

Research Projects 2014-2016

Development of Climate Change Adaptation Elements for Municipal Land Use Plans: Building Resiliency in Ventnor City, New Jersey R/6410-0016

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Now more than ever, towns all over the country are focused on how to make their land and infrastructure more resilient to extreme weather events and climate change. The destruction from Superstorm Sandy put this issue at center stage in most municipal planning activities in the State of New Jersey.

One way municipalities can plan for climate change is to incorporate climate change adaptation elements in already existing land use documents such as master plans, zoning ordinances, open space and recreation plans and stormwater management plans, to create a more grounded, science-informed and holistic approach to climate change preparedness.

The project team will work with Ventnor City in Atlantic County as a replicable model for other coastal communities. Atlantic County is one of the nine "most impacted" counties from Superstorm Sandy. The storm reduced Ventnor's ratable base by almost \$5 million and hundreds of homes were damaged, leaving the city with significant rebuilding costs. Specifically of relevance to this project, the community is considering the development of an eco-park on a parcel of tidal land, and is looking for an opportunity to develop the park in a resilient way.

The investigators will inventory and assess Ventnor's current planning documents, and use existing leading practices in resilience planning to recommend ways in which the town can strengthen local land use regulation and mechanisms, both at the implementation and the policy levels. This project will benefit from Rutgers'



Dudley Avenue, Ventnor Heights, 10/30/12.

Photo - Danny Drake, Press of Atlantic City

work over the past year, including the assembly and compilation of key sets of data that are needed for community-based recovery planning.

Public engagement and communication is an important part of the project. The team will facilitate public workshops where geospatial sea-level rise tools such as Floodmapper and NJAdapt will be used to explain future sea level rise scenarios to residents and the implications these scenarios will have on their town. The workshops also offer residents a chance to voice their concerns about climate change impacts and suggestions for building resilience.

The municipal planning review and associated changes implemented based on this project's recommendations will assist Ventnor with improving its Community Rating System (CRS) rating. Project activities will result in a more resilient town, while at the same time supporting other positive changes, such as providing support to the town's efforts to increase preserved land, expanding research into the possibility of restoring a salt marsh, and potentially offering residents more public recreation opportunities.



Ventnor beach, 9/3/14

Photo - Stacy Perrine