



SECTION 2. PLANNING PROCESS

2021 HMP CHANGES

- The sections in the 2021 HMP were realigned to increase the readability of the plan.
- All aspects of the planning process were updated for the 2021 HMP.
- The Steering Committee was expanded to include additional County departments, municipal representatives and stakeholders including major employers.
- Public outreach was enhanced to reach a broader audience by using additional media outlets (Facebook, Twitter) and interactive online tools (StoryMap and surveying).

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section includes a description of the planning process used to update the 2016 Mercer County HMP, including how it was prepared, who was involved in the process, and how the public was involved. To ensure that the plan meets requirements of the DMA 2000 and that the planning process would have the broad and effective support of the participating jurisdictions, regional and local stakeholders, and the public, an approach to the planning process and plan documentation was developed to achieve the following goals:

- The HMP will be multi-jurisdictional and consider natural and human-caused hazards facing Mercer County, thereby satisfying the natural hazards mitigation planning requirements specified in the DMA 2000.
- Mercer County invited all municipalities in the County to join with them in the preparation of the Mercer County HMP. The County and all municipalities are participating in the HMP as indicated in Table 2-1 below.
- The HMP shall be developed following the process outlined by the DMA 2000, FEMA regulations, and prevailing FEMA and NJOEM guidance. Following this process ensures all the requirements are met and support HMP review.

Table 2-1. Participating Mercer County Jurisdictions

Jurisdictions	
East Windsor Township	Lawrence Township
Township of Ewing	Borough of Pennington
Hamilton Township	Princeton
Borough of Hightstown	Township of Robbinsville
Hopewell Borough	City of Trenton
Hopewell Township	West Windsor Township
Mercer County	

The Mercer 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 local and regional agencies and staff, as well as stakeholders, federal and state agencies, and the residents of the County. The HMP Steering and Planning Committees, together called the Planning Partnership, solicited information from local agencies and individuals with specific knowledge of certain hazards and past historical events, as well as considering planning and zoning codes, ordinances, and other recent planning decisions. The



hazard mitigation strategies identified in this HMP have been developed through an extensive planning process involving local, county and regional agencies, County residents and stakeholders.

This section describes the mitigation planning process, including (1) Organization of the Planning Process; (2) Stakeholder Outreach and Involvement; (3) Public Participation; (4) Integration of Existing Data, Plans, and Technical Information; (5) Integration with Existing Planning Mechanisms and Programs; and (6) Continued Public Involvement.

2.2 ORGANIZATION OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

Many parties supported the preparation of this HMP update: County officials, municipal officials, the Steering Committee, Planning Committee, stakeholders and planning consultant. This planning process does not represent the start of hazard risk management in the County; rather it is part of an ongoing process that various State, County and local agencies and individuals have continued to embrace. A summary of the past and ongoing mitigation efforts is provided in Section 6 (Mitigation Strategy), as well as in Volume II Section 9 (Jurisdictional Annexes), to give an historical perspective of the County and local activities implemented to reduce vulnerability to hazards in the planning area.

This section of the HMP describes how the planning process was organized with the many “planning partners” involved and outlines the major activities that were conducted in the development of this HMP update.

2.2.1 ORGANIZATION OF PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

Recognizing the need to manage risk within the County, and to meet the requirements of the DMA 2000, the Mercer County OEM led the update to the 2016 Mercer County HMP. The State of New Jersey and Mercer County signed a Grantee-Subgrantee Agreement to fund the Mercer County HMP update. The period of performance for this grant is from September 30, 2019 and ending May 29, 2023. The County selected a contract planning consultant (Tetra Tech Inc. – Parsippany, NJ) to guide the County and participating jurisdictions through the HMP update process. A contract between Tetra Tech Inc. (Tetra Tech) and the County was executed in February 2021. Specifically, Tetra Tech, the “contract consultant”, was tasked with:

- Assisting with the organization of a Steering Committee and Planning Committee.
- Assisting with the development and implementation of a public and stakeholder outreach program.
- Data collection.
- Facilitation and attendance at meetings (Steering Committee, Planning Committee, 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 progress of past mitigation strategies.
- 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 HMP documents.

In February 2021, Mercer County OEM notified all municipalities within the County of the pending planning process and invited them to formally participate. Municipalities were provided with a copy of the Planning Partner Expectations and asked to formally notify the County of their intent to participate [via a Letter of Intent to Participate (LOIP)] and to identify a primary and secondary planning point of contact to serve on a Planning Committee and represent the interests of their respective community. In addition, each municipal Floodplain Administrator (FPA) was identified in the LOIP and requested to actively participate in the planning process.



Section 9 (Jurisdictional Annexes) and Appendix B (Participation Documentation) detail contributions provided by the FPA. All jurisdictions returned their LOIP; refer to Appendix B for copies of the returned letters.

To facilitate HMP development, with support from their contract planning consultant, Mercer County developed a Steering Committee to provide guidance and direction to the planning effort, and to ensure the resulting document will be embraced both politically and by the constituency within the planning area. All municipalities participating in the plan update authorized the Steering Committee to perform certain activities on their behalf, via the LOIP. Specifically, the Steering Committee was charged with:

Steering Committee (SC) is comprised of County and municipal representatives and stakeholders that guide and lead the HMP update process on behalf of the Planning Partnership.

Planning Committee (PC) is comprised of representatives from each participating jurisdiction (County and municipal).

Planning Partnership = SC + PC

- Providing guidance and overseeing the planning process on behalf of the general planning partnership.
- Attending and participating in Steering Committee meetings.
- Establish a timeline for completion of the plan;
- 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,
 - Assuring that the data and information used in the plan update process is the best available
 - Reviewing and updating the hazard mitigation goals and objectives,
 - Identification and screening of appropriate mitigation strategies and activities; and
 - Reviewing and commenting on plan documents prior to submission to NJOEM and FEMA.
 - Ensure that the plan meets the requirements of DMA 2000 and FEMA and NJOEM guidance.

The organizational structure was successfully implemented for the 2021 HMP updated consistent with the development of the initial 2016 planning process. The Steering Committee provided guidance and leadership, oversight of the planning process, and acted as the point of contact for all participating jurisdictions and the various interest groups in the planning area. In summary, the Steering Committee was expanded to include additional County Departments (Housing and Community Development, Office of Economic Development), a municipal representative (Princeton), a major employer in the County (Capital Health System), as well as a representative from the Mercer County Community College, Mercer County Superintendent of Schools, and the Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Mercer County.

Table 2-2. Steering and Planning Committee Members

Jurisdiction	Name	Title	Steering Committee	Planning Committee		
				Primary POC	Secondary POC	NFIP FPA
Mercer County HMP Steering Committee	Robert Hartman	County OEM Coordinator	X	X		
	Rana Terzian	Deputy OEM Coordinator	X		X	
	Leslie Floyd	Planning Director, Mercer County Planning Department	X			
	Basit (Sunny) Muzaffar	County Engineer, Mercer County Engineering Department	X			
	Gene Pucci	Highways Supervisor, Mercer County Highway Division	X			



Table 2-2. Steering and Planning Committee Members

Jurisdiction	Name	Title	Steering Committee	Planning Committee		
				Primary POC	Secondary POC	NFIP FPA
	Matthew Lawson	Principal Planner Transportation, Mercer County Planning Department	X			
	Julie Wilmot	Public Information Officer, Mercer County Office of Communications	X			
	Aaron Watson	Deputy County Administrator, Mercer County Transportation and Infrastructure Department	X			
	Karl Thomas	Supervisor, Mercer County Central Services Division	X			
	Nancy Coffee	County Administrator, Mercer County Administration	X			
	Ankit Gandhi	Chief, Mercer County Information Technology	X			
	Terry West	Community Development Specialist, Mercer County Community Affairs	X			
	Marygrace Billek	Human Services Director, Mercer County Division of Public Health	X			
	Robert Doherty	Superintendent of Operations, Mercer County Park Commission	X			
	Edward Pattik	Director, Mercer County Housing and Community Development/County Mass Care Committee	X			
	Anthony P. Carabelli Jr.	Director, Mercer County Office of Economic Development	X			
	Dr. Jianping Wang	President, Mercer County Community College	X			
	Chad Ripberger	Department Head, Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Mercer County	X			
	Gina Mumolie	Senior VP Hospital Administration, Capital Health System	X			
	Jim Boozan	Director EMS & Emergency Management, Capital Health System	X			
	Yasmin Hernandez	Mercer County Superintendent of Schools	X			
	Helen Haniffy	Superintendent of Schools Secretary, Mercer County Superintendent of Schools	X			
	Mark Freda	Mayor, Princeton	X			
Planning Committee						
	Robert Hartman	County OEM Coordinator	X	X		



Table 2-2. Steering and Planning Committee Members

Jurisdiction	Name	Title	Steering Committee	Planning Committee		
				Primary POC	Secondary POC	NFIP FPA
Mercer County	Rana Terzian	Deputy OEM Coordinator	X		X	
Township of East Windsor Township	James Brady	Manager for East Windsor Township		X		
	James Geary	Chief of Police			X	
	Maxwell Peters	Engineer				X
Township of Ewing	James P. McManimon	Business Administrator		X		
	Mike Meenan	Director of Public Works			X	
	Michael Narducci	Deputy Office of Emergency Management Coordinator				X
Township of Hamilton	Lt. Jeffrey Martin	OEM Coordinator		X		
	Deputy Chief Chris Tozzi	Deputy Chief, Fire Division			X	
	Richard Williams	CRS Coordinator/Municipal Engineer				X
Borough of Hightstown	Debra L. Sopronyi	Administrator/Clerk; Dimitri Musing, Administrator		X		
	Margaret Riggio	Deputy Clerk			X	
	George Chin	Construction/Zoning Official				X
Borough of Hopewell	Michele Hovan	Borough Administrator		X		
	Denis Pollack	Engineer's Office			X	
	Jeff Iorio	Zoning Officer				X
Township of Hopewell	Will Mullen	Public Safety Tech		X		
	Matthew Martin	Chief/Fire Safety			X	
	George Snyder	Acting Township Administrator/Director of Public Works				X
Township of Lawrence	Jack Oakley	Director of Emergency Services/Emergency Management		X		
	Brenda Kraemer, P.E.	Assistant Municipal Engineer, Engineering Department			X	
	James F. Parvesse, P.E.	Municipal Engineer, Engineering Department				X
Borough of Pennington	Eileen M. Heinzl, Borough Administrator	Eileen M. Heinzl, Borough Administrator		X		X
	Douglas Pinelli, Chief of Police	Douglas Pinelli, Chief of Police			X	
Princeton	Michael Yeh	Director of Emergency Services		X		
	Joe Novak	Deputy OEM Coordinator/Fire Marshal			X	
	James Purcell	Land Use Engineer				X



Table 2-2. Steering and Planning Committee Members

Jurisdiction	Name	Title	Steering Committee	Planning Committee		
				Primary POC	Secondary POC	NFIP FPA
Township of Robbinsville	Lt. Michael Polaski	Police Lieutenant/OEM Coordinator		X		
	Sgt. Thomas Egan	Sergeant/Deputy OEM			X	
	Roger Fort	Roger Fort, Construction Official				X
City of Trenton	Wahab Onitiri	Director of Public Works		X		
	Hogarth Stephen, Principal Engineer	Principal Engineer			X	
	Benjamin Delisle	Director of Housing/Economics				X
Township of West Windsor	Timothy Lynch	Emergency Management Coordinator		X		
	Robert Garofalo	Police Chief			X	
	Francis Guzik	Township Engineer				X

Notes: POC = Point of Contact; NFIP FPA=National Flood Insurance Program Floodplain Administrator

Each municipality received a copy of the “Planning Partner Expectations” which outlined the responsibilities of the participants and the agreement of the partners to authorize the Steering Committee to represent the jurisdiction in the completion of certain planning elements. Please note that while Steering Committee members are also part of the overall project Planning Partnership fulfilling these responsibilities on behalf of Mercer County. The Planning Partnership was collectively charged with the following:

- Identify municipal representatives to serve as the planning points of contact.
- Support the Steering Committee selected to oversee the development of the plan.
- Provide representation at municipal planning committee meetings.
- Provide data and information about their community as requested to update their jurisdictional annex.
- Support public outreach efforts in their community.
- Assist with the identification of stakeholders within their community that should be informed and potentially involved with the planning process.
- Review draft sections when requested and provide common and input as appropriate.
- Prepare and submit a jurisdictional annex to the Steering Committee/contract consultant.
- Identify specific mitigation actions to address each of the natural hazards posing high or medium risk to their community.
- Involve the local NFIP floodplain administrator in the planning process.
- Adopt the HMP by resolution of the governing body after FEMA conditional approval.
- Provide the Steering Committee with summary or municipal staff and volunteer labor spent on the planning process on a quarterly basis.

The jurisdictional LOIP identifies the above “Planning Partner Expectations” as serving to identify those activities comprising overall participation by jurisdictions throughout the planning process. The jurisdictions in Mercer County have differing levels of capabilities and resources available to apply to the plan update process, and further have differing exposure and vulnerability to the hazard risks being considered in this plan. Mercer County’s intent was to encourage participation by all-inclusive jurisdictions, and to accommodate their specific needs and limitations while still meeting the intents and purpose of plan participation. Such accommodations have included the establishment of a Steering Committee and engaging a contract consultant to assume certain



elements of the planning process on behalf of the jurisdictions, and to provide additional and alternative mechanisms to meet the purposes and intent of mitigation planning.

Ultimately, jurisdictional participation is evidenced by a completed annex (chapter) of the HMP (Section 9) wherein the jurisdictions have identified their planning points of contact, evaluated their risk to the hazards of concern, identified their capabilities to effect mitigation in their community, and identified and prioritized an appropriate suite of mitigation initiatives, actions, and projects to mitigate their natural hazard risk; and eventually by the adoption of the updated plan via resolution.

Appendix B (Participation Documentation) identifies those individuals who represented their jurisdictions during this planning effort and indicates how they contributed to the planning process. This matrix is intended to give a broad overview of who attended meetings and when input was provided. All participants were encouraged to attend the Kick-off Meeting, Risk Assessment and Mitigation Action Workshop. During the planning process the planning consultant contacted each participant to offer support, explain the process, meet individually to collect updated information and to facilitate the submittal and review of critical documents.

All municipalities actively participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and have designated NFIP Floodplain Administrators (FPA). The FPAs were informed of the planning process, were provided the opportunity to review the plan including the jurisdictional annex and provide direct input to the plan update. Local FPAs are identified in the Points of Contact and Administrative and Technical portions of the jurisdictional annexes in Section 9 (Jurisdictional Annexes).

2.2.2 PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Members of the Planning Partnership (individually and as a whole), as well as key stakeholders, convened and/or communicated regularly to share information and participate in workshops to identify hazards; assess risks; review existing inventories of and identify new critical facilities; assist in updating and developing new mitigation goals and strategies; and provide continuity through the process to ensure that natural hazards vulnerability information and appropriate mitigation strategies were incorporated. All members of the Steering Committee and Planning Partnership had the opportunity to review the draft plan and supported interaction with other stakeholders and assisted with public involvement efforts.

A summary of committee meetings (Steering Committee and Planning Partnership) held and key milestones met during the development of the HMP update is included in Table 2-3 that also identifies which DMA 2000 requirements the activities satisfy. Documentation of meetings (e.g., agendas, sign-in sheets, meeting notes) are in Appendix C (Meeting Documentation). Table 2-3 identifies only the formal meetings held during plan development but does not reflect all planning activities conducted by individuals and groups throughout the planning process. In addition to these meetings, each jurisdiction had individual meetings (via teleconference) to work on their jurisdictional annexes (Section 9). Further, there was a great deal of communication between the County, committee members, and the contract consultant through individual local virtual meetings, electronic mail (email), and by phone.

After completion of the HMP update, implementation and ongoing maintenance will become a function of the Planning Partnership as described in Section 7 (Plan Maintenance). The Planning Partnership is responsible for reviewing the HMP and soliciting and considering public comment as part of the five-year mitigation plan update.



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

Date	DMA 2000 Requirement	Description of Activity	Participants
March 1, 2021	N/A	Pre-Kick Off Meeting with County	Mercer County OEM and Tetra Tech
March 25, 2021	1b, 2, 3a, 4a	<u>Steering Committee Meeting #1</u> : Review of mitigation and the 2016 HMP; Review of Steering Committee guidelines; Project schedule and data request; Hazards of concern review and updated; Stakeholders identified; Outreach was discussed (social media, website, brochures); Review of goals and objectives.	See Appendix C
March 31, 2021	2	Mercer County updated its dedicated webpage for mitigation including announcing the first public kickoff meeting, and links to the citizen and stakeholder surveys.	See Appendix D
April 6, 2021	1b, 2, 3a-c, 3e, 4a, 4b	<u>Planning Partnership Kickoff Meeting – open to the public</u> : Importance of mitigation and HMP; Participation Requirements; Review of Steering Committee decisions on March 25 for hazards of concern.	See Appendix C
April 13, 2021	2, 3, 4, 5	<u>Annex Training</u> : Reviewed various worksheets and requested information and data that each jurisdiction was responsible for completing and returning to support jurisdictional annex development.	See Appendix C
May 11, 2021	2	Mercer County posted the citizen survey to social media (Facebook and Twitter). Municipalities were asked to repost/share/like the posts.	See Appendix D
May 19, 2021	1b, 2, 3a, 4a	<u>Steering Committee #2</u> : Project status update; Hazard ranking methodology; County hazard ranking; Strengths, Weaknesses, Obstacles and Opportunities (SWOO) exercise.	See Appendix C
May 24, 2021	1b, 2	Mercer County distributed stakeholder surveys to collect vulnerabilities, capabilities and mitigation actions from academia, emergency services, transportation sector, utilities, hospital and health care, business/commerce and social services. Stakeholders were also reminded of the upcoming risk assessment meeting.	See Section 2.3 (Stakeholder Outreach and Involvement) and Appendix D
May 26, 2021	1b, 2, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 3e	<u>Planning Partnership Risk Assessment Meeting – open to the public</u> : Presentation of draft risk assessment results, hazard ranking exercise, SWOO exercise for high-ranked hazards, introduction to development of problem statements.	See Appendix C
June 10, 2021	1b, 2, 3, 4	<u>Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission Meeting</u> : A meeting was held with a representative for the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission to discuss capabilities, past planning initiatives, and recommended mitigation actions.	See Appendix C
June 16, 2021	1b, 2, 4a, 4b, 4c	<u>Planning Partnership Mitigation Strategy Workshop – open to the public</u> Review of FEMA and State mitigation strategy requirements; Problem statement development; Mitigation resources distributed including mitigation catalog and critical facility/lifeline risk assessment results; Review of Mitigation Action Worksheets.	See Appendix C
June-August, 2021	2, 3, 4	Individual annex support meetings via in-person or virtual (teleconference)	See Appendix C



Date	DMA 2000 Requirement	Description of Activity	Participants
August 10, 2021	2, 3, 4	Steering Committee reviewed the draft HMP and considered stakeholder comments received to date	Steering Committee; see Appendix C
TBD	2, 3, 4, 5	Steering Committee meeting to review and discuss comments on the draft HMP prior to public review.	Steering Committee; see Appendix C
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. Letters to neighboring Counties and stakeholders, were distributed.	Public and Stakeholders
TBD	4b, 4c, 5b	Meeting with County OEM; no public and stakeholder comments were received. Initiate collection of signature pages from participants.	Mercer County OEM and Tetra Tech
TBD	2	HMP submitted to NJOEM	NJOEM
TBD	2	HMP submitted to FEMA Region II	FEMA Region II
TBD	1a	Plan adoption by resolution by the governing bodies of all participating municipalities	All plan participants

Note: Each number in column 2 identifies specific DMA 2000 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

2.3 STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH AND INVOLVEMENT

Stakeholders are the individuals, agencies, and jurisdictions that have a vested interest in the recommendations of the HMP, including all planning partners. Diligent efforts were made to assure broad regional, county and local representation in this planning process. To that end, a comprehensive list of stakeholders was developed with the support of the Planning Partnership. Stakeholder outreach was performed early on, and continually throughout the planning process. This HMP update includes information and input provided by these stakeholders where appropriate, as identified in the references.

This subsection discusses the various stakeholders that were invited to participate in the development of this HMP update, and how these stakeholders participated and contributed. This summary listing cannot possibly represent the total of stakeholders that were aware of and/or contributed to this HMP update, as outreach efforts were being made, both formally and informally, throughout the process by the many planning partners involved in the effort, and documentation of all such efforts is impossible. Instead, this summary is intended to demonstrate the scope and breadth of the stakeholder outreach efforts made during the plan update process:

- All Planning Partnership meetings were open to the public and advertised via the Mercer County’s website and social media platforms.
- Municipalities distributed the citizen and stakeholder surveys and link to the County HMP webpage, where feasible.



- Distributed a stakeholder survey via social media, Mercer County’s mitigation webpage and through the StoryMap to provide input regarding vulnerabilities, capabilities and mitigation projects.
- Posted draft plan on the Mercer County OEM website and advertised using social media and on the StoryMap.
- Distributed letters to regional stakeholders and neighboring counties to participate in meetings, contribute to the development of the HMP, and review the draft HMP.

Federal Agencies

Please see Appendix B (Participation Documentation) for further details regarding federal agency participation. All responses to the stakeholder surveys may be found in Appendix D (Public and Stakeholder Outreach).

FEMA Region II: Provided updated planning guidance; provided summary and detailed NFIP data for planning area; attended the April 2021 Kickoff Meeting and June 2021 Mitigation Strategy Workshop; conducted plan review.

Information regarding hazard identification and the risk assessment for this plan update were requested and received or incorporated by reference from the following agencies and organizations:

- National Climatic Data Center (NCDC)
- National Hurricane Center (NHC)
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- National Weather Service (NWS)
- Storm Prediction Center (SPC)
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- U.S. Census Bureau
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)
- U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)

State Agencies

New Jersey State Police Office of Emergency Management (NJOEM): Administered the planning grant; provided updated planning guidance; attended the April 2021 Kickoff Meeting and June 2021 Mitigation Strategy Workshop; worked with local jurisdictions in developing their updated mitigation strategy; consulted with individual municipalities interested in applying for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance grants; and provided review of the draft HMP update.

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP): The NJDEP was requested information regarding dams in Mercer County; provided the Community Assistance Visit dates and associated NFIP information for all jurisdictions. In addition, the Bureau of Dam Safety, State Park Service, and Bureau of Flood Engineering were asked to take the stakeholder survey and were invited to the April 2021 Kickoff Meeting and May 2021 Risk Assessment Meeting.

New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT): The NJDOT Office of Emergency Management was asked to take the stakeholder survey and was invited to the April 2021 Kickoff Meeting and May 2021 Risk Assessment Meeting.



New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (NJCA): The NJCA was asked to take the stakeholder survey and was invited to the April 2021 Kickoff Meeting and May 2021 Risk Assessment Meeting.

New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH): The NJDOH was asked to take the stakeholder survey and was invited to the April 2021 Kickoff Meeting and May 2021 Risk Assessment Meeting.

Please see Appendix B (Participation Documentation) for further details regarding state agency participation. All responses to the surveys may be found in Appendix D (Public and Stakeholder Outreach).

County and Regional Agencies and Commissions and Non-Profits

County

Several County departments were represented on the Steering Committee, and additional departments and divisions actively involved in the HMP update planning process; refer to Table 2-2 and Appendices C and D. As previously noted, Steering Committee members were invited to all meetings, were provided updates via email communication and invited to review the draft HMP. In addition, the following County employees were emailed an announcement regarding the HMP commencement and invited to participate in the citizen survey; refer to Appendix D (Public and Stakeholder Participation).

- Mercer County Office of Emergency Management (member of Steering Committee)
- Mercer County Planning Department (member of Steering Committee)
- Mercer County Engineering Department (member of Steering Committee)
- Mercer County Highway Division (member of Steering Committee)
- Mercer County Planning Department (member of Steering Committee)
- Mercer County Office of Communications (member of Steering Committee)
- Mercer County Transportation and Infrastructure Department (member of Steering Committee)
- Mercer County Central Services Division (member of Steering Committee)
- Mercer County Administration (member of Steering Committee)
- Mercer County Information Technology (member of Steering Committee)
- Mercer County Community Affairs (member of Steering Committee)
- Mercer County Division of Public Health (member of Steering Committee)
- Mercer County Park Commission (member of Steering Committee)
- Mercer County Housing and Community Development/County Mass Care Committee (member of Steering Committee)
- Mercer County Office of Economic Development (member of Steering Committee)
- Mercer County Transportation Resources to Aid the Disadvantaged and Elderly

Regional and Local Stakeholders

All Planning Partnership meetings were announced on the Mercer County HMP project website and posted on social media to invite residents and stakeholders including the following sectors as outlined below. In addition, the County and municipal representatives emailed regional and local stakeholders requesting their participation in stakeholder sector-specific surveys to provide input on vulnerable assets, capabilities, and current/potential future mitigation projects; and invited to provide input on the draft HMP. Refer to Appendix C (Participation Documentation) for further details regarding regional and local stakeholder agency attendance at meetings and Appendix D (Public and Stakeholder Outreach) for additional details on the public and stakeholder outreach, including responses received to the surveys.



Emergency Services

Numerous Municipal OEM Coordinators participated as points of contact for municipalities and contributed to the plan. Emergency services stakeholders were contacted directly by Mercer County and participating municipalities to take a stakeholder survey which included questions regarding capabilities, vulnerabilities and mitigation projects/actions. Overall, four emergency services responses were received on this survey as summarized in Appendix D. The surveys were distributed to the following:

- Municipal OEM Coordinators
- All EMS agencies in Mercer County
- All fire companies in Mercer County
- Mercer County CERT Coordinators and CERT County Team

Health and Social Services

The following stakeholders were contacted directly and invited to the April 2021 Kickoff Meeting and May 2021 Risk Assessment Meeting. In addition, they were emailed directly and invited to take a stakeholder survey which included questions regarding mitigation capabilities, vulnerabilities and mitigation projects/actions. In addition, municipalities were asked to distribute these custom surveys to establishments in their jurisdictions.

- Capital Health System (member of Steering Committee)
- Robert Wood Johnson University Medical Hospital
- Henry J Austin Health Center
- American Red Cross
- Hamilton Hospital - attended the May 2021 Risk Assessment Meeting.

Utilities

The following stakeholders were contacted directly and invited to the April 2021 Kickoff Meeting and May 2021 Risk Assessment Meeting. In addition, they were emailed directly and invited to take a stakeholder survey which included questions regarding mitigation capabilities, vulnerabilities and mitigation projects/actions. One survey response was received as of July 28, 2021.

- Jersey Central Power & Light (JCP&L) – submitted responses to the stakeholder survey and attended the April 2021 Kickoff Meeting and May 2021 Risk Assessment Meeting.
- Aqua New Jersey Inc
- First Energy Corp.
- Jersey Central Power and Light
- Jersey Water Works
- New Jersey American Water
- PSE&G
- Public Service Enterprise Group
- Trenton Water and Sewer
- Verizon NJ

Business Commerce

The Mercer County Housing and Community Development and the Mercer County Office of Economic Development were invited to the April 2021 Kickoff meeting and May 2021 Risk Assessment meeting. In addition, they were contacted via email to participate in the stakeholder survey which included questions regarding mitigation capabilities, vulnerabilities and mitigation projects/actions. In addition, municipal representatives were asked to distribute this survey to their local chambers of commerce and large employers.



In addition, the following business and civic associations were sent our stakeholder survey via email, and invited to the May 2021 Risk Assessment meeting and June 2021 Mitigation Strategy Workshop. No survey responses were received as of July 28, 2021.

- Mercer County Office of Economic Development (member of Steering Committee)
- Mercer County Executive County Business Official – Attended the May 2021 Risk Assessment Meeting and June 2021 Mitigation Strategy Workshop
- African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey
- Latino Merchants Association of New Jersey
- Devin Group Inc.
- Withum
- Emeritus
- Garcia Realtors
- First Baptist Church
- Kersey Connect
- Investor’s Bank
- Noble Strategy
- Thomas Associates
- SBSI Consulting Solutions
- Bausch Health
- American Conference on Diversity

Transportation

Representatives at the following transportation and public works agencies were emailed directly and invited to the April 2021 Kickoff Meeting and May 2021 Risk Assessment Meeting. In addition, these stakeholders were invited to participate in the stakeholder survey which included questions regarding mitigation capabilities, vulnerabilities and mitigation projects/actions. In addition, municipalities were asked to distribute this survey to their local public works departments. One response from a public works department was received as of July 28, 2021.

- Mercer County Transportation and Infrastructure Department (member of Steering Committee)
- Mercer County Highway Division (member of Steering Committee)
- Mercer County Transportation Resources to Aid the Disadvantaged and Elderly
- New Jersey Transit
- New Jersey Railroad Association, Keller Engineers

Academia

The following academic institutions were invited to the April 2021 Kickoff Meeting and May 2021 Risk Assessment Meeting. In addition, they were asked via email to take a stakeholder survey which included questions regarding mitigation capabilities, vulnerabilities, and mitigation projects/actions. In addition, all municipalities were asked to distribute this survey to their local school districts. Four responses were received as of July 28, 2021.

- Mercer County Special Services School District - submitted responses to the stakeholder survey.
- Mercer County Vocational Technical School - submitted responses to the stakeholder survey.
- Mercer County Superintendent of Schools (member of Steering Committee)
- Hamilton Township School District - submitted responses to the stakeholder survey, attended the May 2021 Risk Assessment Meeting, met with the contract consultant to discuss mitigation actions and included actions in the Hamilton Township jurisdictional annex.



- Princeton University - submitted responses to the stakeholder survey and attended the June 2021 Mitigation Strategy Workshop.
- Rutgers University
 - Office of the State Climatologist – provided information regarding funding sources that support this office and identified areas of need.
 - School of Planning and Public Policy
 - Rutgers Cooperative Extension
- Mercer County Community College (member of the Steering Committee)

Environmental Agencies

The following regional agencies and neighboring counties were invited to attend the April 2021 Kickoff Meeting and May 2021 Risk Assessment Meeting. In addition, they were invited via email to take a stakeholder survey which included questions regarding mitigation capabilities, vulnerabilities and mitigation projects/actions. Three responses were received as of July 28, 2021.

- Alliance for Watershed Education of the Delaware River
- Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic Recreational River
- Mercer County Mosquito Control
- The Trust for Public Land

Regional Agencies and Neighboring Counties

The following regional agencies and neighboring counties were invited to attend the April 2021 Kickoff Meeting and May 2021 Risk Assessment Meeting. In addition, they were invited via email to take a stakeholder survey which included questions regarding mitigation capabilities, vulnerabilities and mitigation projects/actions. In addition, Mercer County sent letters to each of the neighboring County OEM departments as well as the County Administrators. Additional participation is noted below:

- Sustainable Jersey
- New Jersey Future – attended the April 2021 Kickoff Meeting
- Hunterdon County, New Jersey
- Somerset County, New Jersey – Somerset County OEM attended the May 2021 Risk Assessment Meeting.
- Middlesex County, New Jersey – Middlesex County OEM attended the June 2021 Mitigation Strategy .Workshop
- Monmouth County, New Jersey
- Burlington County, New Jersey
- Bucks County, Pennsylvania
- Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (see below)

On June 10, 2020, a representative for the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) met with Tetra Tech staff to discuss the Commission’s capabilities, prior planning efforts partnered with local municipalities, and potential projects to include in the County’s mitigation strategy. The Commission has provided various assistance to municipalities in the past including Natural Resource Inventories, sidewalk inventories, trail mapping, and Community Forestry Management Plans. The Commission has developed guidance for the Municipal Management of Extreme Heat, completed an assessment of planning tools for climate change resiliency in the Delaware Valley,

The Commission has developed the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which is a regionally agreed-upon list of priority transportation projects. The TIP lists all projects that intend to use federal funds, along with



all non-federally funded projects that are regionally significant and State funded capital projects relating to transportation improvements of rail, highway, public transportation, and pedestrian pathways.

2.4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

In order to facilitate better coordination and communication between the Planning Partnership and citizens and to involve the public in the planning process, it was determined that meeting dates/locations will be made available to the public via the Mercer County OEM website dedicated to the HMP update and social media; and the draft HMP available on the Mercer County website. The participating partners also feel that community input on the HMP will increase the likelihood of hazard mitigation becoming one of the standard considerations in the evolution and growth of the County.

The Planning Partnership has made the following efforts toward public participation in the development and review of the HMP:

- The Mercer County OEM maintained a dedicated website for this project. The website was continuously updated throughout the planning process. The public website contains a project overview, meeting announcements, a link to the interactive StoryMap, draft documents for review and comment, and a link to the citizens and stakeholder surveys; refer to Figure 2-1 for a screenshot of the public website.



Figure 2-1. Screenshot of the Website for the 2021 HMP Update



- All hazard mitigation Planning Partnership meetings were open to the public and advertised on the Mercer County HMP website and through social media (Facebook and Twitter). The citizen survey was available through the website, social media and StoryMap as well; refer to Figure 2-2 for an example post. Additional examples of County and municipal outreach are presented in Appendix D.
- An on-line natural hazards preparedness citizen survey was developed to gauge household preparedness that may impact the County and to assess the level of knowledge of tools and techniques to assist in reducing risk and loss of those hazards. The questionnaire asked quantifiable questions about citizen perception of risk, knowledge of mitigation, and support of community programs. The questionnaire also asked several demographic questions to help analyze trends. The questionnaire has been available on the public website since May 2021, and further advertised on additional County and municipal websites. In addition, residents were notified of its availability via social media (Facebook and Twitter) with a direct link from the StoryMap. Responses were collected and shared with the Planning Partnership at the May 2021 and June 2021 meetings to inform problem statement development and mitigation action development. As of July 27, 2021, 45 residents responded to the survey. Appendix D summarizes public input received through the website, the online survey, and other sources.
- In June 2021, a StoryMap was released on the County’s mitigation webpage and through social media (Facebook and Twitter) to provide additional information regarding the Mercer County HMP update and serve as another source of risk communication to residents. The Story Map summarizes the planning process, provides links to the citizen and stakeholder surveys and had individual pages for each hazard of concern. The pages for each hazard of concern provide a brief overview of each hazard and hyperlinks to additional resources, when available. For the spatial hazards, residents can dynamically pan a map to view the hazard area relevant to areas in the County.



Figure 2-2. Example Social Media Post to Advertise the Resident Survey



- Mercer County residents were provided an opportunity to comment on the draft HMP before submittal to NJOEM and FEMA. The HMP was posted on the HMP public website on TBD for review. All jurisdictions were requested to assist with advertising the plan was posted via their websites and social media as shared in Appendix D. The public comment period was opened through TBD. Placeholder for public comments received.

Additional examples of public outreach efforts by the Planning Partnership, and results of surveys distributed, are presented in Appendix D (Public and Stakeholder Outreach Documentation).

2.5 INCORPORATION OF EXISTING PLANS, STUDIES, REPORTS AND TECHNICAL INFORMATION

The Mercer County HMP strives to use the best available technical information, plans, studies and reports throughout the plan process to support hazard profiling; risk and vulnerability assessment; review and evaluation of mitigation capabilities; and the identification, development and prioritization of county and local mitigation strategies.

The asset and inventory data used for the risk and vulnerability assessments is presented in the County Profile (Section 3). Details of the source of this data, along with technical information on how the data was used to develop the risk and vulnerability assessment, is presented in the Risk Assessment, specifically in Section 4.2 Methodology and Tools, as well as throughout the hazard profiles in Section 4.3 (Hazard Profiles). Further, the source of technical data and information used may be found within the References section.

Plans, reports, and other technical information were identified and provided directly by the County, participating jurisdictions, and numerous stakeholders involved in the planning effort, as well as through independent research by the planning consultant. The County and participating jurisdictions were tasked with updating the inventory of their Planning and Regulatory capabilities in Section 9 (Jurisdictional Annexes) and providing relevant planning and regulatory documents, as applicable. Relevant documents, including plans, reports, and ordinances were reviewed to identify the following:

- Existing County and municipal capabilities.
- Needs and opportunities to develop or enhance capabilities, which may be identified within the County or local mitigation strategies.
- Mitigation-related goals or objectives considered in the review and update of the overall Goals and Objectives in Section 6 (Mitigation Strategy).
- Proposed, in-progress, or potential mitigation projects, actions, and initiatives to be incorporated into the updated County and local mitigation strategies.

The following local regulations, codes, ordinances, and plans were reviewed during this process to develop mitigation planning goals, objectives, and strategies that are consistent across local and regional planning and regulatory mechanisms to accomplish complementary and mutually supportive strategies:

- Master Plans
- Building Codes
- Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances
- NFIP Flood Damage Prevention Ordinances
- Site Plan Requirements
- Stormwater Management Plans
- Emergency Management and Response Plans
- Land Use and Open Space Plans



- Capital Plans
- New Jersey State Hazard Mitigation Plan (2019)

NFIP Flood Damage Prevention Ordinances were reviewed to determine if the ordinance included the state-mandated 1-foot freeboard requirement as discussed further in Section 9 (Jurisdictional Annexes). In April 2021, NJDEP released guidance on the use of the Model Code Coordinated Ordinance. Municipalities will update their ordinances accordingly as per State requirements and coordinate with the State on the implementation of this integration action.

2.6 INTEGRATION WITH EXISTING PLANNING MECHANISMS AND PROGRAMS

Effective mitigation is achieved when hazard awareness and risk management approaches and strategies become an integral part of public activities and decision-making. Within the County there are many existing plans and programs that support hazard risk management, and thus it is critical that this hazard mitigation plan integrate and coordinate with, and complement, those mechanisms.

Section 5 (Capability Assessment) 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 within the County. Within each jurisdictional annex in Section 9, the County and each participating jurisdiction identified how they integrated hazard risk management into their existing planning, regulatory, and operational/administrative framework (*integration capabilities*) and how they intend to promote this integration (*integration actions*).

A further summary of these continued efforts to develop and promote a comprehensive and holistic approach to hazard risk management and mitigation is presented in Section 7 (Plan Maintenance).

2.7 CONTINUED PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Mercer County and participating jurisdictions are committed to the continued involvement of the public in the hazard mitigation process. This HMP update will be made available for review on the HMP public website. Each jurisdiction's elected official shall be responsible for receiving, tracking, and filing public comments regarding this HMP update.

A notice regarding annual updates of the plan and the location of plan copies will be publicized annually after the annual plan evaluation meeting (refer to Section 7 – Plan Maintenance) and posted on the public website at <https://www.mercercounty.org/departments/emergency-management-public-safety/mercer-county-hazard-mitigation-plan>

The public will be provided an opportunity to comment on the HMP update as a part of the annual mitigation planning evaluation process and the next five-year mitigation plan update. The HMP Coordinator (currently Mercer County OEM Coordinator Robert Hartman) 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. The purpose of these meetings would be to provide the public an opportunity to express concerns, opinions, and ideas about the HMP.

Further details regarding continued public involvement are provided in Section 7 (Plan Maintenance).



After completion of this HMP update, 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 will be publicized annually after the HMP Committee's annual evaluation and posted on the public web site.

Mercer County OEM Coordinator Robert Hartman has been identified as the ongoing County HMP Coordinator (see Section 7), and is responsible for receiving, tracking, and filing public comments regarding this HMP update. Contact information is:

Mailing Address: Mercer County Emergency Management and Public Safety
350 Lawrence Station Road, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648
Contact Name: Robert G. Hartman, OEM Coordinator
Email Address: rhartman@mercercounty.org

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