

### 3.7.2. OCEANPORT, NJ

Population Density	1802 / sq. mi.
Form of Government	Borough
Category	Suburban Bayfront
CRS Rating	8

Median Household Income	Median Per Capita Income	% Owner Occ	Population	2000-2010 Pop Growth Rate	% White	% Hispanic	% Minority	% Seasonal Housing
88562	42893	78.3	5832	-0.26	93.4	4%	9.5%	1.7

Adaptations	Status	Incorporates CC	Type	Applies To	Standard	Costs	Funding Source
Coastal Community Vulnerability Assessment Tool	Completed	Yes	Procedural	Planning	Unique	Low (<\$10,000)	State Police, FEMA, Other Towns
Freeboard – 2 Ft.	Implemented	No	Accommodation	Building	Above Required	Very Low (<\$1,000)	None

### CONTACTS

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### POPULATION AND GEOGRAPHY

Oceanport, New Jersey, is a town of 3.9 square miles located in the northern portion of Monmouth County, less than a mile from the Atlantic Ocean shore and, according to officials we interviewed, “80 percent of the borough is surrounded by water.” These bodies of water include Parkers Creek, Oceanport Creek, Blackberry Creek, Branchport Creek, and the Shrewsbury River (which is a tidal strait). The borough borders Little Silver, Long Branch, Eatontown, and West Long Branch and has a maritime boundary with Monmouth Beach. Average elevation of

the community is 20 feet. The town is a wealthy year-round (1.7% seasonal homes) commuter suburb of New York City and Northern New Jersey. It has a relatively high (78%) owner-occupancy, and much of the town consists of single-family homes on large lots.

The population as of the 2010 Census is 5,832 and the population density is 1,802 people per sq. mi. There are 2,114 housing units with a density of 656 per sq. mi. The population is 95.7% white, 1.96% African American, and less than 1% other. Median household income is \$71,458 and median per capita income is \$42,893, which is sixth highest of our study communities. 2.7% of the population live below the poverty line.

### COASTAL ISSUES

Superstorm Sandy was an unprecedented late-breaking event in Oceanport. Many roads and bridges were impassible during the storm, and flooding was severe. A local paper quoted resident Margaret Murray as saying "I've lived here my whole life and I've never seen (the water) up so high."

Despite this outsized event, the town is not a stranger to coastal flooding. In particular, the town suffered extensive damage during a 1992 nor'easter. Oceanport has been proactive about the issues facing the community. Kimberly Jungfer, Borough Administrator/Clerk, said, "In all aspects of the town...we are very conscious about flooding...anything that we do...we are always conscious about how it will affect flooding...and anything that we can do to lessen it..." (Personal Communication, Jun. 18, 2012).

When asked "If there is one thing that the state or federal government can do to improve your ability to respond to flooding and climate change," borough OEM coordinator Buzzy Baldanza responded that there was not much they could do to help the town. "Unless someone wants to build the equivalent of the Thames River floodgate...I don't see it happening soon...there's no way we can stop that water from coming in...there's no way you can put a bulkhead around Oceanport...so it's just going to keep coming in..." (Personal Communication, Jun. 18, 2012). Oceanport clearly believes that adapting to these constraints is the way it will survive the future.

Because it is largely built out, Oceanport is limited in its ability to affect the development pattern. However, a major development project for the town is in the works. Fort Monmouth is a large army base on the north side of town that was decommissioned in 2010. The decommissioning expanded the town's total land area by one-third.

### ADAPTATIONS

#### **Coastal Community Vulnerability Assessment Tool**

Oceanport was a participant in the "Coastal Community Vulnerability Assessment Tool" (VAT) as well as the "Getting to Resilience" (GTR) questionnaire, as explained and referenced in the summary for Little Silver.

Mr. Baldanza explained that the town first became involved with the coastal resilience project as a partner in the installation of tide gauges on the Shewesbury River. A professor working with Monmouth University, who was the project manager for the tide gauge project, contacted Oceanport and asked if they would be willing to participate in the GTR project as well.

The information from the tide gauges is being used by Stevens Institute of Technology to develop modeling to predict future inundation, with information from the gauges and an app they developed which allows emergency management teams to report the levels of flooding on the streets. The funding was provided through the state, but each participating town contributes \$1,500 per year for maintenance of the gauges.

Mr. Baldanza noted that the report generated from the vulnerability assessment enhanced their awareness of the risk of flooding in some of the town's critical and public facilities, but he waxed futile about what they could do about it. He indicated they could not qualify for federal or state funds to relocate any of these facilities since they had not been inundated severely enough at that point. But he noted that future development at Fort Monmouth might provide an opportunity to relocate the facilities at risk.

Regarding future plans to incorporate the information into planning and decision making, Mr. Baldanza said he made a presentation to the planning department, and that he hoped they used the information.

#### **Building Code/Freeboard Requirement**

The Borough's building code requires a 2-foot freeboard, which effectively means an 11-1/2 foot elevation for all new or substantially renovated structures (over 50% of the assessed value of the structure, not the total assessed value.) Oceanport's elevation requirement is 9-1/2 feet above the minimum FEMA requirements. They believed that their regulatory requirements for flood elevation were most effective and could serve as a model for other towns. They adopted this strict regulation when the risk to homes became evident in the flooding caused by the 1992 nor'easter in the region. They indicated that many homeowners elected to raise their homes after that storm.

#### **Shrewsbury River Flood Warning System**

Oceanport participates in this multi-jurisdictional partnership described in detail in the Little Silver summary.