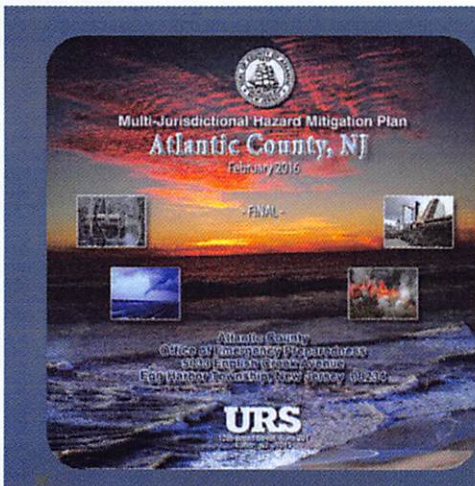


Atlantic County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan Update



Planning Timeline

- The initial hazard mitigation plan was adopted in 2010
- Regular updates are required by FEMA
- The first plan update was completed in 2016
- This second plan update process began in April 2021 and is targeted for completion in 2022

Natural hazards are a part of life throughout Atlantic County. All of these hazard events have the potential to cause property loss, economic hardship, environmental degradation, and threats to public health and safety including loss of life. An important part of emergency management involves hazard mitigation

planning aimed at minimizing these impacts and improving resiliency. The Plan describes the hazard risks that can occur, identifies vulnerable community assets, and presents mitigation strategies comprised of actions and projects that will be implemented to reduce key hazard risks.

Natural hazard events cannot be prevented from occurring. However, by implementing the hazard mitigation projects identified in the Plan, we can reduce vulnerabilities, risks, and future damage. Over time, our hazards will result in fewer disasters.

Purpose and Need for the Plan

The **Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan for Atlantic County** was initially adopted in 2010 to meet the requirements of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (or "DMA 2000"). Its development was led by the County under a FEMA planning grant that covered the costs of its preparation. Though it wasn't required, Atlantic County opted to use what FEMA calls a 'multijurisdictional' approach – meaning that instead of the plan being limited in scope to the County government, every municipality was invited to participate as an equal partner with the County. Adopting a FEMA approved hazard mitigation plan opens the door for all participating jurisdictions to

be in compliance with DMA 2000 and eligible to apply for hazard mitigation project grants. To stay in compliance with DMA 2000, the plan must be updated every five years. The update ensures that the plan remains current in its discussion of local risks and risk reduction strategies. The County has once again obtained FEMA grant funding to cover the cost of this second plan update, and has opted to continue its 'multi-jurisdictional' approach. Each jurisdiction in the County is attending meetings, providing feedback in a series of topic areas, reaching out to the public and other key stakeholders, and updating their local mitigation strategy.

For More Information

For questions or other feedback, or to find out how you can become involved, please contact the Atlantic County Office of Emergency Management. Vincent Jones, Chief of Staff, can be reached at jones_vincent@aclink.org and Karen Koptick,

Operations and Training Officer, can be reached at koptick_karen@aclink.org. Information about the project is also maintained on our web site at: <https://www.atlantic-county.org/hazard-mitigation/>





LOCAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING

Hazard Mitigation Planning for Resilient Communities

Disasters can cause loss of life; damage buildings and infrastructure; and have devastating consequences for a community's economic, social, and environmental well-being. Hazard mitigation is the effort to reduce loss of life and property by lessening the impact of disasters. In other words, hazard mitigation keeps natural hazards from becoming natural disasters.

Hazard mitigation is best accomplished when based on a comprehensive, long-term plan developed before a disaster strikes. Mitigation planning is the process used by state, tribal, and local leaders to understand risks from natural hazards and develop long-term strategies that will reduce the impacts of future events on people, property, and the environment.

The Local Mitigation Planning Process

The mitigation plan is a community-driven, living document. The planning process itself is as important as the resulting plan because it encourages communities to integrate mitigation with day-to-day decision making regarding land use planning, floodplain management, site design, and other functions. Mitigation planning includes the following elements:

Public Involvement – Planning creates a way to solicit and consider input from diverse interests, and promotes discussion about creating a safer, more disaster-resilient community. Involving stakeholders is essential to building community-wide support for the plan. In addition to emergency managers, the planning process involves other government agencies, businesses, civic groups, environmental groups, and schools.

Risk Assessment – Mitigation plans identify the natural hazards and risks that can impact a community based on historical experience, estimate the potential frequency and magnitude of disasters, and assess potential losses to life and property. The risk assessment process provides a factual basis for the activities proposed in the mitigation strategy.

Mitigation Strategy – Based on public input, identified risks, and available capabilities, communities develop mitigation goals and objectives as part of a strategy for mitigating hazard-related losses. The strategy is a community's approach for implementing mitigation activities that are cost-effective, technically feasible, and environmentally sound as well as allowing strategic investment of limited resources.

Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000

The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended by the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, is intended to "reduce the loss of life and property, human suffering, economic disruption, and disaster assistance costs resulting from natural disasters."

Under this legislation, state, tribal, and local governments must develop a hazard mitigation plan as a condition for receiving certain types of non-emergency disaster assistance through the Hazard Mitigation Assistance Programs. The regulatory requirements for local hazard mitigation plans can be found at Title 44 Code of Federal Regulations §201.6.

For more information about FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grants, visit: www.fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-assistance.

Benefits of Hazard Mitigation

Mitigation is an investment in your community's future safety and sustainability. Mitigation planning helps you take action now, before a disaster, to reduce impacts when a disaster occurs. Hazard mitigation planning helps you think through how you choose to plan, design, and build your community and builds partnerships for risk reduction throughout the community. Consider the critical importance of mitigation to:

- Protect public safety and prevent loss of life and injury.
- Reduce harm to existing and future development.
- Maintain community continuity and strengthen the social connections that are essential for recovery.
- Prevent damage to your community's unique economic, cultural, and environmental assets.
- Minimize operational downtime and accelerate recovery of government and business after disasters.
- Reduce the costs of disaster response and recovery and the exposure to risk for first responders.
- Help accomplish other community objectives, such as capital improvements, infrastructure protection, open space preservation, and economic resiliency.

Having a hazard mitigation plan will increase awareness of hazards, risk, and vulnerabilities; identify actions for risk reduction; focus resources on the greatest risks; communicate priorities to state and federal officials; and increase overall awareness of hazards and risks.

Mitigation Activities for Risk Reduction

Possible mitigation activities may include:



Adoption and enforcement of regulatory tools, including ordinances, regulations, and building codes, to guide and inform land use, development, and redevelopment decisions in areas affected by hazards.



Acquisition or elevation of flood-damaged homes or businesses retrofit public buildings, schools, and critical facilities to withstand extreme wind events or ground shaking from earthquakes.



Creating a buffer area by protecting natural resources, such as floodplains, wetlands, or sensitive habitats. Additional benefits to the community may include improved water quality and recreational opportunities.



Implement outreach programs to educate property owners and the public about risk and about mitigation measures to protect homes and businesses.

Mitigation Plan Implementation & Monitoring

History shows that hazard mitigation planning and the implementation of risk reduction activities can significantly reduce the physical, financial, and emotional losses caused by disasters. Putting the plan into action will be an ongoing process that may include initiating and completing mitigation projects and integrating mitigation strategies into other community plans and programs. Monitoring the plan's implementation helps to ensure it remains relevant as community priorities and development patterns change.

Planning Guidance, Tools, and Resources

FEMA provides a variety of guidance, tools, and resources to help communities develop hazard mitigation plans. These resources and more can be found online at: www.fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-planning-resources.

- [Hazard mitigation planning laws, regulations, and policies](#) guide development of state, local, and tribal FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plans.
- The [Local Mitigation Planning Handbook](#) is the official guide for governments to develop, update, and implement local plans. The Handbook includes guidance, tools, and examples communities can use to develop their plans.
- [Mitigation Ideas: A Resource for Reducing Risk to Natural Hazards](#) provides ideas for mitigation actions.
- Visit www.fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-planning-training for more information on available online and in-person mitigation planning training.

"FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards."



Mitigation's Value to Your Community

Building Safer and Stronger

Mitigation is the effort to reduce the loss of life and property by lessening the impact of disasters. Stated plainly, hazard mitigation can keep natural hazards, like flooding, from becoming major disasters.

Hazard mitigation has a number of benefits to our society. It enables individuals and communities to recover more rapidly from floods and other disasters, and it lessens the financial impact on local communities, states, tribes, and federal agencies. In fact, a 2005 study by the Multihazard Mitigation Council (MMC) shows that each \$1 spent on mitigation saves an average of \$4.

Mitigation goes beyond dollars and cents, though. Mitigation also produces secondary effects that are often overlooked yet have significant economic implications, including the prevention of business and education interruptions, enhanced public safety, and improved public spaces.

Case Study: Grand Forks, North Dakota

In 1997, the Red River flooded 8,600 homes in Grand Forks, North Dakota, causing \$3.7 billion in flood losses. Following the disaster, the State of North Dakota, local governments, and FEMA worked together to buy out almost 700 of the most vulnerable homes in the state with FEMA mitigation grant program funding.

The Red River flooded again in 2006, yet losses were kept to \$6.5 million as a result of the mitigation projects and studies.

Demonstrating mitigation's cost-effectiveness is critical to the continued success of FEMA mitigation programs.

FEMA's Role in Supporting Mitigation

The Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration (FIMA) implements numerous congressionally authorized programs that address the effects of natural hazards through mitigation activities and provide funding to support these activities, including:

- [Hazard Mitigation Grant Program \(HMGP\)](#)
- [Pre-Disaster Mitigation \(PDM\) Program](#)
- [Flood Mitigation Assistance \(FMA\) Program](#)

HMGP funding almost always becomes available after disasters that are authorized under a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration.

In addition, FEMA provides technical assistance in the areas of hazard mitigation planning and building sciences for communities that want to mitigate their hazards before potential disaster strikes. Hazard mitigation planning helps community officials think through how to plan, design, and build up their community to withstand and recover from the impacts of potential natural and manmade disasters. FEMA's Building Science Program develops publications, guidance materials, tools, technical bulletins, and recovery advisories that incorporate the most up-to-date building codes, requirements, and design standards for new construction and the repair of existing buildings.

Mitigation Activities for Communities

Typical community risk-reducing mitigation activities include:



Adopting and enforcing regulatory tools, including ordinances, regulations, and building codes to guide and inform land use, development, and redevelopment decisions in areas affected by hazards.



Creating a buffer area by protecting natural resources, such as floodplains, wetlands, or sensitive habitats.



Acquiring or elevating flood-damaged homes or businesses and retrofitting public buildings, schools, and critical facilities to withstand hazard events.



Implementing outreach programs to educate property owners and the public about risk and about mitigation measures to protect homes and businesses.

Mitigation Activities for Homeowners

There are things you can do to make your home and family safer through mitigation.

Homeowners can reduce their own risk of loss by:

- Elevating their home's living floor above the Base Flood Elevation shown on the community's effective Flood Insurance Rate Map, which can be viewed at FEMA's Map Service Center (<https://msc.fema.gov>). This may also be done as a requirement to be compliant with your community's regulations. However, the savings is lower flood insurance premiums and protection from future flood levels.
- Elevating HVAC and/or mechanical units above the Base Flood Elevation.
- Installing flood vents, which reduce the risk of damage by allowing flood water to flow through and drain out.
- Using flood-resistant materials in areas of your home below the Base Flood Elevation, like replacing carpeting with tiles, to prevent water from doing major damage.

Interested in Learning More About How You Can Mitigate?



Check out [FEMA's Mitigation Ideas publication](#)



Contact your [State Hazard Mitigation Officer](#)



Visit the [Hazard Mitigation Assistance Website](#)

FEMA's mission is to help people prepare before, during and after disasters.