

## **Development of a Resilience Plan for Dewey Beach**

At the April 25, 2025, Town Council meeting, Commissioners voted unanimously to direct the Resiliency and Sustainability (formerly Climate Change) Committee to develop a project intended to create a resilience plan for the town. Other shore municipalities have developed such plans, and Lewes has taken the additional step of creating a resiliency fund that will aid in implementing resilience strategies and projects. Stated simply, climate resilience is the ability to prepare for, recover from, and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

### **Resilience and the Town Comprehensive Development Plan**

Every 10 years, Delaware municipalities are required to prepare and submit for state approval a comprehensive development plan. Comprehensive plans provide a 10-year view of a municipality's development strategy setting forth the jurisdiction's position on population and housing growth within the jurisdiction, expansion of its boundaries, development of adjacent areas, redevelopment potential, community character, and the general uses of land within the community, and critical community development and infrastructure issues. Recent legislation requires that plans include "strategies which consider community resiliency and reduce the vulnerability of property, agriculture, infrastructure, and cultural and natural resources to the impacts of climate change, including sea level rise, changes in rainfall patterns, and extreme weather events. The strategies must be informed by the Delaware Climate Action Plan and Implementation Reports."

The new comprehensive plan requirements are mandatory only for municipalities with populations of at least 2,000, but smaller municipalities are encouraged to include non-mandatory items in their plans. Because the size of the summer population in Dewey Beach far exceeds the 2,000 minimum, previous plans have addressed a comprehensive set of plan requirements. The town chose to include climate change and sea-level rise as a key issue in its 2018 plan and included a policy recommendation to establish strategies for resilience. The initial stages of planning for the town's next plan due in 2028 are already underway.

The December 2025 Delaware Climate Action Plan includes extensive sections on sea-level rise and flooding and comprehensive resilience strategies for mitigation and recovery from climate-related events. Understanding the town's resilience needs will be an important foundation for developing recommendations in the new comprehensive plan that are consistent with the objectives described in the Delaware Plan.

## **Overview of Resiliency Plan Report**

The report will contain sea level rise information, projections, inundation maps, FEMA flood maps, historic input from citizens, summary of past reports, importance of planning for resiliency. The “north star” of the project will be clearly identified. The stakeholders will be identified. The options in determining strategies will be shown. The various time-based goals will be listed. The various potential funding sources for recommended strategies will be identified.

## **Scope of Work**

- Meetings and Presentations with Town’s Resilience and Sustainability Committee to Discuss Previous Work and Study Objectives
- Community and Stakeholder Engagement
  - Meet with Town stakeholders to assess:
    - Tolerance for flood risk
    - The planning time horizon – 10 years, 20 years, 50 years?
    - Perceptions about the reality of sea level and the threats it poses
    - Sea level rise projections to consider
  - Collect information on how stakeholders have been affected by past flooding (potentially on-line flood reporter where citizens can upload photos and experiences)
  - Involve outside experts on resilience for funding opportunities
  - Define stakeholders’ goals to serve as north star for the report
- Compile existing data and information
  - Previous studies, including DeIDOTSR1 Flood Mitigation Study
  - Topography and shoreline data (Lidar data)
  - FEMA flood maps
  - National Wetland Inventory
  - Climate change and sea level rise projections
  - Tide data
  - Infrastructure information: stormwater network and other improvements
  - Previously implemented projects to address sea level rise and mitigate flood risks
  - Inundation maps for Dewey Beach
- Data Analysis
  - Review topographic and inundation information to determine vulnerable and at-risk areas of town
  - Identify weak spots and/or under-sized infrastructure
- Consider what strategies may be successful in at-risk areas
  - Prioritize mitigation measures and best practices
    - Right project – right place
- Future Action Recommendations
  - Short, medium, and long-term actions with achievable goals

- Policy, community, and land use recommendations
      - Potential engineered and nature-based solutions
  - Recommend education strategies to enhance understanding of flood mitigation and discourage ideas that are likely not feasible for the town.
  - Prepare a draft report for comment and a final report incorporating comments
  - Expected cost and time of performance:
    - \$75,000
    - 10 months

TASK	PROJECTED DATE
NOTICE TO PROCEED – NTP executed and Kick-Off meeting	April 1, 2026
LAY OUT THE METHODOLOGY AND FRAMEWORK	April 15, 2026
PREPARE EXISTING CONDITIONS MAPS AND EXHIBITS; SHOW PROJECTED IMPACTS AND INUNDATIONS	May 15, 2026
PUBLIC OUTREACH/REVIEW GOALS	June 1, 2026
ANALYZE MAPS, DATA, INPUT	August 1, 2026
IDENTIFY STRATEGIES, APPROACHES, NEEDS, ABILITIES	October 1, 2026
CRAFT FINAL REPORT, REVIEW, EDIT	November 1, 2026
PUBLIC PRESENTATION	January 2027
FINAL REPORT ACCEPTANCE	February 2027