



TOWNSHIP OF TOMS RIVER

DEPARTMENT OF ENGINEERING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

MEMORANDUM

To: FEMA – 2018 CRS Recertification Package
From: Robert J. Chankalian, PE, CME
Township Engineer & Flood Plain Administrator
Subject: 2018 FEMA CRS - Progress Report
Date: September 12, 2018
Copy To: Township Website

Background:

Toms River continues to have a substantial number of Repetitive Loss properties within its boundaries, which have increased since Hurricane Irene and Superstorm Sandy. As of the last Repetitive Loss (RL) report provided by FEMA in September of 2013, the amount of RL properties in Toms River has risen from 109 to 451.

Following the preparation of Toms River's Severe Repetitive Loss Analysis 6 years ago, and after the two recent major storms, we have had over 3,781 homes declared substantially damaged (SD).

It should be noted that the number of SD homes is down from the original 4,000 reported initially, based on appeals.

As part of the ongoing rebuilding process, Toms River is strictly enforcing its floodplain management regulations to ensure all SD properties are brought into code compliance.



These past storms, although tragic in their immediate effect on the Township, are a catalyst for upgrading of the flood prone housing stock. As shown in the table below, you can see the immediate positive impact on a significant amount of flood prone homes within the Township:

The following is a summary of permits issued since the 3rd Quarter of 2018:

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
Dwelling Units Demolished:	2000+	1929+	1,800+	1500+
Elevation Permits Issued:	1175+	1075+	715+	370+
New Dwelling Permits Issued:		1785+	1450+	980+
Homes Approved for RREM Program:			900+/-	1,000+/-
Homes in second round of RREM Program:			Pending+/-	1,400+/-

As such, with approximately 3,800 SD homes required to be mitigated, when you consider the 2,000 demolished homes, and 1175 elevation permits issued, Toms River has approximately 83% of the Substantially Damaged Properties already under mitigation. If you consider the 1785 new home & 1106 elevation permits issued, and outstanding RREM properties, that brings the total even higher.¹

Steps Taken to Minimize Flood Impact:

Public Awareness

A significant portion of Toms River’s SRL properties were post war, pre FIRM construction on the barrier island. Toms River has made several improvements in its efforts to increase public awareness of the Flood Insurance Rate Program to help remedy this. The Township has invested in an upgraded website and a GIS system to help it maintain, monitor and inform the public. Superstorm Sandy publicity has also had a huge impact on the public’s awareness of these regulations.

The website provides an informational news letter available 24/7 as a supplement to the mailing notification that takes place once a year with the tax bill mailing. Updates to the website, including

¹ The percentages assume that the permits issued are, in majority, for substantially damaged homes. It should be noted that some homes that decided to mitigate may not have been substantially damaged.

flood information updates, are now sent via social media to Township subscribers. I can say that this outreach is working. The Engineering Division receives numerous calls from realtors and attorneys to check if a property is substantially damaged during the purchase process.

The Township website maintains a link to the FEMA “What’s my BFE” website, where residents can perform their own flood zone determinations. Notwithstanding the website, over the last few years, the Engineering Division prepared over 1000 flood zone determination letters. The website also has numerous flood regulation information updates.

Following the storm, the Township conducted an informational seminar regarding the substantial damage process and also answered general flood zone questions. The seminar consisted of a PowerPoint presentation, which is also available for download on the Township website. Toms River Township hired a Storm Recovery Ombudsman, Mr. Trevor Newman, right after Superstorm Sandy. Mr. Newman attended various meetings with communities and personal meetings with residents. Mr. Newman had vast knowledge in the FEMA regulations, construction and the insurance process. During the peak of the rebuilding, the Ombudsman provided daily flood insurance and flood regulation information to the public.

The GIS mapping software has allowed us to more easily locate and analyze SRL properties and properties in their vicinity. Eventually, the Township plans on providing a web based version of the GIS so that residents, realtors, attorneys and other professionals can more easily access flood zone information.

With regard to future mitigation, the Township has participated in the preparation of the County’s Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan. Lastly, with the 6 year anniversary of Superstorm Sandy approaching, the Township has also sought the assistance of FEMA with regard to section 1316 of CFR 2002 Title 44.

Physical Improvements

One of our most promising mitigating opportunities to reduce flooding is the ACoE Dune project which began in 2017 and is slated to be completed by the spring of 2018. However, due to the relatively low elevation of the barrier island and the Bay front areas, Toms River does what it can to reduce damage from flooding events.

Previously Toms River Township was installing flood valves on outfall pipes. This however turned out to have a minimal effect in the lower lying areas, as rising waters not only backflow through pipes, but also migrate through the sandy soils.

As such, the Township conducted flood studies of several low lying roads and consequently began a roadway elevation program, of which, two roads have already been elevated, two more roads are about to begin construction, four additional roads are about to begin the design phases, and several grants for future road elevation work have been applied for. Roadway elevation seems to be the only sure way to alleviate the nuisance flooding and to ensure the emergency vehicles have the best chance to traverse a roadway during a flood.

At some point however, due to the naturally low terrain and the proximity to the Ocean and Bay, we must solely rely on elevated construction to minimize flood damage. The Engineering and Building Divisions require compliance with the NJDEP Flood Hazard and CAFRA rules, which mandate the first floor to be 12" minimum above the 100 year BFE. We began enforcing the ABFE maps, the preliminary working maps, and currently the PFIRMS, immediately upon direction by the State NJDEP.