



6.0

# CONCLUSION

## WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

The Resilient Northeastern NJ region matters. Jersey City, Newark, Hoboken, and Bayonne are home to over 700,000 people. The region also includes transportation, trade, and energy assets of national importance. People treasure the region's parks and cultural spaces. Still, rainfall flood events like Ida (2021) and record-breaking heat in the summer of 2022 show how the climate is changing. High poverty rates (about 20-percent of the region lives below the poverty level),<sup>1</sup> a history of environmental justice issues, and pollution and contaminated sites are the legacy of the region's current and former industry. These are examples of the interacting challenges that compound the impacts of climate change.

This Action Plan shares how people can work together to address today's needs and prepare for the future. Such people are community members, as well as part of businesses, community-based organizations, academia, utilities and infrastructure agencies, and local, state, and federal agencies. The recommended actions could cost about \$13 billion over the next 15 to 20 years. Implementation will take significant dedication of time and resources. While this is a big price tag, the investment is worthwhile when measured against the costs of inaction. A future Hurricane Sandy-like storm surge event, for example, could bring over \$30 billion in direct losses to the region.<sup>2</sup> A major rain event<sup>3</sup> could cause \$6 billion in direct losses. These calculations do not include possible long-term community and economic degradation from such events, nor loss that might result from more frequent flooding due to climate change.

<sup>1</sup> 2021 US Census Bureau Population Estimates Program

<sup>2</sup> Hurricane Sandy 2012 high water marks with 2.4 feet of sea level rise

<sup>3</sup> 9.2 inches of rainfall over a 24 hour period with 2.4 feet of sea level rise

## HOW COULD THIS SHAPE THE REGION?

The actions in this plan will change the built environment. The proposed investment will reduce losses from flooding and other climate-related hazards. Integrating resilience into parks, walkways, contaminated sites, and vacant spaces will create new green space and recreational amenities while addressing concerns like toxin exposure and urban heat. Green infrastructure and restored urban and coastal environments will support wildlife, improve water quality, and offer educational opportunities. Resilience hubs will serve as multi-purpose community spaces offering shelter during disasters and providing resources to community members. Policies that govern new development and redevelopment will reduce impervious surfaces (like concrete surfaces that prevent water from being absorbed) and elevate critical buildings and systems above flood levels.

Actions will also change the way we work together and improve availability of information and resources. The "single source of truth" will improve clarity and communication of important information to guide decision-making. Increased coordination between infrastructure entities, local government, and other stakeholders will increase efficiency in the use of time and funds and reduce disruption from construction activities by helping agencies collaborate to "dig-once." Programs, such as the outreach ambassador program, adopt-a-catch-basin programs, and community clean-up days, will involve more community members in the solution and ensure that the most at-risk and historically excluded people are centered and included.

**Combined, the actions proposed in this plan will advance a vision for a collaborative, diverse, innovative, and green region. By easing burdens, protecting key infrastructure and the most vulnerable people, and connecting people and places, the NENJ region will thrive and regenerate its social, economic, environmental, physical, and governance infrastructure in the face of climate change.**





Photos are examples of what projects could look like in different areas.

## WHAT COMES NEXT?

The Resilient NENJ Steering Committee continues to work to advance the plan. The Action Plan recommends responsibilities for different stakeholders (see Section 3.0 Preferred Scenario and Recommendations). It outlines actions by timeframe in Section 5.0 Roadmap. The actions table in Appendix A summarizes everything in one place. Depending on the action, next steps may involve coordination and engagement, feasibility studies, program development, or funding applications. Resilient NENJ recommends regular updates to the Action Plan (approximately every five years) to track and communicate progress, as well as integrate new data, needs, and to make adjustments as needed.

### IF YOU ARE

### WHAT YOU CAN DO NEXT

#### A RESIDENT, BUSINESS OWNER, OR PROPERTY OWNER IN THE REGION

- Know your risk today and in the future
- Take steps to improve preparedness, including following alerts and warnings when hazards are in the forecast
- Purchase and maintain flood insurance
- Reach out to elected officials to support actions you want to see happen
- Share this plan with your friends, family, and neighbors

#### A REPRESENTATIVE OF A COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION

- Carefully review this plan and stay informed about progress
- Get involved by coordinating with Resilient NENJ and municipal and county staff to identify partnership opportunities
- Work with Resilient NENJ and municipal and county staff to take action
- Help raise public awareness of flood and other climate hazards risk and the Action Plan through your networks

#### A MEMBER OF MUNICIPAL, COUNTY, OR STATE STAFF

- Carefully review this plan and stay informed about and involved in the implementation process
- Share the Action Plan with colleagues. Advocate for implementation of priority strategies
- Support identifying, developing, and overseeing funding opportunities from various sources

# STAY INVOLVED!

Please check-out the website at [www.resilient.nj.gov/nenj](http://www.resilient.nj.gov/nenj) to learn more about the program. Check in frequently for updates on progress.

Get in touch with us anytime:

Through our website: [www.resilient.nj.gov/nenj](http://www.resilient.nj.gov/nenj)

Via email: [resilientNENJ@dep.nj.gov](mailto:resilientNENJ@dep.nj.gov)

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@resilientNENJ on Facebook & Twitter

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Image Sources: Resilient NENJ, City of Jersey City



# NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



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