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**FREEHOLDERS APPROVE BUYOUTS OF FLOOD-PRONE PROPERTIES IN LINCOLN PARK THROUGH INNOVATIVE COUNTY PROGRAM**  
*TOTAL ACQUIRED WILL REACH 69 FLOOD-THREATENED HOMES*

The Morris County Freeholders have approved a \$216,887 grant allocation for the buyouts of three flood-threatened residential properties in the Lincoln Park.



It marks **completion of 18 purchases in that borough** under the county's innovative Flood Mitigation Program, which previously has approved almost \$7.5 million to partially fund buyouts of 66 homes in seven Morris County towns.

The freeholders voted unanimously at their meeting in Morristown on Wednesday evening to approve the allocation for the **Lincoln Park** properties.

Approval was based on the recommendations of the Morris County Flood Mitigation Committee, which reviewed the applications. With this final approval, Lincoln Park may now proceed to closing on these properties, which are located on Woodlawn Road, Midwood Road and Forest Avenue.

In addition to Lincoln Park, the county has provided grant funding for buyouts in **Boonton, Denville, Long Hill, Morristown, Parsippany, Pequannock and Riverdale**. The county also is considering future buyouts of nine more Lincoln Park properties, which have long been subject to periodic Pompton River flooding.

“We continue to use this program to help to get county residents out of harm’s way in places that regularly flood and are likely to be struck by future flooding,” said **Freeholder Director Doug Cabana**.



Flooding in Lincoln Park

“It is important to help Lincoln Park residents who have longstanding flood issues and are voluntarily seeking relief,” added **Freeholder Christine Myers**, who is the county governing board’s liaison on open space issues.

“These buyouts also will help ease the burden on first responders, who are called upon to rescue threatened families from flood water, and helps protect other nearby homes and businesses from subsequent flooding,”

Morris County’s mitigation program supplements state and federal flood buyouts programs. The goal is to help towns secure flood-prone properties from willing sellers and convert the sites to permanently preserved open space, which naturally captures and absorbs flood water.

Additionally, these acquisitions lower municipal costs. Every project is subject to a detailed benefit-cost analysis based on FEMA computer models. On average, these Morris County projects have yielded a 7:1 benefit cost ratio (for every \$1 spent by the county, there are \$7 in benefits to the towns and county).

The Freeholder Board established the Flood Mitigation Program in 2012 in response to increased, repetitive flooding in the county, especially the excessive flooding caused by Hurricane Irene in 2011. It is an expansion of the Morris County Open Space, Farmland, and Historic Preservation Trust, and is funded by the county’s open space tax.

As flood insurance rates rise significantly due to recent federal legislation, more homeowners are considering flood buyouts as an escape from destructive, repetitive flooding and the increasing cost of home ownership in the floodplains.

In 2014, the average flood insurance policy cost \$468; by 2016 this policy cost has jumped to \$917. As federal subsidies for flood insurance diminish, insurance premiums will continue to rise until they reach their true actuarial risk.



The Morris County Flood Mitigation Program was the first program at the county level in New Jersey dedicated to acquiring flood-prone homes and land.

It was honored by the state DEP with a 2014 Governor's Environmental Excellence Award.

According to **Jennifer McCulloch, coordinator of the Flood Mitigation Program**, the program is structured with two basic funding tracks. The "MATCH Program" provides a 25 percent county match for projects already underway with agencies, such as Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or DEP's Blue Acres Program,

The second funding track, or "CORE Program," is designed to catch homes that have fallen through other agency's funding nets, with Morris County providing up to 75 percent of the acquisition cost. Lincoln Park has received funding from both the MATCH and the CORE program, these three recent buyouts are from the latter. The remaining 25 percent cost share is being provided by New Jersey DEP.

Grant applications are considered from municipalities only for acquisition of flood-affected residences from willing sellers. All county funds go directly to municipalities, which purchase the properties and must maintain the land as public open space in perpetuity, said McCulloch.

Additional information is available at <http://www.morrispreservation.com>, or by calling 973-829-8120.

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