

EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD MAKE CLIMATE RESILIENCE THE FOUNDATION OF LAND USE PLANNING ACROSS NEW JERSEY

Background

Climate change is not abstract for our region. More than one million people across New York and New Jersey live at risk of flooding today. Yet, eight years after Hurricane Sandy, we are still unprepared. What is at stake? Your home, your business, your school, your park, your neighborhood, and your way of life. Delaying action is not an option. Now is the time to address the greatest threat to our region's future.

The Rise to Resilience campaign is today's roadmap for a more resilient tomorrow. Together we can build resilience, support our communities and economy and create a more equitable and just region.

Please join us at rise2resilience.org.

Issue overview

Municipal master planning is the primary tool at the local level to determine where to facilitate growth and infrastructure investments and a long-term strategy for balancing needs and impacts through the management of land use. Integrating resilience is critical to consideration of future conditions that may negatively affect infrastructure, property, and natural resources.

Such plans, rooted in a strong community process, can equip municipalities to avoid future losses, save taxpayer dollars and increase affordability, equity, infrastructure resilience and green infrastructure. The Together North Jersey Resilience Task Force developed a [Sustainability and Resiliency Toolkit](#) to facilitate this incorporation. All New Jerseyans should have a pathway to resilience and a voice in developing that path.

ACTION:
Amend municipal land use law to ensure that all local master plans incorporate climate vulnerability assessments and resilience measures.

New Jersey lawmakers should amend municipal land use law to:

- › **Assess vulnerability:** municipalities should begin by analyzing vulnerability to future risks, incorporating critical facilities and infrastructure, social factors and natural resources, as well as considering how sea-level rise will affect settlement patterns over time with and without zoning interventions.
- › **Accommodate shifting hazards** in infrastructure planning and design (integrate future conditions into standards and maintenance), zoning strategies (restrict development in high-risk areas and increase infrastructure investment in lower-risk areas), implement rolling easements and actively plan for floodplain restoration.
- › **Integrate and coordinate resilience plans** with overlapping and adjacent county Natural Hazard Mitigation Plans, watershed and floodplain management plans, comprehensive emergency and emergency response plans, post-disaster recovery plans, capital improvement plans and community-based adaptation plans/priorities, consolidating where feasible to comprehensively approach flood risk.
- › **Be equitable and just:** low-income communities and communities of color should be prioritized and empowered in planning when it comes to infrastructure investment decision-making.
- › **Be transparent:** educate the public about climate risk and engage in a thorough two-way public process through which community ideas and priorities are fielded, while also being transparent about feasibility and maintenance over time. A long-term plan for how to fund and maintain flood risk measures and reduce risk behind them over time should be included.

ACTION:
Provide support to help local governments plan.

Localities need support with funding and technical assistance to facilitate adaptation.

The State of New Jersey should work with localities to accomplish the following along with robust community engagement to ensure equitable and people-driven solutions:

- › **Inform:** tailor and regularly update sea level rise information and scenarios to support local planning efforts through the Climate Change Resource Center.
- › **Restore and retreat from risky areas:** develop or expand programs and strategies to partner with municipalities (e.g. Blue Acres, green acres, public-private partnerships, rolling easement pilot projects) to support relocation from areas at high risk of permanent inundation and for those areas to transition into restored floodplains, natural habitat corridors, and publicly-accessible open spaces over time.
- › **Finance and incentivize:** provide a suite of financing and incentive strategies for implementing local resilience planning and projects, including working with municipalities to ensure incorporation of climate information into locally-planned, state-funded projects and enabling local financing mechanisms for flood risk reduction (as has been done with stormwater utility fees). Such support could also help municipalities to better project their fiscal risk (tax revenue exposure) over time in light of rising sea-levels.
- › **Support municipalities to ensure that new, rebuilt, and replaced infrastructure is resilient** to future risks or able to be relocated if necessary to avoid repetitive losses.