

2025 Pinellas County Countywide Local Mitigation Strategy Update

Key Changes since 2020 Plan

The Local Mitigation Strategy is an all-hazards planning document that identifies exposure to natural hazards, vulnerabilities due to those exposures, local capabilities and planning processes that address hazards, and potential funding and projects that can reduce the exposure or consequences from those hazards. The development and adoption of a Local Mitigation Strategy is a requirement of eligibility for certain Federal disaster funding programs and for compliance with requirements of the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM). In Pinellas County, staff from Unincorporated County spearhead the annual and 5-year update processes, with participation from all local governments and some non-governmental organizations.

The 2025 update provided a reassessment of these exposures and vulnerabilities, governmental capability assessments, new disaster prevention funding programs, and new requirements from federal statutes that were addressed in alignment with additional guidance provided by FDEM. As noted in the document, the devastating hurricanes of 2024 occurred after data was compiled for the study and their impacts will be incorporated into future updates of the plan. The itemized changes between the 2020 and 2025 plan are listed below:

Section 1: Introduction

- Update of the County profile (socio-economic data, land use, social vulnerability, etc.).
- Update of risk assessment introduction to include reference to Pinellas County's *Sea Level Rise & Storm Surge Vulnerability Assessment* funded through the RESTORE Act.

Section 2: Planning Process and Plan Maintenance

- Updates to elements of the 10-Step Planning Process (compliant for communities using the LMS for credit under the Community Rating System [CRS]).
- Public Information Meeting 1 (Introduction to Planning Process): April 15, 2024; Lealman Exchange Community Center
- Public Information Meeting 2 (Input on Draft Plan): October 17, 2024; Virtual Meeting

Section 3: Mitigation Strategy

- Revisions to goals and objectives based on facilitated planning sessions. Most changes were minor language revisions to emphasize collaborative approaches where applicable, reduce impacts to disproportionately affected populations, and the addition of objectives focused on better flood protection methods and education.
- Capability assessments updated for every community, including additional floodplain management criteria as part of new federal planning requirements.
- Updated mitigation project lists (included as Appendix D).

Section 4: Risk Assessment

- Updated to maps, tables, and assessments for all natural hazards:
 - Flood
 - Tropical Cyclones
 - Severe Storms
 - Wildfire
 - Erosion
 - Drought
 - Extreme Heat
 - Geological
 - Winter Storm
 - Seismic
 - Tsunami
 - Red Tide

- Updates to narratives and qualitative data associated with technological and human-caused hazards:
 - Transportation Incident
 - Cyber Incident
 - Hazardous Materials Incident
 - Space Weather Incident
 - Radiological Incident
 - Terrorism
 - Agricultural Disruption
 - Biological Incident
 - Mass Migration Incident
 - Civil Disturbance Incident

Section 5: Potential Funding Sources

- Update of federal, state, and local funding sources that could be utilized in support of hazard mitigation projects.

Appendices:

- **Appendix A – Planning Process Documentation:** New documentation for activities associated with the planning process to include meeting agendas, minutes, and outreach.
- **Appendix B – Floodplain Management:** New appendix that summarizes floodplain management activities for each jurisdiction. The appendix was added to meet new plan requirements and serves as a compliment to Section 3 – Mitigation Strategy.
- **Appendix C – CRS 610 Flood Warning:** Update to include the most recent procedures that are also within the County's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP).
- **Appendix D – Mitigation Initiatives:** Updated list of potential projects (and completed projects list) for hazard mitigation activities (approximately \$2B in potential projects).
- **Appendix E – FL Review Tool:** Crosswalk of required plan elements to their location in the plan for use by FDEM and FEMA staff reviewing the plan.
- **Appendix F – Plan Adoption:** Inclusion of FDEM's Approval Pending Adoption (APA) letter. This section will be further updated as communities locally adopt the plan update.
- **Appendix G – Plan Maintenance:** Inclusion of the most recent annual update provided to FDEM.
- **Appendix H – Program for Public Information (PPI):** Inclusion of the latest PPI for credit under the CRS program.
- **Appendix I – Repetitive Loss Area Analysis (RLAA):** Inclusion of the County's most recent RLAA for credit under the CRS program.
- **Appendix J – LMS Procedures:** This is a new appendix to help with orientation for new members and to guide participation in the LMS Working Group (LMWWG). This item will be updated as needed by the LMSWG.
- **Appendix K – Vulnerability Assessment:** This is a new appendix to identify the many vulnerability assessment grants that local governments are going through via the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (FDEP's) Resilient Florida program. Pinellas County and its municipalities have been awarded \$118M to date across 34 projects, with 16 of those being planning grants and 18 being implementation grants. Those grants focus on planning and implementation activities for future flooding as opposed to the LMS which has an all-hazards planning focus.