§67.5 Right of appeal.
(a) Any owner or lessee of real property, within a community where a proposed flood elevation determination has been made pursuant to section 1363 of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968, as amended, who believes his property rights to be adversely affected by the Administrator’s proposed determination, may file a written appeal of such determination with the CEO, or such agency as he shall publicly designate, within ninety days of the second newspaper publication of the Administrator’s proposed determination.

Applying Technology to Streamline the FEMA Flood Map Appeals Process: A Case Study

Samara Ebinger, CFM, Dewberry
FEMA’s Appeal Process

• Required as part of National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) regulations

• Flood hazard information changes shown on preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs)

• Gives communities and the public an opportunity to provide their feedback
FEMA’s Appeals Process, cont.

• 90-day appeal period following issuance of preliminary FIRMs

• **Appeals** must include scientific/technical data and be received during the appeal period

• Submittals must be reviewed by community officials

• **Comments** – submittals that:
  • Do not meet data requirements
  • Are received outside of appeal period
  • Pertain to non-flood hazard elements of FIRM/FIS
• Revised coastal modeling and topographic data

• 285 communities along NJ/NY Atlantic coast, including New York City

• Significant changes in flood hazards since effective FIRMs produced

• Large population affected

• High value real estate
Why a web application?

• Size and visibility of project

• Concurrent appeal period for all communities

• Allow FEMA and support contractors to effectively track and respond to submittals

• Desire for efficiencies to reduce the manpower/effort needed to manage the process

• Make the process easier for everyone involved
‘Appeal Portal’ Development

• Aggressive schedule to ensure rollout by the start of the appeal period

• FEMA Regional and HQ team involved in requirements development

• SQL Server

• Server side component: .Net Framework (C# and WCF Web Services)

• Client side component: Asp.Net, ESRI Javascript API, Flat UI, jQuery
Portal Benefits: Member of the public

- Submit appeals and comments online
- Step-by-step guidance on what needs to be submitted
- Automated email notifications at each step in process
- Submit additional data or comments on resolution letters online
- Check status of their request at any time
Application Demonstration
Portal Benefits: Community Officials

- Submit appeals and comments online
- Step-by-step guidance on what needs to be submitted
- Automated email notifications at each step in process
- Submit additional data or comments on resolution letters online
  
- **Review and comment on all submittals from members of the public**

- **Check status of any/all requests that affect their community**
Portal Benefits: FEMA and Support Staff

• Automated acknowledgment letters eliminate the need to create and issue manually.

• Easy access to complete submittals to help facilitate the review process – central repository/record of each submittal, issued correspondence, milestone dates.

• Email notifications at each step in the process keep the entire team informed of status and action items.

• Ability to download status reports based on the latest information.
FEMA/Community Official Dashboards

[Image of FEMA Preliminary Flood Map Feedback Portal]

- **Submittal ID**: 1546
- **Status**: Draft Resolution Letter Being Prepared
- **Submitter Type**: Community Official
- **Location of Concern**: TOWNSHIP OF LONG BEACH, OCEAN, NEW JERSEY
- **Date Last Edited**: 04/28/15 23:39

- **Submittal ID**: 1548
- **Status**: FEMA / RAMPP Review Started
- **Submitter Type**: Public User
- **Location of Concern**: TOWNSHIP OF LOWER CAPE MAY, NEW JERSEY
- **Date Last Edited**: 04/16/15 12:11

- **Submittal ID**: 1557
- **Status**: FEMA / RAMPP Review Started
- **Submitter Type**: Public User
- **Location of Concern**: CITY OF NEW YORK, NEW YORK
- **Date Last Edited**: 04/27/15 11:17

- **Submittal ID**: 1559
- **Status**: FEMA / RAMPP Review Started
- **Submitter Type**: Public User
- **Location of Concern**: CITY OF NEWARK, CITY OF ELIZABETH, ESSEX, NEW JERSEY
- **Date Last Edited**: 04/27/15 14:49

- **Submittal ID**: 1563
- **Status**: Draft Resolution Letter Being Prepared
- **Submitter Type**: Public User
- **Location of Concern**: MONMOUTH COUNTY, MONMOUTH, NEW JERSEY
- **Date Last Edited**: 04/28/15 16:17

- **Submittal ID**: 1567
- **Status**: FEMA / RAMPP
- **Submitter Type**: Public User
- **Location of Concern**: TOWNSHIP OF
- **Date Last Edited**: 05/01/15 14:03

Note: Unselect all records to export entire table.
FEMA/Community Official Dashboards
Results

• Appeal period has ended for the study
• 170 submittals received
• Currently working to resolve appeals/comments
• Feedback from both internal/external stakeholders has been very positive
• Portal continues to be used by FEMA team as resolution of appeals/comments continues
Next Steps

• Plans to discuss future uses of the tool for other Region II projects or beyond

• Similar web applications may be useful to support other processes/programs
  • Track LOMR submittals
  • States/CTPs
  • Other public comment periods for other types of projects outside of the NFIP or FEMA
Questions?

• Check out the Portal at [www.region2coastal.com/appeal](http://www.region2coastal.com/appeal)

• Samara Ebinger
  (sebinger@dewberry.com)