

An aerial photograph of a river winding through a landscape with marshes and trees. Several people are kayaking on the water. In the background, a white house is visible on the shore. The image has a green tint and is overlaid with a vertical bar of colored segments on the left side.

# Chapter 7

## Mitigation Strategy

Eastern Shore Hazard Mitigation Plan  
2025 Update

## MITIGATION GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

The first iteration of the Eastern Shore Hazard Mitigation Plan was developed in November 2004. At that time, members of the Steering Committee determined the vision for the Eastern Shore during and after a natural hazard event. In the first Project Management Team (PMT) meeting for the 2025 update, the PMT agreed to maintain the vision statement as written. The PMT did agree to update some of the goals to be actionable.

### Vision Statement

As a result of planning and mitigation actions, damage and disruption will be minimized during natural hazard events. Federal and state agencies cooperate with the local government and guide necessary resources to the governments for recovery activities. To the extent possible, residents will be self-sufficient and will have taken responsibility for their own economic and physical protection. Infrastructure smoothly functions throughout the event and the recovery period following.

The Eastern Shore Hazard Mitigation PMT identified the following goals to work toward. Goal 1 was revised slightly for language clarity. Goal 2 was amended to include language for resiliency efforts. Goal 3 was modified and Goal 5 was incorporated. Goal 4 was revised to model FEMA's Community Lifelines and the increased focus on natural system solutions. Goal 5 was removed, and some of the language was incorporated into Goal 3.

### Goal 1

The Hazard Mitigation plan will serve as a guide for comprehensive mitigation actions to local governments and residents.

### Goal 2

Strengthen and develop new partnerships (resident groups, businesses, local governments, elected officials, community partners, academics) that can assist with achieving hazard mitigation goals and increase resilience.

### Goal 3

Raise awareness about local hazard risks and identify the most vulnerable populations and how to reach them, while taking proactive measures to reduce these risks and strengthen the resilience of the Eastern Shore.

### Goal 4

Work to improve infrastructure and implement natural systems for resiliency and provide the appropriate redundancies for the operations of critical infrastructure during a hazard event.



## 7.1 IDENTIFICATION AND PRIORITIZATION OF MITIGATION ACTIONS

The Eastern Shore of Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan PMT collectively identified specific mitigation actions that would benefit the entire region.

A **mitigation action** is a measure, project, plan or activity proposed to reduce current and future vulnerabilities described in the risk assessment (*Local Mitigation Planning Policy Guide*, 2025).

Accomack County, Northampton County, the Town of Chincoteague, and the Town of Accomac developed new specific mitigation strategies to address each of the regional mitigation goals described above. To implement the identified strategies, each locality developed mitigation projects specific to their locality. Non-participating towns are currently not eligible for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance grant award funds. Participating towns indicated additional mitigation projects included in their respective table of mitigation strategies. The projects identified were aimed at addressing all the hazards identified in this plan through the following action categories:

- Structural and Non-Structural Measures
- Nature-Based Solutions
- Policy and Programmatic Actions
- Future Conditions Adaptation Integration

Prioritization ranking is directly based on the rank of the hazard(s) which it addresses. A ranking of 1 indicates a “highest” level of priority and indicates that the mitigation action would address at least one of the highest ranked hazards.

The prioritization of the hazards took into account the impact of the strategy on the community lifelines.

**Community Lifelines** are the most fundamental services in the community that, when stabilized, enable all other aspects of society to function. The integrated network of assets, services and capabilities that provide community lifeline services are used day to day to support recurring needs. Lifelines enable the continuous operation of critical government and business functions and are essential to human health and safety or economic security (*National Response Framework, 4th Edition*)

## 7.2 ACTION EVALUATION CRITERIA

The Eastern Shore of Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan supports local mitigation actions that are effective in achieving the following:

- Foster partnerships among all levels of government.
- Develop and strengthen non-governmental and private partnerships.
- Promote more disaster-resilient communities.
- Reduce the costs associated with disaster response and recovery by promoting mitigation activities.



Local mitigation planners were encouraged to weigh the **cost-effectiveness, feasibility, and equity** when adding a mitigation strategy to their action plan.

Each action added to a localities Mitigation Action Table is evaluated for the

- **Cost-effectiveness** – The integration of planning efforts across sectors, disciplines, and mission areas and sharing risk analyses and vulnerability assessments eliminate redundancy and conserve valuable resources. Wherever possible, mitigation planning should capitalize on existing community efforts.
- **Feasibility** - Each locality has a systematic process that translates risk assessment data and information into prioritized goals and actions for the whole community. The process integrates risk analysis and assessment of local capabilities and authorities into community priorities and assists with decision making efforts that build upon the existing community efforts.
- **Equity** – The strategy will aim to serve a portion of the whole community assessed to be at risk for the identified hazard. *Whole community* is defined as a focus on enabling the participation in national preparedness activities of a wider range of players from the private and nonprofit sectors, including non-governmental organizations and the general public, in conjunction with the participation of all levels of government in order to foster better coordination and working relationships (*Local Mitigation Planning Policy Guide, 2025*). Incorporation of functional needs of the whole community with the equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from emergency preparedness into mitigation planning. Planning teams should be integrated and represent a broad spectrum of the population, both public and private, so that plans result in strategies and actions that are more meaningful and relevant to the mitigation process and the community (*National Mitigation Framework, 2016*).

### 7.3 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (RESPONSIBLE PARTY, TIMELINE, FUNDING SOURCE)

Effective implementation of this Hazard Mitigation plan hinges on the inclusion and understanding of the whole community in carrying out the Mitigation Goals and Vision.

Actions considered during the planning process emphasized reducing risk to existing buildings, structures and infrastructure, as well as limiting risk to new development and redevelopment. The scope of the proposed strategies includes local plans and regulations, structure and infrastructure projects, natural systems protection, and education and awareness programs. Each jurisdiction participating completed an analysis to select actions based on its own capabilities, as well as the social, technical and economic feasibility of the action. After the action was selected, the party responsible for implementation of the action was identified as well as potential timeframe of completion and the possible funding sources for the action. All these actions can be found below in Section 7.6 Mitigation Action Tables.



## 7.4 PROGRESS ON PREVIOUS MITIGATION ACTIONS

Progress on previous mitigation actions was limited, but Accomack and Northampton Counties, and the Town of Chincoteague identified a number of completed actions. All these actions can be found below in Section 7.6 Mitigation Action Tables.

## 7.5 INTEGRATION WITH OTHER LOCAL AND REGIONAL PLAN

This Plan integrates additional elements of local long-range and regulatory planning documents, including comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, subdivision ordinances, and emergency operations plans. These local regulatory documents should in turn reference or incorporate elements of the *Eastern Shore Regional 2025 Hazard Mitigation Plan*, creating a fully integrated effort to reduce hazard impacts and maintain resiliency as a core local and regional planning element. The development of this Plan used information included in the following community plans, studies, reports, and initiatives:

- Municipal Comprehensive Plans from A-N PDC region localities
- Codified Ordinances (Zoning and Subdivision) from A-N PDC region localities
- Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code
- Emergency Operations Plans from A-N PDC regional localities
- Flood Insurance Studies and Flood Insurance Rate Maps
- A-N PDC region Tax Assessor and Land Use data

### Commonwealth of Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan

The Eastern Shore Hazard Mitigation Plan serves as a vital component in the broader framework of regional and state resilience strategies. This plan is intricately linked to these larger initiatives, such as the Virginia Coastal Resilience Master Plan, working in tandem to address the unique vulnerabilities and risks faced by coastal communities. By aligning its objectives with the overarching goals of the state, the Eastern Shore's hazard mitigation efforts ensure a cohesive and integrated approach to resilience. This collaboration not only enhances the effectiveness of local mitigation but also contributes to the collective resilience of Virginia's coastal region. Through collaboration and shared resources, the plan fosters a comprehensive strategy that leverages scientific research, community input, and policy development to mitigate hazards and adapt to climate change impacts.

- Eastern Shore of Virginia Groundwater Resource Protection and Preservation Plan
- Eastern Shore of Virginia Regional Economic Development Plan
- Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program 2026-2030 Coastal Needs Assessment and Strategies
- Seaside Special Area Management Plan
- Virginia Eastern Shore Planning for a Changing Coast – The Nature Conservancy Coastal Resilience tool



The integration of state and regional plans underscores a commitment to sustainable development, ensuring that the Eastern Shore, alongside the rest of Virginia's coastline, is better prepared to face future challenges.

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