the Chicopee Falls Levee in Hampden County, Chicopee, MA.

The purpose of the Project is to facilitate the establishment of a site suitable for redevelopment in support of economic improvements within the City, which will concurrently integrate numerous social and environmental benefits through redevelopment of the Site. The Project is the crucial first step in realizing these potential economic improvements in a former industrial area that has been dormant and drastically underutilized for decades. In order to develop the Site, the City will be required to fill the Site to create a separation between final grade and capped contaminated materials. This creates an opportunity to accept offsite soils with contaminant concentrations below the Reportable Concentrations presented in the Massachusetts Contingency Plan (MCP).

To meet the Project purpose and need in support of future development, the City proposes to place fill along the Chicopee Falls Levee (the Levee) on portions of the Uniroyal Parcels and the Facemate Parcel. Fill placed along the Levee within the Uniroyal Parcels will encompass approximately 7.25 acres (316,000 square feet), while fill on the Facemate Parcel will encompass approximately 1.3 acres (56,100 square feet). In total, approximately 95,980 cubic feet (3,555 cubic yards) of fill material will be required to complete the Project. The Project will also require the implementation of both construction-period and long-term stormwater management BMPs to reduce hydrostatic pressure on the Levee and mitigate alterations in runoff patterns resulting from filling and grading activities.

In addition to filling and grading activities, the City proposes to decommission the Oak Street Pumping Station and two (2) associated pipes per a USACE request, as this infrastructure is no longer required at the Site. Decommissioning activities will include demolition of the Oak Street Pumping Station, filling of the intake and discharge pipes with flowable fill, and construction of a concrete bulkhead within each pipe.

Anticipated Environmental Effects

The EA considers two (2) actions including the Proposed Action as described above, and the No Action Alternative. Both the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative are anticipated to have little to no impact on the surrounding environment as detailed in the EA. Under the Proposed Action, any impacts to noise or traffic will be minimal, short-term, and limited to the period of active construction. Previous modeling performed for the structural integrity of the Levee following filling operations indicated no safety issues, and the updated modeling to be submitted as part of the Section 408 process is anticipated to yield the same results. Any impacts to waters of the U.S. resulting from abandonment of pipes will be temporary and is anticipated to be approved under the Section 404 Massachusetts General Permit 14:

Temporary Construction, Access, and Dewatering. Any cumulative, indirect, or secondary impacts resulting from the Proposed Action are anticipated to be negligible and will not disproportionately impact the Environmental Justice communities near the Site.

Conclusion

Based on a review of the information contained in this EA as summarized above, it is determined that the Proposed Action will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment within the meaning of Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended. Therefore, the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

Signatory TBD

Date