

3.7. NEW JERSEY

3.7.1. LITTLE SILVER, NJ

Population Density	2226/ sq. mi.
Form of Government	Borough
Category	Suburban Bayfront
CRS Rating	Not Participating

Median Household Income	Median Per Capita Income	% Owner Occ	Population	2000-2010 Pop Growth Rate	% White	% Hispanic	% Minority	% Seasonal Housing
115836	53891	88.6	5950	-0.36	96.4	3%	6.3%	2.0

Adaptations	Status	Incorp orates CC	Type	Impact	Standard Costs	Funding Source	
Coastal Community Vulnerability Assessment Tool	Completed	Yes	Procedural	Recommendation	Unique	NA	
Flood gauge warning system	Implemented	No	Procedural	NA	Unique	Low (< \$10,000)	State Police, FEMA, Other Towns
Coastal Wetlands Ordinance	Implemented	No	Infrastructure (Green)	Mandatory	Above Required	NA	NA
Open Space Levy, Approved Open Space Plan and Wetlands Mitigation Bank	Implemented	No	Infrastructure (Green)	Mandatory	Unique	NA	NA

CONTACTS

Borough Administrator - Helen Gormley: hgormley@littlesilver.org
 OEM Coordinator/Police Officer - Frank Solerno
 732-222-8221

Borough of Oceanport
 222 Monmouth Blvd., Oceanport, NJ 07757

POPULATION AND GEOGRAPHY

Little Silver is located in eastern Monmouth County, New Jersey. The Borough is 2.76 square miles and its jurisdiction includes .60 sq. mi. of submerged lands. It is located on tidal marshes about 2 miles from the Atlantic coastline.

The borough is a peninsula surrounded by waterways—the Shrewsbury River, Little Silver Creek, Parker's Creek, and Town Neck Creek all can cause flooding in town. 8% of the homes in Little Silver abut the Shrewsbury River. Some parts of town are more vulnerable due to some variation in topography, as the average elevation is 30 feet and the highest point is 80 feet.

Little Silver is a wealthy commuter suburb of New York City and northern New Jersey. It is a year-round community with only 2% seasonal homes. Its population as of 2010 is 5,950. The population density is 2,226 people per sq. mi. The community is 96% white, .31% African American, and 1.51% Asian. Median per capita income is \$53,831.

COASTAL ISSUES

Little Silver is a largely built-out community with little room for development. It consists mostly of single-family homes and has a small commercial district. A New Jersey Transit train station provides service to New York and Northern New Jersey. The town was hit hard in the 1992 nor'easter, and it takes the threat of coastal flooding seriously.

NFIP data shows that more than over \$3.2 million in flood losses were paid to 156 properties under the National Flood Insurance Program.⁵ The Coastal Communities Resilience Demonstration Project report also pointed out that the entirety of the Borough is at risk from inundation in a Category 1 or 2 hurricane.

Since 1850, nine tropical storms have passed over the Borough, but nothing in recent memory prepared it for the onslaught from Post-Tropical Superstorm Sandy. One-and-a-half weeks after the storm, one-third of homeowners remained without power. In addition to downed power lines, damage to the substations was also significant.



Figure 3.7.1:1 Sandy's wrath on Little Silver Point Road in Little Silver, NJ

Little Silver escaped without injury to emergency workers and residents, but experienced significant property damage from falling trees and flooding. A few residences were severely

⁵ FEMA, NFIP Report Data, Cited in Ida Leigh Wood, Jenny Tirrito and Mariana Leckner.

damaged or destroyed, and some residents were displaced for a lengthy period of rebuilding. (Little Silver Storm Recovery Update 2012)

The tales of destruction and devastation were widespread via electronic media in the days following the storm. The most badly damaged area was reported to be a section of town called Silvermere at the end of Point Road. The niece of a resident whose Shrewsbury riverfront home was badly damaged was quoted saying, "I knew it was bad, I just didn't think it would be like this" (Byrnes 2012). Alvin Terrace was another street that sustained serious impacts from the surge. One resident of that street reported that her house of five years was destroyed by winds, high water, and a fallen tree. Another neighbor reported that his entire neighborhood was under 3 feet of water during the height of the storm.

ADAPTATIONS

New Jersey Coastal Community Resilience Demonstration Project

The Borough of Little Silver was a participant in the New Jersey Coastal Community Resilience Demonstration Project, which consisted of the Coastal Community Vulnerability Assessment Tool (VAT) as well as the "Getting to Resilience" (GTR) questionnaire.

The VAT and the GTR were pilot projects spearheaded by the National Sea Grant Coastal Communities Climate Adaptation Initiative (CCCAI) and the New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium (NJSGC), in partnership with the New Jersey Department of Environmental protection (NJDEP), Monmouth University Urban Coast Institute (UCI), and Stevens Institute of Technology. The community-based climate adaptation demonstration projects were conducted in partnership with the communities of Oceanport, Little Silver, and Cape May Point.

The objective was to provide communities with a vulnerability assessment so they could improve their resilience to coastal hazards and sea level rise. The project used mapping to illustrate inundation scenarios (the Coastal Community Vulnerability Assessment Protocol, "CCVAP") as well as developed the GTR questionnaire. The CCVAP was used to identify critical infrastructure, natural resources, and special need populations subject to inundation from coastal floodwater.

The goal of the questionnaire was to help local officials identify planning, mitigation, and adaptation opportunities to reduce vulnerability to coastal storms and sea level rise and to highlight the importance of local plan coordination, as well as integration with hazard mitigation and town planning and building codes.

The questionnaire was developed with input from government agencies, planning practitioners and academic experts, and focused on land use planning, hazard mitigation and coastal issues. It was comprised of five sections—Risk and Vulnerability Assessment, Planning Integration, Public Engagement, Emergency Preparedness and Recovery, and Hazard Mitigation and Implementation. The questionnaire was administered to Oceanport as well as Little Silver and Cape May.

Coastal Wetlands Ordinance

The Borough has an innovative Coastal Wetlands Ordinance, originally adopted in 1973 and updated since (Little Silver, N.J., Revised General Ordinances, Ch. XIX). The farsighted law prevented development of vulnerable coastal wetlands that act as protective barriers for storm surge flooding for the existing community. The preamble states that the borough council found “the spread of development and increasing demands upon natural resources are encroaching upon, polluting, or eliminating many of the borough’s natural coastal water resources, coastal wetlands, tidal marshes and other natural resources in the coastal flood zone...which, if preserved and maintained in an undisturbed and natural condition, constitute important physical, social, aesthetic, recreational and economic assets to existing and future residents and the public in general” (19-1).

The ordinance allows only three activities as-of-right in the coastal flood zone, and only “provided that there is no significant adverse impact on the coastal flood zone” (§ 19-5)

These include:

- a. Conservation of soil, vegetation, water, fish, shellfish, and wildlife.
- b. Outdoor low-intensity recreation including nature study, hiking, swimming, etc.
- c. Boat anchorage or mooring.

Regulated acts are permitted by special permit issued by the Planning Board only after a permit application is made to the Environmental Commission and the project is also approved under county, state, and federal rules and regulations. Aside from the Environmental Commission, applicants must also forward a copy to the Borough Engineer and Shade Tree Commission, both of whom have 30 days to respond in writing with a recommendation. (§ 19-7.2)

Regulated activities include the erection of structures, driving pilings, changing tidal ebb and flow, temporary storage of materials, construction of dams or water control structures, construction driveways and roads where they pass over tidal wetlands or marshes, deposit of materials or wastes, and the removal, digging, or dredging of any material. (§ 19-6)

In order to obtain a permit, the applicant must provide the names and addresses of all owners within 500 feet; a description of the purpose of the project, and an environmental assessment statement. A description of the “manner in which material will be removed or deposited, structure installed or use carried out” is also required. Topographical maps, a map showing soil types, filing fees, and proof of approvals and permits issued by county, state and federal agencies, “including, but not limited to Freehold Soil Conservation District, Department of Environmental Protection of the State of New Jersey and the United States Army Corps of Engineers” (§19-7.1) The ordinance requires posting of any permit issued and makes clear that the Borough may inspect the project at any time. An environmental bond may also be required for any environmental damage the project may cause.

Shrewsbury River Flood Warning System

Little Silver partnered with the Monmouth County Office of Emergency Management and nine other municipalities to install five automated flood gauges at key locations along the Shrewsbury and Navesink rivers to provide real-time information about tidal flooding, wave heights, and weather during coastal storms. The data is received and decoded by Monmouth University and the Stevens Institute of Technology, who were also partners in the project. The gauges are installed on the Gooseneck Bridge, Rumson-Sea Bright Bridge, Oceanic Avenue Bridge, Highlands-Sea Bright Bridge, and Patten Avenue Bridge. The project was funded by a \$90,000 FEMA Emergency Management Performance Grant to the New Jersey State Police, with a required contributing match of \$1,500 in maintenance funds annually from each of the municipalities.

Open Space Levy, Approved Open Space Plan and Wetlands Mitigation Bank

The Borough passed an annual levy for open space and approved an open space plan in 2003. The plan identifies floodplain management as a priority. It also maintains a wetlands mitigation bank on Town Neck Creek, which restores degraded tidal wetlands and acts as a protective buffer. Unfortunately, the opportunities to acquire land are few as most of the Borough is built out according to current regulations.



Figure 3.7.1:2 - Shrewsbury River Flood Gauge and Weather Station