



Letter from Erica Deuso, Candidate for Mayor of Downingtown

Dear Neighbors,

Flooding has shaped Downingtown's story for generations. Each storm reminds us that our town's greatest strength, our proximity to the Brandywine, is also one of our greatest vulnerabilities. When Hurricane Ida struck, our community saw firsthand how water can change lives overnight. Families on Mary Street, Stuart Avenue, Viaduct Avenue, Brandywine Avenue, and many other areas across this town, faced heartbreaking losses. Business owners along Lancaster Avenue spent weeks, if not months, cleaning and rebuilding. But we also saw something else, neighbors helping neighbors, volunteers stepping forward, and a shared determination to rebuild smarter and stronger.

This plan is built on that same spirit. It takes the findings from the Brandywine Flood Study and turns them into a roadmap for real progress. It reflects our values as a community: to stay safe, sustainable, and strong. As your next mayor, I will champion regional cooperation, invest in science-based solutions, and ensure that Downingtown has a seat at every table where decisions about our watershed are made.

Together, we can protect what makes this town home and leave it safer for those who come after us.

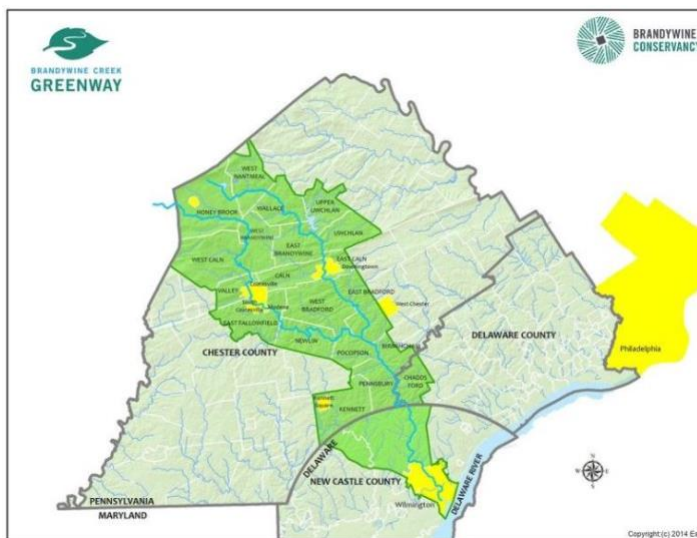
Sincerely,

Erica Deuso
Candidate for Mayor of Downingtown



Regional Collaboration Framework

Flooding in the Brandywine watershed transcends borough and state lines. Downingtown recognizes that lasting flood mitigation requires a coordinated regional effort. This plan calls for the creation of the Brandywine Creek Regional Flood Mitigation Council, a coalition uniting municipality from Honey Brook, Pennsylvania, to Wilmington, Delaware.



Membership will include mayors and township supervisors from every municipality in Chester, Delaware, and New Castle Counties. It will also include county emergency management officials, state legislators from both Pennsylvania and Delaware, and U.S. Representatives whose districts cover the watershed. Representatives from FEMA, PEMA, DNREC, the Delaware River Basin Commission, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will serve as technical advisors.

The Council will meet quarterly, alternating locations between Pennsylvania and Delaware, and will focus on three working priorities:

- Infrastructure & Engineering
 - Aligning bridge, dam, and culvert upgrades.
- Policy & Funding
 - Coordinating multi-jurisdictional grants and shared standards.
- Community Resilience
 - Improving public education, early-warning systems, and communication.

To track success, the Council will publish annual data-driven reports with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) such as reduced repetitive-loss properties, decreased



average flood elevation, and the amount of funding secured for mitigation projects. Each member municipality will report project progress, completed maintenance, and community outcomes to ensure accountability.

Table 3: Primary Structural Recommendations for Flood Mitigation

Stream Section	RM (mi/ft)	Structure	Municipality	State	Priority Level
Main Stem	7,970	US Rte 13/NE Blvd Bridge replacement	Wilmington	DE	High
Main Stem	19,996	Bancroft Dam No. 4 removal	Wilmington	DE	High
Main Stem	24,490	DuPont Exp. Sta. Dam 6 removal	Wilmington/New Castle County	DE	High
Main Stem	7.3*	Rockland Dam No. 11 removal	New Castle County	PA	High
Main Stem	22,413	East Penn Railroad Bridge replacement	Chadds Ford/Pennsbury	PA	High
Main Stem	23,660	US Rte 1 Bridge replacement	Chadds Ford/Pennsbury	PA	High
Main Stem	23,743	PA Dam No. 1 removal	Chadds Ford/Pennsbury	PA	Low
Main Stem	23,743	Conservancy floodplain restoration	Chadds Ford/Pennsbury	PA	Medium
East Branch	39,913	Rte 322 Bridge replacement	East Bradford	PA	Low
East Branch	46,852	Rte 30 Bus. Lancaster Ave replacement	Downingtown	PA	High
East Branch	106,300	Barneston Dam upgrades	Wallace	PA	High
West Branch	71,551	Reading Wilm. Northern Railroad Bridge replacement	Modena	P A M e d i u m	
West Branch	81,718	Cleveland Cliffs Rail Bridge replacement	South Coatesville	PA	Low
West Branch	88,244	East Glencrest Rd Bridge replacement	Valley	PA	Low
Beaver Creek	6,510	Lloyd Ave Bridge replacement	Caln	PA	Low
Beaver Creek	1,388	Manor Ave Bridge replacement	Downingtown	PA	High

*measured in miles instead of feet

The Council will pursue joint applications for funding through programs such as FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, the U.S. Army Corps' Planning Assistance to States, the EPA's Clean Water State Revolving Fund, and the Delaware River Basin Commission's Flood Resiliency Grants.

Local Flood Mitigation Projects

Downingtown's location at the confluence of the East Branch Brandywine Creek and Beaver Creek makes it a focal point for both opportunity and vulnerability. During



Hurricane Ida, 8.2 inches of rainfall fell within six hours, and water discharge peaked at 49,000 cubic feet per second. The resulting floods displaced residents and damaged property throughout the borough.



The 2025 Brandywine Flood Study identifies 16 key regional mitigation projects, including ten bridge replacements, four dam removals, and one major floodplain restoration. Downingtown's highest-priority project is the replacement of the **Manor Avenue Bridge**, which will significantly improve water flow through Beaver Creek and reduce flooding for homes along Mary and Stuart Avenues.

Additional initiatives include expansion of the borough's stormwater retention basins, replacement of undersized culverts, and evaluation of upstream detention opportunities in partnership with Chester County Water Resources Authority.



The borough will also explore collaboration with PennDOT to synchronize road elevation and drainage upgrades along Route 30 to reduce localized pooling near Lancaster Avenue. These improvements will be paired with streambank stabilization efforts and green infrastructure projects.



State and Federal Funding Opportunities

Downingtown Borough will take a proactive stance in pursuing funding from all available state and federal sources. By aligning borough needs with regional goals, Downingtown can access a wider pool of grants, pilot programs, and resilience funds.

Key funding sources include FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), the Flood Mitigation Assistance Program (FMA), and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Planning Assistance to States Program. The Borough will also pursue support through the Delaware River Basin Commission and new flood resilience allocations under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

To maximize competitiveness, Downingtown will maintain an annual pre-qualification process for project proposals, complete environmental and engineering reviews in advance, and maintain readiness to match funds when required. Local funding will also be leveraged through partnerships with Chester County and Pennsylvania DEP's Growing Greener Program.

Each year, the Borough will publish a Grant Application Calendar outlining upcoming deadlines and coordination opportunities. Grant-writing assistance will be provided through regional partnerships, ensuring Downingtown remains competitive for large-scale infrastructure grants.

Partnership with Borough Committees

Downingtown's Flood Advisory Committee and **Sustainability Advisory Committee** are vital partners in both planning and implementation. These committees represent the borough's community-driven approach to resilience, grounded in local expertise and public engagement.

The Flood Advisory Committee will continue identifying high-risk properties, reviewing data from the Brandywine Flood Study, and advising Borough Council on annual infrastructure priorities. The Sustainability Advisory Committee will lead on green solutions, rain gardens, bioswales, native tree plantings, and pervious pavement projects, that reduce runoff and improve stormwater quality.

Together, these committees will develop community outreach campaigns to educate residents about flood insurance, home elevation programs, and emergency preparedness. This includes an annual 'Flood Awareness Week' featuring public workshops and volunteer cleanup events.



Multi-Benefit and Nature-Based Solutions

The Borough of Downingtown will expand its commitment to nature-based flood mitigation strategies that deliver long-term, sustainable benefits. The Brandywine Flood Study demonstrates that floodplain restoration, wetland expansion, and low-head dam removal can reduce flood elevations by up to two feet during major storms while improving ecosystem health.

Working with the Brandywine Conservancy, Chester County Water Resources Authority, and local landowners, the Borough will identify pilot sites for restoration projects by 2027. These will include reforestation of stream buffers, conversion of impervious surfaces to absorbent landscapes, and installation of pollinator-friendly native plants in conjunction with Restore Our Roots.

These efforts not only manage floodwaters but also enhance recreation, improve water quality, and provide carbon sequestration benefits. The Borough will also seek Tree City USA certification by the end of 2026 and expand the shade tree program to include stormwater-beneficial species.

Implementation and Accountability

This plan will be implemented through annual action schedules, tied to measurable outcomes. Progress will be tracked through key metrics such as reduced flood claims, completed infrastructure upgrades, and community engagement levels.

The Mayor's Office will coordinate with Borough Council and the Brandywine Creek Regional Flood Mitigation Council to ensure resources are deployed efficiently and transparently. A public dashboard will be launched to track milestones, funding received, and community updates.

This document represents a living framework, subject to refinement and ratification by Borough Council and any regional flood committee that may be formed. As science, technology, and local priorities evolve, the plan will evolve with them.

As your future mayor, I commit to ensuring this plan moves from paper to progress, turning lessons learned into long-term resilience for every neighborhood in Downingtown.