

**SUMMARY OF THE 8-STEP WETLAND ANALYSIS FOR
THE BLENHEIM MUNICIPAL COMPLEX
TOWN OF BLENHEIM, SCHOHARIE COUNTY,**

Below is a summary of the analysis conducted in accordance with 24 CFR Part 55 (Floodplain Management and Protection of Wetlands) and Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands).

Step 1: Determine if the proposed action is in a wetland.

Schoharie County is proposing a Project that would involve acquiring a site and constructing a new municipal complex for the Town of Blenheim. The Project site is not on or adjacent to wetlands, as identified by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). The Project site is adjacent to a National Wetland Inventory (NWI) riverine wetland to the west, and an NWI freshwater emergent wetland crosses the Project site from east to west. A wetland assessment and delineation report dated June 15, 2016, mapped the extent, vegetation, and soils of the on-site wetland, which is located along the banks of the intermittent stream bisecting the Project site (see **Figure 1**). It stated that the wetlands identified on the Project site and the intermittent stream are hydraulically connected and, therefore, may be under federal jurisdiction.

Step 2: Notify the public of the intent to locate the proposed action in a wetland.

An early public notice of proposed activity within a wetland was published by the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery on November 24, 2016 (see attached Early Notice of a Proposed Activity in a Wetland). The notice requested comments from the public concerning the wetland and natural resource impacts of the proposed action. The notice also indicated that the proposed action would be evaluated for potential direct and indirect impacts associated with development that would disturb a wetland and, where practicable, would be designed or modified to minimize potential adverse impacts to lives, property, and natural values within the wetland. The notice was published in the Daily Gazette and posted at <http://www.stormrecovery.ny.gov/environmental-docs>. The required 15-day period was conducted to allow for public comments, and comments were accepted either electronically or via written correspondence. No comments were received from the early notice concerning the Project.

Step 3: Identify and evaluate practicable alternatives to locating the proposed action in a wetland.

Alternatives to the proposed action considered:

Alternative 1: Replacement at an Alternative Location

Other properties in the Town of Blenheim were considered as potential sites for relocation of the municipal facilities. Public and direct advertisement was conducted to identify suitable properties, and those properties meeting the Town's criteria were pursued. These other suggested sites were not considered suitable for development because they were:

- Not owned by the Town of Blenheim and were not available for sale,
- Not large enough to support the proposed municipal complex,
- Properties with slopes that would be too steep to develop, or
- Within flood-prone areas.

Alternative 2: No Action Alternative

Not undertaking the Project would not be consistent with the goals and objectives of the Towns of Fulton and Blenheim NYRCR Plan and other local and state plans. The town would not develop a key component of the resilient infrastructure it needs to function during emergency situations. The flooded town hall complex was identified as substandard with insufficient storage capacity, minimal space for administrative functions, and a highly inefficient energy system. Because the garage has inadequate

space for highway equipment, over \$500,000 worth of new equipment sits outside. Maintaining this equipment in various weather conditions requires extra time and attention. The equipment is vulnerable to theft and vandalism. The damaged town hall facility was evaluated as an unsafe place for employees to work. Without the project, the community would not have a functioning municipal complex during future storm events. Under the No Action Alternative, the town's goals to minimize future impacts from flooding would be limited. Relocating the critical functions of the existing Blenheim municipal facility out of the floodplain, eliminating potential damage caused by flooding, and strengthening emergency response activities during a flood event would be delayed.

Step 4: Identify and describe the proposed action's direct and indirect effects associated with occupying or modifying the wetland.

The proposed action would disturb less than one acre of the wetland and intermittent stream on the Project site for construction and operation of the storm water discharge channel and outfall. Because the area of disturbance would be under one acre and operations would involve treated storm water at one discharge point, the Project would have only minimal adverse effects to the wetlands. The storm water outfall would be covered under U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Nationwide Permit No. 43, which covers discharges of dredged or fill material into non-tidal waters of the United States for the construction of storm water management facilities, including storm water detention basins and retention basins and other storm water management facilities, and the construction of water control structures, outfall structures and emergency spillways. A water quality certification under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act also would be required from NYSDEC for the USACE Section 404 nationwide permit. The Project would require a joint permit application to NYSDEC and coordinated review with the USACE

The short-term direct impacts to the wetland would consist of grading and construction of the proposed discharge channel and outfall. Long-term direct impacts would include the discharge of treated storm water from one discharge point to the intermittent stream within the wetland.

Step 5: Identify methods to minimize the potential adverse impacts within a wetland and to restore and preserve its natural and beneficial values.

The short-term impacts would be mitigated by best management practices for debris, dust, and erosion control during construction activities.

Because the area of disturbance would be under one acre and operations would involve treated storm water at one discharge point, the Project would have only minimal adverse effects to the wetlands. The storm water outfall would be covered under U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Nationwide Permit No. 43, which covers discharges of dredged or fill material into non-tidal waters of the United States for the construction of storm water management facilities, including storm water detention basins and retention basins and other storm water management facilities, and the construction of water control structures, outfall structures and emergency spillways. A water quality certification under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act also would be required from NYSDEC for the USACE Section 404 nationwide permit. The Project would require a joint permit application to NYSDEC and coordinated review with the USACE.

The Project would adhere to and be in compliance with the guidelines and regulations of Executive Order 11990, in order to minimize the destruction, loss or degradation of wetlands and to preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of wetlands.

Step 6: Reevaluate the proposed action to determine if it is still practicable given its wetland effects.

The proposed project would improve the resilience of the Town of Blenheim to future storm events by providing a new facility in another location with expanded, secure storage that would protect the town's highway equipment. The facility would relocate the critical functions of the existing Blenheim municipal

facility out of the floodplain eliminating potential damage caused by flooding and strengthening emergency response activities during a flood event.

The proposed action is among the projects that would support the hazard mitigation portion of the Long Term Community Recovery Plan. The project is part of the Towns of Fulton and Blenheim New York Rising Community Reconstruction Plan and is specifically identified to protect critical infrastructure, improve communications, and explore additional energy resiliency measures.

The proposed project location is the only one that would be practicable due to the unavailability of appropriate alternate sites, as described in Step 3 above. Potential effects to the wetland during construction would be minimized by best management practices. Operations would be covered under USACE Nationwide Permit No. 43.

The No Action Alternative would not be practicable because without the project, the community would not have a functioning municipal complex during future storm events.

Step 7: If the only practicable alternative is locating in a wetland, publish a final public notice.

It has been determined that there is no practicable alternative to disturbing a portion of a wetland in order to implement the project.

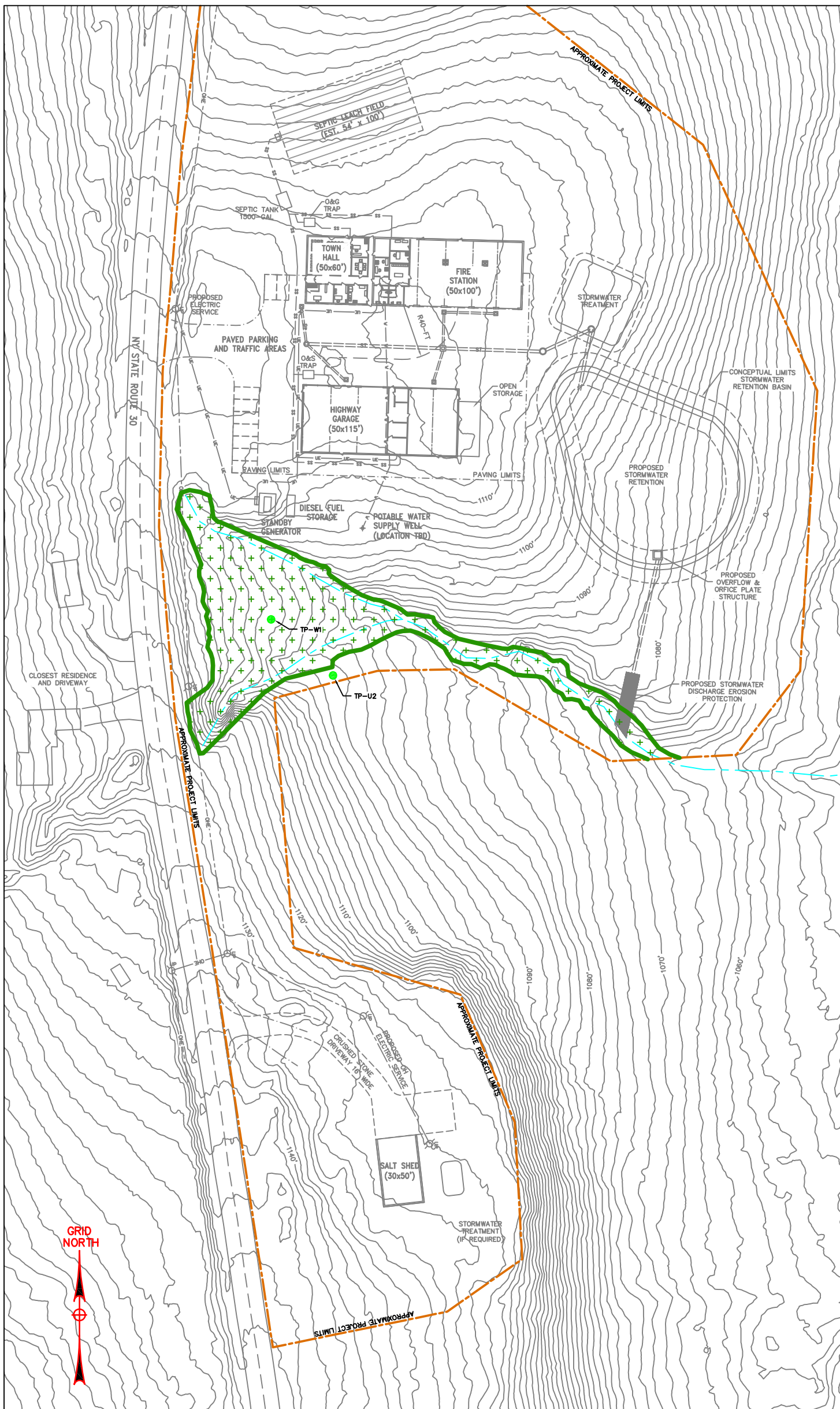
A final public notice will be published in accordance with 24 CFR Part 55 for a minimum 7-day comment period. The final notice will detail the reasons why the Project must disturb a wetland, a list of alternatives considered, and all mitigation measures taken to minimize adverse impacts and preserve natural and beneficial floodplain values.

All comments received during the comment period will be responded to and fully addressed prior to funds being committed to the proposed project, in compliance with Executive Order 11990 and 24 CFR Part 55.

Step 8: The proposed action can be implemented after steps 1 through 7 have been completed.

Implementation of the proposed action may require additional local and state permits, which could place additional design modifications or mitigation requirements on the project.

FIGURE 1 WETLAND DELINEATION MAP



LEGEND	
WETLAND/WUS BOUNDARY	
DELINEATED WETLANDS	
TEST PIT LOCATION	
APPROXIMATE PROJECT LIMITS	
INTERMITTENT STREAM CLASSIFICATION C	