



## 2. PLANNING PROCESS

This chapter describes the planning process used to update the Cape May County HMP, including how it was prepared, who was involved in the process, and how the public was involved. The planning approach aimed to achieve the following results:

- The plan will be multi-jurisdictional, including all municipalities in the County. Cape May County invited all jurisdictions in the County to join in the planning process. To date, all the 16 local municipal governments and one special district in the County (the Planning Partnership) have participated in the 2026 plan update process:
  - Cape May County
  - Borough of Avalon
  - City of Cape May
  - Borough of Cape May Point
  - Township of Dennis
  - Township of Lower
  - Township of Middle
  - City of North Wildwood
  - City of Ocean
  - City of Sea Isle
  - Borough of Stone Harbor
  - Township of Upper
  - Borough of West Cape May
  - Borough of West Wildwood
  - City of Wildwood
  - Borough of Wildwood Crest
  - Borough of Woodbine
  - Cape May County Municipal Utilities Authority
- The format of this plan is such that other entities can easily join at a later date as part of the regulatory 5-year plan update process.
- The plan considers all natural hazards that pose a risk to the area, as required by 44 CFR 201. Non-natural hazards that pose significant risk were considered as well.
- The plan was developed following FEMA regulations and prevailing FEMA and state guidance. This ensures that all the requirements are met and supports plan review. In addition, this plan will meet criteria for the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS) and the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) programs.

Cape May County applied for and was awarded a multi-jurisdictional planning grant under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (DR-4488-NJ-011-0010) awarded for the COVID-19 pandemic, which has supported the development of this HMP. Grant administration was the responsibility of the Cape May County Office of Emergency Management.

### 2.1 GENERAL MITIGATION PLANNING APPROACH

FEMA provides hazard mitigation planning support to local communities through guidance, resources, and plan reviews. This hazard mitigation plan was prepared in accordance with the following regulations and guidance:

- FEMA Mitigation Planning How-to Series (FEMA 386-1 through 4, 2002)
- FEMA How-To Guide for Using Hazus for Risk Assessment FEMA Document No. 433, February 2004.
- FEMA Local Mitigation Plan Review Guide, October 1, 2011.
- FEMA Mitigation Ideas: A Resource for Reducing Risk to Natural Hazards, January 2013.
- FEMA Integrating Hazard Mitigation into Local Planning, March 1, 2013.
- FEMA Plan Integration: Linking Local Planning Efforts, July 2015.
- FEMA Local Mitigation Planning Policy Guide, April 19, 2022.



- FEMA Local Mitigation Planning Handbook, May 2023.
- DMA 2000 (Public Law 106-390, October 30, 2000).
- 44 CFR 201 and 206 (including: Feb. 26, 2002, Oct. 1, 2002, Oct. 28, 2003, and Sept. 13, 2004, Interim Final Rules).
- NJOEM Hazard Mitigation Planning Standard, 2019.
- State of New Jersey Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2024.

## 2.2 ORGANIZATION OF PLANNING PROCESS

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### 2.2.1 Planning Process Participants

#### Project Management and Planning Consultant

Project management was the responsibility of the Cape May County Office of Emergency Management. A contract planning consultant (Tetra Tech) was tasked with the following:

- Assisting with the organization of a Steering Committee and the Planning Partnership
- Assisting with the development and implementation of a public and stakeholder outreach program
- Data collection
- Facilitation and attendance at meetings (Steering Committee, municipal, stakeholder, public and other)
- Review and update of the hazards of concern, and hazard profiling and risk assessment
- Assistance with the review and update of mitigation planning goals and objectives
- Assistance with the review of past mitigation strategy progress
- Assistance with the screening of mitigation actions and the identification of appropriate actions
- Assistance with the prioritization of mitigation actions
- Authoring of the draft and final plan documents

#### Planning Partnership

In November 2024, the County notified all municipalities in the County of the pending planning process and invited them to formally participate. Jurisdictions were asked to formally notify the County of their intent to participate via a letter of intent and to identify planning points of contact to facilitate their participation and represent the interests of their communities. All participating jurisdictions, including the County, are recognized as Planning Partners and belong to the Planning Partnership for this HMP. The Planning Partnership was charged with the following:

- Representing their jurisdiction throughout the planning process
- Ensuring participation of all departments and functions within their jurisdiction that have a stake in mitigation (e.g., planning, engineering, code enforcement, police and emergency services, public works)
- Assisting in gathering information for inclusion in the HMP update, including the use of previously developed reports and data
- Supporting and promoting the public involvement process
- Reporting on progress of mitigation actions identified in prior or existing HMPs, as applicable



- Identifying, developing, and prioritizing appropriate mitigation actions
- Reporting on progress of integration of prior or existing HMPs into other planning processes and municipal operations
- Supporting and developing a jurisdictional annex
- Reviewing, amending, and approving all sections of the plan update
- Adopting, implementing, and maintaining the plan update

Table 2-1 shows the current members of the Planning Partnership as of the time of publication of this plan update.

Table 2-1. Cape May County Hazard Mitigation Planning Partnership Members

Jurisdiction	Primary Point of Contact	Title	Alternate Point of Contact	Title
County of Cape May	Christopher Leusner	OEM Coordinator	John Edwards	Deputy OEM Coordinator
Borough of Avalon	Ed Dean	Fire Chief, OEM Coordinator	Kevin Scarpa	EMS Coordinator
City of Cape May	Michael Eck	OEM Coordinator	Justin Riggs	Deputy OEM Coordinator
Borough of Cape May Point	Bill Gibson	Public Works Supervisor	Elaine Wallace	Municipal Clerk
Township of Dennis	Adam Dotts	OEM Coordinator	Jessica Bishop	Administrator
Township of Lower	Gary Douglass	OEM Coordinator	Katie Crecca	Deputy OEM Coordinator
Township of Middle	Tracey Super	OEM Coordinator	Brian Murphy	Deputy OEM Coordinator
City of North Wildwood	Nicholas Long	City Administrator	Kyle Rutherford	Deputy City Administrator
City of Ocean City	Frank Donato	OEM Coordinator	Christine Gunderson	Manager of Capital Planning
City of Sea Isle City	Nicholas Giordano	Deputy OEM Coordinator	Anthony Garreffo	OEM Coordinator
Borough of Stone Harbor	Frank Vault	OEM Coordinator	Roger Stanford	Deputy OEM Coordinator
Township of Upper	Frank Donato	OEM Coordinator	James Mike Jones	Deputy OEM Coordinator
Borough of West Cape May	George Dick	Commissioner of Public Works and Property	Giacomo Antonicello	Commissioner of Public Affairs and Safety
Borough of West Wildwood	Ronald McGowan Jr	OEM Coordinator	Edward Bradley	Deputy OEM Coordinator
City of Wildwood	Daniel Dunn	OEM Coordinator	Steven Booy	Zoning Officer
Borough of Wildwood Crest	Bill Cripps	OEM Coordinator	James Grauel	Deputy OEM Coordinator
Borough of Woodbine	Soren Hudyma	Deputy OEM Coordinator	Laurie Boyd	Municipal Clerk
Cape May County Municipal Utilities Authority	Joshua Palombo	Wastewater Program Manager	Andrew Wallace	Risk Program Manager



The various jurisdictions in Cape May County have differing levels of capabilities and resources available to apply to the plan update process, as well as differing levels of vulnerability to and impacts from the natural hazards being considered in this plan. It was Cape May County's intent to encourage participation by all jurisdictions, and to accommodate their specific needs and limitations while still meeting the intent and purpose of plan update participation. Such accommodations have included establishing a Steering Committee, engaging a contract consultant to assume certain elements of the plan update process on behalf of the jurisdictions, and providing alternative mechanisms for planning participation.

Ultimately, jurisdictional participation is evidenced by a completed annex of the HMP, wherein jurisdictions individually identify their planning points of contact, evaluate their risk from the hazards of concern, identify their capabilities to effect mitigation in their community, identify and prioritize a suite of actions to mitigate their hazard risk, and adopt the updated plan via resolution. Annexes are included in Volume II of this HMP.

Appendix B (Participation Matrix) identifies how each individual who represented the jurisdictions during this planning effort contributed to the planning process.

It is noted that all municipalities in the County actively participate in the National Flood Insurance Program and have a designated NFIP floodplain administrator. All floodplain administrators have been informed of the planning process, reviewed the plan documents, and provided direct input to the plan update. Local floodplain administrators are identified as part of each jurisdiction's hazard mitigation planning team, as presented in the jurisdictional annexes in Volume II, as well as in Appendix B (Participation Matrix).

After completion of the plan, implementation and ongoing maintenance will become a function of the Planning Partnership as described in Chapter 18 (Plan Maintenance). The Planning Partnership will be responsible for reviewing the draft plan and soliciting public comment as part of an annual review and as part of the five-year mitigation plan updates.

### **Steering Committee**

Cape May County developed a Steering Committee to provide guidance and direction to the HMP update effort, and to ensure that the resulting document will be embraced by local government leaders as well as all who live and work within the planning area. Steering Committee members were charged with the following:

- Providing guidance and oversight of the planning process on behalf of the general planning partnership
- Attending and participating in Steering Committee meetings
- Assisting with the development and completion of certain planning elements, including:
  - Reviewing and updating the hazards of concern
  - Developing a public and stakeholder outreach program
  - Ensuring that the data and information used in the plan update process is the best available
  - Reviewing and updating the hazard mitigation goals
  - Identifying and screening appropriate mitigation strategies and activities
- Reviewing and commenting on plan documents prior to submission to NJOEM and FEMA.

The Steering Committee provided guidance, leadership, and oversight of the planning process and acted as the point of contact for all participating jurisdictions and various interest groups in the planning area. Table 2-2 lists the members of the Steering Committee.



Table 2-2. Cape May County Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee Members

Affiliation	Name	Title
Cape May County Emergency Management	Christopher Leusner	OEM Coordinator
Cape May County Emergency Management	John Edwards	Deputy OEM Coordinator
Cape May County Emergency Management	Annemarie Ricco	Operations Manager
Cape May County Emergency Management	Liam Millar	Planner
Cape May County Public Works and Engineering	Robert Church	County Engineer
South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization	David Heller	Program Manager
Cape May County Health Department	Kevin Thomas	Public Health Coordinator
Cape May County Planning Department	Leslie Gimeno	Planning Director
Cape May County Planning Department	Jason Downie	GIS Manager
Cape May County Brewing Company	Alicia Grasso	Director of Marketing
National Weather Service	Sarah Johnson	Warning Coordination Meteorologist
Cumberland County	Gabe Scarpa	OEM Coordinator
Atlantic County	Michael Steinman	OEM Coordinator
Middle Township	Tracey Super	OEM Coordinator
Cape May County MUA	Andrew Wallace	Risk Program Manager
Cape May County MUA	Josh Palombo	Wastewater Program Manager
Cape May County MUA	Patrick Morrison	Solid Waste Engineer
Cape May County MUA	Megan Kau	Wastewater Engineer
Cape May County Mosquito Control	Ed Sokorai	Wetlands Specialist
Cape May MAC	Danielle Dufner	Director of Operations
Lomax Consulting Group	Joseph Lomax	Principal Consultant
Heist Insurance	Tom Heist	CEO

### 2.2.2 Planning Activities

Members of the Planning Partnership (individually and as a whole), as well as key stakeholders, met and communicated as needed to share information. This included workshops to identify hazards, assess risks, update inventories of critical facilities, and assist in updating mitigation goals and strategies. All members of the Planning Partnership had the opportunity to review the draft plan, supported interaction with other stakeholders, and assisted with public involvement efforts. These activities provided continuity through the process to ensure that natural hazard vulnerability information and appropriate mitigation strategies were incorporated.

Table 2-3 summarizes meetings and other planning activities conducted during the development of the plan. It also identifies which 44 CFR 201 requirements each activity satisfies. Documentation of meetings (agendas, sign-in sheets, minutes, etc.) may be found in Appendix C (Public and Stakeholder Outreach).

Table 2-3 identifies only formal meetings and milestone events in the plan update process. In addition to these meetings, there was a great deal of communication between Planning Partnership members and the consultant through individual local meetings, phone, and email.



Table 2-3. Summary of Mitigation Planning Activities / Efforts

Date	44 CFR 201 Requirement	Description of Activity	Participants
September 24, 2024	2	<u>Municipal OEM Coordinator Meeting:</u> Welcome and Introductions, Overview of Hazard Mitigation and Planning Process, Anticipated Project Schedule, Anticipated Municipal Role in Planning Process	County and municipal representatives. See Appendix B
December 3, 2024	1b, 2, 3a, 3b, 3c, 4a, 5c	<u>Steering Committee Meeting #1:</u> Welcome and Introductions, In-Kind Tracking, Project Organization, Roles/Responsibilities, HMP Overview, Risk Assessment and Mitigation Strategy Overview, Data Collection, Public and Stakeholder Outreach Next Steps, and Schedule.	See Appendix B
December 3, 2024	1b, 2, 3a, 3b, 3c, 4a	<u>Planning Partnership Meeting #1:</u> Welcome and Introductions, In-Kind Tracking, Benefits of Hazard Mitigation and Overview, Project Organization and Overview, Updating the Risk Assessment, Identifying Critical Facilities, Public and Stakeholder Outreach, Capability and Mitigation Strategies, Updating the Mitigation Strategy, Sections of Plan, Worksheet Review, Next Steps and Questions.	County and municipal representatives and stakeholders. See Appendix B
January 29, 2025	2, 3b, 3c, 3d, 3e, 4b	<u>Steering Committee and Planning Partnership Risk Assessment Meeting:</u> Welcome and Introductions, Project Report and Status Review, Risk Assessment Overview, Risk Assessment Results, Hazard Rankings, Next Steps	County and municipal representatives and stakeholders. See Appendix B
March 25, 2025	2, 3c, 3d, 3e, 4a, 4b	<u>Steering Committee and Planning Partnership Mitigation Strategy Meeting:</u> Welcome and Introductions, Project Report and Status Review, Identifying and Developing Mitigation Strategies, Developing New Potential Actions, Proposed Goals, Workshop, Next Steps	County and municipal representatives and stakeholders. See Appendix B
TBD	1b, 2, 3, 4, 5	<u>Draft Plan Review Meeting:</u> Overview of entire plan and sections; confirmed plan maintenance schedule; public invited to attend.	Steering Committee Contract Planner See Appendix B
TBD	2	Draft HMP posted to public project website; all plan participants were notified and asked to assist with the public outreach including social media. Neighboring communities and stakeholders were notified of the posting as well.	Public and Stakeholders
TBD	2	HMP submitted to NJOEN	NJOEM
TBD	2	HMP submitted to FEMA Region II	FEMA Region II
Upon plan approval by FEMA	1a	Plan adoption by resolution by the governing bodies of all participating municipalities	All plan participants

Note: TBD = to be determined.



Numbers in column 2 identify specific federal requirements, as follows:

- 1a – Prerequisite – Adoption by the Local Governing Body
- 1b – Public Participation
- 2 – Planning Process – Documentation of the Planning Process
- 3a – Risk Assessment – Identifying Hazards
- 3b – Risk Assessment – Profiling Hazard Events
- 3c – Risk Assessment – Assessing Vulnerability: Identifying Assets
- 3d – Risk Assessment – Assessing Vulnerability: Estimating Potential Losses
- 3e – Risk Assessment – Assessing Vulnerability: Analyzing Development Trends
- 4a – Mitigation Strategy – Local Hazard Mitigation Goals
- 4b – Mitigation Strategy – Identification and Analysis of Mitigation Measures
- 4c – Mitigation Strategy – Implementation of Mitigation Measures
- 5a – Plan Maintenance Procedures – Monitoring, Evaluating, and Updating the Plan
- 5b – Plan Maintenance Procedures – Implementation through Existing Programs
- 5c – Plan Maintenance Procedures – Continued Public Involvement

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## 2.3 STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH AND INVOLVEMENT

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The Cape May County HMP update was written using the best available information obtained from a wide variety of sources. Throughout the HMP update process, a concerted effort was made to gather information from municipal and regional agencies and staff as well as stakeholders, federal and state agencies, and the residents of the County. A Steering Committee solicited information from local agencies and individuals with specific knowledge of certain natural hazards and past historical events. In addition, the Steering Committee and Planning Partnership took into consideration planning and zoning codes, ordinances, and recent land use planning decisions.

This section details the outreach to, and involvement of, the many agencies, departments, organizations, non-profits, districts, authorities, and other entities that have a stake in managing hazard risk and mitigation, commonly referred to as stakeholders.

Diligent efforts were made to ensure broad regional, county, and local representation in this planning process. A comprehensive list of stakeholders was developed with the support of the Steering Committee and Planning Partnership. Stakeholder outreach was performed early and throughout the planning process, including mass media notification efforts. Identified stakeholders were invited to attend the Planning Partnership risk assessment meeting, and key stakeholders were requested to participate on the Steering Committee and/or Planning Partnership. Information and input provided by these stakeholders has been included throughout this plan.

The following sections list the stakeholders who were invited to participate in the development of this plan and describe how they contributed to the plan. This summary information demonstrates the scope and breadth of the stakeholder outreach efforts during the planning process. Beyond those described here, many stakeholders were aware of and/or contributed to this plan through formal and informal outreach efforts by the Planning Partners involved in the plan update.

### 2.3.1 Federal and State Agencies

The federal and state agencies listed in Table 2-4 were contacted during the planning process. The table describes how each participated.



Table 2-4. Participation of Federal and State Agencies

Agency	Participation
FEMA Region 2	Provided updated planning guidance; provided summary and detailed NFIP data for planning area; conducted plan review.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI)</li> <li>National Hurricane Center (NHC)</li> <li>National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)</li> <li>National Weather Service (NWS)</li> <li>Storm Prediction Center (SPC)</li> <li>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)</li> <li>U.S. Census Bureau</li> <li>U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)</li> </ul>	Information regarding hazard identification and the risk assessment for this HMP update was requested and received or incorporated by reference
New Jersey Office of Emergency Management	Administered planning grant and facilitated FEMA review; provided updated planning guidance; attended meetings; participated in the Mitigation Strategy Workshop, provided review of Draft and Final Plan.
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Watershed and Land Management Program	The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Watershed and Land Management Program was asked to provide information on the location of dams, identified issues with dams, and suggested mitigation actions to include in the mitigation strategy to address dam failure.

### 2.3.2 County and Regional Agencies

The county and regional agencies listed in Table 2-5 were invited to participate during the planning process. The table describes how each participated.

Table 2-5. County and Regional Agencies

Agency	Participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cape May County Emergency Management</li> <li>Cape May County Public Works and Engineering</li> <li>South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization</li> <li>Cape May County Health Department</li> <li>Cape May County Planning Department</li> <li>Cape May County Brewing Company</li> <li>National Weather Service</li> <li>Cumberland County</li> <li>Atlantic County</li> <li>Middle Township</li> <li>Cape May County MUA</li> <li>Cape May County Mosquito Control</li> <li>Cape May MAC</li> <li>Lomax Consulting Group</li> <li>Heist Insurance</li> </ul>	Served on steering committee, attended meetings, completed hazard of concern exercise and goals and objectives exercise and reviewed draft plan.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JCNERR</li> <li>NJ Coastal Coalition</li> <li>Cape-Atlantic Sustainable Jersey Hub</li> </ul>	Invited to take the stakeholder survey and review the draft plan.



Agency	Participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cape May County Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Stockton University Coastal Research Center</li> <li>• Wetlands Institute</li> <li>• Ford Scott Associates</li> <li>• Halliday Architects</li> <li>• Cape May Lutheran</li> <li>• Freelance Environmental Journalist</li> <li>• Avalon Borough</li> <li>• Mott MacDonald</li> <li>• Press of Atlantic City</li> </ul>	

### 2.3.3 Stakeholders by Community Lifeline Category

FEMA defines community lifelines as fundamental services in a community that, when stabilized, enable all other aspects of society. Following a disaster event, intervention is required to stabilize community lifelines. All participating jurisdictions were asked to invite their internal agencies associated with community lifeline categories to complete a stakeholder survey. Many jurisdictions also directly involved representatives of these agencies in the planning process, as identified in Table 2-1. This section describes outreach to and participation by other stakeholders in the planning process associated with FEMA’s eight designated community lifeline categories. More detailed information about community lifelines in the planning area is provided in Section 3.9.

#### Safety and Security

##### Law Enforcement

Many municipalities directly involved police and other law enforcement representatives in the planning process. Municipalities were asked to invite their law enforcement agencies to complete a stakeholder survey. Further, the following police departments and law enforcement agencies were invited to complete a stakeholder survey and review the draft plan:

- Avalon Borough Police Department
- Cape May City Police Department
- Lower Township Police Department
- Middle Township Police Department
- North Wildwood City Police Department
- Ocean City Police Department
- Sea Isle City Police Department
- Stone Harbor Borough Police Department
- West Wildwood Borough Police Department
- Wildwood City Police Department
- Wildwood Crest Borough Police Department



## Fire Districts and Fire Departments

Many jurisdictions directly involved fire district/department, haz-mat teams, and rescue team representatives in the planning process. Jurisdictions were asked to invite their fire departments to complete a stakeholder survey. The following fire districts or departments, hazardous materials response teams, and rescue teams were invited to complete a stakeholder survey and review the draft plan:

- Ocean City Fire Department
- North Wildwood Fire Department
- North Wildwood Volunteer Fire Company No. 1
- Anglesea Volunteer Fire Company No. 1
- Wildwood City Fire Department
- Holly Beach Volunteer Fire Company
- Wildwood Fire Company. No. 1
- Wildwood Crest Fire Company No. 1
- Strathmere Volunteer Fire Company
- Sea Isle City Fire Department
- Avalon Vol. Fire Department
- Stone Harbor Volunteer Fire Company
- Marmora Volunteer Fire Company
- Woodbine Fire Department
- Ocean View Volunteer Fire Company
- Dennis Volunteer Fire Company
- Goshen Volunteer Fire Company
- Green Creek Volunteer Fire Company
- Rio Grande Volunteer Fire Company
- Middle Township Fire Company No. 1
- Erma Volunteer Fire Company
- Town Bank Volunteer Fire Company
- Villas Volunteer Fire Company
- Cape May Point Volunteer Fire Company
- West Cape May Volunteer Fire Company
- Cape May City Fire Department
- Belleplain Volunteer Fire Company
- West Wildwood Volunteer Fire Company
- Tuckahoe Volunteer Fire Company
- Seaville Fire Rescue Company

## Dams

In order to address risk to dams, outreach was conducted with the following dam owners and/or the dam safety agency.

- New Jersey Department of Transportation
- New Jersey Division of Parks and Forestry
- County of Cape May
- The City of Wildwood

The following information was requested:

- Information, data, or resources regarding the risk to dam failure as a result of deficiencies or exposure to hazards such as flooding and severe weather
- Concerns with dam safety due to changing climate conditions
- Concerns with emergency action plan deficiencies including warning time, evacuation needs, etc.
- Completed or in progress repairs/improvements to dams
- Potential new mitigation actions that should be considered for inclusion in the HMP mitigation strategy



## Food, Hydration, Shelter

Jurisdictions were asked to invite their emergency management related agencies to provide information on shelters and sheltering procedures. The following stakeholders that provide food, hydration, shelter, and agricultural activities in the County were invited to complete a stakeholder survey and review the draft plan:

- Catholic Family and Community Services (CFCS)

## Health and Medical

### Hospitals and Health-Care Facilities

The following hospitals and health-care facilities were invited to complete a stakeholder survey and review the draft plan:

- Cape Regional Health System
- Acenda Integrated Health

## Energy

In addition to municipal utilities, the following electrical, natural gas, and fuel companies were invited to complete a stakeholder survey and review the draft plan:

- Atlantic City Electric
- South Jersey Gas

## Communications

Each jurisdiction was asked to provide information on emergency communication and warning systems. In addition, the following communications companies were invited to complete a stakeholder survey and review the draft plan:

- Verizon NJ

## Transportation

The following transportation companies and organizations were invited to complete a stakeholder survey and review the draft plan:

- NJ Transit
- NJ Department of Transportation
- Cape May Seashore Lines
- South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization

## Water Systems

In addition to municipal utilities, the following water utility companies were invited to complete a stakeholder survey and review the draft plan:

- Cape May County Municipal Utility Authority



### 2.3.4 Additional Stakeholder Groups

Additional stakeholder outreach was made to academia, businesses, and organizations that support socially vulnerable populations and underserved populations, as listed in the sections below.

#### School Districts and Other Academic Institutions

The following school districts, colleges, and academic organizations were invited to complete a stakeholder survey and review the draft plan:

- Cape Atlantic Community College
- JCNERR
- Rowan University
- Rutgers University

#### Business and Commerce

The following businesses, chambers of commerce, and commercial groups were invited to complete a stakeholder survey and review the draft plan:

- Ocean City Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Wildwood Chamber of Commerce
- Cape May County Board of Realtors
- Cape May County Chamber of Commerce
- Heist Insurance
- Ford Scott Associates
- Halliday Architects
- Lomax Consulting Group

#### Groups Supporting Socially Vulnerable Populations and Underserved Communities

The following groups and agencies that provide support to and work with socially vulnerable populations and underserved communities were invited to complete a stakeholder survey and review the draft plan:

- Catholic Family and Community Services (CFCS)
- Salvation Army
- American Red Cross

### 2.3.5 Adjacent Jurisdictions

The County kept surrounding jurisdictions apprised of the project, invited them to complete a neighboring community survey, and requested their review of the draft plan. The following adjoining county and jurisdictional representatives were contacted to inform them about the availability of the project website, draft plan documents, and surveys and to invite them to provide input to the planning process:

- Atlantic County



- Estell Manor City
- Corbin City
- Egg Harbor Township
- Somers Point City
- Longport Borough
- Cumberland County
  - Maurice River Township

### 2.3.6 Stakeholder and Neighboring Community Survey Summaries

This section summarizes the results and feedback received by those who completed the stakeholder and neighboring community surveys. Feedback was reviewed by the Steering Committee and integrated where appropriate in the plan.

#### Stakeholder Survey

The stakeholder survey was designed to identify general needs for hazard mitigation and resiliency within Cape May County from the perspective of stakeholders, as well as to identify specific projects that may be included in the mitigation plan. It was distributed to identified stakeholders, including county and municipal departments and agencies. As of August 13, 2025, no stakeholders submitted the survey.

#### Neighboring Community Survey

The neighboring community survey was sent to the county and municipal governments that border Cape May County due to their proximity to the county and because the effects of hazard events that impact Cape May County would be similar to that of their neighbors. As of August 13, 2025, no neighboring communities submitted the survey.

### 2.3.7 Public Outreach

In order to facilitate better coordination and communication between the Planning Partnership and all community members and to involve the public in the planning process, draft documents were made available to the public through a variety of venues, including printed and online format. The Steering Committee and Planning Partnership made the following efforts toward public participation in the development and review of the Plan:

- The public was informed of the hazard mitigation planning effort commencement at the kickoff meeting and through press releases, news articles, and public service announcements released throughout the planning process.
- A public website is being maintained as another way to facilitate communication between the Steering Committee, planning partnership, public and stakeholders ([www.capemaycountynjhmp.com](http://www.capemaycountynjhmp.com)). The public website contains a project overview, county and local contact information, access to the citizens survey and various stakeholder surveys, and sections of the HMP for public review and comment.
- All participating jurisdictions have been encouraged to distribute press releases on the project, including links to the project webpage and public and stakeholder surveys.
- In order to facilitate coordination and communication between the Planning Partnership and citizens and involve the public in the planning process, the plan update will be available to the public through a variety



of venues. A printed version of the plan will be maintained at the Cape May County Office of Emergency Management.

- An online natural hazards preparedness public survey was developed to gauge household preparedness that may impact Cape May County and to assess the level of knowledge of tools and techniques to assist in reducing risk and loss of those hazards. The questionnaire asks quantifiable questions about citizen perception of risk, knowledge of mitigation, and support of community programs. The questionnaire also asks several demographic questions to help analyze trends.
- The questionnaire was posted on the County website and was available through August 13, 2025 for public input. All participating jurisdictions have been requested to advertise the availability of the survey via local homepage links, and other available public announcement methods (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, email blasts, etc.). Roughly 85 responses have been collected. A summary of survey results is provided later in this chapter with full results provided in Appendix D of this plan.
- Directed response surveys were distributed to Academia, Fire Departments, Hospitals and Healthcare Organizations, Business and Commercial interests, Utilities and Law Enforcement stakeholders as detailed in the Stakeholder outreach subsection of this chapter. A summary of survey results is provided later in this chapter with full results provided in Appendix D of this plan. In addition, an example of the directed stakeholder surveys is presented in Appendix D.
- All Planning Partnership meetings were open to the public.
- The Draft Plan was posted to the public website as of August 15, 2025, for public review and comment. All public comments were directed to the Cape May County Office of Emergency Management for collection and review by the Steering Committee. All public comments received were forwarded to the appropriate jurisdiction and/or agency and incorporated into the final plan as appropriate.
- Once submitted to NJOEM/FEMA, the Final Plan will be available for public review and comment in the same manner and format as the Draft Plan, as well as in hard-copy format at the following as identified in Chapter 17, “Plan Maintenance”.

Examples of virtual outreach via social media completed by the Planning Partners are provided in Figure 2-1 and Figure 2-2.

### Public Survey Summary

The public survey was developed to assess the level of knowledge of tools and techniques to assist in reducing risk and loss associated with hazards. It asked quantifiable questions about citizen perception of risk, knowledge of mitigation, and support of community programs. The County advertised the survey on their website and social media accounts. As of August 13, 2025, the survey received 83 responses.

Demographically, survey respondents were from 13 municipalities within Cape May County, with 53.03 percent having lived in the County for 20 years or more. The most common (60 percent) age of respondents was over the age of 60. The majority (60.49 percent) of residents receive information concerning a natural hazard through the internet, closely followed by those who receive information via social media (59.26 percent). Over half (55.56 percent) receive information through mass notification systems or tv news.

Survey respondents identified the following as the top most frequently occurring natural hazard events within Cape May County in the past five years (Figure 2-3):

- Severe Storms (Thunderstorm, Hail) (59.76 percent)
- Disease/Pandemic Outbreak (59.76 percent)



- Extreme Wind (56.10 percent)
- Extreme Temperature (47.56 percent)
- Drought (45.12 percent)
- Lightning (45.12 percent)
- Winter Storm (45.12 percent)

Respondents identified the following as priorities regarding planning for hazards:

- Protecting critical facilities and community lifelines (85.07 percent)
- Protecting and reducing damages to utilities (83.58 percent)
- Promoting cooperation among public agencies, residents, non-profit organizations, and local business (71.21 percent)
- Protecting private property (66.67 percent)
- Strengthening emergency services (65.67 percent)
- Enhance the functions of natural features (65.67 percent)

Respondents were asked which activities have been performed to mitigate hazard impacts to their homes. 100 percent of respondents have installed smoke detectors; roughly 82 percent have talked with other household members about what to do in case of a natural disaster or emergency; 62 percent have become trained in first aid and/or CPR; 55 percent have attended meetings or received information on natural disasters or emergency preparedness; 39 percent have prepared a disaster supply kit; and 56 percent have developed an emergency plan for the household to decide what will be done in the event of a disaster or emergency.

Respondents were also asked about their property's location within the floodplain, and if they have flood insurance. Of the 80 respondents who answered this question, 34 (42.50 percent) indicated that their property is located in a designated floodplain. 31 respondents with property located inside of the floodplain indicated their home is covered by flood insurance; 10 respondents with property located outside of the floodplain indicated their home is covered by flood insurance.

The most self-selected jurisdiction respondents indicated that they live in is Lower Township (16.42 percent); however, there were respondents from all jurisdictions except Sea Isle City, Stone Harbor Borough, and West Wildwood Borough.

Jurisdiction-specific responses can be found in Volume II. Refer to Appendix D (Public and Stakeholder Outreach) for the full list of survey questions and responses.



Figure 2-1. Cape May County HMP Online Outreach via Facebook





Figure 2-2. Cape May County HMP Online Outreach via Facebook

**Cape May Police Department** March 31 · 🌐

"Public Notice: Request for Participation in County-Wide Hazard Mitigation Plan

The Cape May Office of Emergency Management is seeking input from all residents to help shape the County-Wide Hazard Mitigation Plan. This is an opportunity for you to share your concerns and thoughts on how we can better prepare for and reduce the impacts of hazards in our community.

By participating, you can have a direct impact on developing strategies and priorities that will make our commun... **See more**

— with **Cape May City Office of Emergency Management - OEM.**

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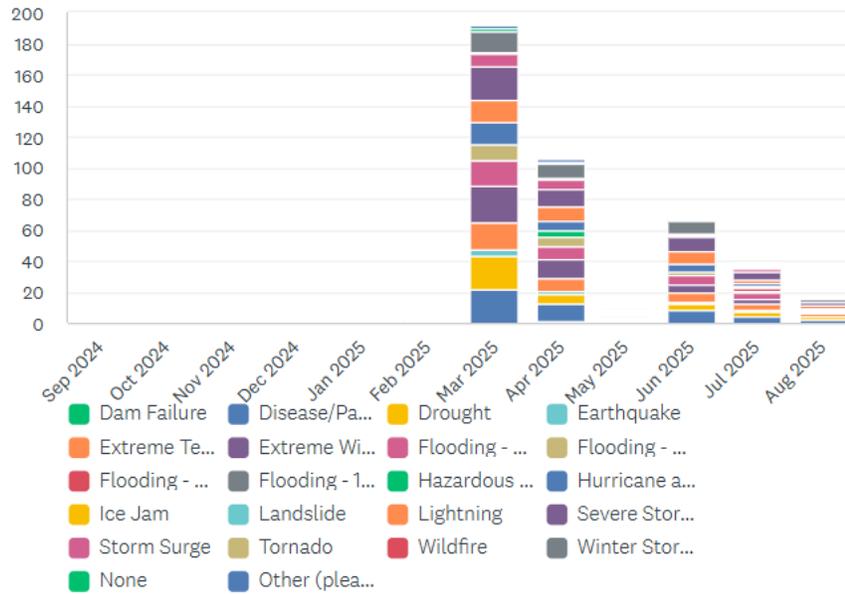
👍 Like      💬 Comment

All comments ▼

 **Mary Parker**  
Low flood areas  
24w



Figure 2-3. Most Frequently Experienced Natural Hazard Events in Cape May County



## 2.4 INCORPORATION OF EXISTING PLANS, STUDIES, REPORTS AND TECHNICAL INFORMATION

The Cape May County HMP uses the best available information to support hazard profiling, risk assessment, review and evaluation of mitigation capabilities, and the development and prioritization of County and local mitigation strategies. Plans, reports, and other technical information were identified and accessed online through independent research by the planning consultant or provided directly by the County, participating jurisdictions, and stakeholders involved in the planning effort. Detailed sources of technical data and information used are listed in the References section.

The asset inventory data used for the risk assessment is presented in the County Profile (Chapter 3). Details of the source of this data, along with technical information on how the data was used to develop the risk assessment, are presented in Chapter 4, as well as throughout the hazard profiles in this HMP. The County and participating jurisdictions provided relevant jurisdiction-specific planning and regulatory documents, which were reviewed to identify:

- Existing jurisdictional capabilities
- Needs and opportunities to develop or enhance capabilities, which may be identified in the County or local mitigation strategies
- Mitigation-related goals or objectives, considered in the review and update of the overall Goals and Objectives (see Chapter 16)
- Proposed, in-progress, or potential mitigation actions to be incorporated into the updated County and local mitigation strategies

The following regulations, codes, ordinances, and plans were reviewed to develop mitigation planning goals and objectives and mitigation strategies that are consistent across local and regional planning and regulatory mechanisms:



- Comprehensive/master plans
- Building codes
- Zoning and subdivision ordinances
- Flood insurance studies
- Flood insurance rate maps
- NFIP flood damage prevention ordinances
- Site plan requirements
- Local waterfront revitalization plans
- Stormwater management plans
- Emergency management and response plans
- Land use and open space plans
- Capital plans
- Climate smart community program
- Community rating system
- New Jersey Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2019

The County and participating jurisdictions were tasked with updating the assessment of their planning and regulatory capabilities (see capability assessment section of each jurisdictional annex in Volume II). They reviewed relevant plans contributing to the capability of the County and each jurisdiction to integrate effective mitigation efforts into their daily activities. This review is reflected in the capability assessment table in each of the municipal annexes. These tables list plan types, names, and dates, as well as a summary of how each plan supports mitigation and resilience.

### **2.5 INTEGRATION WITH EXISTING PLANNING MECHANISMS AND PROGRAMS**

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Effective mitigation is achieved when hazard awareness and risk management approaches and strategies become an integral part of public activities and decision-making. Many existing plans and programs support hazard mitigation in the County. It is critical that this HMP integrate, coordinate with, and complement, those existing plans and programs.

The capability assessment presented in Chapter 15 provides a summary and description of the existing plans, programs, and regulatory mechanisms at all levels of government (federal, state, county and local) that support hazard mitigation in the County. In the jurisdictional annexes in Volume II, each participating jurisdiction identifies how it has already integrated hazard mitigation into its planning, regulatory and administrative framework (“integration capabilities”) and how it intends to promote this integration (“integration actions”).



## 2.6 PLAN ADOPTION

Adoption by the local governing bodies of each participating jurisdiction demonstrates the commitment of the Planning Partners to fulfill the mitigation goals and strategies outlined in this HMP. Adoption via a municipal resolution legitimizes the HMP and authorizes responsible agencies to execute their responsibilities.

All participating jurisdictions will proceed with formal adoption proceedings. Each jurisdiction must submit a copy of its formal adoption resolution or other legal instrument to the Cape May County Emergency Management. Cape May County Emergency Management (NJOEM), after consulting with FEMA, offers options for submitting adoption resolutions.

- **Submittal of adoption resolution** – Each jurisdiction must submit its adoption when the plan is initially submitted to the state. Once the state, FEMA conducts its review.
- **Approvable pending adoption** – A draft HMP is submitted to the state and FEMA for approval prior to adoption by the jurisdictions. When FEMA determines that the plan as a whole and each participating jurisdiction have met all the requirements except adoption, FEMA will inform the state that the plan is “approvable pending adoption” (APA). After that, once FEMA receives documentation of adoption resolutions from at least one jurisdiction, the status is changed from APA to approved for the entire plan and for that jurisdiction. Other jurisdictions that participated in the planning process then receive approval once they pass their own adoption resolutions. A jurisdiction with a plan in APA status does not meet the requirement for an approved mitigation plan to apply for and receive funding assistance.

In addition to being required by DMA 2000, adoption of the HMP is necessary because:

- It lends authority to the plan to serve as a guiding document for all local and state government officials.
- It gives legal status to the plan in the event it is challenged in court.
- It certifies to program and grant administrators that the plan’s recommendations have been properly considered and approved by the jurisdictions’ governing authority and citizens.
- It helps to ensure the continuity of mitigation programs and policies over time because elected officials, staff, and other community decision-makers can refer to the official document when making decisions about the community’s future.

Source: FEMA. 2003. *How to Series: Bringing the Plan to Life (FEMA 386-4)*.

FEMA will transmit acknowledgement of verification of formal plan adoption and the official approval of the plan to the Cape May County HMP Coordinator. The plan approval date begins the five-year approval period and sets the expiration date for the plan. All participating jurisdictions will have the same expiration date regardless of their own jurisdiction’s adoption date. The date indicated on FEMA’s approval letter is the official approval date.

The resolutions issued by each jurisdiction to support adoption of this HMP are included in Appendix A.

## 2.7 CONTINUED PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The Planning Partners are committed to the continued involvement of the public in the hazard mitigation process. This Plan update will be posted on-line (currently at [www.capemaycountynjhmp.com](http://www.capemaycountynjhmp.com)), and jurisdictions will be encouraged to maintain links to the plan website. Further, the County will make hard copies of the Plan available for review at public locations as identified on the public plan website.



A notice regarding annual updates of the plan and the location of plan copies will be publicized annually after the Planning Partnership's annual evaluation and posted on the public website (currently at [www.capemaycountynjhmp.com](http://www.capemaycountynjhmp.com)).

Each jurisdiction's governing body shall be responsible for receiving, tracking, and filing public comments regarding this plan.

The public will have an opportunity to comment on the plan as a part of the annual mitigation planning evaluation process and the next five-year mitigation plan update. The HMP Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the plan evaluation portion of the meeting, soliciting feedback, collecting, and reviewing the comments, and ensuring their incorporation in the 5-year plan update as appropriate; however, members of the Planning Partnership will assist the HMP Coordinator. Additional meetings may also be held as deemed necessary by the Planning Partnership. The purpose of these meetings would be to provide the public an opportunity to express concerns, opinions, and ideas about the plan.

After completion of this plan, implementation and ongoing maintenance will continue to be a function of the Planning Partnership. The Planning Partnership will review the plan and accept public comment as part of an annual review and as part of five-year mitigation plan updates.

A notice regarding annual updates of the plan and the location of plan copies will be publicized annually after the HMP Committee's annual evaluation and posted on the public web site.

Mr. Christopher Leusner of the Cape May County Office of Emergency Management has been identified as the ongoing County HMP Coordinator (see Chapter 17), and is responsible for receiving, tracking, and filing public comments regarding this Plan Update. Contact information is:

Mailing Address: Office of Emergency Management  
Cape May County Department of Public Safety  
4 Moore Road-DN308  
Cape May Court House, NJ 08210

Contact Name: Christopher Leusner, Director

Email Address: [Christopher.Leusner@CO.CAPE-MAY.NJ.US](mailto:Christopher.Leusner@CO.CAPE-MAY.NJ.US)

Telephone: (609) 600-5070

Further details regarding continued public involvement are provided in Chapter 17.