Community Asset Mapping

10 Points

Updated January 2026

Municipalities can earn points for this action by conducting Community Asset Mapping that includes 2 parts:

1. A geographic map of spatial assets
2. A list of both spatial and non-spatial assets

Assets that are spatial and have a specific location must be geographically mapped and listed. Assets that are not spatial, such as programs and activities, must be included in the list, but they do not need to be geographically mapped.

This action can be used by a municipality to complete the required component of the Comprehensive Climate Change-Related Hazard Vulnerability Assessment (CCCRHVA) Action to create a list of the important public-serving facilities and infrastructure in the community. The CCCRHVA Action must be completed by a municipality in tandem with the municipality's process to comply with the NJ Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL), which requires a climate change-related hazard vulnerability assessment in the Land Use Plan Element of a municipal Master Plan. Community assessment and engagement is a critical part of climate resilience planning, placing this action in the Sustainable Jersey Gold Star in Climate Readiness Framework.

Successful completion of this action could contribute toward one of the requirements for earning a Gold Star in Climate Readiness. For more information on earning a Gold Star see the Gold Star Standards section of the website.

The most recent revisions to this action include: Clarifications of the requirements, update to the lookback period, and addition of the Gold Star.

Why is it important?

Community asset mapping provides a collective inventory of the positive and valued aspects of a community, including locations, facilities, built infrastructure, natural resources, institutions, and programs. People are also assets of the community.

The community asset mapping inventory provides a foundation for assessing gaps and making improvements. Asset mapping is a positive (and enjoyable) approach to learning about a community. It begins to answer the question "What do we have now?" and helps community members to think positively about the place in which they live and work.It also challenges them to recognize how different people see and experience the same community. This process fosters civic participation and can be a great way to engage various community members in community-building efforts, including youth, older adults, and vulnerable populations who may be underrepresented in typical municipal processes. By identifying their assets, communities can better understand how to build on these important resources to sustain and enhance future generations.

Community asset mapping provides a critical element of community sustainability planning—the engagement of people in the shaping of their communities. The process of identifying community assets helps members of the community understand what resources they currently have that are supporting a sustainable economy, supporting the environment, or promoting social equity in the community.

Because community assets add significant value to a place, these features are important to assess in relation to the current and projected impacts that climate hazards impose on them—so that solutions to safeguard,

relocate, or reinforce the assets can be identified and carried through. This action is informative to the CCCRHVA Action, which follows the planning process provided in the Guide to Local Climate Change Adaptation Planning: The Model Climate Change-Related Hazard Vulnerability Assessment for New Jersey Municipalities (CCRHVA Guide). The Community Asset Mapping Action is included in Step 4.1.c of the CCRHVA Guide.

Who should lead and be involved with this action?

The Green Team should lead a community-wide effort to complete this action. Community asset mapping is most successful when all sectors of the community are engaged in contributing to the process. The Green Team should engage directly with:

- Elected officials
- Municipal staff
- Board and commission members
- Schools
- Civic and faith-based groups
- Non-profit organizations
- Business associations
- Community members

If this action is being completed as part of a town's CCCRHVA, or another multi-sectoral municipal effort, the project team leading that effort can also lead this action. The Green Team should ensure the community asset mapping activities and final product reflect the requirements of the Sustainable Jersey Community Asset Mapping Action.

Timeframe

Community asset mapping projects can be done in less than a month but could also take up to 12 months to complete, depending on the technology and methods used to conduct the project. Communities can also choose to undertake the asset mapping exercise as an ongoing project that is updated on an annual basis to recognize and celebrate new community resources and programs that support sustainability. To complete this action for the Sustainable Jersey CCCRHVA Action or Gold Star in Climate Readiness, it can be done in 1 to 2 months, being updated through community engagement activities occurring throughout the CCRHVA planning process.

Project costs and resource needs

Community asset mapping projects can range from simple and low-cost efforts using interview techniques and paper maps to technology-enhanced programs that use databases, cameras, global positioning, and interactive mapping to help gather and record resources and activities. Volunteer time and some limited municipal staff time are required for the simplest initiatives. Green Teams should consider partnering with municipal boards and committees as well as schools, civic groups, and nonprofit partners to do some of the work involved in identifying, locating, and mapping community assets. Free or low-cost web-based and print versions of community asset maps can allow the public to locate and nominate programs, organizations, businesses, and projects that support a more sustainable community. If this action is being completed for the Sustainable Jersey CCCRHVA Action or Gold Star in Climate Readiness, consultant costs may be incurred if the municipality chooses to utilize professional services to assist in the identification and/or mapping of community assets. The cost for a consultant to simply add information compiled by the Green Team to the municipality's list of critical and important features for inclusion in a municipal CCRHVA would be slight, but it would depend on the quality and level of descriptive and mapping information provided to the consultant by the Green Team.

What to do, and how to do it ("How to")

This section provides guidance and recommendations for implementing the action. A municipality does not need to follow this guidance exactly if it meets the requirements for earning points for this action.

Lookback Period: A municipality can earn points for this action if the Community Asset Map was completed in the current or previous two years.

In order to earn points for this action, the Community Asset Map must engage the public in identifying assets and include the following five categories of assets:

1. **Built Infrastructure**: Facilities, buildings, utilities, and other physical, human-made features.
2. **Natural Resources**: Natural resources such as forests, wetlands, water, wildlife corridors, greenways, etc.
3. **Social Support Networks**: Organizations, people, and sources of resources to help people improve their well-being, or in times of need or crisis.
4. **Economic Assets**: Businesses, special improvement districts, chambers of commerce, and other entities that assist with enhancing or supporting the local economy.
5. **Government Programs and Actions**: Municipal initiatives that support people and place.

Assets that are spatial and have a specific location must be geographically mapped and also provided in list format, with information about accessing the asset if available (e.g., website, location, and contact information). Assets that are not spatial, such as programs and activities, must be included in the list, but they do not need to be geographically mapped. It is recommended that the list be compiled in an Excel or Google spreadsheet so that it can be easily updated, searched, sorted, and transferred to a geographic information system (GIS) or other database resources.

Points will not be awarded for a map of only one area, such as a park or hiking trail, or only one type of asset, such as open space or outdoor recreation. The Community Asset Map must reflect the diversity of the community and be community-wide, and it cannot pertain to just one specific project. It also cannot be derived from a different purpose, such as an open space plan, or a combination of different efforts that may have included a component that maps or lists assets. The Community Asset Map must be created based on a process specifically implemented to produce a Community Asset Map that includes all five categories of assets described in this action and involves a diverse set of community members in identifying the assets.

To promote community awareness, appreciation, and connectivity, the Community Asset Map must be widely advertised publicly after it is completed. The community's asset map should continue to get updated, and it is recommended that a schedule and process be established to maintain it after submission to the Sustainable Jersey program. The Community Asset Map of the town will then be another asset to include in the mapping of sustainability assets.

Mapping of spatial assets can be done using paper, a GIS, or an interactive web-based mapping platform.

Creating a Community Asset Map generally involves the following steps:

1. Assign a person or small group to lead the effort. See the information under the "Who should lead and be involved with this action?" section.
2. Identify partners for collecting information about community assets. Partners are people and organizations that can help do the work of gathering information and creating the Community Asset Map. This can include municipal staff, community groups, advocacy organizations, and other local stakeholder groups.
3. Determine the target outreach group for people who will provide input for the Community Asset Map based on what is important to them or from their perspective. These are community members and are the people engaged through the participatory processes for collecting information and data described below in the next step. An effort should be made to include diverse perspectives in mapping community assets. See the Community & Equity Diversity Profile Action for guidance about diversifying stakeholders to include in the process. This action provides a way to get a better understanding of who is in the community and how to reach to them.
4. Determine an asset mapping approach that will work best in your community. Choose an approach that takes into account the amount of time the lead and partners are willing to volunteer, as well as the technical or organizational needs of your inventory method. Determine the level of staff support available from the municipal government to support the effort.

    - Determine the approach for collecting information and data, which will typically include a combination of the following methods:
        - **Web-Based Resources**: A vast amount of information about facilities and resources has already been compiled in various databases and made publicly available. Interactive web tools and data download sites provide a good starting point since most public assets are included in these resources.
        - **Participatory Processes**:
            - **Interviews**: Talking to key people in the community can reveal information about important assets from different sectors, neighborhoods, and demographic groups.

Interviews do not need to be formal, but a standard process for recording information provided by interviewees should be established before talking with people.
        - **Community Meetings and Events**: Including the community asset mapping topic on a regularly scheduled municipal meeting agenda or as a topic at local events is a good way to solicit information about community assets from people who regularly attend these. A meeting or event specifically established and designed to solicit community input for creating the Community Asset Map can potentially include more diverse perspectives if advertising for the meeting/event intentionally conducts equitable outreach and the meeting/event considers engagement strategies for greater inclusivity.
        - **Listening Sessions**: Gathering smaller groups to generate discussion can illuminate community assets and help explain why these features are important and to whom they are important. Having this information can contribute to the prioritization of assets for other activities, including the allocation of open space funding, implementation of climate adaptation actions, or provision of social supports. It can also inform further outreach efforts.
    - Determine the approach for creating the Community Asset Map. The map submitted for this action must include both a map and a list.
5. Collect information and data by applying the approach identified in the previous steps. Use a digital spreadsheet (Excel or Google Sheets) to record the list of all community assets that will be included in the Community Asset Map, or create the list on paper. It is recommended that the list be compiled digitally so that it can be easily updated, searched, sorted, or transferred to a geographic information system (GIS) or other database resources. The list must be categorized into the following types of assets:
    - Built Infrastructure
    - Natural Resources
    - Social Support Networks
    - Economy Assists
    - Government Programs and Actions
6. Create the map for the Community Asset Map. When determining which kind of map to create, consider how the end product will be distributed to and used by the community.
7. Advertise the Community Asset Map. Promote the map widely—with the Green Team, others who participated in the data collection process, and the public. The Community Asset Map must be actively advertised to the public to earn points for this action. The map can also be used to celebrate existing locations, facilities, built infrastructure, natural resources, institutions, and programs that contribute to a sustainable community.
8. Use the information learned about assets and knowledgeable community members in other efforts to assess, plan for, and improve the community. The data collected can be directly applied to the municipal CCRHVA, which must identify features necessary for sustaining quality of life during a natural disaster and assess the municipality's overall vulnerability. See the Sustainable Jersey Comprehensive Climate Change-Related Hazard Vulnerability Assessment Action for more details.

What to submit to earn points for this action

To earn points for this action, the following documentation must be submitted as part of the online certification application to verify that the action requirements have been met.

Lookback Period: A municipality can earn points for this action if the Community Asset Map was completed in the current or previous two years.

1. **Description of Implementation**
In the text box on the submission page, provide a short narrative (300 words or less) describing what has been accomplished and the impact it has or will have on the community.

For 10 points

2. **Upload:** Community Asset Map, including:

- A geographic map of spatial assets and
- A list of both spatial and non-spatial assets that includes the name of the resource, website, contact information, and physical address (if available).

3. **Upload:** Description of the community mapping approach used to complete the action, who the partners and participants were, and how outreach was implemented. The description of the community mapping approach must indicate which of the outreach approaches from Step 4 in the "What to do and how to do it" section was used to develop the Community Asset Map, and any additional approaches.

4. **Upload:** Description of how the completed Community Asset Map has been communicated to the community and explain how the community is using the information. Sharing the Community Asset Map with the community is an outreach process, not just posting on the website. The completed Community Asset Map, including the map and list of all assets, must be actively advertised to the public to earn points for this action.

IMPORTANT NOTES

There is a limit of six uploaded documents per action and individual files must not exceed 50 MB. Excerpts of relevant information from large documents are recommended..

All action documentation is available for public viewing after an action is approved. Action submissions should not include any information or documents that are not intended to be viewed by the public.

Resubmission Requirements

To resubmit for points under this action, provide:

- Updated information for all the requirements listed under the “What to Submit” section.

Also upload:

- A summary of items removed and added to the Community Asset Map.
- A description of how the community used the map to collectively strategize on using and improving assets.

Approved Action Expiration Date

Approved actions will be set to expire at the end of two full calendar years. For example, if the action is approved in the 2025 certification cycle, it will be set to expire December 31, 2027.

Gold Star Standard

Successful completion of this action could contribute toward the requirements for earning a Gold Star in Climate Readiness.

Spotlight: What NJ Municipalities Are Doing

Manville

Manville’s Green Team was formed during a kickoff meeting at Duke Farms on April 8, 2017. The first Sustainable Jersey action that the Green Team pursued was Community Asset Mapping. Asset Mapping is a common participatory process used in community planning that allows local decision makers and residents to focus on what’s positive about a community as a base for development. Manville’s Green Team used focus groups to gather data for the Asset Maps, filling in the gaps with interviews and a desktop analysis. A total of 80 Manville residents and decision makers participated in the focus group meetings hosted by the Manville Public Library during morning or evening sessions over six different days. Assets were grouped into 4 categories: physical, economic, community, and natural. This analysis also allowed for the unexpected opportunity to identify gaps in these areas, which can provide a foundation for future projects. A formal report was prepared with the assistance of The Nature Conservancy, the Manville Public Library, and the Administration of the Borough of Manville. The Community Assets Mapping was shared with the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Local Planning Services for the purposes of developing a Redevelopment Plan for Manville’s Downtown and Rustic Mall. The Borough also shared this project with the Somerset County

Planning Division and Sustainable Manville to enhance and accompany current and future planning initiatives.

COMMUNITY ASSET MAPPING_ASSETS INVENTORY REPORT_MANVILLE BOROUGH

BORDENTOWN CITY

Bordentown City's Community Asset Map (CAM) project began in approximately 2010 by reviewing various existing community resources including municipal documents, Downtown Bordentown Association brochures and website, and other pre-existing documents from other organizations. The CAM was completed in 2016. The CAM was reevaluated in 2019 and 2025, and various map elements were added and revised to represent changes that had occurred in the community. Community feedback and input were collected by displaying it at the City's First Annual Green Fair, making it available on the Environmental Commission's website, and by sharing on social media when originally drafted and upon each reevaluation. The main challenge to successful implementation of the CAM was to provide sufficient visibility to the public and generate sufficient public interest that the map would be used. The 2019 version of the CAM was provided to the public as an interactive web map, which helped make the information more accessible to the public. Bordentown also planned to develop an electronic submission form linked to the CAM. However; three main issues made these technological approaches impossible to continue: (1) frequent changes in state and county (Burlington) map layers; (2) changes in licensing that greatly increased the cost; and (3) lack of funding and/or volunteer manpower to perform continuing maintenance. The Community Asset Map (CAM) has been shared as a PDF on Bordentown City Environmental Commission's (BCEC) website and the link has been shared with the community on the Green Team's Facebook page and in a mailing to their email list with requests for public feedback. The CAM will be shared at Bordentown City's Annual Green Fair, and members of the community will be invited to provide contact information for their community organizations, businesses, creative endeavors, and so on, for inclusion in the map.

BORDENTOWN CITY COMMUNITY ASSET MAP UPDATED 2025

Resources

The following resources may be helpful in completing this action.

Conceptual / Framework Resources

- Asset Mapping & Visioning – Presentation describing components of the process
- Mapping the Assets of Your Community: A Key Component for Building Local Capacity – Southern Rural Development Center (Mississippi)

Mapping Resources

- Maps & Projects-- GreenMap.org
- NJ Community Asset Map – NJ Department of Community Affairs interactive web map]
- NJ-GeoWeb – NJ Department of Environmental Protection interactive web map
- Highlands Resource Explorer – NJ Highlands Council interactive web map
- New Jersey Conservation Blueprint- Interactive maps of NJ showing resources and rankings related to: agriculture, community greenspace, ecology, water quality, and parcel and land use / land cover data.
- NJ HazAdapt-– Under "Flood Hazard Analysis" there are critical facilities data available for download based on Lifeline Sectors identified by the US Department of Homeland Security.