



Section 7: Plan Implementation

2016 Plan Update changes: This section includes information on the Plan Maintenance and Monitoring procedures, mechanisms for continued public outreach, and plan integration that were previously in Section 10. The procedures have all been reviewed and updated to reflect current County processes and priorities.

7.1 Overview

Since the 2010 Middlesex County Hazard Mitigation Plan was written the County has experienced four disaster declarations, two hurricanes and two severe winter storms. These storms, and other events, have provided new understanding and information for the County to prepare for future natural hazard events. Municipalities and the County have worked to mitigate repetitive loss properties, improve energy resilience, and implement procedures to improve efficiency in emergency response and discovery.

Part of this effort to continually reduce the County's vulnerability to damage and injuries associated with natural hazard events is to improve integration between existing planning mechanisms, involve and educate the public, and continue to keep mitigation strategies up-to-date with current data and priorities. The following sections detail the efforts of Middlesex County and the participating municipalities to keep the County Hazard Mitigation Plan as a critical and current planning tool.

7.2 Plan Integration

7.2.1 Plan Integration at the County

Middlesex County has limited land use planning and zoning authority, so the County has few opportunities to incorporate this Plan into other local mechanisms, such as zoning and subdivision ordinances, or comprehensive land use plans. This plan will be incorporated, to the extent possible, into the County Open Space Master Plan and the County Capital Improvement Plan.

In addition, Middlesex County OEM and the Middlesex County Planning Department will work with individual municipalities to incorporate the recommendations of the Plan into local comprehensive planning and capital improvement programs.

7.2.2 Plan Integration in the municipalities

Many of the municipalities within the County have made an effort to incorporate mitigation into other planning efforts within their town, through budgeting, master planning, zoning implementation and development review, or capital improvement funding. It should be noted that counties and municipalities are not empowered to make alterations or improvements to the state's building code, the Uniform Construction Code.

All of the towns have adopted ordinances that protect critical resources including wetlands, stream buffers, and floodplains. Additionally, all of the towns have stormwater management ordinances and requirements. More specific information on the integration of mitigation into local planning



mechanisms is included in each municipal appendix.

7.3 Public Involvement and Stakeholder Engagement

Middlesex County intends to keep its efforts of stakeholder engagement and public outreach in its mitigation planning efforts. The County supports initiatives that increase awareness, understanding, and capacity of the business and residents within its towns. The County will utilize public notices and a centralized website in an effort to include the public for significant plan updates; defined as a change that requires approval from the Board of Chosen Freeholders. In addition, Middlesex County staff will undertake public outreach and awareness activities as outlined in the Mitigation Action Plan that will include continuing updates on the progress of implementing the Plan and future updates. Each municipality will also work to engage local stakeholders and the general public. The details of these procedures are outlined in each municipal appendix.

7.4 Plan Monitoring and Maintenance

7.4.1 Method for Monitoring the Plan

This Plan will be monitored by the Middlesex County Office of Emergency Management (MC OEM) for several related purposes:

- Maintain the currency of hazard and risk information.
- Ensure that mitigation projects and actions reflect the priorities of Middlesex County and stakeholders.
- To comply with FEMA and the State of New Jersey requirements for plan maintenance and maintain Middlesex County's eligibility for federal disaster assistance and mitigation grants.

The MC OEM will monitor the plan with respect to the purposes noted above, according to the schedule described in Section 7.4.2 and with respect to the update triggers noted in Section 7.4.3 below.

Specifically, monitoring activities will consist of:

- Soliciting and reviewing reports from participating municipalities regarding status of implementation of action items from the Plan. Status reports will indicate if projects have been:
 - Scoped and/or documented for FEMA grant applications;
 - Submitted for FEMA funding programs;
 - Approved (or denied approval) for FEMA funding;
 - Documented for funding by other means (e.g., municipal capital improvement plans);
 - Funded (or not approved for funding) by other means;
 - Under construction;
 - Completed; and (for completed projects only) Subject to hazard conditions such that avoided losses can be documented.



- Tracking progress of sources of improved or revised data for use in subsequent Plan updates on an annual (at a minimum) basis.
- Preparing a report of the status of implementation of action items from the Plan and the availability of improved or revised data. The report will include recommendations to the Hazard Mitigation Working Group regarding the need and/or advantages of undertaking updates to all or part of the Plan prior to the five-year required update.

Each municipality has designated an individual to be responsible for continually monitoring and updating the plan, which is included in each municipal appendix. Only the title as been designated, as the individual in these positions may change frequently.

7.4.2 Schedule for Monitoring the Plan

Informal Plan monitoring activities will be ongoing. In addition to the FEMA mandated five year update cycle, the Middlesex County Emergency Management Coordinator or his designee (Coordinator) will perform monitoring activities for the Plan as described in Section 7.4.1 annually at the first Emergency Management Coordinator meeting of each new calendar year, or more often as circumstances require.

In cases where the Point of Contact (PoC) is not the Emergency Management Coordinator, the Coordinator is responsible for securing an update from the PoC prior to the first coordinator meeting of the year.

In addition to the scheduled reports, the Coordinator will convene meetings after damage-causing natural hazard events to review the effects of such events. Based on those effects, adjustments to the mitigation priorities identified in Section 5 may be made or additional event-specific actions identified.

7.4.3 The Next Plan Update

Although the County intends on continually reviewing and updating the plan, this section identifies the circumstances or conditions under which MC OEM will initiate a complete plan review and update.

1. On the recommendation of the Coordinator or on its own initiative, the Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders may initiate a Plan review at any time.
2. After natural hazard events that appear to significantly change the apparent risk to Middlesex County assets, operations and/or constituents.

If neither of these occurs, a comprehensive evaluation of and update to this Plan will be undertaken on a five-year cycle (at a minimum). This Plan was adopted in [Insert Date], and thus must undergo a formal FEMA-compliant update process by [Insert Date + 5 years]. Approximately one year prior to the five year anniversary of Plan adoption or sooner if circumstances require, the Coordinator will initiate a comprehensive evaluation of the Plan with particular attention to FEMA guidance.

The criteria to be used in this evaluation include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Assessing whether or not goals and objectives in the Plan address current and expected



conditions;

- Determining if there are any changes in risk factors and/or data that would be relevant to hazards in Middlesex County;
- Determining if capabilities have changed relative to the County and municipalities' ability to plan and implement hazard mitigation projects;
- Determining if significant changes have occurred in the availability of funding at federal and state levels to support hazard mitigation planning and implementation; and
- Results in implementing the Plan per monitoring reports.

The Plan Update will sequentially be provided to the Middlesex County Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee (HMPSC) and Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders for consideration. Each municipality will review the update with the respective Boards and/or Councils. The report will also be posted on the MC OEM website for public review and comment. This plan will be reviewed by the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management and FEMA Regional Office for compliance with statutes and requirements. The Board of Chosen Freeholders, and the parallel municipal councils, will indicate any desired changes, approve and adopt the Plan in sufficient time to meet FEMA requirements.