

OVERVIEW

The Town of Hampton has coastline bordering the Atlantic Ocean and the Hampton-Seabrook Estuary. Over time, accelerating sea level rise and worsening storms threaten to degrade the Town's beaches and wetlands, damage its roads and buildings, stress its economy, and strain its municipal services. Implementing policies and regulations related to coastal resilience is therefore, imperative to the future of Hampton. The town has undergone several initiatives to prepare for and adapt to the impacts of climate change and continues to pursue regulatory actions that will make it a more resilient community.

APPROACH TO ADOPTING CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE REGULATIONS

Including community outreach, long range planning, and regulatory changes. The town has undertaken the following initiatives to address flooding risk caused by sea level rise:



King Tide, Hampton NH 2017

- **Floodplain Ordinance Reorganization and Freeboard**

In 2017, Hampton re-organized the town's floodplain ordinance and incorporated a 1-foot freeboard requirement to add an additional margin of safety over the FEMA minimum base flood elevation requirement. As outlined in the 2021 Coastal Resilience plan, the town's goal is to increase this freeboard requirement to two feet above the base flood elevation to provide more protection to buildings sea levels rise.

- **Hampton Town Wetland Permit**

Hampton revised its Wetland Permit Application to require applicants to identify their flood hazard zone. The Conservation Commission finds there is great synergy between the Wetland Ordinance and the Floodplain Ordinance given the fact that tidal buffers are located within Flood Hazard Zones. The Commission meets with applicants to discuss flood protection measures that could be incorporated into their site plans which is particularly useful when projects are in the design phase.

- **Reduction of Impervious Coverage**

In 2017, the Conservation Commission recognizing the connection between impervious coverage, water quality, and flooding, sponsored a warrant article to reduce the maximum impervious coverage percentage on a parcel. For properties outside of the aquifer protection zone impervious cover maximums were reduced from 85% to 60% and reduced to 75% in the business seasonal zone. The warrant article revised the impervious coverage formula to exclude areas of wetlands and open water in determining minimum lot size. This ensures that the calculation accurately represents the portions of the property that are truly buildable. New construction and substantial redevelopment projects must meet this lower impervious cover threshold. To date, there have been several beach redevelopment projects that had to incorporate green infrastructure in order to meet lower impervious percentage.

This project was funded, in part, by NOAA's Office for Coastal Management under the Coastal Zone Management Act in conjunction with the NH Department of Environmental Services Coastal Program.



Additionally, Hampton is considering the following as outlined in the Coastal Resiliency chapter of the 2022 Master Plan update:

- **Establish a Coastal hazard Overlay District** with boundaries encompassing projected future flood hazard zones presented in the Part I: Science (Wake, et. al. 2019) and visible through the New Hampshire Coastal Viewer platform. The Coastal Hazard Overlay District should have higher regulatory standards to protect against flood impacts from sea-level rise and coastal storm surge.
- **Create a Community Resilience Incentive Zone** and a Capital Reserve Fund with seed funding and a reliable revenue source to be used to help fund municipal repairs, upgrades, flood mitigation and/or resiliency projects identified in this Master Plan Chapter, the Hazard Mitigation Plan, and other local or regional flood studies.
- **Join the FEMA Community Rating System (CRS)**, which is a voluntary incentive program that recognizes and encourages community floodplain management practices that exceed the minimum requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The benefit of the Town's participation in this program is that it offers a reduction in premium rates to policy holders based on actions the community takes to reduce flood risk. CRS discounts on flood insurance premiums range from 5 to 45% depending on the CRS credit points that are awarded to the community.

NEXT STEPS

While Hampton has made significant strides in implementing regulatory tools to prepare for the impacts of climate change and sea-level rise, the town recognizes additional action will be required and is currently undergoing the following community initiatives:

- **Master Plan Update**
Hampton is currently undergoing a comprehensive master plan update. The first phase of the update concluded in March of 2021 and resulted in an updated vision chapter and coastal management plan, which will be integrated into the overall Master Plan document (anticipated to be completed by the end of 2022).
- **Local Land Use Regulations Audit and Amendments**
Hampton has received grant funding from the Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership (PREP) to review its current land use regulations and make revisions that would improve coastal resilience and mitigate climate change and sea level rise impacts on the community. The project will involve integrating recommendations from New Hampshire's Coastal Flood Risk Guidance and an extensive public outreach campaign.
- **Floodplain Development Standards**
The Hampton Conservation Commission is considering two options to amend the Wetland Ordinance that would: require open foundations (allow for unobstructed flow of water underneath a structure) for substantially improved structures or new construction within 50 feet of a tidal wetland; or create a Coastal A Zone in the floodplain ordinance that would apply the VE Zone construction standards to the AE and AO flood zones.
- **Ongoing initiatives with the Coastal Hazards and Adaption Team (CHAT)**
CHAT is a dedicated group of town staff, residents and representatives of the Hampton Beach Area Commission and Hampton Beach Village Precinct and the Seabrook Hamptons Estuary Alliance (SHEA), that work to improve coordination of flood hazard management and adaption efforts in Hampton as well as provide public outreach and education to Hampton residents concerning flood hazards and resiliency.

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LESSONS LEARNED AND GUIDANCE FOR THESE REGULATIONS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Building community resilience requires utilizing a variety of approaches to address the different spheres of community life that are impacted by coastal hazards. One of the most integral approaches is increasing public education on hazards and vulnerabilities related to coastal flooding. Creating an informed and aware community can provide essential support for coastal resilience policies and programs and can empower residents and business owners to proactively implement resiliency measures on their own. As part of its process for enacting regulations related to coastal resiliency, Hampton has identified strategies to increase public education and raise awareness of coastal flood risk among municipal staff, decision-makers, and the public. Strategies include providing municipal education and training opportunities to town staff and elected officials, launching public awareness campaigns, and enhancing emergency procedures within the community during flooding events.

Adapting to climate change and sea level rise requires collective action and developing multi-stakeholder partnerships to share knowledge and expertise. Hampton recognizes the need for increased collaboration across multiple sectors and, through SHEA and CHAT, provides the opportunity for town staff, municipal board members, residents, state officials and others to share knowledge and ideas related to coastal hazards and adaptation strategies.

RESOURCES

- Hampton's PREPA Grant Project – Local Land Use Regulations (Audit and Amendments): <https://www.hamptonnh.gov/588/PREPA-Grant-Project--Local-Land-Use-Reg>
- Hampton Master Plan Update: <https://resilience.mysocialpinpoint.com/hampton-master-plan/hampton-master-plan-update>
- CHAT: <http://shea4nh.org/coastal-hazards-adaptation-team-chat/>
- Rockingham Planning Commission: www.therpc.org
- NH Coastal Flood Risk Summary: <https://www.des.nh.gov/about/boards-and-committees/coastal-flood-risk>
- FEMA Flood Maps and Guidance: <https://www.nh.gov/osi/planning/programs/fmp/maps.htm>