

COASTAL PLANNING CHOICE AND CONSIDERATIONS

There is no single way to plan for a changing coastline. Pictou County could continue its current approach, change existing requirements or use several tools together.

Each choice has potential benefits and limitations. The most appropriate approach may depend on local elevation, shoreline type, exposure to flooding and erosion, existing development and community priorities.

No decisions have been made. These choices are being presented to support public discussion and help the Municipality understand what residents consider important.

Continue the Current Approach

Continue using the Municipality's existing coastal buffer, zoning and development-permitting requirements without adding new municipal requirements.

How it could help

- Avoid adding new requirements or costs for property owners.
- Allow property owners greater flexibility.

Things to consider

- Existing requirements may not fully address future erosion, flooding, sea-level rise or changing storm conditions.
- Residents and the Municipality could face higher costs if new development occurs in increasingly vulnerable areas.

Maintain or Amend Coastal Setbacks

Keep or revise the existing minimum distance required between new development and the shoreline or top of bank.

How it could help

- Keep new buildings and infrastructure farther from coastal hazards.
- Provide a clear requirement that is relatively easy to understand and administer.

Things to consider

- One setback distance may not reflect the different conditions found along beaches, cliffs, wetlands, rocky shores and sheltered areas.
- Larger setbacks may reduce the developable area of some properties.
- Exceptions or site-specific assessments may be needed for constrained lots, existing development and essential coastal uses.

Use Site-Specific Assessments

Require additional information or a professional assessment when development is proposed in a potentially vulnerable area.

How it could help

- Respond to the elevation, erosion risk, flooding and other conditions affecting an individual property.
- Provide more flexibility than applying the same requirement everywhere.

Things to consider

- Professional assessments may add cost and time to a development application.
- Clear standards would be needed to explain when an assessment is required, what it must examine and who is qualified to prepare it.
- The Municipality would need a consistent process for reviewing technical findings.

Establish Minimum Building Elevations

Require the occupied portions of new buildings in areas exposed to coastal flooding to be constructed above an identified elevation.

How it could help

- Reduce damage to buildings during coastal flooding.
- Provide a clear construction standard in mapped flood-risk areas.

Things to consider

- Elevating a building does not protect roads, driveways, wells, septic systems, utilities or emergency access.
- Reliable elevation and flood information would be needed to establish and apply the requirement.
- Elevation requirements may affect construction costs and building design.

Require Flood-Resilient Design

Require certain buildings to use materials or construction methods that can better withstand temporary flooding.

How it could help

- Reduce damage to buildings and make recovery easier.
- Allow requirements to reflect the type, location and intended use of a building.

Things to consider

- Flood-resilient design does not prevent flooding or eliminate all risk.
- It may not protect roads, wells, septic systems, utilities or access to the property.
- Additional design requirements may increase construction costs.

Maintain or Restore Natural Buffers

Maintain vegetation, dunes, wetlands or other natural areas between development and the shoreline.

How it could help

- Help manage erosion, flooding and wave impacts.
- Support habitat, water quality and natural coastal processes.
- Provide space for shorelines and coastal ecosystems to change over time.

Things to consider

- Effectiveness depends on shoreline type, exposure, available space and local conditions.
- Buffers may reduce the developable area of some properties.
- Restoration and maintenance may require ongoing stewardship.

Use Shoreline Protection

Allow or support measures intended to protect particular buildings, roads or infrastructure from erosion and wave impacts.

How it could help

- Protect important buildings or infrastructure in some locations.
- Reduce erosion or damage at a particular site.

Things to consider

- Hard shoreline protection can change how waves and sediment move and may increase impacts on neighbouring shorelines.
- A measure that works in one location may not be appropriate somewhere else.
- Construction and maintenance can be costly.
- Shoreline protection may have effects on beaches, habitat and public access.

Improve Coastal-Hazard Information

Provide maps, guidance and other information to help people understand coastal flooding, erosion and changing conditions.

How it could help

- Help residents, property owners and the Municipality make informed decisions.
- Improve awareness before land is purchased, developed or redeveloped.
- Support emergency planning and municipal infrastructure decisions.

Things to consider

- Coastal information and projections contain uncertainty and may need to be updated.
- Maps cannot show every condition affecting an individual property.
- Information alone does not prevent development in vulnerable areas or require people to take action.

What Do You Think?

As you consider these choices, we want to know:

- Which choices seem most appropriate for Pictou County?
- What benefits or concerns do you see?
- Should different approaches apply in different coastal areas?
- How should future coastal planning consider existing homes, businesses, working waterfronts and constrained properties?
- Is there another approach the Municipality should consider?

Your feedback will help the Municipality compare different approaches and identify matters requiring further research. Public input will inform future discussions, but no new coastal policy is being adopted through this engagement project.

<i>Possible approach</i>	What it could do	Important considerations	What do you think? (Y/N)
<i>Continue the current approach</i>	Avoid adding new municipal requirements	May not adequately address future coastal conditions	
<i>Coastal setbacks</i>	Keep new development farther from hazards	May reduce the developable area of some properties	
<i>Site-specific assessments</i>	Respond to the conditions of individual properties	Can add cost and time to an application	
<i>Flood-resilient design</i>	Reduce damage to buildings	Does not protect roads, wells, septic systems or access	
<i>Natural buffers</i>	Support erosion management, habitat and water quality	May require additional land and ongoing stewardship	
<i>Shoreline protection</i>	Protect particular buildings or infrastructure	May transfer erosion or wave effects elsewhere	
<i>Better hazard information</i>	Help people make informed decisions	Information alone does not prevent risky development	

