

News from the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders

Patrick Scaglione, Freeholder Director • Brian D. Levine, Freeholder Deputy Director
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Underway

Public Input Sought

Because public participation is an important component of hazard mitigation planning, Somerset County Freeholder Brian G. Gallagher invites residents to review and provide input on a five-year update to the countywide Hazard Mitigation Plan, which paves the way for pre-disaster mitigation funding.

The document and a link for [comments](#) may be found on the county's website at <http://bit.ly/2018SCHMP>. Somerset County residents are encouraged to attend a public meeting to learn more about the Hazard Mitigation Plan update.

The first public meeting will be included as part of a Somerset County Planning Board meeting on **Tuesday, Nov. 20**. The meeting will start at **4:45 p.m.** in the freeholder meeting room, located on the 3rd floor of the county Administration Building at 20 Grove St. in Somerville.

The second public meeting will be held from **7 to 8:30 p.m.** on **Thursday, Dec. 6**, at the Somerset County Emergency Services Training Academy, located at 402 Roycefield Rd. in Hillsborough.

Participants will learn about the purpose, goals and objectives of the Hazard Mitigation Plan. During the meeting, county Planning Division representatives will review the public outreach process, major natural hazards and vulnerabilities and mitigation strategies and projects. They also will discuss next steps, including reviews by the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), local adoption, plan maintenance and implementation.

The public comment period will conclude Jan. 7, 2019.

The Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders spearheaded the comprehensive Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) in 2008. This plan, which was last updated in 2013, is important because it makes the county and its participating municipalities eligible for future mitigation funding through FEMA. The detailed plan addresses a variety of potential natural hazards that could affect some or all of the county's residents.

"The county Planning Division and Office of Emergency Management collaborated with members of the Mitigation Planning Committee to complete the updated plan as required by FEMA," said Freeholder Gallagher, planning liaison. The committee includes representatives from county divisions and offices, municipalities and other

stakeholder groups. “We are asking residents to participate in the process by attending one of the public meetings and providing feedback on the plan.”

The goal of the plan is to identify projects that can reduce damages from future natural hazards. The plan includes a risk assessment and hazard-mitigation strategy. The primary natural hazards in Somerset County are severe storms and flooding, but other potential hazards include drought, extreme temperatures, wildfires and earthquakes. The study focused on existing and future buildings, infrastructure and critical facilities that might be impacted by natural hazards.

Annexes for each of the county’s 21 municipalities will be included in the plan. This will make each municipality eligible to apply for pre-disaster mitigation funding for projects that will reduce hazard vulnerabilities and risks and help communities recover more quickly from disasters.

For more information, contact Walter Lane, director of the county Planning Division, at [\(908\) 231-7021](tel:9082317021) or Planningbd@co.somerset.nj.us; or Douglas Vornlocker, Office of Emergency Management director, at [\(908\) 725-5070](tel:9087255070) or EmergencyMgmt@co.somerset.nj.us.

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