

Resilient NJ



Regional Planning for a Stronger New Jersey

Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan for the Regional Resilience and Adaptation Action Plan (RRAAP)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



**Atlantic County, Atlantic City,
Brigantine, Pleasantville, Northfield,
Ventnor City, Margate City, Longport,
and the American Red Cross**

Submitted by:



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The intent of the community and stakeholder engagement strategy is to influence key decisions of the project, and to develop and enhance collaboration and relationships that will extend long after the completion of the plan as Actions are implemented and in the response to future disasters. Our engagement strategy will focus on answering the critical questions that will guide the Consultant Team towards each milestone in the planning process.

The Consultant Team will involve stakeholders that represent all aspects of the communities and the region, including residents, businesses, environmental advocates, institutions, youth, socially vulnerable populations, technical and community leaders. Our messaging will consistently focus on why this plan is so vital to the region.

The goal for this Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan is to clearly outline the strategy, stakeholders, consistent messaging, the multiple layers of engagement, the identification and strategies for socially vulnerable populations, the key data to be obtained, milestones to be achieved, benchmarks and indicators to monitor the success of the engagement plan, the timing, type, and frequency of each engagement strategy, and the deliverables. The strategy is a layered approach that is consistent throughout the eighteen (18) months of the project. Our stakeholders will be organized as follows:

- ❖ **Steering Committee (SC)**: One (1) decision member from each of the entities that make up the Steering Committee plus a Regional Coordinator will make up the ten (10) member Steering Committee; one member from each of the seven (7) municipalities (Brigantine, Atlantic City, Ventnor, Margate, Longport, Northfield, Pleasantville), one member from the County (Atlantic County), one member from a Community Based Organization (the American Red Cross), and one (1) Regional Coordinator which is an individual that works with all the Steering Committee Members.

Role and Responsibility: To make final decisions about the Plan by considering feedback from all other stakeholders. Will assist with introductions to CAC and Focus Groups.

Frequency of Meetings: Monthly; 18 meetings;

- ❖ **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)**: Consists of leaders that have expertise in these communities on coastal resiliency, disaster response and recovery, economic recovery, transportation, utilities, tourism, coastal engineering, and funding agencies.

Role and Responsibility: Serves as a technical resource to review and provide technical feedback on the planning process and deliverables.

Frequency of Meetings: 2-3 meetings;

- ❖ **Community Advisory Committee (CAC)**: Made up of diverse community representatives from each of the seven municipalities, Atlantic County, and Community Based Organizations that represent socially vulnerable populations. Several nearby coastal communities that were not part of the original application are included on the CAC- Egg Harbor Township, Somers Point, Absecon and Linwood. The CAC members have a local knowledge of the various elements that have affected these communities after natural disasters, such as emergency response, flooding, crime, job loss, road closures, power shortages, loss of business activity, and infrastructure challenges.

Role and Responsibility: To provide local perspective and guidance, potential community challenges to planned scenarios, and advice on how to position actions to align with their

respective funding sources or future plans. The CAC will also advise the Steering Committee on the engagement strategies and project deliverables. It will review the outcomes of the stakeholder surveys and feedback collected at meetings to guide the final recommendation to the Steering Committee for the Actions and Implementation Strategies.

Frequency of Meetings: 3-4 meetings; due to size of the CAC, the Consultant Team may supplement with stakeholder interviews of CAC members organized into smaller groups either by community, or by expertise with a mixture of members from the various communities;

- ❖ **Focus Groups (FG)** Consists of members of the communities of Brigantine, Atlantic City, Ventnor, Margate, Longport, Northfield, Pleasantville, and Atlantic County. Focus groups include Residents, Businesses, Environmental, Youth and Institutions, and Utilities. There will also be focus groups for socially vulnerable populations including low-income people, seniors, people with disabilities, and people with Limited English Proficiency (including immigrants). There are a total of nine (9) Focus Groups.

Role and Responsibility: To provide local perspective and guidance on community assets, needs, vision, potential community challenges to planned scenarios, and the actions that will have the greatest impact on their respective communities.

Frequency of Meetings: The Consultant Team will meet with each of the nine (9) Focus Groups twice, for a total of eighteen (18) Focus Group meetings. The first round of focus groups will take place during the asset mapping and visioning phase of the project which is in the February through May 2021 timeframe. The second round of focus groups will take place later on in the planning process to discuss scenarios and action plans in Winter 2022. In addition to meetings, the Consultant Team will send the Focus Groups invitations to surveys hosted on the website, invitations to add assets to the mapping tool on the website, invitations to Public Meetings, and the Focus Groups will receive newsletters.

In addition to the stakeholder meetings listed above, there will be Public Meetings, and a Project Website that hosts the mapping tool, surveys, opportunities for feedback, copies of newsletters, and access to virtual meetings. Social media blasts will also occur throughout the project and will use existing social media accounts of the Steering Committee since those accounts already have followers. All meetings and engagement will be used to guide the project towards each milestone. An Engagement Matrix is included that aligns every type of engagement with the following milestones:

- Understanding what has been planned and where the gaps are (Planning Context)
- Understanding Community Needs, Risks, and Assets
- Establishing a unified Vision and Goals for the Region
- Reviewing and selecting Scenarios and Actions
- Aligning Actions with Funding
- Demonstrating how the Region will use the Plan

The engagement plan provides for consistent feedback and self-reflective evaluation opportunities for the Steering Committee and Consultant Team throughout the eighteen (18) month project and provides the framework for the Region to use the Regional Resilience and Adaptation Action Plan (RRAAP) as a guide to meet its Vision for a resilient future.