

Climate Change Committee

FOCUS

Develop plans and recommendations to the Town Council for a responsible strategy and resilience to rising sea levels and protect Dewey Beach in the face of climate change.

OBJECTIVES

- Develop a comprehensive plan with risk/response strategies to address the town's adaptation to climate change impact
- Promote public understanding of key factors such as flood zone designations and associated flood risks
- Assess and recommend tools available to characterize current and future flood risks
- Propose Town coastal adaptation goals (protection, accommodation, retreat, or preservation and how these goals may apply differentially to sections of the Town
- Consider and recommend possible changes to zoning and building regulations that may enhance resilience to the effects of climate change and sea level rise
- Identify sources for possible grant funding and technical assistance for implementing resilience and sustainability strategies.



Dear Mr. Davis,

Feb 27th, 2023

On February 20th, 2023, The Dewey Beach Climate Change Committee held a quarterly meeting to begin assessing policy options the Committee should evaluate that would make the town more resilient to climate impacts. In attendance were town commissioners, the town manager, the mayor, and members of the public, including Michelle Schmidt from the Center for the Inland Bays. During the meeting, the Committee received support from the Institute for Public Administration (IPA) at the University of Delaware to identify and quickly assess the applicability of a range of climate resiliency policy options.¹ This letter provides an overview of the meeting and outlines an evaluation framework for the Committee to consider as it continues to debate a path forward.

During the meeting, IPA presented a menu of local climate policy options that it previously researched and vetted with the City of Lewes.² For each option, a brief description was offered and the Committee was then given the opportunity to debate the merits and applicability of the option in Dewey Beach. During these brief discussions, the Committee would use certain criteria/metrics to judge the policy while the IPA team took notes. The Committee then determined whether the policy was worthy of future debate and deliberation, or whether they felt it was not worth further discussion. The table below presents fifteen policy options that were considered and the Committee’s determination of whether each one is worth further debate or not (i.e. keep or discard).

No	Policy Option	Keep or Discard?
1	Increase the freeboard requirement in the 100-year floodplain	Keep
2	Regulate development in the 500-year floodplain	Discard ³
3	Apply VE Zone regulations to the Coastal A Zone	Keep
4	Require freeboard on filled sites	Keep ⁴
5	Require sea level rise to be shown on development applications	Discard
6	Encourage/require permeable paving for site-specific applications	Discard ⁵
7	Improve landscape standards	Keep
8	Increase the amount of open space in new subdivisions	Discard ⁶
9	Increase percentage of green space in new development	Discard ⁷

¹ IPA, along with the Delaware Center for the Inland Bays, is a proud member of RASCL (Resilient and Sustainable Communities League). <http://www.derascl.org>

² <https://udspace.udel.edu/bitstreams/63caf01e-5aae-4625-aa0c-09d27cbc3889/download>

³ This was discarded because there is no 500-year floodplain area in the Town.

⁴ For policy option 4, the Town of Dewey Beach currently requires freeboard on filled sites in the VE Zone, but the Committee was not sure whether the regulation also applied to the Coastal A Zone, hence the reason for keeping the option.

⁵ The Town already does this.

⁶ This was deemed to not apply because there is little-to-no available subdivision opportunities left in the Town.

⁷ This was discarded out of a concern for public acceptance.

10	Establish/increase wetland buffer width	Keep
11	Establish a stormwater utility for the town	Keep
12	Create a resiliency fund	Keep
13	Prepare and adopt a storm reconstruction ordinance	Keep
14	Require a sea level rise disclosure for real estate transactions	Keep
15	Public education campaign	Keep

During the discussion of these fifteen policies, members of the Committee used different criteria to judge the options. Those criteria, in no particular order, were:

- Public Acceptance: How likely is it that residents, businesses, and other stakeholders will agree with the need for the policy and support its passage, implementation, and enforcement?
- Effectiveness: To what extent will policy enhance the resiliency of the Town to climate change impacts?
- Cost: How big of a financial burden does the policy carry?
- Geography: To which area(s) of the Town does the policy apply?

It is important to note that the criteria list is not exhaustive and Committee, members of the public, or Town officials may wish to add other criteria to this list. Still, the list of criteria identified by the Committee during the February 20th meeting is a good starting point. Armed with the policy options that the Committee deemed worthy of further discussion and the criteria to assess them, the following table presents an evaluation framework for the Committee to complete by continuing to deliberate and debate the merits of each option against each criteria. Doing so will help the Committee objectively compare the policies to each other and establish a policy priority list.

Policy Option	Public Acceptance	Effectiveness	Cost	Geography
Increase the freeboard requirement in the 100-year floodplain				
Apply VE Zone regulations to the Coastal A Zone				
Require freeboard on filled sites				
Improve landscape standards				
Establish/increase wetland buffer width				
Establish a stormwater utility for the town				
Create a resiliency fund				
Prepare and adopt a storm reconstruction ordinance				
Require a sea level rise disclosure for real estate transactions				
Public education campaign				

Completing the table above should be the work of the Committee in the future. Once the Committee has “filled in” the table, it is advisable to take a step back, reflect on the tradeoffs between the policy options, select a small number (no more than three) for much deeper

exploration and development. Working on too many options at once will simply overwhelm the capacity of the Committee, community, and Town government.

The IPA team thanks the Dewey Beach Climate Change Committee and the Town government for their commitment and resolve to make the Dewey Beach community more resilient to the impact of climate change. We were happy to offer our assistance to the Committee and will continue to make ourselves available to provide strategic guidance and council as the Committee and larger Dewey Beach community engages in this timely and important work.

Sincerely,

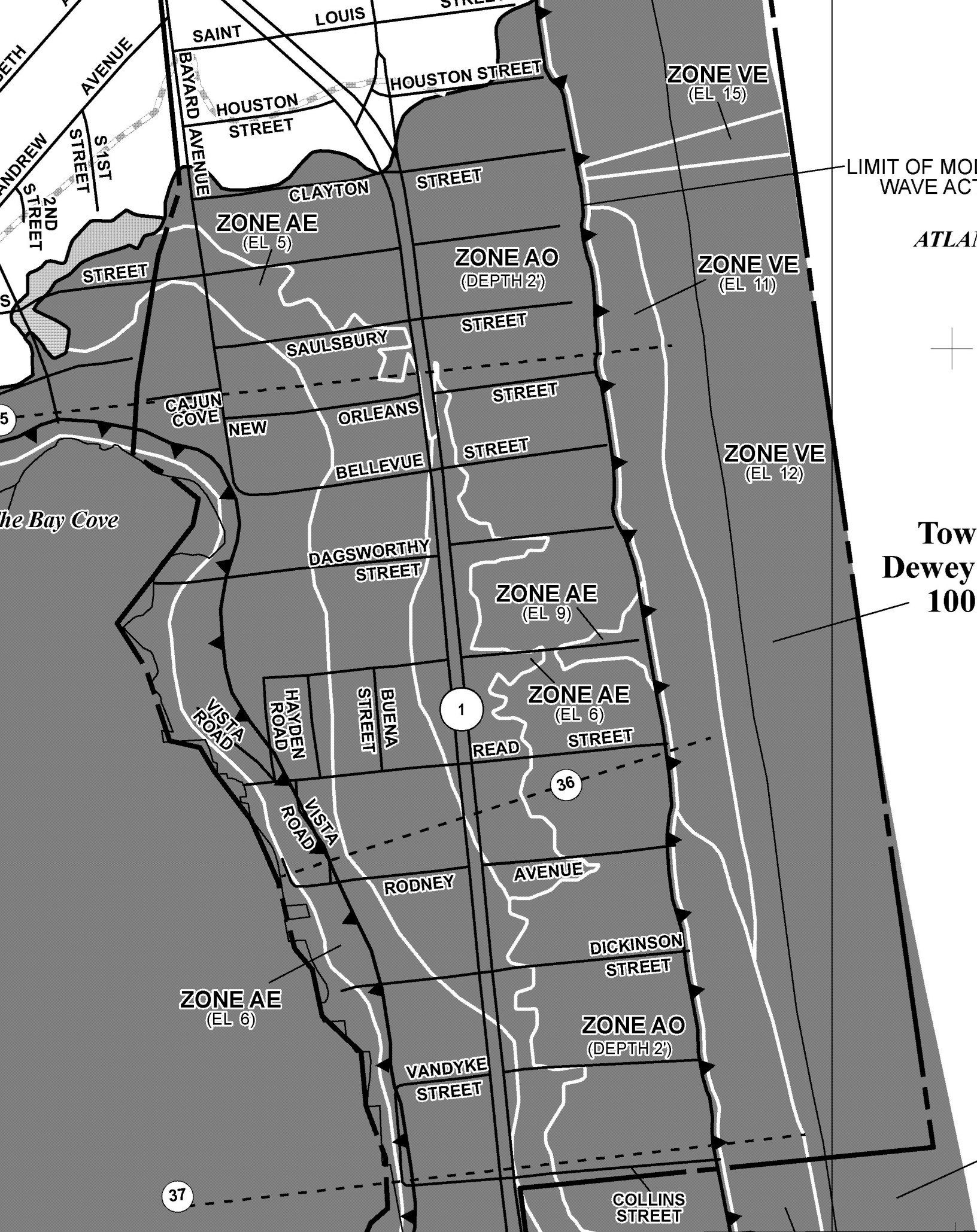


Philip Barnes, Ph.D.
Biden School of Public Policy and Administration
Institute for Public Administration
University of Delaware



Chase Barnes
Biden School of Public Policy and Administration
Institute for Public Administration
University of Delaware

cc: Bill Zolper, Dewey Beach Town Manager
Jerome Lewis, Director of the Institute for Public Administration
Michelle Schmidt, Director at the Delaware Center for the Inland Bays
Danielle Swallow, Coastal Hazards Specialist at Delaware Sea Grant



WHO WE ARE: 27 Member Organizations

STATE PARTNERS

Delaware Emergency Management Agency
Delaware Department of Natural Resources and
Environmental Control
Delaware Department of Transportation
Delaware Division of Libraries
Delaware Division of Public Health
Delaware Forest Service
Delaware Geological Survey
Delaware Office of State Planning Coordination
Delaware State Housing Authority

NON-PROFIT PARTNERS

Center for the Inland Bays
Delaware Interfaith Power and Light
Delaware League of Local Governments
Delaware Nature Society
Delaware Sustainable Energy Utility
Delaware Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster
Green Building United
National Wildlife Federation Mid-Atlantic Regional Center
The Nature Conservancy PA/DE Chapter
Partnership for the Delaware Estuary

UNIVERSITY PARTNERS

Delaware Center for Environmental Monitoring and Analysis
Delaware Environmental Institute
Delaware Sea Grant
University of Delaware Coastal Resilience Design Studio
University of Delaware Institute for Public Administration
University of Delaware Office of Sustainability
University of Delaware Water Resources Center
University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center

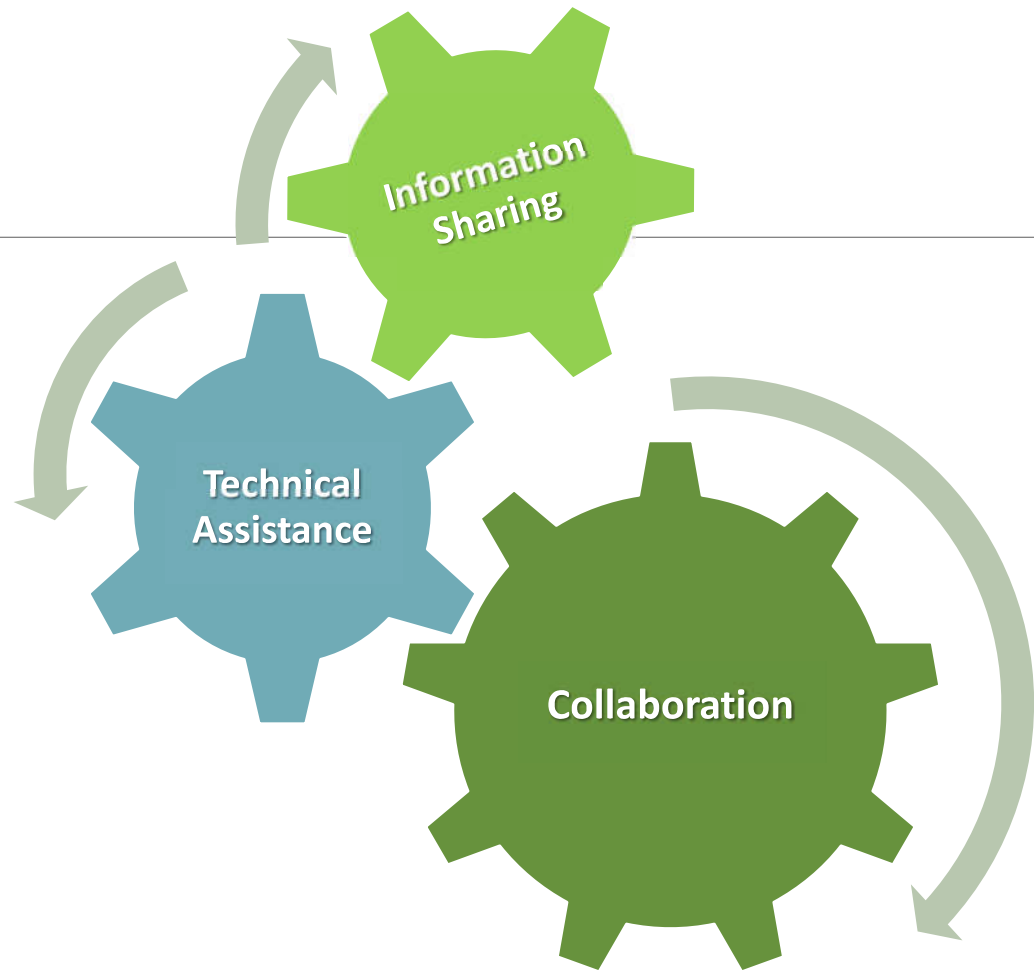
Steering Committee:



<https://www.derascl.org>

WHAT WE DO

Support all Delaware communities in taking the necessary actions to thrive in the face of changing environmental conditions.



RASCL PGG

Free service offered by the RASCL Resilient Project Implementation Committee to Delaware communities needing technical assistance and advice to initiate or complete resilience-related projects.

We will help you identify solutions, project partners, funding, what is needed to start a project, connect you with the appropriate professionals, and more.



Who is this intended for?

- Incorporated cities and towns in Delaware
- County governments
- Common interest community groups
- HOAs
- Faith-based organizations
- Non-profit organizations
- Chambers of Commerce



PGG In Action

- Town of Dewey Beach
- Town of Milton
- Tri-State Bird Rescue
- Village of Arden community in Arden, DE

