



Town of Damariscotta Downtown Damariscotta Coastal Hazards Preliminary Engineering Study

“Prior to the County’s 2012 flood hazard report and last year’s downtown flood resiliency report, most downtown business and most of the community at large were unaware of the vulnerability of our village business district due to sea level rise and storm surge. As a result of these two studies and the subsequent community outreach efforts, there is widespread awareness of this issue and a growing consensus for action to implement flood protection measures.”



PARTNERS

Town of Damariscotta, Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission and Maine Geological Survey

ISSUE AREA

Assist municipalities to define Sea Level Rise Project— Main Street Damariscotta

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (completed April 2015)

The Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission was awarded a Coastal Community Grant to work with Maine Geological Survey in a study of 450 miles of coastline in Maine's mid-coast region, including Damariscotta, to evaluate the effect of various sea level rise scenarios . The study completed in June 2013 suggested that Main Street in Damariscotta and the town's municipal parking lot may be inundated under future conditions. As the primary commercial area of the town, the routine inundation of Main Street could have devastating effects on quality of life and may reduce the town's tax base. The Town of Damariscotta, through its Waterfront Planning Committee, secured a coastal community grant and subsequently contracted with Milone & MacBroom, Inc. to study the effects of sea level rise and develop options for protecting the town. The study was intended to answer the following question:

Are there adaptation techniques that can be implemented to make downtown buildings and public infrastructure more resilient in the face of existing flooding hazards and potential future hazards created by rising sea levels?

APPROACH

The goals of this study were to determine the location and elevation of structures that are vulnerable to coastal flooding, including windows, doors, and other openings in existing buildings that may allow for intrusion of floodwaters; establish a sea level rise scenario and elevation for the town's use in planning improvement; and identify opportunities and recommend improvements for protecting structures as well as the town's parking lot from flooding.

RESULTS

The Waterfront Committee recommended to the Board of Selectmen that the downtown be protected from an increase of three feet in sea level during a storm equivalent to the February 1978 storm of record through the creation of a seawall sufficient to allow FEMA to remove the downtown from the mapped special flood hazard area (aka "100 year floodplain").

NEXT STEPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The town has been conducting a series of community-wide meetings to determine public support for the project. In addition, the town is planning a fund raising campaign to procure design plans sufficient for FEMA to issue a Conditional Letter of Map Revision.

LESSONS LEARNED

There has been significant support throughout the community to protect the downtown from flooding and sea level rise. It is apparent that the public is understanding of the risks associated with changing sea levels and increasing severity of storms and is supportive of the plans presented to date.

APPLICABILITY FOR OTHER MUNICIPALITIES

Do not underestimate the intelligence of the public regarding changing climate. Present as much solid information as possible in a convincing fashion and let the public weigh in. If there is not sufficient support at the present time, it is very likely that support will grow in the near future.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

http://www.townofdamariscotta.com/sites/townofdamariscotta.com/files/20150202_FinalReport_Revised.pdf and http://www.townofdamariscotta.com/sites/townofdamariscotta.com/files/20150202_FinalReport_Appendix_Revised.pdf

CONTACT

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