



Edward J. Bloustein School  
of Planning and Public Policy

LOCAL OFFICE  
LANDSCAPE AND URBAN DESIGN

## Civic Association Resident Advisory Group Meeting - Resilient NJ

### MEETING SUMMARY

**DATE:** August 12, 2021  
**TO:** The Project Team  
**FROM:** CHPlanning  
**SUBJECT:** Resilient NJ - Atlantic County Coastal Communities (ACCR) – Youth Focus Group with the NJ Youth Corp

A meeting was held on August 6, 2021 at 9:00 – 10:30 AM with teens that are enrolled in the NJ Youth Corp to discuss the Resilient NJ Project. The NJ Youth Corps of Atlantic County provides academic instruction, work experience, and personal/career counseling for young adults aged 16-25 that have not completed high school. The meeting was held virtually on Zoom. The attendees for this event were:

- 6 teens/young adults enrolled in the NJ Youth Corp
- 2 Adult staff

Names of participants were not collected to protect the privacy of minors.

The following was discussed at the meeting:

1. Introduction - The moderators introduced themselves, explained what City Planners do and introduced the concept of resilience. We discussed experiences with past disasters, and then discussed how responses to future disasters should be changed and the vision for a safer and more resilient community.
2. Past Experiences - We asked students about their past experiences with disasters. Most students remembered Hurricane Sandy. We did not focus on this in depth or for very long with any one story, so as not to dwell on any traumatic experiences.
  - a. Personal Experiences – Hurricane Sandy
    - i. Staying during Hurricane Sandy because they did not know it would be that bad
    - ii. Flooding came to knee height and the power was out for days
    - iii. Family just moved back into their home, rebuilding took 10 years
  - b. Personal Experiences – Other
    - i. Flooding causes closed roads frequently meaning they cannot walk to the store and waste money on gas to get around the flooding
    - ii. Feels like flooding is getting worse and more frequent
  - c. Emergency Preparedness

- i. The school curriculum doesn't talk about emergency preparedness or climate vulnerabilities specific to the local area. They do have Fire Drills and Active Shooter Drills but they don't have drills for natural hazards.
    - ii. Students mostly said they did not have a plan for emergencies or disasters
  - d. Communication
    - i. How do students hear about emergencies? Texts, flood alerts on their phone, recorded messages (specifically when school is closed), radio, TV
    - ii. We asked what sources of information students trust – they said the library and AC Boys & Girls Club
    - iii. We asked where people would go to get help
      - 1. Students said they would go to Salvation Army, American Red Cross, and the schools
        - a. They specifically mentioned that Rowan University had a shelter in their auditorium
      - 2. Students said they would not go to religious centers (like churches, synagogues, and mosques) or The Mission because there were too many drug addicts there
3. Daily life
- a. Do you and your family have access to a vehicle?
    - i. Most said yes
  - b. Do you use transit?
    - i. Only as a last resort because it takes too long, students preferred to get a ride, take a Lyft/Uber, or walk
  - c. Do you walk in your neighborhood?
    - i. All in Atlantic City/Pleasantville said yes
    - ii. One student living somewhere more suburban said no
  - d. What can you access by walking?
    - i. Stores mostly, school is not in walking distance (located in Pleasantville)
  - e. Do you bike?
    - i. Everyone said no
    - ii. They know how to bike, but do not have one as an adult and are not interested in biking
  - f. Are there parks in your neighborhood? Are they interesting to you?
    - i. Yes, there are parks
    - ii. No, they are mostly for young kids
    - iii. Many do not have swings, which could be used by teens or young adults, only playground equipment for young kids
  - g. Do you know your neighbors? Could you call them for help? (We asked this because tight knit communities do better in emergency)
    - i. All in Pleasantville and AC said no

- ii. One in suburban area said yes
- h. What do you do in the area? What do you want to do?
  - i. Students said there was nothing in the area and they do not want to stay in AC
  - ii. They said they have to go to Mays Landing or Philadelphia to find interesting restaurants and events
  - iii. Without a car, they cannot get anywhere
  - iv. Students wished there were a water park and restaurants that are not so repetitive (they said there were a lot of chains and even local restaurants served the same type of food)
- 4. What should be done in the future? We asked participants to identify what community locations, assets, or programs are important to protect.
  - a. We asked participants to identify what community locations, assets, or programs are important to protect.
    - i. Homes
    - ii. Vehicles – these can be moved during flooding and they are important to people being able to get around
    - iii. Stores – especially grocery store
    - iv. Boys & Girls Club
    - v. Red Cross
    - vi. Cell phone service so people can communicate
- 5. We asked participants what worked in the past and what do we need to do better?
  - a. What has worked well?
    - i. A lot of assistance after the hurricane from FEMA
  - b. What did not work well?
    - i. Do more to prepare people before the hurricane like make sure people have a flood kit with things like flashlight, batteries, tissues, candles, food, water
    - ii. Make sure transportation is available
- 6. Strategies – Student suggestions:
  - a. Create parks for flood protection
  - b. Use the recorded messages like the school to warn people about an emergency
  - c. Have shelters for the homeless, especially during a storm
  - d. Have transportation to get people out where there is a storm, like trains
  - e. Get funds to people more quickly after a storm
- 7. Next Steps
  - a. The planning team shared the ResilientNJ-ACCR website with the interactive map feature.
  - b. The planning team remains available to meet with the NJ Youth Corp again upon invite.



## Planning for the Future

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Presentation to the  
NJ Youth Corp  
August 6, 2021



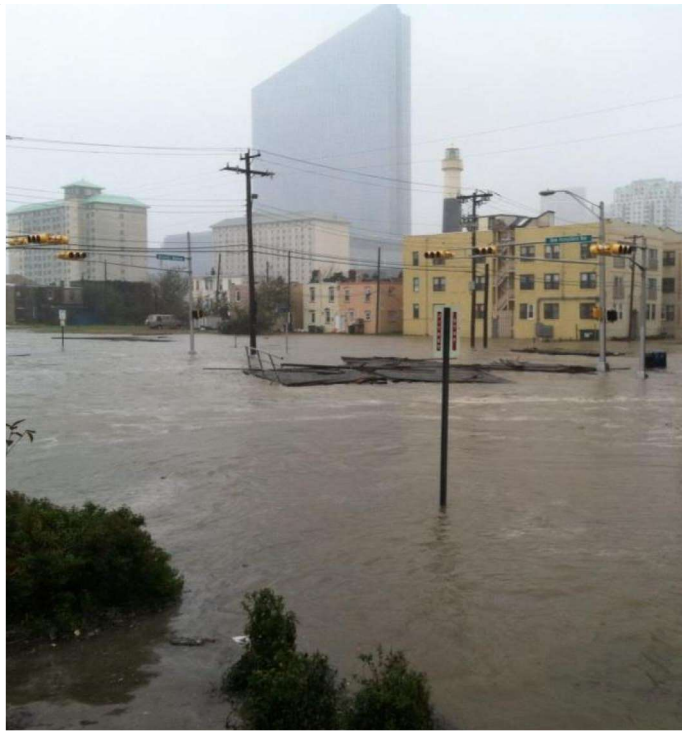
Why are we  
Here?



We want to hear from you!

- What are your perspectives for a more “Resilient” future
- How can we all be more prepared for climate change, extreme weather, and other big disruptions
- What does our region need to be a great place to live

Learn more at our website: [Resilient NJ -Atlantic County Coastal Region \(resilientnj-accr.com\)](https://resilientnj-accr.com)



# What does “Resiliency” mean?

The ability to withstand and recover from difficulties

# How can we reduce the impact of flooding?

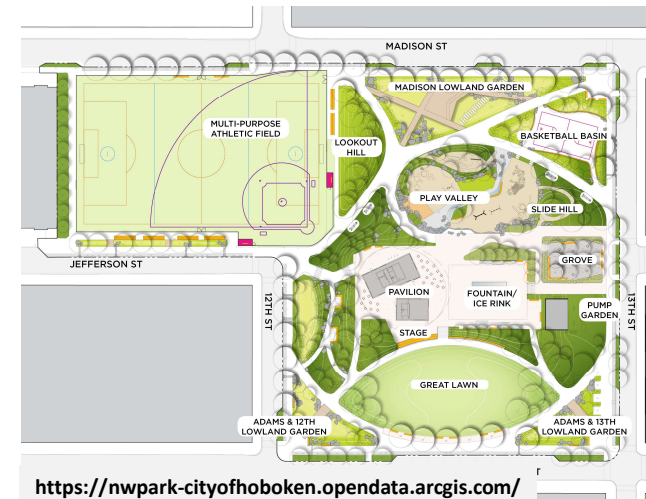
Wetlands



Green infrastructure



Stormwater parks



# How can we reduce the impact of flooding?

Bulkheads/Dunes



Raising Homes





# Who are we talking to?

Communities represented in the Atlantic County Coastal Region:

- Atlantic City
- Brigantine
- Longport
- Margate
- Northfield
- Pleasantville
- Ventnor

# What is the Planning Process?



Understanding the problem



Visioning for the future



Developing strategies to meet our goals



Prioritizing Solutions



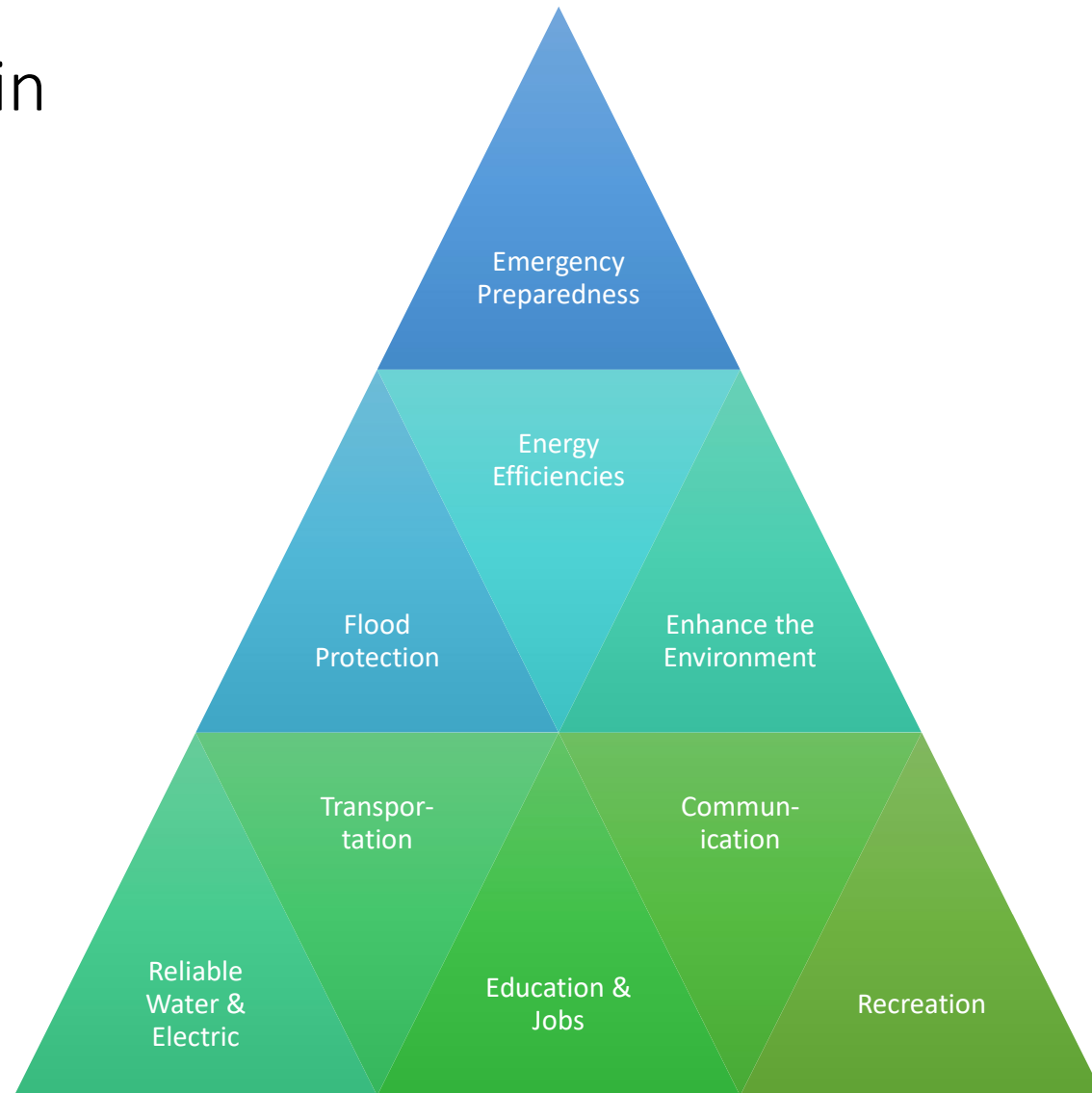
Preparing an Implementation Plan



Funding new projects and programs

What would be in  
this Plan?

Projects and  
Programs for....



What are we  
going to do  
with your  
input and  
what happens  
next?

Summer 2021 – Listening to communities, assessing vulnerabilities and developing goals

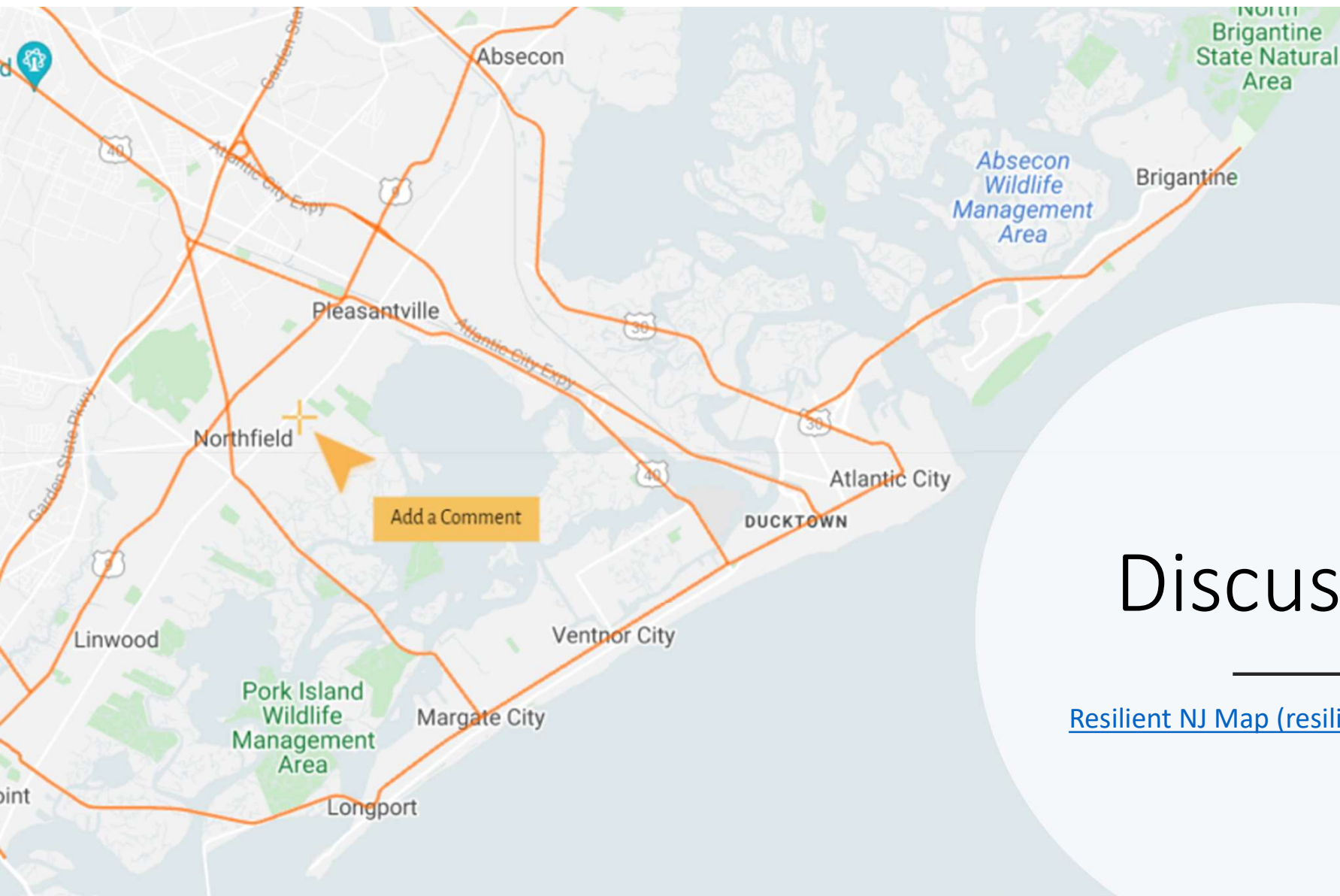
Fall 2021 – Developing ideas to meet our goals

Winter 2021/2022 – Refine and prioritize our recommendations

May 2022 – Final Plan

Summer 2022 – Seek funding and implement priority recommendations

Learn more at our website: [Resilient NJ -Atlantic County Coastal Region \(resilientnj-accr.com\)](https://resilientnj-accr.com)



# Discussion

[Resilient NJ Map \(resilientnj-accr.com\)](https://resilientnj-accr.com)

# Our Questions for YOU:

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- What extreme events have you lived through and what were those experiences like?
  - What stories have you heard about big weather events from others?
- What worked well and what could have been done better?
- What are important things that were damaged and what should be protected in the future?
- How do you hear about big emergencies, and do you find out in time to be prepared?
- What would you need to be better prepared?
  - Do you have a plan in place for the next emergency?
- What needs to be here to make people who live here be able to stay?
  - What do you want to be when you're older?
  - What should the community look like and have?
  - What do you hope stays here in the future?



Thank You