

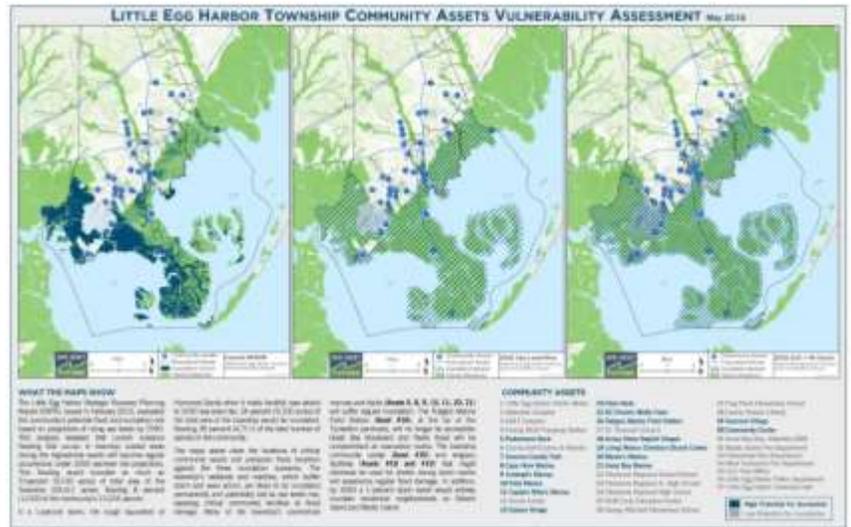
New Jersey's Resilient Coastal Communities Initiative

The New Jersey Resilient Coastal Communities Initiative (RCCI) provided planning and technical support to 40 New Jersey coastal communities in response to increasing coastal hazards. RCCI includes an extensive network of partners that provided vulnerability assessments, planning recommendations, and mitigation strategies to coastal communities.

New Jersey is truly a coastal state, encompassing 127 miles of Atlantic coastline and nearly 1,800 miles of estuarine shoreline. The coastal zone is comprised of multiple shoreline types, including spits, headlands, high-energy barrier island systems, mixed-energy barrier island systems, and bays, all of which sustain habitat and wildlife, support viable maritime and tourism industries, and harbor a way of life for many New Jersey residents. Unfortunately, much of New Jersey's coastal landscape is threatened by the impacts of episodic and chronic erosion, subsidence, shallow coastal flooding, nor'easters, tropical storms, and hurricanes.

Local decision-makers continue to have the greatest influence on their community's resiliency through land use planning and permitting, floodplain management, disaster preparedness, and public education. Unfortunately, many communities may not be aware of their existing vulnerabilities to coastal hazards, let alone, the potential impacts of climate change and sea level rise.

Following Superstorm Sandy, the New Jersey Coastal Management Program (NJCMP) was awarded a CRest grant for the NJ Resilient Coastal Communities Initiative. This project partnered the Program with the Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve, Monmouth University Urban Coast Institute, NJ Future, NJ Sea Grant, the Bloustein School at Rutgers University, and Sustainable Jersey. There were three primary purposes of this project: 1) Continue the development of the tools necessary to inform and support coastal communities' planning efforts; 2) Provide direct support to our coastal communities; and 3) Develop recommendations for the establishment of a Resiliency Planning Program within the Department. RCCI built upon existing resilience planning tools such as New Jersey's Coastal Vulnerability Index (CVI) Getting to Resilience, to further develop and enhance existing tools, and to provide direct support to coastal communities.



Mapping vulnerable community assets in Little Egg Harbor Township, New Jersey

Through RCCI, the NJCMP provided support to 40 communities ranging from outreach and education about resiliency planning tools, assistance developing detailed mapping products, coastal vulnerability assessments, and an assessment of the impact to a community's critical assets and tax base from future flooding events. One of the first tasks through RCCI was to provide all 239 of New Jersey's coastal communities with a CVI-based map, specific to their town. The NJCMP developed a methodology for a New Jersey-specific Coastal Vulnerability Assessment which is being used in 35 communities through this and other projects. Additional assistance provided through RCCI included facilitation of GTR, which resulted in municipal-specific recommendations to address gaps in local policies and planning mechanisms to address coastal hazards and linkages to FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS). The NJCMP was also able to identify a sizeable list of resiliency planning actions from across the United States for consideration when working with municipalities, and are translating many of them into guidance appropriate to New Jersey. Importantly, this project also serves as the basis for the NJCMP's continuing efforts to assist communities by providing information to make informed decisions about coastal hazards and to identify and implement coastal hazard mitigation and new adaptation strategies given changing conditions.