

# Municipal and Community Leaders Take Action Toward Climate Resilience

Many Paths to Community Resilience and Adaptation in Casco Bay

## WHY IT MATTERS

Maine's warming climate brings increased intensity, frequency, and variability to precipitation events, snowmelt, coastal flooding, and sea level rise. These climate-related events are already threatening Casco Bay's coastal ecosystems, community infrastructure, social fabric, and marine and tourism economy. Casco Bay coastal communities are diverse but share a common goal of protecting our natural resources to remain socially, economically, and environmentally resilient. There are many different metrics to assess resilience and steps communities can take to adapt to a changing climate, such as strengthening land use ordinances. All communities need increased and ongoing coordinated support and technical assistance to adapt to our changing climate.



*In a pilot project to test the use of natural elements to protect against shoreline erosion, a team led by Maine Geological Survey installed "living shorelines" at three sites around Casco Bay. (Photo: Maine Geological Survey)*

## STATUS & TRENDS

8+

Communities have completed climate change vulnerability assessments

12

Communities are covered by their region's Hazard Mitigation Plan

11

Communities have consistent comprehensive plans; only a few integrate climate resilience planning

2-3

Communities are in the process of developing adaptation plans and vulnerability assessments



## Flood Insurance Policies and Community Rating System Participation

COMMUNITY	NUMBER OF FLOOD INSURANCE POLICIES	CRS CLASS
Brunswick	49	NP
Cape Elizabeth	64	8
Chebeague Island	1	NP
Cumberland	32	NP
Falmouth	35	NP
Freeport	26	NP
Harpswell	146	NP
Long Island	6	NP
Phippsburg	48	NP
Portland	240	8
South Portland	125	NP
West Bath	8	NP
Yarmouth	63	NP

Source: FEMA NFIP Insurance Report; Maine Emergency Management Agency

As of July 2020, about 96% of Maine communities participated in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). As of October 1, 2019, there were 17 Maine communities participating in the Community Rating System (CRS). The CRS provides flood insurance discounts for communities that invest in flood mitigation measures such as reducing flood damage to existing buildings, preserving and restoring natural functions of floodplains, and other activities.

## SUCCESSSES & CHALLENGES

- ▶ Lack of municipal resources and capacity, competing community and political priorities, and little regional coordination pose challenges, particularly for small municipalities.
- ▶ Community awareness and support, increased education and assistance from state agencies and nonprofits, and the presence of community champions all greatly increase the likelihood of implementing programs and policies.
- ▶ Continuing to share information, success stories, and existing resources between communities and partners will help improve community planning for resilience.
- ▶ Underserved and vulnerable populations are often those most impacted by environmental pollution and climate change. Furthermore, there are often barriers to and inertia in engaging these residents.
- ▶ The Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future, in partnership with state agencies, is following up on the Maine Climate Council report with more and stronger state and regional programs that offer technical assistance and coordinated funding sources.

## COMMUNITY ACTIONS



### VISION

Together, Portland and South Portland work to be inclusive, vibrant communities that provide opportunities for residents and businesses to thrive in a changing climate.

Our businesses, neighborhoods, and way of life are worth protecting. Knowing our future will be impacted by climate change, we must collectively work to ensure that our communities continue to be places of opportunity. The Cities of Portland and South Portland are taking the lead on this by developing a joint climate action and adaptation plan - *One Climate Future: Charting a Course for Portland and South Portland*. The goal of this planning process is to make our communities even stronger tomorrow than we are today. But we can't do this alone. We need to **work together** to make it a success.

### Our Plan has 4 Elements



#### BUILDINGS & ENERGY USE

Using energy efficiently, transitioning to renewable energy, and encouraging high performing buildings.



#### TRANSPORTATION & LAND USE

Designing and connecting our homes, businesses, and public spaces around an efficient transportation network.



#### WASTE REDUCTION

Minimizing waste by changing how our community consumes and disposes of goods and materials.



#### CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Ensuring all our neighborhoods can withstand, respond to, and recover from a disruption.

Visit our website! [www.oneclimatefuture.org](http://www.oneclimatefuture.org)

The cities of Portland and South Portland adopted a joint climate action and adaptation plan called *One Climate Future*. This model of regional collaboration is one that other communities could adopt.



The Town of Harpswell has been planning for the impacts of sea level rise and coastal flooding events on both public and private roads (above). A local climate resilience task force completed a climate resilience vulnerability assessment in 2020 and is actively seeking funding to implement adaptation projects and engage the community. Below: Wallace Shore Road in Harpswell overtopping during a nor'easter in January 2018. (Photos: Top, CBEP; Bottom, Harpswell Conservation Commission)

