

Jurisdictional Annex III

Village of Athens

Village Profile

The Village of Athens is located in Greene County along the west bank of the Hudson River within the eastern portion of the Town of Athens. See Table III-1.

History: The land that is currently the Village of Athens was purchased from the Makicanni Tribe in 1655 and became three settlements: Loonenburg (1685), Esperanza (1794), and Athens (1800). The Village of Athens was incorporated in 1805 and was a port on the Hudson-Athens Ferry (Source: *Athens Street Festival website*). It thrived as a hub for shipbuilding, brick making, and ice harvesting. In 1935, when the Rip Van Winkle Bridge opened just 4 miles to the south, it eliminated the need for the ferry. The Village of Athens architecture is much the same as it was in the 1800s and there are more than 300 buildings in the Village that are on national and state historical registers (Source: *Athens Village Website*).

Form of Government: The Village is governed by a Village Board comprised of the mayor and four trustees. The Village Board sets policy, approves the budget, adopts local laws, implements policies, and administrates local affairs. Each member serves a 2-year term.

Growth and Development Trends: According to the 2007 Greene County *Comprehensive Economic Development Plan*¹, commercial growth is encouraged on Second Street and State Route 385 through the adaptive reuse of historic structures with waterfront-related development encouraged along the Hudson River. The Village of Athens has a joint *Comprehensive Plan* (2007) with the Town of Athens and a *Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan* (1999).

The Village of Athens, despite some areas of development, has seen a relatively stable population since the early 2000s. The Village was previously under a consent order for its wastewater treatment plant, creating a significant obstacle to development in the Village, but this has been lifted. U.S. Census statistics show that the Village shrank from 1,695 to 1,668 people between 2000 and 2010 (see Table III-1), while the number of housing units increased from 793 to 885.

Recent Hazard Events

In the last 5 years, there have been a few storms that were significant for the Village of Athens, most notably Hurricane Irene and Superstorm Sandy.

Hurricane Irene (2011): While the River Towns did not experience as much damage as the Mountaintop area of Greene County, there was measurable damage to the public sector. Damage from Hurricane Irene caused financial losses in the Village of about \$40,000. Substantial debris

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Table III-1: Village of Athens Statistics

2010 Population	Total Land Area	Land/Water Area
1,668	4.6 sq. mi.	3.4/1.2 sq. mi.

¹ <http://greenegovernment.com/departments/planning-economic-development>

clearance and damage to the Main Waste Water Treatment Plant accounted for most of the documented damage. There was also destruction at the Municipal Building with the loss of the boiler.

Superstorm Sandy (2012): Superstorm Sandy resulted in damage claims close to \$25,000. The claims were focused on debris cleanup and repairs to the Main Waste Water Treatment Plant necessitated after a tidal surge sent up to 4 feet of water into the basement of the Treatment Plant, damaging monitoring devices and contaminating an oil tank.

Summary of Vulnerabilities

The Village of Athens is one of Greene County’s River Towns located along the Hudson River.

Flooding occurs adjacent to the Hudson River, along major tributaries, and steep slopes. Table III-2 details the number of parcels that are located in or touch the floodway, 100-year floodplain, or 500-year floodplain.

Table III-2: Number of Parcels in Flood Hazard Areas, Village of Athens

Floodway	100-Year Floodplain	500-Year Floodplain
0	241	272

Source: 2015 FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map

As shown in Figure III-1, the Village of Athens has two critical facilities located in the floodplain:

- The Village of Athens Sewage Plant: This plant is located on the Hudson River in the flood zone at the intersection of Water Street and Market Street.
- Brick Row Sewer Plant: This sewer plant is in a flood zone on the Hudson River and is within an historic district.

There are three repetitive loss properties in the Village.

Capability Assessment

Each municipality analyzed four capability assessment areas that are relevant for reducing long-term vulnerabilities through mitigation planning. These four areas include: Planning (legal) and Regulatory, Administrative and Technical, Financial, and Education and Outreach. Changes that have occurred since the 2009 *Greene County Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazard Mitigation Plan*² (HMP) are described below.

² <http://greenegovernment.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/HMP.pdf>

Planning (legal) and Regulatory: There have not been many changes in capabilities for reducing long-term vulnerability since the 2009 HMP. The Village has a number of relevant documents and ordinances listed at right (see text box), including a joint Comprehensive Plan with the Town of Athens.

Administrative and Technical: In addition to the Village Board, the Village has a Village Clerk, Department of Public Works, Police Department, Fire Departments, and Code Enforcement Officer as well as several volunteer boards and committees. The Village also has a consulting engineer and a volunteer fire chief, both provide and enhance the Village’s administrative and technical capabilities. The Code Enforcement Officer position is a shared position with the Village of Catskill and the Village of Coxsackie, which reduces the Village’s capacity.

Financial: Dollars available for reducing long-term vulnerabilities in the Village have shrunk rather than expanded. However, the Village has recently embarked on a municipal sharing project with the Town of Athens. The Village and Town are currently experimenting on joint management of the two public works crews; if successful, this would greatly enhance planning and operational resources for the Village.

Education and Outreach: There have not been any identifiable or confirmable changes in the capabilities for reducing long-term vulnerability since the 2009 HMP.

Relevant Documents and Ordinances

- ✓ Town of Athens and Village of Athens joint *Comprehensive Plan* (2007)
- ✓ Zoning Law (2013)
- ✓ Subdivision Law (2012)
- ✓ Site Plan Review (2013)
- ✓ Building Code (2008)
- ✓ Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) (1999)
- ✓ Flood and Historical Laws (2008)



Figure III-1: Village of Athens Hazard Area Map

Mitigation Strategies

Hazard Mitigation Actions Completed or in Progress: In the last 5 years, the Village of Athens has undertaken a number of actions to mitigate the effects of flooding. Table III-3 shows the hazard mitigation actions described in the 2009 HMP that have been completed or are in progress.

Village of Athens Sewer Plant: The Village has progressed in its updates to the Village of Athens Sewer Plant located on Water and Market Streets in the flood zone along the Hudson River, with the result that the plant is no longer under an order of consent from the NYS DEC due to high inflow and infiltration.

During past storm events, storm water had entered the plant and created high inflow and infiltration, resulting in a violation of the SPDES permit for required usage of the plant. The Village invested a total of \$4.6 million dollars to upgrade the sewage treatment plant by installing a new clarifier and new drying beds, and upgrading the drainage, among other improvements. The Village’s effort will help advance development opportunities in the Village while also preventing future violations. While the rehabilitated plant is not floodproof, the upgrades applied by the Village will make it more resistant to flooding events.

Infiltration and Inflow Upgrades: Approximately \$600,000 of the \$4.6 million dollars was spent on the treatment of infiltration and inflow, with very positive results. When the basement flooded in 2014, due to human error, the VFD’s were moved out of the flood zone and the heat was converted to electric, resulting in further effective mitigation.

Municipal Building Drainage. Drainage was also installed around the Municipal Building to draw water away from the basement and furnace room in particular. To date, this effort has been successful with no additional flooding.

The Village will continue to look for opportunities to correct other infiltration and inflow problems since completed efforts have proven to be very effective.

Brick Row Waste Water Plant. The Village is currently involved in talks with the Sleepy Hollow Lake management to build a series of pump stations to allow the Brick Row Waste Water Plant to be removed from operation. Instead, sewage would be pumped from Sleepy Hollow Lake and Brick Row directly to the main plant (Village of Athens Sewer Plant). Problems with the Brick Row Waste Water Plant would be mitigated by this action.

Emergency Shelter. The emergency shelter action is no longer needed as the firehouse has a generator and it has been determined to make a better shelter than the community center gym.

Table III-3: Summary of Mitigation Actions, Village of Athens

Mitigation Action	Project Status
Village of Athens Sewer Plant	Complete
Infiltration and Inflow Upgrades	Complete for Now
Municipal Building Drainage	Complete
Brick Row Waste Water Plant	In Progress
Emergency Shelter in Community Center Gym	No Longer Needed – Firehouse is used as a shelter

Proposed Hazard Mitigation Actions: In addition to the Greene County actions discussed in this Plan, the Village of Athens has considered its individual needs related to risk and vulnerability and is pursuing or proposing the following hazard mitigation actions:

- (V)ATH-1: Culvert Replacement – Replace culvert and widen the roadway on Union Street.
- (V)ATH-2: Brick Row Sewer Plant – Remove this sewer plant in the floodplain and replace it with a pump station to pump sewage to the main sewer plant in the Village. Studies are underway with Sleepy Hollow Lake to combine the two systems.
- (V)ATH-3: Village of Athens Drainage System – Undertake a full study of the drainage system in the Village of Athens, including new culverts and drains throughout the Village.
- (V)ATH-4: New Sewer and Water Lines – Provide new sewer and water lines where necessary. Continue infiltration and inflow rehabilitation of manholes and sewer mains.
- (V)ATH-5: Relocate Department of Public Works Building – The building is in a flood zone and needs to be moved.
- (V)ATH-6: Wastewater Treatment Plant Flood Mitigation – Purchase new influent pumps to ensure that increased flow during storms can be properly handled.

The Village will also participate in the action identified for all municipalities to integrate this plan's actions with existing planning, consider hazards in future development decisions, and attempt 500-year level protection for critical facilities.

Details about each proposed hazard mitigation action can be found in the individual Action Worksheets.