

# Step 4: Community Engagement Strategy

## Resilient Coastal Communities Program (RCCP)



### Background

Community engagement is a core requirement of the North Carolina Resilient Coastal Communities Program (RCCP) and a foundational element of the Town of Shallotte's resilience planning effort. Engagement activities are designed to ensure that risk identification, vulnerability assessment, and strategy development are informed by local knowledge, lived experience, and practical implementation considerations.

The Community Action Team (CAT) was engaged early in the process to provide input on the Community Engagement Strategy. The Town's approach emphasizes targeted, place-based engagement that reflects Shallotte's inland setting, relatively stable year-round population, and strong reliance on trusted local institutions. Engagement methods prioritize in-person interaction, non-digital communication channels, and partnerships with organizations that residents already rely on for information and services.

### Engagement Goals

Engagement goals for the Shallotte RCCP focus on improving understanding of stormwater and flood risk, identifying priority problem areas, supporting informed decision-making, and developing strategies that are practical, equitable, and implementable. Engagement aims to reach residents, property owners, businesses, and developers who are affected by or contribute to stormwater conditions. Key objectives are summarized below.

*Increasing community awareness of flooding and stormwater challenges*

*Identifying neighborhood-level drainage concerns not captured in existing datasets*

*Ensuring vulnerable populations are represented in the planning process*

*Gathering input that informs resilience goals, mitigation strategies, and project prioritization*

### Engagement Methods & Approach

The community engagement strategy uses a multi-modal approach, designed to reduce barriers, prioritize accessibility, maximize participation, and ensure broad representation across the Shallotte community. Selected engagement methods emphasize smaller, community-based interactions and trusted local communication channels to meet residents where they are. Methods are outlined more in depth below.

## CAT Meetings

Meetings will occur at key planning milestones and provide opportunities for Town staff and community representatives to review findings, discuss risk data, and guide strategy development.

## Pop-Up Engagement

Recognizing that many residents may not attend formal meetings, the project team will conduct informal outreach at community gathering places where residents already spend time.

## Targeted Outreach

SVI and RAPT mapping, in addition to CAT input, will be used to identify neighborhoods where residents may face increased vulnerability to flooding impacts.

## Digital Engagement

A designated project website will be developed to host all relevant project information including RCCP resources, meeting materials, and draft deliverables. The site will also host the public survey.

## Engagement by Project Phase

### Phase I (Oct 2025 - May 2026)

#### *Risk & Vulnerability Assessment*

Engagement during Phase 1 focuses on collecting input to inform the identification of hazards, assets, areas. Key activities include:

- CAT meetings to identify hazards, assets, and vulnerabilities
- Launch of community survey (Spring 2026)
- Development of project website (Spring 2026)
- Pop-up outreach events at community locations

### Phase II (June - Oct 2026)

#### *Resilience Strategy Development*

Engagement during Phase 2 focuses on refining and prioritizing resilience strategies based on community priorities. Key activities include:

- CAT meetings to review and prioritize strategies
- Outreach to businesses and community organizations
- Continued digital engagement and website updates

## Vulnerable Populations

To ensure RCCP efforts meaningfully include historically underserved and underrepresented populations, engagement strategies for the Town of Shallotte are informed by CDC Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) and FEMA Resilience Analysis and Planning Tool (RAPT) indicators, as well as input from the CAT regarding local conditions. While Shallotte does not exhibit large concentrations of extreme vulnerability, the presence of these indicators highlights the importance of proactive outreach and fostering inclusive engagement.

The following groups were identified as potentially more vulnerable to flooding and stormwater impacts and less likely to participate in traditional planning process.

*Elderly & Aging Populations*

Residents may rely on fixed incomes or have mobility limitations that affect their ability to prepare/respond to flooding.

*Renters / Residents of Multi-Family Units*

Residents in these housing types may have limited control over property improvements that could reduce flood risk.

*Low-to-Moderate Income Households*

Residents may face additional challenges due to limited financial capacity for property improvements or mitigation.

## Engagement Summary Table

As summarized in the table below, the engagement strategy uses a combination of structured stakeholder input and accessible, community-based outreach to support broad participation throughout the RCCP process. These methods are intentionally designed to reach a range of audiences by meeting people where they are and providing multiple ways to participate.

LOCATION / SETTING	METHOD / MATERIALS	TARGET AUDIENCE(S)
<b>CAT Meetings</b>	Facilitated planning meetings, presentations, mapping exercises, and discussion of flooding and stormwater issues	Town leadership, planning/public works staff, community representatives
<b>Town Hall &amp; Public Library</b>	Public information sessions, printed project summaries, interactive maps, community surveys	Homeowners, long-term residents, seniors
<b>Community Events &amp; Gathering Spaces</b>	Pop-up outreach table, drop box responses, maps/posters, informational flyers	Working families, renters, younger residents, businesses
<b>Faith-Based Organizations &amp; Community Groups</b>	Printed informational materials, survey distribution, small group conversations	Community leaders, church members, seniors
<b>Neighborhood-Based Outreach in Problem Areas</b>	Neighborhood-level workshops, door-to-door information distribution, problem areas maps	Residents, renters, property owners in affected areas
<b>Town Website &amp; Online Platforms</b>	Project website, online survey, project resources/updates, meeting announcements & materials	Younger residents, property owners, businesses

## Ongoing Engagement Activities

Community engagement will be conducted as a continuous and iterative process throughout both Phases 1&2 of the RCCP. Rather than one-time engagement, the approach emphasizes consistent visibility and repeated opportunities for participation, particularly during key milestones. Ongoing engagement activities are focused on maintaining awareness of the project and providing multiple opportunities to participate in ways that are convenient and accessible.

### Key Ongoing Activities:

- Maintain and update the project website with materials, maps, and updates
- Share project updates through Town communication channels
- Conduct repeat pop-up outreach at high traffic community locations
- Distribute survey reminders and follow-up materials
- Coordinate with community organizations and local partners
- Adjust outreach methods based on participation trends and feedback

## Engagement Tracking & Documentation

All engagement activities will be documented and tracked for transparency, demonstrating how community input informs the RCCP process. Tracking efforts focus on capturing not only participation levels, but also where engagement occurred, who was reached, and what feedback was received. Input collected will be compiled and evaluated to identify recurring themes and location-specific issues, helping strengthen the connection between community input and technical analysis.

<i>CAT Meetings</i>	<i>Community Survey</i>	<i>Pop-Up Outreach</i>	<i>Public Input</i>	<i>Engagement Summary</i>
Attendance, presentation, & meeting minutes	Number of responses, common themes, & geographic trends	Locations, dates, methods used, & estimated participation	Compilation of comments related to flooding & drainage concerns	Synthesis of key findings & recurring issues

## How Engagement Informs Outcomes

Community engagement directly informs both the Risk and Vulnerability Assessment and the Resilience Strategy Development. Input will be used to validate technical findings and identify localized issues, specifically recurring flooding and drainage concerns that may not be reflected in existing datasets or plans. Engagement results will also guide the development of resilience strategies. Community input will help identify which areas and issues should be prioritized, while stakeholder feedback will provide insight into feasibility, community support, and implementation considerations.