Keeping New Hampshire’s Coast Afloat
Policy Change & Financing Mechanisms for Resilient Coastal Communities

Ben Sweeney, NOAA Coastal Management Fellow
NHDES Coastal Program & Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership
Northeast Regional Ocean Council
April 8, 2021
Fellowship Project Focus

**Track 1:** Advance coastal community understanding and implementation of local stormwater and flood resilience funding mechanisms.

**Track 2:** Build relationships with organizations that have a direct connection to frontline communities to better integrate justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion into policy, planning, and decision making processes.
Track 1

Funding for stormwater & flood resilience
5-Step Process for Implementation

1. Assess Funding Needs Related to Stormwater and Flood Resilience
   Know your current assets, future needs, and capital and operating budget

2. Create a Stormwater and Flood Resilience Funding Task Force
   Generate community and political support for funding solutions

3. Consider Funding Strategies
   Evaluate funding options and establish criteria to choose the best option

4. Launch Stormwater and Flood Resilience Funding Program
   Establish a dedicated source of funding to support future needs

5. Post-Implementation Sustainability Measures
   Ensure ongoing transparency to the community

Partnership with the City of Dover, NH

Committee to Study Stormwater and Flood Resilience Funding
• Formally established by City Council in November 2020
• Charged with providing recommendations by October 2021
• Comprised of 17 members representing various stakeholder groups
• Modeled after Portland, ME Sustainable Stormwater Funding Task Force
Evaluating Funding Options

Funding Options Considered
• General fund
• Fee-based
• System development charges
• Stormwater utility
• Sewer user fees
• Village districts
• Public private partnerships
• Grants, loans, and bonds

“S.A.F.E.” Evaluation Criteria
Secure – Dependable over the long-term
Adequate – Meets current needs and maintains existing level of service
Flexible – Adjustable as needs fluctuate over time
Equitable – Imposed costs are fairly assessed
### Which Options Merit Further Exploration?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stormwater Utility</th>
<th>Fee-based</th>
<th>Public Private Partnership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What rate structure would be most equitable?</td>
<td>What fees exist (e.g., permit, plan review)?</td>
<td>What would a P3 look like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What data needs exist?</td>
<td>How much revenue is allocated to stormwater?</td>
<td>What would initial costs be and is it affordable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who would be charged?</td>
<td>What additional fees should be considered?</td>
<td>What are the local benefits to financing with private investment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What would rates be?</td>
<td>How could fees combine with other options?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How could property owners receive credits?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lessons Learned Thus Far

• Allowing committee members to go through their own discovery process is key for building support

• Committee process also serves as a learning opportunity for City staff

• Outreach and education on the committee’s recommendations will require additional capacity and resources if City Council moves forward
Track 2

Building relationships with organizations that have a direct connection to frontline communities
Genesis of the Project

• NH Coastal Risks and Hazards Commission generated a lot of momentum in the region

• Questions remain about how to implement some recommendations

• **Original goal:** facilitate a collaborative process to explore, evaluate, and advance state-level laws, regulations, policies, and programs that support on-the-ground resilience and adaptation efforts
Evolution of the Project

Brainstorming Workshop
• Convened stakeholders to help generate resilience policy ideas
• Participants were identified as “resilience champions” within their organization or community

Stakeholder Feedback
• Need to include underserved populations in policy process from onset
• Provide opportunities for underserved populations to contribute policy ideas
• Policies must incorporate justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion considerations
New Focus on Frontline Communities

**Frontline Communities:** Those that experience the “first and worst” consequences of climate change. People who are highly exposed and have fewer resources, capacity, safety nets, or political power to respond to risks. Including but not limited to:

- People of color
- Low income
- Homeless populations
- Senior citizens
- Persons with disabilities
- Indigenous peoples
- Chronically-ill/hospitalized people
- Youth
Starting Conversations

Where do we begin?
• Relationships and trust need to be built before starting policy discussions
• Identify organizations that have a direct connection to frontline communities
• Start by reaching out to organizations that we already know
• Have conversations to listen, learn, and share

Anticipated learning outcomes
• Best practices for starting future conversations with frontline communities
• Corrective actions we can take to ensure frontline communities are not left out of policy, planning, and decision-making
• Ways we can better support frontline communities throughout our work
Lessons Learned Thus Far

• We still have a lot to learn about meaningful engagement practices

• We do not yet fully understand who frontline communities are, where they are located, or how to reach them

• Additional resources will need to be allocated to similar efforts after the fellowship concludes to continue momentum
Questions?

Ben Sweeney
NOAA Coastal Management Fellow
NHDES Coastal Program & Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership
Benjamin.R.Sweeney@des.nh.gov
(603) 559-0021