

SECTION 7

CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT

This section discusses the capability of the participating jurisdictions in the Southeastern NC region to implement hazard mitigation activities. It consists of the following four subsections:

- ◆ 7.1 Overview
- ◆ 7.2 Conducting the Capability Assessment
- ◆ 7.3 Capability Assessment Findings
- ◆ 7.4 Conclusions on Local Capability

7.1 OVERVIEW

The purpose of conducting a Capability Assessment is to determine the ability of a local jurisdiction to implement a comprehensive Mitigation Strategy, and to identify potential opportunities for establishing or enhancing specific mitigation policies, programs, or projects. As in any planning process, it is important to try to establish which goals, objectives, and actions are feasible, based on an understanding of the organizational capacity of those agencies or departments tasked with their implementation. A Capability Assessment helps to determine which mitigation actions are practical and likely to be implemented over time given a local government’s planning and regulatory framework, level of administrative and technical support, amount of fiscal resources, and current political climate.

A Capability Assessment has two primary components: 1) an inventory of a local jurisdiction’s relevant plans, ordinances, and programs already in place; and 2) an analysis of its capacity to carry them out. Careful examination of local capabilities will detect any existing gaps, shortfalls, or weaknesses with ongoing government activities that could hinder proposed mitigation activities and possibly exacerbate community hazard vulnerability. The Capability Assessment also highlights the positive mitigation measures already in place or being implemented at the local government level, which should continue to be supported and enhanced through future mitigation efforts.

The Capability Assessment completed for the SENC Region serves as a critical planning step and an integral part of the foundation for designing an effective Mitigation Strategy. Coupled with the Risk Assessment, the Capability Assessment helps identify and target meaningful mitigation actions for incorporation into the Mitigation Strategy portion of the Plan. It not only helps establish the goals and objectives for the Region to pursue under this Plan, but also ensures that those goals and objectives are realistically achievable under given local conditions.

7.2 CONDUCTING THE CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT

In order to facilitate the inventory and analysis of local government capabilities within the Southeast NC region, the Capability Assessment sections from the previous Southeastern NC Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan and the previous Onslow County Hazard Mitigation Plan were reviewed and relevant information on capabilities *were* documented in this update. The project consultant then reviewed County and municipal websites to determine additional capabilities for documentation. Finally, the

participating jurisdictions reviewed the draft version of this update and provided any supplemental or missing capability information before the final plan was completed and adopted. Capabilities that were reviewed included documentation on existing local plans, policies, programs, or ordinances that contribute to and/or hinder the Region's ability to implement hazard mitigation actions. Other indicators included information related to the Region's fiscal, administrative, and technical capabilities, such as access to local budgetary and personnel resources for mitigation purposes, as well as any existing education and outreach programs that can be used to promote mitigation. The participating jurisdictions were also asked to comment on the current political climate with respect to hazard mitigation, an important consideration for any local planning or decision making process.

At a minimum, the capability assessment provides an extensive and consolidated inventory of existing local plans, ordinances, programs, and resources in place or under development, in addition to their overall effect on hazard loss reduction. In completing the assessment, local officials were also asked to conduct a self-assessment of their jurisdiction's specific capabilities. The capability assessment thereby not only helps accurately assess the degree of local capability, but it also serves as a good source of introspection for counties and local jurisdictions that want to improve their capabilities as identified gaps, weaknesses, or conflicts can be recast as opportunities for specific actions to be proposed as part of the Mitigation Action Plan.

7.3 CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

The findings of the *Capability Assessment* are summarized in this Plan to provide insight into the relevant capacity of the jurisdictions in the SENC Region to implement hazard mitigation activities. All information is based upon the input provided by local government officials.

7.3.1 Planning and Regulatory Capability

Planning and regulatory capability is based on the implementation of plans, ordinances, and programs that demonstrate a local jurisdiction's commitment to guiding and managing growth, development, and redevelopment in a responsible manner, while maintaining the general welfare of the community. It includes emergency response and mitigation planning, comprehensive land use planning, and transportation planning, in addition to the enforcement of zoning or subdivision ordinances and building codes that regulate how land is developed and structures are built, as well as protecting environmental, historic, and cultural resources in the community. Although some conflicts can arise, these planning initiatives generally present significant opportunities to integrate hazard mitigation principles and practices into the local decision making process.

This assessment is designed to provide a general overview of the key planning and regulatory tools or programs in place or under development for the jurisdictions in the SENC Region, along with their potential effect on loss reduction. This information will help identify opportunities to address existing gaps, weaknesses, or conflicts with other initiatives in addition to integrating the implementation of this Plan with existing planning mechanisms where appropriate.

Table 7.1 provides a summary of the relevant local plans, ordinances, and programs already in place or under development for the jurisdictions in the SENC Region. A checkmark indicates that the given item is currently in place and being implemented. An asterisk (*) indicates that the given item is currently being developed for future implementation. Each of these local plans, ordinances, and programs should be considered available mechanisms for incorporating the requirements of the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

TABLE 7.1: RELEVANT PLANS, ORDINANCES, AND PROGRAMS

Jurisdiction	Hazard Mitigation Plan	Comprehensive Land Use Plan	Floodplain Management Plan	Open Space Management Plan	Stormwater Management Plan	Emergency Operations Plan	SARA Title III Plan	Radiological Emergency Plan	Continuity of Operations Plan	Evacuation Plan	Disaster Recovery Plan	Capital Improvements Plan	Economic Development Plan	Historic Preservation Plan	Transportation Plan	Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance	Zoning Ordinance	Subdivision Ordinance	Site Plan Review Requirements	Unified Development Ordinance	Post-Disaster Redevelopment Ordinance	Building Code	Fire Code	Community Wildfire Protection Plan	National Flood Insurance Program	Community Rating System
Brunswick County	√	√	√	√	√	√			√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√		√	√
Village of Bald Head Island	√	√	√	√	√					*	*	√			√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√	
Town of Belville	√	√	√	√						√	*	√			√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√	
City of Boiling Spring Lakes	√	√	√	√	√	√			√	√	*	√			√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√		√	
Town of Bolivia	√	√	√							*	*				√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√	
Town of Calabash	√	√	√	√					√	√	*	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	
Town of Carolina Shores	√	√	√		√					*	*				√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√	
Town of Caswell Beach	√	√	√							*	*				√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√	√

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Town of Holden Beach	√	√	√	√	√					*	*				√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√	√
Town of Leland	√	√	√	√	√					√	*	√			√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√	
Town of Navassa	√	√	√	√	√					*	*				√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√	
City of Northwest	√	√	√							*	*				√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√	
Town of Oak Island	√	√	√	√	√					*	*	√			√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√	√
Town of Ocean Isle Beach	√	√	√	√	√					*	*	√			√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√	√
Town of Saint James	√	√	√	√					√	√	*	√			√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√		√
Town of Sandy Creek	√	√								*	*				√		√	√	√			√	√			
Town of Shallotte	√	√	√	√	√					*	*	√			√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√	
City of Southport	√	√	√	√	√				√	√	*	√			√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√

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Town of Sunset Beach	√	√	√	√	√					*	*	√			√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√	√
Town of Varnamtown	√	√	√							*	*				√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√	
New Hanover County	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√			√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√		√	√
Town of Carolina Beach	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	*	√			√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√		√	√
Town of Kure Beach	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	*	√			√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√	√
City of Wilmington	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	*	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√	
Town of Wrightsville Beach	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	*	√			√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√	√
Onslow County	√	√	√	*	√	√			√	√	*	√	*		√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√	√
City of Jacksonville	√	√		√	√	√			√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√		√	√

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Town of Holly Ridge	√	√	√			√					*				√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√		
Town of North Topsail Beach	√	√	√	√	√	√			√	√	*	*			√	√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√	√
Town of Richlands	√	√		√	√	√			*		*	√			√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√		
Town of Swansboro	√	√	√	√	√	√				√	*		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√	
Pender County	√	√				√				√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√	*
Town of Atkinson	√	√	√								*				√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√		
Town of Burgaw	√	√	√	√							*	√			√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√		
Village of Saint Helena	√	√	√								*				√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√		
Town of Surf City	√	√	√	√	√	√			√	√	√	√	*		√	√	√	√	√	√	*	*	√	√		√	*

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Town of Topsail Beach	√	√	√	√	√						*	√			√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√	√
Town of Watha	√	√	√								*				√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√	

A more detailed discussion on the Region’s planning and regulatory capability follows, along with the incorporation of additional information based on the narrative comments provided by local officials.

7.3.1.1 Emergency Management

Hazard mitigation is widely recognized as one of the four primary phases of emergency management. The three other phases are preparedness, response, and recovery. In reality each phase is interconnected with hazard mitigation, as **Figure 7.1** suggests. Opportunities to reduce potential losses through mitigation practices are most often implemented before a disaster event, such as elevation of flood-prone structures or through the continuous enforcement of policies that prevent and regulate development that is vulnerable to hazards because of its location, design, or other characteristics. Mitigation opportunities can also be identified during immediate preparedness or response activities (such as installing storm shutters in advance of a hurricane), and in many instances during the long-term recovery and redevelopment process following a disaster event.

FIGURE 7.1: THE FOUR PHASES OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT



Planning for each phase is a critical part of a comprehensive emergency management program and a key to the successful implementation of hazard mitigation actions. As a result, the Capability Assessment documents community capabilities across a range of emergency management plans in order to assess each participating jurisdiction’s willingness to plan and their level of technical planning proficiency. Some examples of emergency management capabilities include the following:

Hazard Mitigation Plan

A hazard mitigation plan represents a community’s blueprint for how it intends to reduce the impact of natural, and in some cases human-caused, hazards on people and the built environment. The essential elements of a hazard mitigation plan include a risk assessment, capability assessment, and mitigation strategy.

Disaster Recovery Plan

A disaster recovery plan serves to guide the physical, social, environmental, and economic recovery and reconstruction process following a disaster event. In many instances, hazard mitigation principles and practices are incorporated into local disaster recovery plans with the intent of capitalizing on opportunities to break the cycle of repetitive disaster losses. Disaster recovery plans can also lead to the preparation of disaster redevelopment policies and ordinances to be enacted following a hazard event.

Emergency Operations Plan

An emergency operations plan outlines responsibilities and the means by which resources are deployed during and following an emergency or disaster.

Continuity of Operations Plan

A continuity of operations plan establishes a chain of command, line of succession, and plans for backup or alternate emergency facilities in case of an extreme emergency or disaster event.

7.3.1.2 General Planning

The implementation of hazard mitigation activities often involves agencies and individuals beyond the emergency management profession. Stakeholders may include local planners, public works officials, economic development specialists, and others. In many instances, concurrent local planning efforts will help to achieve or complement hazard mitigation goals, even though they are not designed as such. The Capability Assessment documents general planning capabilities and the degree to which hazard mitigation is integrated into other ongoing planning efforts in the region.

Some examples of general planning capabilities include the following:

Comprehensive/General Plan

A comprehensive land use plan, or general plan, establishes the overall vision for what a community wants to be and serves as a guide for future governmental decision making. Typically, a comprehensive plan contains sections on demographic conditions, land use, transportation elements, and community facilities. Given the broad nature of the plan and its regulatory standing in many communities, the integration of hazard mitigation measures into the comprehensive plan can enhance the likelihood of achieving risk reduction goals, objectives, and actions.

Capital Improvements Plan

A capital improvements plan guides the scheduling of spending on public improvements. A capital improvements plan can serve as an important mechanism for guiding future development away from identified hazard areas. Limiting public spending in hazardous areas is one of the most effective long-term mitigation actions available to local governments.

Historic Preservation Plan

A historic preservation plan is intended to preserve historic structures or districts within a community. An often overlooked aspect of the historic preservation plan is the assessment of buildings and sites located in areas subject to natural hazards, and the identification of ways to reduce future damages.

This may involve retrofitting or relocation techniques that account for the need to protect buildings that do not meet current building standards, or are within a historic district that cannot easily be relocated out of harm's way.

Zoning Ordinance

Zoning represents the primary means by which land use is controlled by local governments. As part of a community's police power, zoning is used to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of those in a given jurisdiction that maintains zoning authority. A zoning ordinance is the mechanism through which zoning is typically implemented. Since zoning regulations enable municipal governments to limit the type and density of development, a zoning ordinance can serve as a powerful tool when applied in identified hazard areas.

Subdivision Ordinance

A subdivision ordinance is intended to regulate the development of residential, commercial, industrial, or other uses, including associated public infrastructure, as land is subdivided into buildable lots for sale or future development. Subdivision design that accounts for natural hazards can dramatically reduce the exposure of future development.

Building Codes, Permitting, and Inspections

Building codes regulate construction standards. In many communities, permits and inspections are required for new construction. Decisions regarding the adoption of building codes (that account for hazard risk), the type of permitting process required both before and after a disaster, and the enforcement of inspection protocols all affect the level of hazard risk faced by a community.

The adoption and enforcement of building codes by local jurisdictions is routinely assessed through the Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule (BCEGS) program, developed by the Insurance Services Office, Inc. (ISO). In North Carolina, the North Carolina Department of Insurance assesses the building codes in effect in a particular community and how the community enforces its building codes, with special emphasis on mitigation of losses from natural hazards. The results of BCEGS assessments are routinely provided to ISO's member private insurance companies, which in turn may offer ratings credits for new buildings constructed in communities with strong BCEGS classifications. The concept is that communities with well-enforced, up-to-date codes should experience fewer disaster-related losses, and as a result should have lower insurance rates.

In conducting the assessment, ISO collects information related to personnel qualification and continuing education, as well as number of inspections performed per day. This type of information combined with local building codes is used to determine a grade for that jurisdiction. The grades range from 1 to 10, with a BCEGS grade of 1 representing exemplary commitment to building code enforcement, and a grade of 10 indicating less than minimum recognized protection.

Other Relevant Plans and/or Planning Processes

Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point (MOTSU) Joint Land Use Study

MOTSU is the largest military terminal in the world. It serves as the Army's primary East-coast deep water port for containerized ammunition and is a transfer point between rail, trucks, and ships for the import and export of weapons, ammunition, explosives and military equipment for United States Army. Recently, MOTSU partnered with the Cape Fear Council of Governments and the jurisdictions of Brunswick County, New Hanover County, Boiling Spring Lakes, Carolina Beach, Kure Beach, Leland, Southport to develop a joint land use study.

There is a Public Safety coordination element to the Joint Land Use Study that could be evaluated to see if there are elements that could compliment or be integrated with the regional hazard mitigation plan.

Resilient Redevelopment Plans

Following Hurricane Matthew, the State of North Carolina provided funding through the Disaster recovery Act of 2016 to assist impacted communities with the development of Resilient Redevelopment Plans. Plans were developed for all four counties in the SENC region. The primary goals were to: 1) develop strategic plans and actions; and, 2) define any unmet funding needs required to implement those actions after other funds are used. The resulting resilient redevelopment plans served as the foundation for any supplemental funding received through Congress, the North Carolina General Assembly and other funding sources. These plans also provided the basis for the state's Recovery Action Plan required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development heeded to spend funds allocated through the Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Relief program. The Resilient Redevelopment Plans should be evaluated to see what opportunities are present for integration with the hazard mitigation plan.

7.3.1.3 Floodplain Management

Flooding represents the greatest natural hazard facing the nation. At the same time, the tools available to reduce the impacts associated with flooding are among the most developed when compared to other hazard-specific mitigation techniques. In addition to approaches that cut across hazards such as education, outreach, and the training of local officials, the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) contains specific regulatory measures that enable government officials to determine where and how growth occurs relative to flood hazards. Participation in the NFIP is voluntary for local governments; however, program participation is strongly encouraged by FEMA as a first step for implementing and sustaining an effective hazard mitigation program. It is therefore used as part of this *Capability Assessment* as a key indicator for measuring local capability.

In order for a county or municipality to participate in the NFIP, they must adopt a local flood damage prevention ordinance that requires jurisdictions to follow established minimum building standards in the floodplain. These standards require that all new buildings and substantial improvements to existing buildings will be protected from damage by a 100-year flood event, and that new development in the floodplain will not exacerbate existing flood problems or increase damage to other properties.

A key service provided by the NFIP is the mapping of identified flood hazard areas. Once completed, the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) are used to assess flood hazard risk, regulate construction practices, and set flood insurance rates. FIRMs are an important source of information to educate residents, government officials, and the private sector about the likelihood of flooding in their community.

NFIP information for each participating jurisdiction in the SENC Region can be found in **Table 7.2** below.

TABLE 7.2 NFIP INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPATING JURISDICTIONS

Jurisdiction	Date Joined NFIP	Current Effective Map Date	NFIP Policies In Force	Insurance In Force	Written Premium In Force
Brunswick					
Brunswick County (Unincorporated Area)	12/09/77	12/6/19	3,891	\$930,416,500	\$1,842,138
City of Boiling Spring Lakes	03/02/89	8/28/08	171	\$30,400,500	\$55,418
City of Northwest	12/09/77	12/6/19	7	\$1,218,000	\$1,639
City of Southport	05/24/74	8/28/18	564	\$114,773,300	\$293,873
Town of Belville	12/09/77	8/28/18	66	\$12,751,400	\$20,201
Town of Bolivia	06/10/77	10/16/08	7	\$408,000	\$1,072
Town of Calabash	06/10/77	8/28/18	97	\$18,897,800	\$34,169
Town of Carolina Shores	06/10/77	8/28/18	779	\$100,359,600	\$122,791
Town of Caswell Beach	07/15/77	8/28/18	638	\$139,596,300	\$533,731
Town of Holden Beach	05/26/72	8/28/18	1,851	\$507,197,300	\$4,062,145
Town of Leland	12/09/77	8/28/18	1,031	\$106,524,900	\$137,558
Town of Navassa	12/09/77	12/6/19	17	\$1,665,000	\$2,288
Town of Oak Island	03/27/71	8/28/18	3,476	\$829,941,000	\$4,806,652
Town of Ocean Isle Beach	07/16/71	8/28/18	2,608	\$622,976,800	\$4,377,145
Town of Saint James	12/09/77	8/28/18	1,189	\$289,948,100	\$425,382
Town of Sandy Creek*			0	0	0
Town of Shallotte	05/24/74	8/28/18	202	\$44,803,700	\$93,891
Town of Sunset Beach	11/18/72	8/28/18	1,808	\$447,423,600	\$1,150,220
Town of Varnamtown	12/09/77	8/28/18	21	\$4,417,900	\$5,566

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Jurisdiction	Date Joined NFIP	Current Effective Map Date	NFIP Policies In Force	Insurance In Force	Written Premium In Force
Village of Bald Head Island	12/09/77	8/28/18	1,048	\$328,874,300	\$1,271,457
Subtotal Brunswick	-	-	19,471	\$4,532,594,000	\$19,237,336
Onslow					
City of Jacksonville	05/10/74	2/16/07	887	\$166,135,500	\$293,806
Onslow County (Unincorporated Area)	06/09/78	6/19/20	2,406	\$461,968,400	\$936,391
Town of Holly Ridge	11/03/05	6/19/20	42	\$8,063,200	\$17,474
Town of North Topsail Beach	06/09/78	6/19/20	1,217	\$254,459,900	\$1,827,357
Town of Richlands	07/11/75	6/19/20	41	\$5,000,400	\$9,052
Town of Swansboro	05/24/74	6/19/20	217	\$40,013,100	\$99,157
Subtotal Onslow	-	-	4,810	\$935,640,500	\$3,183,237
New Hanover					
City of Wilmington	03/01/74	8/28/18	3,817	\$690,660,100	\$1,683,886
New Hanover County (Unincorporated Area)	07/17/78	12/6/19	6,302	\$1,373,247,400	\$3,076,609
Town of Carolina Beach	05/26/72	8/28/18	3,510	\$698,316,100	\$3,041,350
Town of Kure Beach	02/15/74	2/16/07	971	\$254,985,600	\$704,720
Town of Wrightsville Beach	06/12/70	8/28/18	2,621	\$672,664,700	\$2,844,745
Subtotal New Hanover	-	-	17,221	\$3,689,873,900	\$11,351,310
Pender					
Pender County (Unincorporated Area)	10/29/76	2/16/07 and 12/6/19	2,284	\$413,084,500	\$973,514
Town of Atkinson	02/16/07	12/6/19	2	\$385,000	\$1,882
Town of Burgaw	01/19/00	02/16/07	89	\$13,515,400	\$68,479
Town of Surf City	05/24/74	02/16/07	1,775	\$522,302,100	\$3,154,736
Town of Topsail Beach	06/07/74	02/16/07	948	\$292,230,400	\$1,595,140
Town of Watha	10/29/76	02/16/07	2	\$233,400	\$1,865
Village of Saint Helena	10/29/76	02/16/07	4	\$110,000	\$1,873

Jurisdiction	Date Joined NFIP	Current Effective Map Date	NFIP Policies In Force	Insurance In Force	Written Premium In Force
Subtotal Pender	-	-	5,104	\$1,241,860,800	\$5,797,489
TOTAL PLAN	-	-	46,606	\$10,399,969,200	\$39,569,372

Source: FEMA NFIP Policy Statistics; *Community not in NFIP

Most all of the jurisdictions in the Southeastern NC region participate in the National Flood Insurance Program and will continue to comply with all required provisions of the program and work to adequately comply in the future utilizing a number of strategies. Floodplain management is managed through zoning ordinances, building code restrictions, and the county building inspection program. The jurisdictions will coordinate with NCEM and FEMA to develop maps and regulations related to Special Flood Hazard Areas within their jurisdictional boundaries and, through a consistent monitoring process, will design and improve their floodplain management program in a way that reduces the risk of flooding to people and property. Each county and its municipalities while participating in the National Flood Insurance Program comply with regulations as demonstrated in regular Community Assessment Visits.

Community Rating System

An additional indicator of floodplain management capability is the active participation of local jurisdictions in the Community Rating System (CRS). The CRS is an incentive-based program that encourages counties and municipalities to undertake defined flood mitigation activities that go beyond the minimum requirements of the NFIP, adding extra local measures to provide protection from flooding. All of the 18 creditable CRS mitigation activities are assigned a range of point values. As points are accumulated and reach identified thresholds, communities can apply for an improved CRS class. Class ratings, which range from 10 to 1, are tied to flood insurance premium reductions as shown in **Table 7.3** As class ratings improve (the lower the number, the better), the percent reduction in flood insurance premiums for NFIP policyholders in that community increases.

TABLE 7.3: CRS PREMIUM DISCOUNTS, BY CLASS

CRS Class	Premium Reduction
1	45%
2	40%
3	35%
4	30%
5	25%
6	20%
7	15%
8	10%
9	5%
10	0%

Source: NFIP Community Rating System.

Community participation in the CRS is voluntary. Any community that is in full compliance with the rules and regulations of the NFIP may apply to FEMA for a CRS classification better than class 10. The CRS application process has been greatly simplified over the past several years, based on community comments intended to make the CRS more user friendly, and extensive technical assistance available for communities who request it.

CRS communities in the Southeastern NC Region include the following:

- ◆ Brunswick County
- ◆ Caswell Beach
- ◆ Holden Beach
- ◆ Oak Island
- ◆ Ocean Isle Beach
- ◆ Southport
- ◆ Sunset Beach
- ◆ New Hanover County
- ◆ Carolina Beach
- ◆ Kure Beach
- ◆ Wrightsville Beach
- ◆ Topsail Beach
- ◆ Onslow County
- ◆ Jacksonville
- ◆ North Topsail Beach

Floodplain Management Plan

A floodplain management plan (or a flood mitigation plan) provides a framework for action regarding corrective and preventative measures to reduce flood-related impacts.

Open Space Management Plan

An open space management plan is designed to preserve, protect, and restore largely undeveloped lands in their natural state, and to expand or connect areas in the public domain such as parks, greenways, and other outdoor recreation areas. In many instances open space management practices are consistent with the goals of reducing hazard losses, such as the preservation of wetlands or other flood-prone areas in their natural state in perpetuity.

Stormwater Management Plan

A stormwater management plan is designed to address flooding associated with stormwater runoff. The stormwater management plan is typically focused on design and construction measures that are intended to reduce the impact of more frequently occurring minor urban flooding.

7.3.2 Administrative and Technical Capability

The ability of a local government to develop and implement mitigation projects, policies, and programs is directly tied to its ability to direct staff time and resources for that purpose. Administrative capability can be evaluated by determining how mitigation-related activities are assigned to local departments and if there are adequate personnel resources to complete these activities. The degree of intergovernmental coordination among departments will also affect administrative capability for the implementation and success of proposed mitigation activities.

Technical capability can generally be evaluated by assessing the level of knowledge and technical expertise of local government employees, such as personnel skilled in using geographic information systems (GIS) to analyze and assess community hazard vulnerability. The Capability Assessment captured information on administrative and technical capability through the identification of available staff and personnel resources.

Table 7.4 provides summary results for the SENC Region with regard to relevant staff and personnel resources. A checkmark indicates the presence of a staff member(s) in that jurisdiction with the specified knowledge or skill.

TABLE 7.4: RELEVANT STAFF/PERSONNEL RESOURCES

Jurisdiction	Planners with knowledge of land development and land management practices	Engineers or professionals trained in construction practices related to buildings and/or infrastructure	Planners or engineers with an understanding of natural and/or human-caused hazards	Building Official	Emergency manager	Floodplain manager	Land surveyors	Scientist familiar with the hazards of the community	Staff with education or expertise to assess the community's vulnerability to hazards	Personnel skilled in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and/or HAZUS	Resource development staff or grant writers	Maintenance programs to reduce risk	Warning systems/services	Mutual Aid Agreements
Brunswick County	√	√	√	√	√	√			√	√	√	√	√	√
City of Boiling Spring Lakes	√	√	√		√	√			√	√	√		√	√
City of Jacksonville	√	√		√	√	√			√	√	√	√	√	√
City of Northwest						√				√	√		√	√
City of Southport	√	√	√		√	√		√	√	√	√		√	√
City of Wilmington	√	√	√		√	√	√		√	√	√		√	√
New Hanover County	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Onslow County	√		√	√	√	√			√	√	√	√	√	√
Pender County	√	√	√	√	√	√			√	√	√	√	√	√

SECTION 7: CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT

Jurisdiction	Planners with knowledge of land development and land management practices	Engineers or professionals trained in construction practices related to buildings and/or infrastructure	Planners or engineers with an understanding of natural and/or human-caused hazards	Building Official	Emergency manager	Floodplain manager	Land surveyors	Scientist familiar with the hazards of the community	Staff with education or expertise to assess the community's vulnerability to hazards	Personnel skilled in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and/or HAZUS	Resource development staff or grant writers	Maintenance programs to reduce risk	Warning systems/services	Mutual Aid Agreements
Town of Atkinson						√				√	√		√	√
Town of Belville	√	√	√		√	√			√	√	√		√	√
Town of Bolivia						√				√	√		√	√
Town of Burgaw						√				√	√		√	√
Town of Calabash	√	√	√		√	√			√	√	√		√	√
Town of Carolina Beach	√	√	√		√	√			√	√	√		√	√
Town of Carolina Shores	√	√	√			√				√	√		√	√
Town of Caswell Beach	√	√	√			√				√	√		√	√

SECTION 7: CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT

Jurisdiction	Planners with knowledge of land development and land management practices	Engineers or professionals trained in construction practices related to buildings and/or infrastructure	Planners or engineers with an understanding of natural and/or human-caused hazards	Building Official	Emergency manager	Floodplain manager	Land surveyors	Scientist familiar with the hazards of the community	Staff with education or expertise to assess the community's vulnerability to hazards	Personnel skilled in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and/or HAZUS	Resource development staff or grant writers	Maintenance programs to reduce risk	Warning systems/services	Mutual Aid Agreements
Town of Holden Beach	√	√	√			√				√	√		√	√
Town of Holly Ridge						√				√	√		√	√
Town of Kure Beach	√	√	√		√	√			√	√	√		√	√
Town of Leland	√	√	√		√	√			√	√	√		√	√
Town of Navassa	√	√	√		√	√				√	√		√	√
Town of North Topsail Beach	√	√	√	√	√	√			√	√	√		√	√
Town of Oak Island	√	√	√			√	√			√	√		√	√
Town of Ocean Isle Beach	√	√	√			√				√	√		√	√

SECTION 7: CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT

Jurisdiction	Planners with knowledge of land development and land management practices	Engineers or professionals trained in construction practices related to buildings and/or infrastructure	Planners or engineers with an understanding of natural and/or human-caused hazards	Building Official	Emergency manager	Floodplain manager	Land surveyors	Scientist familiar with the hazards of the community	Staff with education or expertise to assess the community's vulnerability to hazards	Personnel skilled in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and/or HAZUS	Resource development staff or grant writers	Maintenance programs to reduce risk	Warning systems/services	Mutual Aid Agreements
Town of Richlands	√				√	√				√	√		√	√
Town of Saint James	√	√	√			√				√	√		√	√
Town of Sandy Creek										√	√		√	√
Town of Shallotte	√	√	√			√				√	√		√	√
Town of Sunset Beach	√	√	√			√				√	√		√	√
Town of Surf City	√	√	√	√	√	√			√	√	√		√	√
Town of Swansboro	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√		√	√
Town of Topsail Beach						√				√	√		√	√
Town of Varnamtown						√				√	√		√	√

SECTION 7: CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT

Jurisdiction	Planners with knowledge of land development and land management practices	Engineers or professionals trained in construction practices related to buildings and/or infrastructure	Planners or engineers with an understanding of natural and/or human-caused hazards	Building Official	Emergency manager	Floodplain manager	Land surveyors	Scientist familiar with the hazards of the community	Staff with education or expertise to assess the community's vulnerability to hazards	Personnel skilled in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and/or HAZUS	Resource development staff or grant writers	Maintenance programs to reduce risk	Warning systems/services	Mutual Aid Agreements
Town of Watha						√				√	√		√	√
Town of Wrightsville Beach	√	√	√		√	√			√	√	√		√	√
Village of Bald Head Island	√	√	√			√				√	√		√	√
Village of Saint Helena						√				√	√		√	√

7.3.3 Fiscal Capability

The ability of a local government to take action is often closely associated with the amount of money available to implement policies and projects. This may take the form of outside grant funding awards or locally based revenue and financing. The costs associated with mitigation policy and project implementation vary widely. In some cases, policies are tied primarily to staff time or administrative costs associated with the creation and monitoring of a given program. In other cases, direct expenses are linked to an actual project such as the acquisition of flood-prone houses, which can require a substantial commitment from local, state, and federal funding sources.

The Capability Assessment captures information on the Region’s fiscal capability through the identification of locally available financial resources.

Table 7.5 provides a summary of the results for the SENC Region with regard to relevant fiscal resources. A checkmark indicates that the given fiscal resource is locally available for hazard mitigation purposes (including match funds for state and federal mitigation grant funds).

TABLE 7.5: RELEVANT FISCAL RESOURCES

Jurisdiction	Capital Improvement Programming	Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)	Special Purpose Taxes	Gas/Electric Utility Fees	Water/Sewer Fees	Stormwater Utility Fees	Development Impact Fees	General Obligation Bonds	Revenue Bonds	Special Tax Bonds	Other
Brunswick County	√	√									
City of Boiling Spring Lakes											
City of Jacksonville	√	√			√	√	√				√
City of Northwest											
City of Southport											
City of Wilmington	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√		
New Hanover County	√	√			√	√	√				
Onslow County	√	√						√	√		√
Pender County	√	√									

SECTION 7: CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT

Jurisdiction	Capital Improvement Programming	Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)	Special Purpose Taxes	Gas/Electric Utility Fees	Water/Sewer Fees	Stormwater Utility Fees	Development Impact Fees	General Obligation Bonds	Revenue Bonds	Special Tax Bonds	Other
Town of Atkinson											
Town of Belville											
Town of Bolivia											
Town of Burgaw											
Town of Calabash											
Town of Carolina Beach					√	√	√				
Town of Carolina Shores											
Town of Caswell Beach											
Town of Holden Beach											
Town of Holly Ridge											
Town of Kure Beach					√	√	√	√	√	√	
Town of Leland											
Town of Navassa											
Town of North Topsail Beach	√	√	√					√	√	√	
Town of Oak Island											
Town of Ocean Isle Beach											
Town of Richlands	√	√					√	√	√	√	
Town of Saint James											
Town of Sandy Creek											
Town of Shallotte											
Town of Sunset Beach											

Jurisdiction	Capital Improvement Programming	Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)	Special Purpose Taxes	Gas/Electric Utility Fees	Water/Sewer Fees	Stormwater Utility Fees	Development Impact Fees	General Obligation Bonds	Revenue Bonds	Special Tax Bonds	Other
Town of Surf City	√	√	√		√	√					√
Town of Swansboro	√	√	√			√		√	√	√	√
Town of Topsail Beach											
Town of Varnamtown											
Town of Watha											
Town of Wrightsville Beach					√	√	√				
Village of Bald Head Island											
Village of Saint Helena											

Source: Local Governments

7.3.4 Education and Outreach Capability

This type of local capability refers to education and outreach programs and methods already in place that could be used to implement mitigation activities and communicate hazard-related information. Examples include natural disaster or safety related school programs; participation in community programs such as Firewise or StormReady; and activities conducted as part of hazard awareness campaigns such as a Tornado Awareness Month.

Table 7.6 provides a summary of the results for the SENC Region with regard to relevant education and outreach resources. A checkmark indicates that the given resource is locally available for hazard mitigation purposes.

TABLE 7.6: EDUCATION AND OUTREACH RESOURCES

Jurisdiction	Local citizen groups or non-profit organizations focused on environmental protection, emergency	Ongoing public education or information program (e.g., responsible water use, fire safety, household	Natural disaster or safety related school programs	StormReady certification	Firewise Communities certification	Public-private partnership initiatives addressing disaster-related issues	Other
Brunswick County				√	√		√
City of Boiling Spring Lakes		√					
City of Jacksonville							
City of Northwest							
City of Southport							
City of Wilmington	√	√					
New Hanover County	√	√		√			√
Onslow County		√		√			√
Pender County				√			√
Town of Atkinson							
Town of Belville							
Town of Bolivia							
Town of Burgaw							
Town of Calabash				√			
Town of Carolina Beach	√	√					
Town of Carolina Shores							
Town of Caswell Beach							
Town of Holden Beach							
Town of Holly Ridge							
Town of Kure Beach	√	√					

SECTION 7: CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT

Jurisdiction	Local citizen groups or non-profit organizations focused on environmental protection, emergency	Ongoing public education or information program (e.g., responsible water use, fire safety, household	Natural disaster or safety related school programs	StormReady certification	Firewise Communities certification	Public-private partnership initiatives addressing disaster-related issues	Other
Town of Leland							
Town of Navassa							
Town of North Topsail Beach							
Town of Oak Island							
Town of Ocean Isle Beach				√			
Town of Richlands							
Town of Saint James					√		
Town of Sandy Creek							
Town of Shallotte							
Town of Sunset Beach							
Town of Surf City							
Town of Swansboro							
Town of Topsail Beach							
Town of Varnamtown							
Town of Watha							
Town of Wrightsville Beach	√	√					
Village of Bald Head Island							
Village of Saint Helena							

7.3.5 Mitigation Capability

This type of local capability refers to the mitigation strategies and actions that are developed by the communities in this plan.

Table 7.7 provides a summary of the results for the planning area with regard to relevant mitigation resources. A checkmark (X) indicates that the given resource is locally available for hazard mitigation purposes.

TABLE 7.7: MITIGATION RESOURCES

Jurisdiction	Do you apply for mitigation grant funding?	Do you perform reconstruction projects?	Do you perform building elevations?	Do you perform acquisitions?
Brunswick County	√	√	√	√
City of Boiling Spring Lakes	√	√		
City of Jacksonville	√	√	√	√
City of Northwest				
City of Southport	√	√	√	√
City of Wilmington	√	√	√	√
New Hanover County	√	√	√	√
Onslow County	√	√	√	√
Pender County	√	√	√	√
Town of Atkinson				
Town of Belville				
Town of Bolivia				
Town of Burgaw	√	√	√	√
Town of Calabash	√	√	√	√
Town of Carolina Beach	√	√	√	√
Town of Carolina Shores	√	√	√	√
Town of Caswell Beach	√	√	√	√
Town of Holden Beach	√	√	√	√
Town of Holly Ridge				
Town of Kure Beach	√	√	√	√

Jurisdiction	Do you apply for mitigation grant funding?	Do you perform reconstruction projects?	Do you perform building elevations?	Do you perform acquisitions?
Town of Leland	✓	✓	✓	✓
Town of Navassa	✓	✓	✓	✓
Town of North Topsail Beach	✓	✓	✓	✓
Town of Oak Island	✓	✓	✓	✓
Town of Ocean Isle Beach	✓	✓	✓	✓
Town of Richlands				
Town of Saint James	✓	✓		
Town of Sandy Creek				
Town of Shallotte	✓	✓	✓	✓
Town of Sunset Beach	✓	✓	✓	✓
Town of Surf City	✓	✓	✓	✓
Town of Swansboro	✓	✓	✓	✓
Town of Topsail Beach	✓	✓	✓	✓
Town of Varnamtown				
Town of Watha				
Town of Wrightsville Beach	✓	✓	✓	✓
Village of Bald Head Island	✓	✓	✓	✓
Village of Saint Helena				

7.3.6 Political Capability

One of the most difficult capabilities to evaluate involves the political will of a jurisdiction to enact meaningful policies and projects designed to reduce the impact of future hazard events. Hazard mitigation may not be a local priority, or may conflict with or be seen as an impediment to other goals of the community, such as growth and economic development. Therefore, the local political climate must be considered in designing mitigation strategies, as it could be the most difficult hurdle to overcome in accomplishing their adoption and implementation.

The Capability Assessment captures information on political capability of the SENC Region. Local governments were asked to identify some general examples of local political capability, such as guiding development away from identified hazard areas, restricting public investments or capital improvements within hazard areas, or enforcing local development standards that go beyond minimum state or federal requirements (e.g., building codes, floodplain management, etc.). The comments provided by the participating jurisdictions are listed below:

- Onslow County's leadership is very strict on floodplain management. County planning continues to enforce programs to reduce hazard impacts and the County is working to ensure compliance in hazard mitigation.
- The City of Jacksonville has implemented policies, procedures and ordinances that support hazard mitigation. The City has a floodplain management plan with an assigned floodplain manager. The City has worked extensively in flood prone areas such as Shoreline Dr. to remove affected properties from hazard area. The City participates in code enforcement and plan review programs. The City has a Capital Improvement Plan that supports hazard mitigation with the new Jacksonville Marina being a prime example in addition to storm-water improvements. The City has an Emergency Operations Plan that is regularly reviewed and practiced. City council has illustrated their support for hazard mitigation through a resolution to join the SRHMP and through programs that waive fees during disaster recovery.
- The Town of Swansboro has taken proactive steps to develop several plans and programs which aid in the mitigation and reduction of hazards in our community.

Those plans/programs are as follows:

1. Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan in conjunction with the Onslow County Emergency Services Department (in process);
2. Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance (Updated 2020);
3. Watershed Restoration Plan (2017);
4. CAMA Land Use Plan Update (2019);
5. Stormwater Enterprise Fund (Collected Annually); and
6. Emergency Operations Plan (Updated Annually).

More information and copies of these plans can be found on our website at <https://swansboronc.org/>.

- Pender County has exhibited political commitment to reduce the impact of future hazard events through requiring two feet of freeboard in Special Flood Hazard Areas, applying for grant

funding to mitigate future risk to structures damaged by storms, and implementing the Pender 2.0 Comprehensive Land Use Plan which encourages the conservation of environmental features for their natural storm protection functions.

7.3.7 Local Self-Assessment

In addition to the inventory and analysis of specific local capabilities, the Capability Assessment asked counties and local jurisdictions within the SENC Region to conduct a self-assessment of their perceived capability to implement hazard mitigation activities. As part of this process, local officials were encouraged to consider the barriers to implementing proposed mitigation strategies in addition to the mechanisms that could enhance or further such strategies. Local government representatives classified each of the aforementioned capabilities as either “limited,” “moderate,” or “high.”

Table 7.8 summarizes the results of the self-assessment for the SENC Region.

TABLE 7.8: SELF-ASSESSMENT OF CAPABILITY

Jurisdiction	Plans, Ordinances, Codes and Programs	Administrative and Technical Capability	Fiscal Capability	Education and Outreach Capability	Mitigation Capability	Political Capability	OVERALL CAPABILITY
Brunswick County	High	High	High	Moderate	Moderate	High	High
City of Boiling Spring Lakes	High	Moderate	Limited	High	Unrated	Moderate	Moderate
City of Jacksonville	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated
City of Northwest	Limited	Limited	Limited	Unrated	Unrated	Limited	Limited
City of Southport	High	High	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Limited
City of Wilmington	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Unrated	Unrated	Moderate	Moderate
New Hanover County	Moderate	Moderate	Limited	Unrated	Unrated	Moderate	Moderate
Onslow County	High	High	Moderate	High	High	Moderate	Moderate
Pender County	Moderate	Moderate	Limited	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Town of Atkinson	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated
Town of Belville	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Unrated	Unrated	Moderate	Moderate

SECTION 7: CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT

Jurisdiction	Plans, Ordinances, Codes and Programs	Administrative and Technical Capability	Fiscal Capability	Education and Outreach Capability	Mitigation Capability	Political Capability	OVERALL CAPABILITY
Town of Bolivia	Limited	Limited	Moderate	Unrated	Unrated	Limited	Limited
Town of Burgaw	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated
Town of Calabash	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Unrated	Unrated	Moderate	Moderate
Town of Carolina Beach	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Unrated	Unrated	Moderate	Moderate
Town of Carolina Shores	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated
Town of Caswell Beach	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated
Town of Holden Beach	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated
Town of Holly Ridge	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated
Town of Kure Beach	Limited	Limited	Limited	Unrated	Unrated	Limited	Limited
Town of Leland	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Unrated	Unrated	Moderate	Moderate
Town of Navassa	Limited	Limited	Limited	Unrated	Unrated	Limited	Limited
Town of North Topsail Beach	High	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High	High
Town of Oak Island	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated
Town of Ocean Isle Beach	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated
Town of Richlands	Moderate	Moderate	Limited	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Town of Saint James	Unrated	Limited	Limited	Unrated	Unrated	Moderate	Limited
Town of Sandy Creek	Limited	Limited	Limited	Unrated	Unrated	Limited	Limited
Town of Shallotte	Moderate	Limited	Moderate	Unrated	Unrated	Moderate	Limited
Town of Sunset Beach	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated
Town of Surf City	High	High	High	High	High	Moderate	High

Jurisdiction	Plans, Ordinances, Codes and Programs	Administrative and Technical Capability	Fiscal Capability	Education and Outreach Capability	Mitigation Capability	Political Capability	OVERALL CAPABILITY
Town of Swansboro	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Town of Topsail Beach	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated
Town of Varnamtown	Limited	Limited	Limited	Unrated	Unrated	Limited	Limited
Town of Watha	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated
Town of Wrightsville Beach	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated
Village of Bald Head Island	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated
Village of Saint Helena	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated

7.4 CONCLUSIONS ON LOCAL CAPABILITY

As previously discussed, one of the reasons for conducting a Capability Assessment is to examine local capabilities to detect any existing gaps or weaknesses within ongoing government activities that could hinder proposed mitigation activities and possibly exacerbate community hazard vulnerability. These gaps or weaknesses have been identified, for each jurisdiction, in the tables found throughout this section. The participating jurisdictions used the Capability Assessment as part of the basis for the mitigation actions that are identified in Section 9; therefore, each jurisdiction addresses their ability to expand on and improve their existing capabilities through the identification of their mitigation actions.