



# Coastal Enhancement Strategy and Hazard Mitigation Plan Alignment Guide

August 2024



FEMA

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## Introduction

The U.S. coastlines are home to growing and evolving populations, ecosystems, and industries. They also experience some of the nation’s most expensive and disruptive disasters. These risks continue to grow. Coastal Enhancement Strategies and Hazard Mitigation Plans both address coastal hazards and identify opportunities to reduce risk. This guide provides information on how state coastal managers and hazard mitigation planners can work together and align these planning processes.

### Fifth National Climate Assessment, Ch. 9

*On the coast, natural landscapes are intertwined with the cultures, economies, and built infrastructure of humans...Climate change is exacerbating coastal hazards, with rising seas and more intense storms leading to increases in both flood risks and shoreline change and erosion...*

*Accelerating sea level rise and climate change will transform the coastal landscape, requiring a new paradigm for how we live with, or adapt to, these changes.*

Section 309 of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) encourages state and territory coastal management programs to develop multi-year strategies to enhance their program’s ability to address priority needs related to nine different enhancement areas, including coastal hazards. The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act) incentivizes states and territories to engage in hazard mitigation planning.

In this guide, “coastal enhancement strategies” (enhancement strategies, for short) refer to CZMA Section 309 Enhancement Program Assessments and Strategies. This is a plan developed by the coastal management program of a state or territory. A “hazard mitigation plan” refers to a plan authorized by the Stafford Act. The plan is typically developed by a state, tribe, territory, or local emergency management agency .

Hazard mitigation professionals work to reduce the risk from all the hazards a community may face. Coastal managers work to protect, restore and responsibly develop our coastal communities and resources. This work includes managing coastal development to minimize the loss of life and property caused by improper development in areas vulnerable to coastal hazards.

This resource guide is aimed at both state hazard mitigation planners and state coastal managers. State, local, tribal, and territorial planners in coastal communities can use this resource to inform both planning processes and to find new ways to coordinate.

The goals of hazard mitigation plans and coastal enhancement strategies may overlap. However, they have different purposes, are administered by different federal agencies, and are updated on different schedules. Table 1 highlights the key differences.

**Table 1: Plan Comparison at a Glance**

	Coastal Enhancement Strategy	Hazard Mitigation Plan
<b>Leading Federal Agency</b>	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)	Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
<b>Leading State or Territorial Agency*</b>	Generally, an environmental, natural resource or coastal management department	Generally, an emergency management or public safety department
<b>Purpose</b>	Assess the need for improving coastal management efforts in nine “enhancement areas,” one being coastal hazards.  Identify strategies to address the needs for high-priority enhancement areas.	Assess the hazards that pose risks to vulnerable assets within the planning area and utilize an inclusive planning process to identify and prioritize actions to reduce those risks. These risks may be related to coastal hazards.
<b>Funding</b>	Strategy approval provides access to CZMA Section 309 funding to implement strategies.	Plan approval is required for certain non-disaster assistance. Visit <a href="#">Mitigation Planning and Grants   FEMA.gov for more information.</a>
<b>Planning Cycle</b>	5-year cycles that begin in years ending with 1 or 6 (e.g., 2026 or 2031).	A 5-year cycle that starts when the plan is approved. Visit <a href="#">FEMA’s Plan Status</a> website for more information.
<p>* Section 309 programs are led by state governments. Tribes and local governments engage in hazard mitigation planning and may use similar concepts. This table compares state and territorial processes that have opportunities for direct coordination.</p> <p>For a more detailed comparison of the two plans, review Appendix A.</p>		

Despite these differences, there are ways to align these state and territorial planning processes. Doing so can use existing efforts, reduce redundancies, and maximize capacity. It can also unite complementary capabilities and strengthen both planning documents. This may lead to more effective and collaborative approaches to protecting the coast. This guide identifies four opportunities for alignment:

- Leveraging engagement and partnerships.
- Sharing data and risk assessments.
- Assessing complementary capabilities.
- Coordinating strategies and actions.

Figure 1 illustrates these areas of alignment.



**Figure 1: Opportunities for Alignment**

## Opportunity 1: Leveraging Engagement and Partnerships

### What is required to engage partners during the planning process?

All hazard mitigation plans and coastal enhancement strategies must document the planning process. This includes noting how partner agencies and other groups were engaged. Identifying stakeholders takes time and thoughtful planning. Involving these groups early and often can bring in their unique knowledge and skills that may influence the final product.

### COASTAL ENHANCEMENT STRATEGIES

As they begin to develop their coastal enhancement strategy, coastal management programs need to identify and document a few key stakeholder groups to engage. The stakeholders provide feedback on what they believe are the high-priority enhancement areas, the critical problems related to those priority areas, and the greatest opportunity for a state’s coastal management program to strengthen and enhance its program to address those problems. The stakeholder input helps inform the priority enhancement areas and needs identified through the assessment process. It also helps the coastal management program develop strategies to address those high-priority issues. These plans must also summarize any feedback that informed the assessment and strategies. One way to do this is for

a plan to include a one-page summary of which groups were involved, how they were engaged, the input they provided, and any ideas and priorities that emerged.

Section 309 Guidance provides flexibility on how to engage these groups. It does not have specific requirements for which groups to include. Rather, the guidance notes that the coastal management program knows its stakeholder groups best and how to effectively engage them in the assessment and strategy development process. It says that stakeholder groups should provide feedback on what they feel are high-priority areas to enhance along a state or territory’s coastal zone. The guidance notes that the stakeholders should reflect the diversity of people and organizations that use the coast to live, work and recreate, including communities or groups that have not historically been actively engaged, or may be underrepresented, in the coastal management program’s work.

### HAZARD MITIGATION PLANS

The State, Local, and Tribal Mitigation Planning Policy Guides have requirements to engage certain groups in developing the plan. This is more complex at the state and territory levels, since these plans affect large populations. For state plans, FEMA requires planners to coordinate with seven different sectors during plan development. Table includes these sectors.

The same sectors/stakeholder groups can be included for both planning processes.

**Table 2: Potential Sectors and Partners for Integration**

Sector	Possible Partners*
<p><b>Emergency management</b> Including these community lifelines: Safety and Security, Hazardous Materials, Food, Hydration, Shelter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ State agencies (e.g., Housing, Emergency Management, Planning)</li> <li>▪ Federal agencies (e.g., FEMA, NOAA, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA))</li> <li>▪ U.S. Coast Guard</li> </ul>
<p><b>Economic development</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Federal agencies (e.g., Economic Development Administration)</li> <li>▪ Regional planning agencies or commissions</li> <li>▪ Local businesses</li> <li>▪ Chambers of commerce</li> </ul>
<p><b>Land use and development</b> Including the agency or department that regulates building codes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Local or tribal governmental agencies</li> <li>▪ Local zoning departments</li> <li>▪ State agencies (e.g., Planning, Coastal Management Programs, State Floodplain Management Office/ State National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Coordinator)</li> </ul>



Sector	Possible Partners*
<p><b>Housing</b></p> <p>Including these community lifelines: Food, Hydration, Shelter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development</li> <li>▪ Local housing developers</li> <li>▪ Builders’ associations</li> <li>▪ Coastal property and homeowners</li> </ul>
<p><b>Health and social services</b></p> <p>Including these community lifelines: Health and Medical</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Local hospitals or clinics</li> <li>▪ Departments of health and human services</li> </ul>
<p><b>Infrastructure</b></p> <p>Including these community lifelines: Energy, Communications, Transportation, Food, Hydration, Shelter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ State agencies (e.g., Transportation, Emergency Management, Economic Development, Planning)</li> <li>▪ Departments of energy</li> <li>▪ Energy enterprises</li> <li>▪ Shipping and regional port authorities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Natural and cultural resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Colleges and universities, research and scientific institutions, and other educational programs</li> <li>▪ National, state, and territorial Sea Grant programs</li> <li>▪ National Estuarine Research Reserves (NERRs)</li> <li>▪ Land trusts or other conservation organizations</li> <li>▪ State, local, and tribal conservation agencies</li> <li>▪ Environmental management agencies</li> <li>▪ Fisheries and fisheries management</li> <li>▪ Industries that rely on upstream resources</li> <li>▪ Aquaculture</li> <li>▪ Tourism, development, and recreation sectors</li> <li>▪ Historical societies</li> </ul>

\* A range of federal agencies can fall into any of the sectors identified in this table.

For more information on partnering with each of these sectors, please visit: [Guides to Expanding Mitigation](#)

## The Importance of Local Partners

Local and nonprofit partners are key groups to engage as both types of plans are developed. Think about the people or organizations that a coastal hazard may affect. Which ones have a role in mitigating risks? For instance, the State NFIP coordinator or local floodplain manager can help with coordinating both the planning processes, as they have on-the-ground

experience. They know where needs exist and can offer valuable insights into areas where state and federal agencies do not have local knowledge.

## Why coordinate stakeholder engagement?

There are benefits to aligning the engagement of stakeholders. If done at the same time, it meets the requirements for two planning processes at once. If not, sharing inputs can inform the stakeholder engagement process for the other planning effort. It can save time, money, and energy. This is even more true when agencies have a limited capacity. Aligned engagement can lead to fewer meetings, each with a greater impact. Coordinating on a regular basis can also prevent strategies that conflict with one another.

As a result, both plans benefit by sharing their partners and priorities.

Coastal managers can provide data, leverage additional planning resources, and share their relationships with coastal stakeholders. The inverse is also true. The mitigation plan is a foundation to plan for resilience and reduce long-term risk. Both plans identify potential funding sources that can be used to fund coastal risk reduction projects. Hazard mitigation planners can offer the coastal management program new data and planning resources.

If a project will affect the natural environment, it is important to engage early with the state agency that has regulatory authority over that natural resource. Doing so can help the planners be aware of requirements and regulations.

### Engagement Success: Washington State Coastal Hazards Resilience Network

The Washington Coastal Hazards Resilience Network (CHRN) includes more than 75 people. All of them work in the fields of coastal hazards and climate resilience. They come from all levels of government and from tribes, academic institutions, and private and non-profit groups. The Washington Coastal Zone Management Program and Washington Sea Grant co-manage the network. The state's Emergency Management Department also participates in CHRN.

People work on coastal issues in different ways. CHRN allows them to share that work, build relationships, and learn from each other. These connections might not have existed otherwise.

For additional information, visit the [Washington Coastal Hazards Resilience Network](#).

## How to coordinate engagement

Coordinating engagement may require more work up front, but it offers the planning process a wealth of benefits. The groups to be engaged will vary, based on who works in the coastal environment. Many groups are unique to specific agencies.

Multiple stakeholders can be engaged at the same time by using existing meetings. Consider planning committees or forums, or recurring interagency meetings. Think about adding this topic to events where partner agencies and stakeholders already meet.

One opportunity is the state mitigation program consultation. FEMA holds this formal meeting with the mitigation program of each state and territory annually, to promote conversations on reducing risk. While the participants may change from year to year, the consultation is an opportunity for state programs to discuss current events, recent or ongoing natural disasters, or changing priorities directly with FEMA. This is an opportunity for each state hazard mitigation program to invite the coastal management program to the table to discuss coastal hazards. For more information, review FEMA's resource for [Planning the Mitigation Program Consultation](#).

Here are some general steps that either program can take to coordinate their engagement of stakeholders.

1. **Identify a contact for each planning effort.** To identify contacts, consider looking at who worked on the existing plans. For the hazard mitigation plan, this is likely to be someone in the emergency management or public safety department. Contacts for the coastal enhancement strategy may be from the state or territory's coastal management program. These programs are often within the environmental or natural resources department. NOAA or the Coastal States Organization (CSO) can provide [contact information](#) for any state's coastal program. FEMA provides [contact information](#) for State Hazard Mitigation Officers.
2. **Set up meeting logistics.** Early in the process, decide how and when to hold the meetings. Will they be virtual, hybrid, or fully in person?
3. **Set clear expectations.** It is important for each one to know what is expected. A clear agenda can help you get the most out of discussions at all meetings. Consider asking all groups for information for the agenda. Then ask them for feedback once the agenda is out. Everyone should also understand who will make the final decisions on the plan.

### Questions to Consider During the Planning Process.

After you identify potential contacts, consider the following prompts. These can help the two agencies that oversee plan development start to talk:

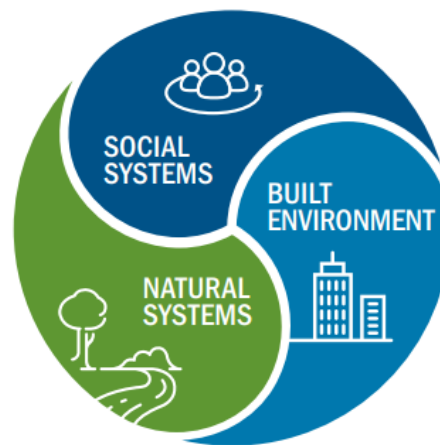
- What partners or stakeholders do we have in common? This applies to the state or territory coastal management and hazard mitigation planning programs.
- Are there ways for us to work together with the partners we share? Are joint visioning meetings an option? Can we use existing, regularly occurring meetings or partnerships to encourage coordination? Examples include hazard mitigation committees or resilience or adaptation commissions or committees.
- If plans are on different timelines, are there ways to incorporate stakeholder feedback that one planning group has collected, to inform the other's planning work?

- Are members of the coastal management program invited to the annual state mitigation program consultation? If not, can they be?
- Where is each agency in its planning cycle?
- What resources are available for engagement? How can partner agencies help one another fill gaps? How can agencies integrate or support (e.g., co-host) planned engagement events?
- Which stakeholders are not shared? Could they provide a valuable perspective on the other plan?
- What types of programs or policies do both agencies prioritize? Is there a way to align these priorities to pursue grant funds?
- Do both lead agencies take part in any other planning process? Is any climate resilience or adaptation planning work ongoing?

## Opportunity 2: Sharing Data and Assessments of Hazards

### What hazard analysis is required for each plan?

Hazard mitigation plans and coastal enhancement strategies both look at coastal hazards. Each plan may share data and can reference each other. The data in the hazard mitigation plan can be used directly to inform this section of the coastal enhancement strategy, and vice versa. However, the requirements for each type of plan's assessment of coastal hazards differ significantly.



Holistic coastal zone management means finding a balance between natural systems, social systems, and the built environment.

Source: [What is coastal zone management? \(noaa.gov\)](https://www.noaa.gov/what-is-coastal-zone-management/)

**Figure 2. An Approach to Holistic Coastal Zone Management**

## COASTAL ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY

As it begins to develop their enhancement program plan, state coastal management programs conduct a self-assessment. Each is encouraged to enhance their coastal management programs by assessing nine coastal enhancement policy areas to identify high-priority management needs. These needs are known as “areas of national importance.” They include coastal hazards, wetlands, aquaculture, and public access, and more.

The Section 309 Guidance lays out a set of questions for states to answer for their assessment. The goal is to better understand the resource and management issues related to each enhancement area. This will help the program identify the highest priority enhancement areas for the program. The coastal management program will assess its general level of risk to identified coastal hazards and summarize the data and reports on the state’s level of risk and vulnerability to these hazards. The guidance encourages coastal management programs to use their hazard management plans as a resource for this risk assessment. The following coastal hazards need to be included in the assessment:

- Flooding
- Coastal storms
- Geological hazards
- Shoreline erosion
- Sea level rise
- Great Lake level change
- Land subsidence
- Saltwater intrusion

Coastal management programs then begin to assess the high-priority enhancement areas identified through the initial assessment. They look more closely at each area and explore the most significant coastal hazard risks. This helps them identify emerging issues of concern. Their top management priorities to address these risks, and identify priority needs and gaps. These insights will be used to address these management needs. The programs also propose strategies to improve those high-priority areas.

## HAZARD MITIGATION PLANS

To be approved, a hazard mitigation plan must satisfy specific requirements. However, the approach is flexible. The plan will include details on coastal and non-coastal risks across the planning area. The plan must profile each hazard, including the areas at risk, previous events, the probability of future events, and critical assets at risk. Mitigation plans must also describe the potential impacts of each hazard on populations and key assets. The risk assessment of a hazard mitigation plan is often an intensive effort. Many sources of data are used to describe potential risks. This data can also be used to better assess the coastal hazards in the coastal enhancement strategy. For example, FEMA provides products such as Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) that can help determine the area of inundation during a flooding event. Another resource FEMA offers is Hazus, which is a mapping and data tool that can help estimate the risk of flooding. Both Hazus and FIRMs can help users make data-driven decisions for coastal mitigation projects.

More information to help build this part of the plan in FEMA's [Key Topics Bulletin on the Risk Assessment](#).

## Why work together to assess risks?

A strong risk assessment requires access to current and accurate data. Sharing data, models, and prioritized risks strengthens both plans. It will also maximize staff capacity and expertise and reduce redundancy. Data identified for either plan can be a valuable addition to the other. One example is high-resolution bathymetric or topology data on coastal erosion and flood risk. This may be used for a coastal enhancement strategy. It can also help inform the coastal erosion and flooding hazard profile in a hazard mitigation plan. Through collaboration, the teams can align the final risk assessments and prevent conflicting priorities and actions.

Sharing data can also broaden each program's view. Coastal managers can learn more about the range of hazards a coastal region may face, like extreme heat or drought. They can have cascading effects on more typical coastal hazards. Hazard mitigation professionals can also identify where coastal projects have co-benefits for other local priorities. These connections can lead to better coordination for potential grant funding opportunities.

### Georgia's Approach to Coastal Management and Hazard Mitigation Planning

Coordination between the Department of Natural Resources Coastal Resources Division (GDNR CRD) and Emergency Management Agency has matured over the last several years, benefitting coastal risk reduction planning in Georgia. Agency representatives have served to both inform and review plans and processes. In this way, each agency works to build the vitality and resiliency of Georgia's coast.

As a result, each agency has successfully developed plans, programs, and initiatives. In 2014, the GDNR CRD asked to be a part of the review of the State Hazard Mitigation Plan (SHMP). The state's 2016-2020 309 Assessment and Strategy drew from the SHMP to determine the level of risk for coastal hazards. Early in the development of this strategy, the coordination with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) resulted in a state-level executive order. This called for the creation of a state Disaster Recovery and Redevelopment Plan (GDRRP) framework. GEMA also consults the Georgia Coastal Hazards Program to provide climate change mitigation technical assistance to the SHMP.

Through Section 309, the state coastal management program funded a project to map historical shorelines. This mapping includes shoreline change, erosion and accretion rates, and both modern and historical shoreline change trends with coastal vulnerability classifications. These vulnerabilities are also considered when determining the state's level of risk for the SHMP. In the latest coastal enhancement cycle, the coastal program has identified new ways to build resilience. It will develop a Resiliency Reference Guide. That will be used to assess

hazard vulnerabilities. It will also evaluate the opportunities for nature-based solutions, and encourage their use through sound science and policy decisions.

## How to share data and risk assessments.

A state hazard mitigation plan's risk assessment is typically robust. NOAA recommends using these plans to inform the coastal enhancement strategy.<sup>1</sup> NOAA has guidance and a rubric for the coastal enhancement strategy. These reference the state hazard mitigation plan in both the Phase I (high-level) and Phase II (in-depth) analyses. The coastal enhancement strategy should also consider standalone climate change assessments if they are available from the state.

The coastal management program and its partners may also develop data that can inform the hazard mitigation plan. Many have detailed studies on specific coastal hazards, such as sea level rise or coastal erosion. Data and models can and should be refined and analyzed by both programs.

The hazard mitigation plan and coastal enhancement strategy are not usually on the same 5-year rotation. The staggered schedules allow for an ongoing review and refinement of coastal data. This encourages consistency across the plans. Meet regularly to discuss the studies and identify gaps in existing data sources. This can help you find ways to work together to understand and evaluate coastal risk more fully.

### Questions to consider for aligning the risk assessment.

- Does the hazard mitigation plan have data that can inform or strengthen the coastal enhancement strategy?
- Can data produced by or for the coastal management program be used in the hazard mitigation plan?
- Can data or priorities from the coastal enhancement strategy support future grant or funding requests for hazard mitigation, or vice versa?
- What coastal data that would benefit both programs is most urgent or most needed?
- Can any upcoming or recurring data collection work by either program benefit the other one?
- What are the data collection and analysis capabilities of each program?
- What grant opportunities would allow for collaboration to help fill data gaps?

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<sup>1</sup> [Coastal Zone Management Act Section 309 Program Guidance 2021 to 2025 Enhancement Cycle \(noaa.gov\)](#)

## Opportunity 3: Assessing Complementary Capabilities

### What is required for a capability assessment?

Capabilities are a community's resources to complete a project or program. These range from fiscal or human resources to legal or regulatory resources that allow the community to achieve its goals to reduce risk. Identifying and assessing these capabilities is necessary because they can help you to select and scale mitigation projects based on what is feasible.

### COASTAL ENHANCEMENT STRATEGIES

NOAA does not explicitly require states or territories to assess their capabilities to address the priorities in the Phase I or II assessment. However, Section 309 guidance states that an updated coastal enhancement strategy must identify various management approaches employed by the state, such as any updated policies, programs, or plans, to address the enhancement area. It must also discuss any changes that have occurred since the last plan. This activity aims to identify the resources available to manage coastal hazards. It also clarifies how they are maintained. In addition, strategies should lead to a "program change" that will enhance the program's capability to address the priority needs identified. If they have the capability, they can include additional strategies that go beyond their anticipated Section 309 funding.

### HAZARD MITIGATION PLANS

Under the State Guide, a state capability assessment must evaluate the state's laws, regulations, policies and programs that relate to hazard mitigation.<sup>2</sup> This evaluation must note which capabilities improve or impede resilience to future hazard events and other future conditions, including climate change. This includes:

- State land use laws, enabling legislation and plans.
- The adoption and enforcement of state building codes.
- State administration of the NFIP.
- State participation in FEMA's flood hazard mapping program, Risk Mapping, Assessment and Planning (Risk MAP).
- State funding capabilities, including:
  - The state's general funds and other resources.
  - FEMA mitigation programs and funding sources. These include but are not limited to, the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), HMGP Post Fire, Building Resilient Infrastructure

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<sup>2</sup> [FEMA. State Mitigation Planning Policy Guide. 2022](#)



and Communities (BRIC), Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA), High-Hazard Potential Dam Program (HHPD), Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Swift Current, and Public Assistance (PA) Mitigation.

- Other federal programs and funding sources for mitigation, if applicable.

These capabilities drive the ways jurisdictions can grow and develop. Some regulatory authorities, such as land use laws, building codes, and enforcement, may be delegated to local governments. Local communities may also have zoning or land use standards that go beyond state and federal minimums.

The capability assessment in mitigation plans is more than a list of existing programs. Capabilities must be evaluated in a way that shows a commitment to mitigation and identify resources that can be used to implement mitigation activities. Plans must also summarize any challenges or barriers for implementation and identify areas for future improvement. This will help keep the implementation of the plan from being stalled by inadequate programs and resources.

### Mitigating Tsunami Risk Through Collaborative Action

Building codes and design standards have been a staple in Hawaii's coastal enhancement strategies for at least four update cycles due to the state's vulnerability to coastal storms and tsunamis. The state has successfully updated and adopted their building codes to include advanced design standards for winds through previous strategies. To strengthen the state building codes even more, the last two coastal enhancement strategies have included the modelling of Tsunami Design Zone (TDZ) maps that will be used to increase the state's resilience to tsunami events.

The 2023 State Hazard Mitigation Plan acknowledges the development of these maps. It also ensures that they will be consistent with the International Building Code and American Society of Civil Engineers' codes for tsunami load. This is a mitigation action. These maps will inform and help strengthen building codes to fulfill statutory requirements and increase the resilience of coastal buildings and facilities across the state.

## Why should existing capabilities be coordinated?

### CAPABILITY CO-BENEFITS

Both plans involve complex and technical processes. Each requires an in-depth understanding of the regulatory processes and plan components that will result in its successful adoption. This requires each agency to retain staff with advanced expertise and technical know-how to see each plan through to completion. Shared capabilities can result in operational efficiencies. This is most true when few technical staff are available to support the planning process.

Coordinating capabilities has multiple co-benefits: In addition to creating stronger plans, it can:

- Improve staff expertise in a particular subject area, topic, hazard, or geography.
- Reduce the need for redundant analyses by using existing technical experts, data and resources.
- Strengthen grant applications and funding opportunities. Each program brings skills, knowledge, perspectives and insights that can strengthen a grant proposal through collaboration.

Sharing planning processes brings new groups together. As projects from either set of plans are put into action, emergency and coastal managers will have a better understanding of whom to reach out to for technical assistance. It also gives each group access to the other's network of contacts. That can help them bring more partners into a discussion. It becomes more likely that projects will have fewer issues as they are developed.

### Questions to consider when assessing capabilities.

- What is the legal framework for land use planning in the state?
- What laws support and facilitate hazard mitigation and coastal zone management? Do any laws support activities that put people, assets or infrastructure at risk to natural hazards?
- Do any statewide model building codes or ordinances help reduce the risk?
- Which state agencies had a role in risk reduction and hazard mitigation in the past? What programs in those agencies address hazard mitigation?
- Can any state-level pre- and post-disaster mitigation programs be used for coastal resilience?
- What are the state's capabilities to assess vulnerability, climate resilience and risk reduction?
- What tools, policies and programs have helped meet mitigation objectives? Which have been less effective?

## Opportunity 4: Coordinating Strategies and Actions

### What is required for strategies and actions for each plan?

Hazard mitigation plans and coastal enhancement strategies both require detailed, actionable strategies. These must address their hazards and the highest priority enhancement areas, respectively. Planners have some latitude in choosing the type of projects to address risks. In both plans, the actions must be tied to the stated goals.

## COASTAL ENHANCEMENT STRATEGIES

NOAA has a structured template for actions in coastal enhancement strategies. These strategies must lead to a “program change.” The guidance defines a program change as a “change to a state’s or territory’s federally approved coastal management program”<sup>3</sup>. Program changes include:

- A change to coastal zone boundaries.
- New or revised authorities.
- New or revised local coastal programs and implementing ordinances.
- New or revised coastal land acquisition, management, and restoration programs.
- New or revised special area management plans or plans for areas of particular concern.
- New or revised guidelines, procedures, and policy documents that are formally adopted by a state.

## HAZARD MITIGATION PLANS

Hazard mitigation plans must describe which actions are considered. They must state how they are prioritized for implementation. FEMA defines four types of mitigation actions:

- **Plans and regulations:** Government authorities, policies, or codes that encourage risk reduction. This may include building codes, state planning regulations, or planning studies.
- **Structure and infrastructure projects:** These projects build or modify structures and infrastructure in ways that reduce the impact of hazards.
- **Natural systems protection and nature-based solutions:** These projects minimize losses while also preserving or restoring the function of natural systems.
- **Education and awareness programs:** Long-term, sustained efforts to inform and educate people about hazards and mitigation options. This could also include training.

All four types of action may be aligned with coastal enhancement strategies. Structure and infrastructure projects for a coastal community could include coastal resource conservation and protection objectives. The education and outreach projects can be used to also advance coastal resilience.

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<sup>3</sup> [Coastal Zone Management Act Section 309 Program Guidance \(noaa.gov\)](https://www.noaa.gov/education/outreach/309-program-guidance)

For each action, plans must include a potential funding source, such as a specific FEMA grant program. The title or agency responsible is also included. This offers a clear understanding of who will carry out each project.

## Why work together to advance actions?

The requirements for coastal enhancement strategies and mitigation plans are very similar. Both plans must explain how a strategy will enhance the policies or programs and how it will be funded and carried out. As outlined above, the four categories of actions in hazard mitigation plans might overlap with the program changes in a coastal enhancement strategy. Planning needs and policies should not evolve in a silo. They should be reflected in any program with related goals and outcomes. Plans identify, organize and prioritize projects. Coordinated efforts can have a broader impact than those that are isolated. Also, working together to reduce risks and align plan priorities makes it more likely for projects to be funded and completed. Most importantly, these projects ultimately reduce the risks to life and property.

### A Collaboration Success in Implementation: ResilientMass

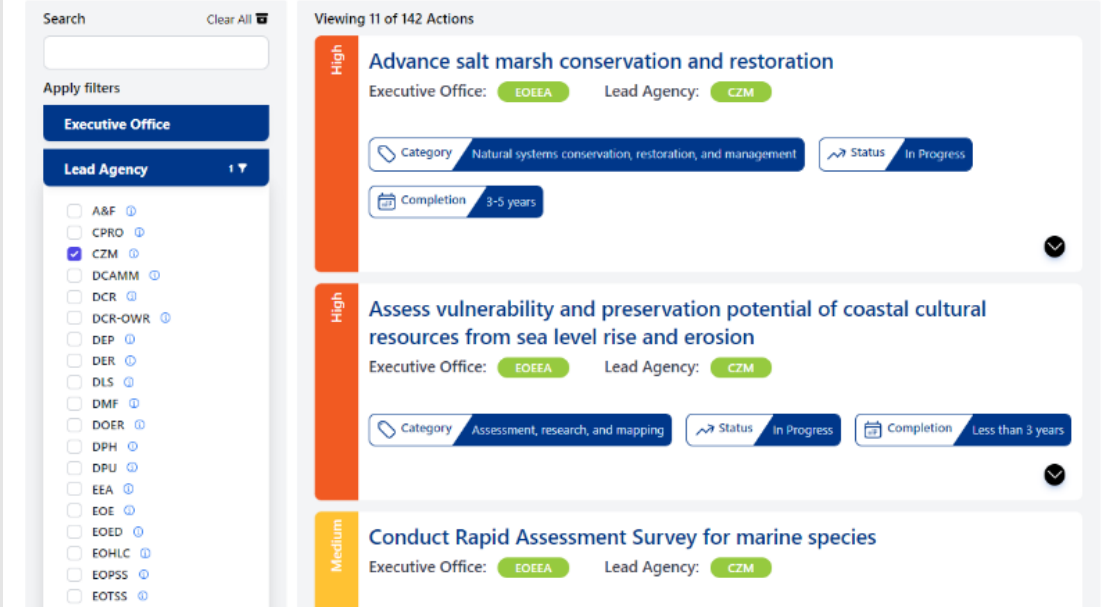
ResilientMass is Massachusetts's updated State Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan. It includes the state's process to implement the plan. The ResilientMass Action Team includes Climate Change Coordinators and supporting staff from across the state government. This includes the MA Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM), Office of Climate Innovation and Resilience, and Emergency Management Agency. The ResilientMass website hosts a data clearinghouse, information on grants, climate-resilient design guidance, and the ResilientMass Action Tracker.

Each action in the Action Tracker is listed with a summary, its status and priority, and the responsible agency. CZM is responsible for 11 of the 142 actions. The work includes:

- Development of a coastal resilience strategy.
- Advancement of salt marsh conservation and restoration.
- Assessment of vulnerability and preservation of potential coastal resources from sea level rise and erosion.

## ResilientMass Plan Action Tracker

State agencies identified over 100 initial priority actions to increase resilience and reduce the Commonwealth's risks and vulnerabilities related to natural hazards and projected climate changes. This tracker is maintained by the inter-agency [ResilientMass Action Team \(RMAT\)](#) and contains a list of actions identified through the 2023 ResilientMass planning process. All actions address at least one of the primary statewide climate change impacts identified in the [2022 Massachusetts Climate Change Assessment](#). This tracker will be updated periodically to reflect progress in implementing these actions.



**Figure 3. ResilientMass Action Tracker**

MA CZM was an integral part of the state hazard mitigation planning process. It has a key role in leading (11) or supporting (3+) several of the actions, including a cross-government action. The planning process helps elevate CZM's priorities and makes sure they align with other state initiatives.

For more information, visit the [ResilientMass Action Tracker](#).

### How to align implementation efforts.

The strategy section of each plan usually starts with the plan's goals. Review the goals for each plan in detail to identify any strategy components that complement each other. Alignment opportunities may include developing and managing projects, planning, products, tools or models, communication or outreach activities, model local laws, or resources to advance long-term coastal resilience.

Plan updates for one program are an opportunity to review progress on the other. This is a good time to see which projects or programs have moved forward, and which have stalled. Those that need additional work could also need more funding or capacity. Changes in priorities at federal, state, and local levels can also affect which initiatives get the most attention. Conversations about both plans can take place when either one is being updated. The best way to collaborate on any project, program or activity depends on its specific needs.

## FUNDING PLANNING AND PROJECTS

Each program comes with its own set of funding sources. Aligning work and coordinating on funding capabilities can help both programs implement their plans more successfully.

FEMA grant programs offer funding for planning, plan alignment and projects. When applying for a planning grant as a BRIC Capability and Capacity Building (C&CB) activity, the coastal management program should be added as a partner in the scope of work for the planning process. FEMA grant programs can also be used to integrate plans. For example, HMGP offers a 7% set-aside for planning-related activities. This can be used to fund the integration of information from the hazard mitigation plan into the coastal enhancement strategy, and vice versa.

Many state agencies do not have grant writers on staff. However, their staff may have the technical expertise and skills to develop strong grant applications, and can help develop or review grant applications. This can enhance their work with communities. They may be able to develop projects with a higher chance of winning a grant award. FEMA also has several funding programs that can be used for projects in a coastal enhancement strategy. Adding these projects to the mitigation plan may help increase the score for a BRIC application. This makes it more competitive, which gives the project a better chance of being implemented.

NOAA administers a funding program called Projects of Special Merit (PSM). The funds can be used for projects that support the coastal enhancement strategies. The program focuses on national priorities for areas of enhancement. Projects that align with the hazard mitigation plan can be applied for under the Hazards priority area.

Explore sources of funding beyond FEMA and NOAA. Many other agencies fund nature-based solutions. An interagency group hosted by the EPA has put together the following resource on federal funding sources: [Navigating Federal Finding for Green Infrastructure and Nature-Based Solutions \(epa.gov\)](https://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure/navigating-federal-funding-for-green-infrastructure-and-nature-based-solutions)

Table 2 lists a few key potential grant programs to use for projects and planning efforts.

**Table 2: Potential Grant Opportunities**

Potential Grant Programs	FEMA HMGP and HMGP Post Fire	FEMA BRIC	FEMA Flood Mitigation Assistance and Flood Mitigation Assistance Swift Current	FEMA Public Assistance (PA)	USFWS National Coastal Resilience Fund	NOAA Ecological Effects of Sea Level Rise Program
<b>Program Type</b>	Post-disaster	Non-disaster	Non-disaster	Post-disaster	Non-disaster	Non-disaster
<b>Funding Availability</b>	Presidentially declared disaster	6% annual set-aside from federal post-disaster grant funding*	Annual Appropriations (Swift Current is only available after a presidentially declared flood-related disaster)	Presidentially declared disaster	Annual	Annual
<b>Mitigation Planning Funding Available?</b>	Yes	Yes	Flood Mitigation Assistance, Yes Flood Mitigation Assistance Swift Current, No	No**	No	Yes
<b>Competitive?</b>	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

\* BRIC funding is only available to state, local, tribal, and territorial jurisdictions who have received a major disaster declaration in the last seven years. A Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is released each fiscal year that outlines the funding opportunity, eligibility, application, and administration of the grant.

\*\* Mitigation planning is not typically available through the PA program. However, excess funds after project completion under a fixed-cost PA grant may be used for mitigation planning activities.

**Questions to consider when connecting mitigation goals and strategies.**

- Do any coastal enhancement strategy goals address coastal hazards? How do they compare to the hazard mitigation plan goals that relate to the coast? Could they be better aligned?

- Is the coastal management program involved in implementing any of the actions in the hazard mitigation plan? If not, where could it be more involved?
- Could the hazard mitigation team be more involved in coastal management actions and priorities?
- Which projects to mitigate or reduce the risk of coastal hazards could support other priorities of the coastal management program?
- Are there actions that should be listed in both documents?
- Are there any opportunities to collaborate to use grants to fund projects?
- Where could we collaborate on land use projects or nature-based solutions?

## Summary

Coastlines are dynamic and always changing, and so are the needs to managing them. Working together to protect coasts and their unique heritage, economies and ecosystems will lead to a higher chance of success. This guide describes four key areas to align the hazard mitigation and coastal enhancement strategies. Collaborating to engage partners, share data, complement capabilities, and work together on implementation will expand each program's perspective and make it easier to achieve each one's goals.

This resource provides a framework for working together to advance coastal resilience. It uses both the coastal enhancement strategy and the hazard mitigation planning processes. Use Appendix C: Questions to Consider to assess where you work well together. It will also show where to better align your efforts. Reach out to your state's corresponding program to discuss how you can work together.

### Alignment Opportunities

Coordination between the hazard mitigation programs and coastal management programs can focus on building on each other's work and leveraging complementary strengths in these ways:

- Coastal Flood Hazards - State hazard mitigation programs collect and analyze information about coastal hazards and the risk to the built environment in great detail. They use products and tools such as V zones on a FIRM, flood risk products from Risk MAP, and Average Annualized Loss using Hazus. The coastal enhancement strategies can benefit from the comprehensive data for understanding high-hazard areas. (See the Georgia case study.)
- Climate Impacts - Coastal management programs have in-depth information on climate change impacts. This may include sea level rise data, future precipitation modeling, shoreline changes and coastal erosion. A state or local hazard mitigation plan can use the results of those analyses to understand future risk. Several states host information portals



and provide other resources for local mitigation planning. These include California, Massachusetts, Hawaii, Illinois, Delaware, Washington and Georgia.

- Partner to implement actions – Both programs work to build coastal resilience. If they coordinate, it will enable complementary initiatives and innovation through nature-based solutions. This applies to both regulatory actions and projects. Hazard mitigation planners should consult the state coastal management program office that has a regulatory authority over natural resources, land use and zoning. Working with the floodplain manager, they should utilize the coastal program’s expertise in land use and permitting. That can help identify overlapping objectives and add supporting actions to the mitigation plan. Coastal management programs should also consult emergency managers as they develop or carry out projects to enhance coastal resilience. This helps maximize both funding and staff capacity. FEMA grant programs and NOAA Projects of Special Merit are key funding sources to leverage. Some lead state coastal management program offices also have regulatory authority over natural resources, land use and zoning. When developing projects for either plan, align that work with the other. Utilize their expertise to help identify overlapping objectives. Coastal management programs should also consult emergency managers as they develop or carry out projects to enhance the coast. This may maximize the capacity of their funding and staff. They may also identify projects to add to the mitigation plan.

For more information on this topic, please reach out to [fema-mitigation-planning@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:fema-mitigation-planning@fema.dhs.gov).

## Resources

- [Hazard Mitigation Planning: Learn more about how to Create a Hazard Mitigation Plan as well as Best Practices and Implementation Resources](#)
- [National Coastal Zone Management Program: Learn more about the Coastal Zone Enhancement Program, Coastal Zone Management Programs in each coastal state.](#)

## Planning Regulations and Guidance

- [The Coastal Zone Enhancement Program, NOAA, 2024](#)
- [Regulations and Guidance, FEMA, 2023](#)

## Related Resources

- [The Economic Case for Coastal Resilience, FEMA, 2023](#)
- [Guide to Expanding Mitigation: Making the Connection to the Coast, FEMA, 2022; the full Guides to Expanding Mitigation series](#)

- [Digital Coast](#)
- [Reducing Hazard Impacts through Plan Alignment, NOAA, 2024](#)
- [U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit](#)
- [Nature-Based Solutions, FEMA](#), that has FEMA's Nature-Based Solutions guides:
  - [A Guide for Local Communities](#)
  - [Strategies for Success](#)
- [Geospatial Reference Center, FEMA](#)
- [Plan Alignment Interactive Tool, ResilientCA](#)

## Related Organizations

- [American Planning Association \(APA\)](#)
- [Association of State Floodplain Managers \(ASFPM\)](#)
- [Coastal States Organization \(CSO\)](#)

## Funding Sources

- [Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities \(BRIC\)](#)
- [Flood Mitigation Assistance \(FMA\)](#)
- [Hazard Mitigation Assistance \(HMA\) Guidance](#)
- [Hazard Mitigation Grant Program \(HMGP\)](#)
- [HMGP Post Fire](#)
- [Navigating Federal Funding for Green Infrastructure and Nature-Based Solutions](#)
- [NOAA Office for Coastal Management Funding Opportunities](#)
- [NOAA Sea Grant](#)
- [Marine Debris Community Action Coalitions](#)
- [National Coastal Resilience Fund](#)
- [Public Assistance \(PA\) 406 Mitigation Grant Program](#)

# Appendix A: Coastal Enhancement Strategy and Hazard Mitigation Plan Regulatory Requirements

This appendix presents the requirements, participants and processes for coastal enhancement strategies and hazard mitigation plans. It includes the regulatory citations for each planning process.

## Coastal Enhancement Strategy and Hazard Mitigation Plan Summary Information

	Coastal Enhancement Strategy	Hazard Mitigation Plan
<b>Federal Regulations</b>	<p><a href="#">Title 15, Section 923 Subpart of the CFR (15 CFR § 923 Subpart K)</a></p> <p>For more information on the specific requirements for a NOAA-approved coastal enhancement strategy, refer to the <a href="#">Coastal Zone Management Act Section 309 Program Guidance</a> and future updates.</p>	<p><a href="#">Title 44, Section 201.4 of the CFR (44 CFR § 201.4)</a></p> <p>For more information on the specific requirements for a FEMA-approved mitigation plan, refer to the <a href="#">State Mitigation Planning Policy Guide</a> and future updates.</p>
<b>Federal Administering Agency</b>	U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA, Office of Coastal Management	U.S. Department of Homeland Security, FEMA
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The Coastal Zone Enhancement Program encourages state and territorial coastal management programs to strengthen and improve their federally approved coastal management programs in one or more of nine areas. These “enhancement areas” include wetlands, coastal hazards, public access, marine debris, cumulative and secondary impacts, special area management plans, ocean and Great Lakes resources, energy and government facility siting, and aquaculture. Actions listed in the enhancement strategy are eligible for NOAA Section 309 funding.</p>	<p>The purpose of hazard mitigation planning is for state, local, tribal, and territorial governments to identify the natural hazards that affect them, to identify actions and activities to reduce any losses from those hazards and to establish a coordinated process to implement the plan, taking advantage of a wide range of resources.</p> <p>At the state level, mitigation plans demonstrate intent to reduce or eliminate natural hazard risks. It guides decision makers to reduce the effects of natural hazards as resources are committed. The state mitigation plan serves as the foundation for all other plans and planning process in the state to integrate resilience and risk reduction. Projects must be in the mitigation plan to receive FEMA mitigation funding.</p>

	Coastal Enhancement Strategy	Hazard Mitigation Plan
<b>Update Period</b>	Five-year cycle (begins in years ending in 1 or 6, e.g., 2026-2031)	Every five years (maintained annually)
<b>Plan Development Guidance</b>	NOAA Coastal Zone Enhancement Program guidance and resources: <a href="https://coast.noaa.gov/czm/enhancement/">https://coast.noaa.gov/czm/enhancement/</a>	FEMA Hazard Mitigation Planning policy, guidance, and training resources: <a href="https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/risk-management/hazard-mitigation-planning/create-hazard-plan">https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/risk-management/hazard-mitigation-planning/create-hazard-plan</a>

# Appendix B: Plan Requirements

This table outlines the requirements to which each plan must adhere, according to its guiding documents.

**Table 1: Stakeholder Engagement Requirements**

Coastal Zone Management Act Section 309 Program Guidance, 2026-2030 Enhancement Cycle	State Mitigation Planning Policy Guide, April 2022
<p>At the beginning of the assessment and strategy development process, the coastal management program should identify a few key stakeholder groups to engage. Stakeholders should reflect the diversity of people and organizations that use the coast to live, work and recreate, including communities or groups who have not historically been actively engaged in, or may be underrepresented in the CMP’s work. The stakeholders should provide feedback on what they believe are the high-priority enhancement areas for the state or territory’s coastal zone, critical problems related to those priority areas, and the greatest opportunities for the program to strengthen and enhance its program to address those problems more effectively.</p> <p>Regardless of how stakeholder input is captured, the coastal management program must document the groups or individuals they engaged with and briefly summarize relevant feedback that is useful for informing the development of the assessment and strategy.</p>	<p>The plan must describe how the state coordinated with other state agencies and appropriate federal agencies that were involved in the process, and how they were involved in the process. At minimum, the plan must describe how the state coordinated with other agencies and interested groups, including stakeholders responsible for the following sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Emergency management.</li> <li>▪ Economic development.</li> <li>▪ Land use and development, including the agency or department that regulates building codes.</li> <li>▪ Housing.</li> <li>▪ Health and social services.</li> <li>▪ Infrastructure (including the Energy, Communications, Transportation, and Food, Hydration, Shelter community lifelines).</li> <li>▪ Natural and cultural resources.</li> </ul> <p>In addition to these sectors, the plan should describe how the state coordinated with agencies with climate change and adaptation expertise, state agencies with programs, policies, and assistance that support underserved communities, and other representatives serving these communities in the mitigation planning process.</p> <p>Where barriers exist, the plan must describe the limitations as well as how they will be overcome. These may be included in the mitigation strategy.</p>

**Table 2: Data and Risk Assessment Requirements**

Coastal Zone Management Act Section 309 Program Guidance, 2026-2030 Enhancement Cycle	State Mitigation Planning Policy Guide, April 2022
<p>The assessment is conducted in two phases. All plans must conduct a Phase I (high-level) assessment of all enhancement areas, using criteria provided by NOAA. The coastal management programs must rank each enhancement area as low, medium, or high priority. Stakeholders help to inform the prioritization process.</p> <p>If coastal hazards are deemed a high priority, the coastal managers must conduct a Phase II (in depth) assessment of coastal hazards.</p>	<p>The hazard identification and risk assessment provides the factual basis for activities proposed in the mitigation strategy that will reduce losses from identified hazards. To meet requirements for the risk assessment, states must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify and describe all hazards that affect the state.</li> <li>▪ Identify state assets, including state-owned or operated buildings, infrastructure, community lifelines, and critical facilities.</li> <li>▪ Analyze, determine, and summarize the vulnerability of state assets to damage and loss from the identified hazards.</li> <li>▪ Analyze and summarize vulnerability to local and tribal (as applicable) jurisdictions.</li> </ul>

**Table 3: Actions and Implementation**

Coastal Zone Management Act Section 309 Program Guidance, 2026-2030 Enhancement Cycle	State Mitigation Planning Policy Guide, April 2022
<p>The strategy is a comprehensive, multi-year statement of goals to address high-priority needs, identified in the assessment, for improving a state’s or territory’s CMP. In addition to stating clear goals, the strategy also lays out methods for achieving those goals that are designed to lead toward one or more program changes. There is a specific strategy template provided by NOAA to use.</p>	<p>The mitigation strategy serves as the long-term blueprint for reducing the potential losses identified in the risk assessment. This is the heart of the mitigation plan and is essential to leading statewide mitigation programs to reduce risk...The strategy [starts with mitigation goals and] includes establishing specific hazard mitigation actions and the potential funding sources for each, including federal, state, local or private funding. These actions are critical for leading and implementing statewide mitigation efforts.</p>

# Appendix C: Questions to Consider

Once potential contacts have been identified, consider the following prompts to help start the conversation between the two agencies that oversee plan development:

## Opportunity 1: Leveraging Engagement and Partnerships

- What partners or stakeholders do we have in common? This applies to the state or territory coastal management and hazard mitigation planning programs.
- Are there ways for us to work together with the partners we share? Are joint visioning meetings an option? Can we use existing, regularly occurring meetings or partnerships to encourage coordination? Examples include hazard mitigation committees or resilience or adaptation commissions or committees.
- If plans are on different timelines, are there ways to incorporate stakeholder feedback that one planning group has collected, to inform the other's planning work?
- Are members of the coastal management program invited to the annual state mitigation program consultation? If not, can they be?
- Where is each agency in its planning cycle?
- What resources are available for engagement? How can partner agencies help one another fill gaps? How can agencies integrate or support (e.g., co-host) planned engagement events?
- Which stakeholders are not shared? Could they provide a valuable perspective on the other plan?
- What types of programs or policies do both agencies prioritize? Is there a way to align these priorities to pursue grant funds?
- Do both lead agencies take part in any other planning process? Is any climate resilience or adaptation planning work ongoing?

## Opportunity 2: Sharing Data and Risk Assessments

- Does the hazard mitigation plan have data that can inform or strengthen the coastal enhancement strategy?
- Can data produced by or for the coastal management program be used in the hazard mitigation plan?

- Can data or priorities from the coastal enhancement strategy support future grant or funding requests for hazard mitigation, or vice versa?
- What coastal data that would benefit both programs is most urgent or most needed?
- Can any upcoming or recurring data collection work by either program benefit the other one?
- What are the data collection and analysis capabilities of each program?
- What grant opportunities would allow for collaboration to help fill data gaps?

### **Opportunity 3: Assessing Complementary Capabilities**

- What is the legal framework for land use planning in the state?
- What laws support and facilitate hazard mitigation and coastal zone management? Do any laws support activities that put people, assets or infrastructure at risk to natural hazards?
- Do any statewide model building codes or ordinances help reduce the risk?
- Which state agencies had a role in risk reduction and hazard mitigation in the past? What programs in those agencies address hazard mitigation?
- Can any state-level pre- and post-disaster mitigation programs be used for coastal resilience?
- What are the state's capabilities to assess vulnerability, climate resilience and risk reduction?
- What tools, policies and programs have helped meet mitigation objectives? Which have been less effective?

### **Opportunity 4: Coordinating Strategies and Actions**

- Do any coastal enhancement strategy goals address coastal hazards? How do they compare to the hazard mitigation plan goals that relate to the coast? Could they be better aligned?
- Is the coastal management program involved in implementing any of the actions in the hazard mitigation plan? If not, where could it be more involved?
- Could the hazard mitigation team be more involved in coastal management actions and priorities?
- Which projects to mitigate or reduce the risk of coastal hazards could support other priorities of the coastal management program?
- Are there actions that should be listed in both documents?



- Are there any opportunities to collaborate to use grants to fund projects?
- Where could we collaborate on land use projects or nature-based solutions?