

3.2.2. HAMPTON, NH

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|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Population Density | 1050 / sq. mi. |
| Form of Government | Town |
| Category | Oceanfront Seasonal |
| CRS Rating | In Application Process |

| Median Household Income | Median Per Capita Income | % Owner Occ | Population | 2000-2010 Pop Growth Rate | % White | % Hispanic | % Minority | % Seasonal Housing |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|------------|---------------------------|---------|------------|------------|--------------------|
| 67461 | 40371 | 46.8 | 15430 | 0.33 | 96.1 | 2% | 4.9% | 22.4 |

| Adaptations | Status | Incorp orates CC | Type | Impact | Standard Costs | Funding Source |
|--|-------------|------------------|------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Coastal Adaptation Workgroup Participant | Implemented | Yes | Procedural | Recommendation | Unique Zero | None |
| Comprehensive Plan - Incorporates SLR | Completed | Yes | Procedural | Recommendation | Unique Medium (<\$100,000) | None |
| Wetlands Conservation District Zoning | Implemented | No | Prevention | Mandatory | Above Required Medium (<\$100,000) | State |

CONTACTS

Jamie Steffen, Town Planner
 jsteffen@town.hampton.nh.us
 609-929-5913

Rayanne Dionne, Conservation Coordinator
 rdionne@town.hampton.nh.us
 603-929-5808

Town of Hampton Town Hall
 100 Winnacunnet Rd.
 Hampton, NH 03842

POPULATION AND GEOGRAPHY

New Hampshire has the shortest coastline of any U.S. state (18 miles) and Hampton is one of only four New Hampshire towns having an Atlantic Ocean shoreline. Hampton consists of an area of 14.7 square miles. The town's shore is a well-known resort destination. Elevation ranges from sea level to 150 feet above sea level near the border with the town of Exeter. Hampton also borders the towns of Hampton Falls on the south and North Hampton to the north. I-95 and Route 1 traverse the town.

The town has a population of just over 15,000. There is also a significant summertime increase in population, as 22% of the housing stock is reported as seasonal. The population is 96% white and has a median per capita income of just over \$40,000.

COASTAL ISSUES

The Town of Hampton has been subject to over 50 major floods from coastal storms and high tides since 1723. Flooding is particularly severe in the Hampton Beach area, where most of the town's NFIP floodplains exist. Flooding can occur any time of year, and even a single intense rainfall can cause minor to moderate flooding. Severe flooding occurs when two storms occur within a week or when coastal surge and heavy rain occur together.

The entirety of Hampton Beach is in the FEMA Special Flood Hazard Area. Hampton contains over 4,000 structures and 2,703 lots totaling 2,577 acres in flood zones. This includes over 2,200 in Zone AE, 260 in Zone AO, 5 in Zone VE, 1,277 in Zone X, and 188 in Zone X500. There are 935 NFIP policies in the town and \$2.6 million has been paid in flood claims from 1978 to 2001.

The Master Plan for Hampton Beach states that increased development of the Hampton Beach area has increased impervious surfaces and increased the rate of runoff. However, the problem is particularly exacerbated when combined with coastal storms “and potential sea level rise due to climate change ... [which will] make the Hampton Beach area highly vulnerable to destructive flooding and storm damage” (III-96).

The town experienced rapid development of its coastal dunes in the 1880s and the state constructed seawalls and breakwaters in the early 1900s, which have been maintained by the town, state, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

ADAPTATIONS

Coastal Adaptation Workgroup/Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership/COAST Tool

The town of Hampton, along with other New Hampshire coastal towns Hampton Falls and Seabrook, joined with the Coastal Adaptation Workgroup (CAW) to participate in a sea level rise adaptation project.

The project was spearheaded by the Casco Bay Estuaries Partnership (CBEP) in Portland, Maine, the Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership (PREP) in coastal New Hampshire, and the New England Environmental Finance Center. The groups were awarded funding by the EPA Climate

Ready Estuaries program to develop and use a sea level rise simulation called COAST (“Coastal Adaptation to Sea level rise Tool”).

The town identified vulnerable assets and adaptation actions to model using COAST. The Environmental Finance Center, under the direction of Sam Merrill, ran the simulations and made presentations of the results in Hampton. After numerous meetings with stakeholders, however, the town indicated it has actually done little with the information or taken any steps to actually implement adaptation activities. The one adaptation the town is undertaking is increasing setbacks of a firehouse that is being reconstructed due to necessary maintenance.

Incorporates Sea Level Rise into Master Plan

The Hampton Beach Master Plan, which was completed in 2001, discusses the impact of sea level rise and climate change on the town's vulnerability to coastal flooding. The plan states that recent analyses suggest sea level is rising 1/8 inch a year, and suggests a number of challenges it will cause, including "inundation of ocean water into low-lying areas ... storm surge and wave runoff [which] is likely to cause more of a problem than inundation since the built areas will be affected by storm waves" (Hampton Beach, N.H. Master Plan 2001) The plan cites inundation of ocean water into low-lying areas, erosion of beach cliffs, loss of low-lying land, loss of sediment along beachfronts, salt intrusion into aquifers and surface waters, and higher water tables.

The plan mentions challenges such as elevation standards being based on static floodplain designations without considering sea level rise, and suggests future adaptations, such as regulations to enhance flood controls, stricter building codes in flood areas, and similar actions that change the types of structures that are built near or in high-velocity wave areas.

Wetlands Conservation District Zoning

The town of Hampton has adopted a Wetlands Conservation District Zone to protect and preserve its tidal and inland wetlands and wetland buffers (Hampton, N.H., Town Code, Sec. 2.3.1):

The Wetlands Conservation District is intended to:

- Prevent the destruction and preserve the integrity and health of wetlands and areas of very poorly drained soils and poorly drained soils and their buffers, all of which provide flood protection, connection to the ground or surface water supply, filtration of water flowing into ponds and streams, and augmentation of stream flow during dry periods;
- Prevent the development of structures and land uses on wetlands, areas of very poorly drained soils and poorly drained soils, and their buffers, which would contribute to pollution of surface and ground water by sewage or other wastes or toxic materials;
- Prevent unnecessary or excessive expense to the Town for provision and maintenance of essential services and utilities;
- Protect wildlife habitat, maintain ecological balance and enhance ecological values;

- Preserve and enhance the aesthetic values associated with wetlands and areas of very poorly drained soils and poorly drained soils and their buffers in Hampton;
- Prevent construction or earth moving activities in wetlands and their buffers, which could impact adjacent property. (Town Code, Sec. 2.3.1)

The State of New Hampshire does not require minimum wetland buffers, but towns are permitted to adopt such stricter standards. Hampton requires a buffer of 50 feet out from 1) the wetland boundary line and/or 2) the boundary line of areas of very poorly drained soils and poorly drained soils. (Town Code, Sec. 2.3.2) In this area, no structures, impermeable surface, parking space, or building activity including dredging, filling, or regrading is permitted (Town Code, Sec. 2.3.4) A buffer of 75 feet is required for all septic systems and leach fields. Uses in the wetlands are highly restricted to low-impact activities such as wildlife refuges and certain types of agricultural activities, though use of fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides, and herbicides are prohibited in wetlands and buffers. The code permits seawalls, fences, footbridges, catwalks and wharves to be constructed on tidal wetlands but requires them to be constructed on posts and pilings to allow tide flow to preserve the natural vegetation and contour of the tidal wetlands. (Town Code, Sec. 2.3.2 (D))

NFIP Floodplain Activities

The town originally adopted a model flood ordinance that allowed it to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program in 1986. Required by FEMA, the town completed a Flood Mitigation Plan in 2000 which identified flood prone areas and proposed strategies to mitigate future losses. The plan identified a number of structural and non-structural mitigation tools, including

- A pilot program to provide incentives to owners of residential and commercial property
- Enhancements to the town's Floodplain Management regulations
- A conservation program to acquire land for flood storage purposes and prime undeveloped land in the floodplain area
- A grant or loan program for residential floodproofing
- Public information programs to educate homeowners in the floodplain
- Apply for a designation as a FEMA Project Impact Community
- Participate in the Community Rating System

The Town applied for and received designation as a FEMA Project Impact Community. This designation will provide incentives to incorporate the multi-hazard planning process into its ongoing comprehensive planning process and allow the Town to participate in the NFIP Community Rating System.