

Basically, municipalities do not have any obligations with regards to coastal protection / resilience within the current policy environment established by the provincial government.

The government's approach stated in the Minister's Message in the *The Future of Nova Scotia's Coastline, A plan to protect people, homes and nature from climate change* (the action plan) found at <https://novascotia.ca/coastal-climate-change/docs/coastline-plan.pdf> is "to help our coastal property owners understand the possible risks of living on the coastline, and it will give Nova Scotians the tools and information they need to make informed decisions to protect property, people, and the natural areas along our coast."

The action plan goes on to state that "Municipalities know their communities – and their unique needs – best. Municipal leadership is key for helping communities manage and adapt to coastal hazards from climate change." It then provides five actions specifically aimed at "supporting municipalities and their leadership on this important work." These actions (listed by the number provided in the action plan) are:

1. Support municipalities with example land use by-law content they could use to regulate coastal protection in their communities.
2. Conduct a province-wide erosion risk assessment by capturing aerial video of coastal areas to assess geology and inventory coastal risks. Municipalities can use the information to inform zoning.
3. Continue to invest and leverage funds to support and enhance the Municipal Flood Line Mapping Program. This will provide information to residents and municipalities to help them better understand flood hazards.
4. Support practical municipal leadership by expanding the responsibilities of Environment and Climate Change's new Flood Management and Adaptation Lead and Stormwater Engineer positions.
5. Promote the power of community-led solutions to achieve coastal protection by sharing success stories funded through the Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund.

There are other actions in the action plan that could provide additional information that is relevant to municipalities:

1. Make the Coastal Hazard Map (and a user guide) available to all Nova Scotians. This online mapping tool will help property owners understand the impacts of coastal hazards. (This map shows projected worst case flooding in 2100 to 100m. inland. I understand that areas beyond 100 m., that additional projections of flooding related to time period and risk profiles, and that a tool to provide a coarse estimate of erosion risk will also be added at some point in the future.)
2. Enhance the Coastal Hazard Map with Coastal Hazard Assessment Reports that users can generate on-demand. (Anyone can generate these reports for any property, so when municipal staff are looking at particular applications, they could run one to understand the hazards.)
3. Create a Navigator Service to help Nova Scotians use the Coastal Hazard Map, understand the information and navigate support materials. (While this service is focussed on individuals, I would imagine that municipalities might be able to get assistance within the scope of the Navigators' duties.)
4. Create a comprehensive resource guide for coastal property owners that helps people to understand the issues, alternatives, and actions they can take. (This guide can be found

at <https://novascotia.ca/coastal-climate-change/docs/safeguarding-coastal-property.pdf/>. It is a good guide for anyone wanting to understand the general issues and is something that councillors and staff could point residents to.)

5. Install signs indicating provincial government infrastructure that is susceptible to flooding. (This is mostly going to be roads that regularly flood during storm events or king tides. Knowing where these signs are will help councillors and staff / EMO to talk about hazards and other considerations like evacuation routes.)
6. Engage the Nova Scotia Real Estate Commission to increase awareness and encourage consideration of hazards for coastal real estate through education and potential changes to Property Disclosure Statements. (I have heard a number of councillors express concerns that people who do not understand the hazards of living along the coast are being sold properties that are potential at risk. So, this would help people to better understand the coastal erosion and flooding risks of the property they are buying.)
7. Leverage CLIMAtlantic's services and extend its reach to help more Nova Scotians. This includes increasing support for coastal adaption using the Coastal Adaptation Toolkit. (CLIMAtlantic is a great group for municipalities to talk with and get information from. The Toolkit provides information for communities as well as individual property owners).
1. Continue creating adaptation strategies for provincial departments that create a clear path for them – and the Nova Scotians they serve – to become more resilient to the impacts of climate change. (Municipalities interact with a number of departments, so this work should be helpful on work that those departments are doing in municipalities.)
2. Re-evaluate the cap on disaster relief funding to discourage rebuilding repeatedly in at-risk areas, while considering income, hardship, and equity. (This will have a direct impact of the disaster relief program run by the province and municipalities should keep an eye on proposed changes, so they are aware of what is to be provided and the differing pressures this may create for municipalities.)
3. Require municipalities to consider coastal hazard information as a condition for qualifying for provincial funding. (This will require some additional work / consideration on funding applications to the province.)

The actions are at varying stages of implementation.

I hope that this is helpful. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Cheers,
Gordon

Gordon Smith, FCSLA, LPP (he/him) | Coastal Land Use Planning Coordinator
NOVA SCOTIA FEDERATION OF MUNICIPALITIES