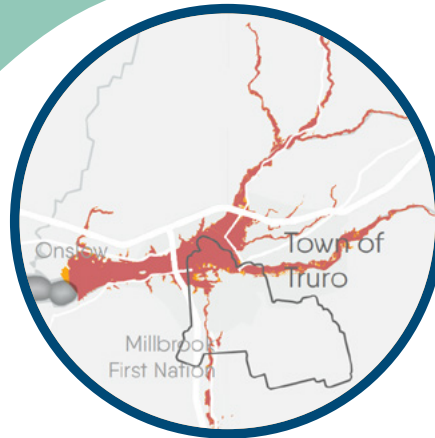


Fact Sheet 4

Environment



The information on this Fact Sheet comes from the Background Report and the What We Heard Report. To view these documents, [please click here.](#)

What We Heard

Top 3 Environmental Concerns

Availability of drinking water

Water quality of rivers and streams

Environmental Protection

What is Being Proposed

- ▶ Watercourse and Shoreline Buffers
- ▶ Minimum Coastal Elevation
- ▶ Flood Overlays
- ▶ Shoreline Zone

Residents in coastal areas feel particularly vulnerable to climate change effects such as erosion and flooding, and would like to see better protection of these areas as well as education on how to mitigate them.



Communities near Onslow, Truro and Millbrook First Nation are most **vulnerable to freshwater flooding** in extreme rainfall events

Relative sea levels in Colchester are expected to **increase by approximately 1.0 metre (3.3 feet)** by the year 2100.



Proposed Changes to the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) and Land Use Bylaw (LUB)

The **MPS** is the primary planning document for the Municipality, it establishes the vision, goals, and policies for growth and development in the near future.

The **LUB** is the companion document to the MPS, and puts the vision, goals, and policies into action through specific regulations that have to do with development activities, such as zoning.

Creation of a New “Shoreline Zone”

MPS Policy 4-24: Council shall, through the Land Use Bylaw, establish the Shoreline Zone. This land use zone is intended to enable waterfront development with thoughtful development standards intended to protect the integrity of aquatic and riparian ecosystems.

Lakes, rivers, and the coast are a prominent feature of the landscape in Colchester. There are numerous small and medium sized lakes and rivers across the entire municipality, and they are home to an abundance of aquatic and terrestrial species. These waterbodies are, however, also popular destinations for recreational development for seasonal properties and accommodations. To accommodate recreational development and associated septic systems, large areas of land must be cleared and graded, threatening the integrity of the plants and animal species that rely on waterbodies for their habitat.

The proposed Shoreline Zone allows for lower development densities and a more limited range of uses than other rural zones, to help keep the municipality’s watercourses healthy.

Watercourse and Shoreline Buffers

The draft LUB contains minimum horizontal buffers between development and watercourses. This is measured from the ordinary high water mark on inland watercourses, and from the top of bank on the coast. The latter is to help address issues of coastal erosion. Development would be limited within these buffers to uses that depend on access to the water (marine industry, boat houses, etc.). These buffers can be reduced with site-specific study.

Minimum Coastal Elevation

In Nova Scotia, the relative level of the ocean is rising. This is caused by two separate processes. The first is subsidence, where the land is sinking due to a rebound effect from the weight of the glaciers in the last ice age. The second process is the increase of water levels caused by melting glaciers and the physical expansion of water as a result of climate change. Sea levels are expected to be approximately one metre (3.3 feet) higher by the year 2100. The drafts contain minimum elevations for habitable development in coastal areas. These elevations account for storm surge and this increase in sea levels.

Flood Overlays

The current Central Colchester planning documents contain controls related to flooding. These are continued in the drafts, but the extent of the flood plain is updated to reflect a new study done in 2016.

