

## 1. Defining the Coastal Boundary

Before a town or municipality can regulate the coast, it has to define where the "coastal area" begins and ends.

- **Option A: Targeted Approach:** Focuses strictly on areas directly exposed to the ocean.
- **Option B: Broad Approach:** Includes inland waterways and rivers that are affected by tides and coastal water movements.

**Recommendation: Option B.** A broad approach will ensure inland waterways are accounted for since the area does see tidal influence.

How the rules are applied visually/legally:

- **Option A: Coastal Zoning:** Creating a dedicated "Coastal Zone" on land use maps, with its own set of development regulations in the Land Use By-law. The Town already has a "Floodplain" zone in its planning documents; however, this zone is not currently applied to any lands in the Town.
- **Option B: Overlay Maps:** Placing an additional coastal safety overlay over existing zones. This would allow development based on the existing zone, but with additional restrictions added to areas covered by the overlay.
- **Option C: Text Descriptions:** Writing out detailed rules in the by-law text describing which properties are included.

**Recommendation: Option B.** Municipal Flood Line mapping indicates significant portions of the downtown area fall under flood risk. Considering the Town's strong history and connection to the waterfront with multiple needs and uses in the waterfront area, a single "Coastal Zone" may be too restrictive to account for all the different types of development downtown. A coastal overlay would allow for general regulations related to flooding over existing development regulations. However, a hybrid approach can also work, with the Floodplain zone being applied to certain lands where land use is not as intense or varied.

## 2. Managing Coastal Flooding & Sea Level Rise

Rising sea levels, warming ocean temperatures, melting ice caps, and natural land sinking (post-glacial rebound) increase the risk of coastal flooding. Municipalities can protect communities using two main options:

- **Option A: Mapped Flood Lines (Floodway Fringe):** Uses official flood mapping programs to ban high-risk uses—such as hospitals, senior care facilities, and

hazardous material storage—in known flood zones, based on provincial regulations in the Municipal Government Act.

- **Option B: Vertical Elevation Rules:** Sets a required minimum height above sea level for any new building. This height accounts for normal high tide, expected storm surges, and long-term sea level projections.

**Recommendation: Option A.** Municipal Flood Line Mapping has been completed by the Province and provides clear identification of risk areas. This mapping is easy to understand at a visual glance and aligns with other land use planning regulations that typically use horizontal setbacks rather than vertical.

### 3. Protecting Against Coastal Erosion

Coastal erosion happens when waves, storms, and rain wear away shorelines. To keep buildings safe, municipalities set horizontal setback lines (buffers) from the top of coastal cliffs or banks.

- **Option A: Science-Based Buffers:** Uses local erosion studies to calculate how fast the coast is wearing away and creates custom setbacks designed to protect buildings for a target number of years.
- **Option B: Precautionary Buffers:** Sets a standard setback line across the municipality when local erosion studies aren't available.
- **Flexibility Clause (Buffer Reduction):** Allows property owners to hire a qualified professional to inspect their specific site. If the professional confirms it is safe, the setback distance can be reduced.

**Recommendation: Option B.** Erosion studies are currently unavailable, and erosion mapping can be hard to complete at a Town-wide scale due to a variety of factors, including access to private coastal properties, differing soil and vegetation types, and unpredictable, episodic erosion rather than gradual erosion that can be recorded. Flexibility clause can be included if desired by community members.

### 4. Exemptions and Exceptions

Recognizing that strict rules cannot apply everywhere, municipalities can use several exemption mechanisms. These can be included depending on community feedback:

- **Water-Dependent & Special Uses:** Exempts structures that need shore access (like docks or boat launches), lower-cost developments, or properties in designated downtown/waterfront zones. These exemptions may be particularly important in the Pictou context.

- **Flood-Proofed Buildings:** Allows building below minimum elevation lines if the structure is specifically engineered and flood-proofed.
- **Existing (Non-Conforming) Buildings:** Gives flexibility to existing homeowners so they can expand, move, or repair damaged non-residential buildings, as long as it doesn't make the hazard risk worse.
- **Setback Variances for Undevelopable Lots:** Allows municipal staff to grant flexibility on standard property line setbacks so owners can build safely further inland on small or difficult lots.