

## **The Army Corps of Engineers, USACE, presented plans for flood abatement in the Rahway River basin at 3 public meetings in Cranford, Rahway and Orange.**

They analyzed a variety of projects and selected 3: modifications to the Orange Reservoir to facilitate pre-storm draining and to detain excess storm water, channel modifications in Cranford to allow faster drainage, and raising and razing buildings in the Robinson's Branch flood plain. These projects would reduce the risk of flooding for a 25 year storm, but the risk remains high for 100 year storms, however the expected damage is not sufficiently costly to justify other large engineering solutions, such as raising the Lenape dam.

With this in mind, RRWA requests the Corps to further consider seriously the many distributed abatement solutions possible along the length of the Rahway and its tributaries. The idea is to modify the waterway channel all along, but especially at choke points, and to establish multiple, distributed water detention flood plains. This program would call for substantial local action by the municipalities in flood-prone areas themselves.

The engineering efficacy and legal feasibility of restoring these multiple flood plain areas needs to be assessed. The idea is to further solve the flood problems with a long-term, holistic design that address grandfathered bottleneck features. These measures complement the large-scale engineering projects proposed in the USACE plans. Specific examples are given on the RRWA website.

While no solution can eliminate all flooding, the USACE's top contender is a "solution" that will reduce the yearly damage by \$3 million, yet will allow a \$6 million yearly damage to continue to occur. The other top contenders are in the same ballpark. In this densely-settled area, further local, small "fixes" are perhaps the only way to accomplish significant flood abatement. We would like USACE to have greater engagement with the communities in the Rahway basin, with an aim:

- to strategically open up the river at places throughout its length
- to create adequate volume of local temporary rainwater storage space everywhere in the watershed to catch a good percentage of the storm water before it hits the river or one of the tributaries
- to restructure the most vulnerable flow restricting nodes
- to recommend appropriate changes to the DEP for Land Use requirements of the storm water management rules that would efficiently curtail the direct channeling of rainfall into storm water drainage pipes and from there into the river
- to recommend to the DEP to more strictly apply its existing rules disallowing building in flood prone, wet areas

