

ESSEX COUNTY

Resilience Action Checklist

The RAFT | Resilience Adaptation Feasibility Tool



TOP PRIORITIES TO ADDRESS IN THE NEXT YEAR WITH SUPPORT FROM THE RAFT

❑ ENHANCE COMMUNITY-ENGAGED DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

This effort will include increasing community emergency preparedness and awareness of available services and programs, especially for vulnerable populations, through information sessions and education activities held in partnership with community organizations. Activities may include training programs for community members and volunteers prior to emergencies and events that leverage existing groups' capacities and networks to reach a broader audience. This effort will also include identifying projects that can be supported by the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission's "Fight the Flood" program and collaborating with nonprofits working with historically excluded and underserved populations to identify how this program may serve non-homeowners in the community.

❑ INCREASE AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND SHELTERING OPTIONS

Create a strategy to establish an emergency shelter and homeless shelter in Essex County, while considering longer term solutions to addressing the lack of affordable housing options to both own and to rent in the area. Included in this task will be an effort to increase home repair services.

❑ EXPAND FOOD ACCESS AND SECURITY THROUGH COMMUNITY GARDENS ON PUBLIC & PRIVATE LAND

Work in coordination with food banks, farmers markets, community gardens and churches to increase food access across Essex County and develop a neighborhood-scale food system. This will be pursued by planning a series of community gardens to be established on public and private lands (i.e., churches, community organizations).

❑ PROTECT THE AVAILABILITY OF CLEAN WATER DURING STORM EVENTS AND IN THE LONG-TERM

This effort will consider the potential impacts of both acute water quality issues occurring during and after storm events, including flooded wells and septic systems, as well as long-term water quality challenges due to sea level rise and saltwater intrusion. Opportunities for investigating and addressing chronic surface water contaminants, including pesticides and coliform/septic contaminants will be pursued.

❑ IMPROVE ACCESS TO VULNERABLE RESIDENTS BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER STORMS THROUGH INVESTMENTS IN EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Improve access to vulnerable residents' homes before, during, and after a storm hits as a part of long-term planning. This effort may include increasing the county's access to boats, investing in other water rescue resources, and developing other emergency infrastructure necessary for community storm response. Opportunities to collaborate directly with community groups will also be explored.



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OTHER ATTENDEE-SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR FUTURE RESILIENCE EFFORTS

- Conduct on-site field investigation and analysis of shoreline erosion concerns for property owners. Provide a written advisory report with recommended solutions and connections to available financial incentive programs.
- Stormwater incentives for private property owners.
- Expand youth and childcare services.
- Improve transportation.
- Work with SWCD to reinstitute the VCAP Program and install a pilot SE-2 shoreline stabilization project.
- Identify and install high priority riparian buffer projects on public and private lands.

This checklist was developed by community participants in the online Resilience Action Workshop, conducted and facilitated by The RAFT three-university Collaborative Team on January 28th, 2022. This document is intended to be static and record the outcomes of that workshop. However, the checklist items and their details may evolve over the course of the year-long implementation of The RAFT in response to the changing circumstances and needs of the community.

**RAFT team recommends the creation of a Resilience Committee as a way to create and sustain momentum to build resilience in the long term. We recognize, based on our experience with coastal communities in Virginia, and consistent with best practices in resilience planning and implementation, that communities benefit from more comprehensive and coordinated approach to building resilience. Establishing a Resilience Committee is key to establishing a foundation for sustained efforts in building resilience. The RAFT team has developed a [worksheet](#) to assist communities in establishing a Resilience Committee structure and framework, and if you decide this would benefit your community we can facilitate your discussion.

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For more information visit The RAFT website: raft.ien.virginia.edu

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