

Coastal Management

Introduction



The Hillsborough County coastline overlooks much of Tampa Bay. An estuary of national significance, the bay is fed by three major rivers and more than 100 small tributaries. More than 200 species of fish, bottlenose dolphins, manatees, oysters, scallops, clams, shrimp, crab, brown pelicans, heron and egret, roseate spoonbills, cormorants and laughing gulls inhabit the bay's seagrass beds, mudflats and mangrove wetlands. A 43-foot deepwater shipping channel is at the bay's entrance. It leads to Port Tampa Bay, the largest port in the state (in terms of physical size), handling over 37 million tons of cargo per year.

The abundance of scenic resources, recreational opportunities, shipping opportunities, waterways and natural habitat makes coastal Hillsborough County both a desirable location to

live, work and recreate, as well as being vulnerable to natural hazards such as tropical storms and hurricanes.

The Coastal Management Section provides a framework to guide the County's decisions and programs to maintain the responsible use and management of coastal resources related to development activities, protection of human life, the limitation of public expenditures in areas subject to natural disaster and protection of wildlife and natural habitat. It is the intent of the County to responsibly manage its coastal area and protect working commercial waterfronts and coastal natural resources. The proper management and use of this area is necessary for the protection of life and property from natural disasters in addition to the conservation of natural resources.

The Coastal Management Section provides plan and policy direction for development activities in the Coastal Planning Area of Hillsborough County. The Coastal Management Section's role is to ensure that development in

the coastal area does not adversely impact public accessibility to the coast, that adequate public hurricane shelter space is available to coastal inhabitants, that levels of service on evacuation routes are maintained, that water-dependent and water-related land uses are given priority on the coast, that coastal natural resources are conserved and protected, and that public decisions will include consideration of coastal hazards in the decision-making process.

Additionally, coastal planning spans the Comprehensive Plan Sections. Please refer to the **Future Land Use Section** for additional policies regarding land use suitability in the Coastal High Hazard Area and Coastal Planning Area. Policies related to infrastructure in the Coastal High Hazard Area and the Coastal Planning Area can be found in the **Capital Improvements Section**. Policies referring to rivers, tributaries and wetlands can be found in the **Environmental and Sustainability Section**. Policies referring to stormwater management and green infrastructure can be found in the **One Water Chapter**.

GOAL 1

Conserve, protect, restore and enhance natural coastal resources.

Objective 1.1

Support the Tampa Bay Estuary through the implementation of the Comprehensive Conservation & Management Plan (CCMP).

Policies

- 1.1.1 Support the TBEP Habitat Master Plan as a component of the CCMP.
- 1.1.2 Continue membership, support, participation and coordination on inter-jurisdictional boards, such as the Agency on Bay Management, to address the estuarine environmental quality of Tampa Bay.
- 1.1.3 Collaborate with the TBEP to achieve a measurable annual increase in restored tidal wetland acreage.
- 1.1.4 Protect, maintain and enhance the abundance and diversity of living marine resources in the Tampa Bay.
- 1.1.5 Consider public education and the adoption and enforcement of marine turtle protection regulations, including marine turtle friendly exterior lighting.
- 1.1.6 Prohibit unmitigated development activities on submerged lands containing seagrass habitat and seek to restore seagrass coverage appropriately, except in cases of overriding public interest.
- 1.1.7 Investigate the capacity of the Tampa Bay and its surrounding natural features, soils, wetlands, and other water bodies to serve as “blue carbon” sequestration reserves.

- 1.1.8 Encourage wetland design changes that allow for the landward migration of wetlands for resilience to sea-level rise.

- 1.1.9 Identify priority areas for land acquisition based on their strategic capacity to absorb floodwaters and support coastal ecosystem migration in order to reduce loss to flooding.

GOAL 2

Increase community resiliency to protect property, cultural and natural resources from natural vulnerabilities.

Objective 2.1

Maintain beaches and coastlines in an environmentally sensitive manner.

Policies

- 2.1.1 Protect and restore beaches to provide storm protection, recreational opportunities, and a natural habitat for endemic flora and fauna.
- 2.1.2 Encourage shoreline softening through vegetative projects, submerged vegetation and living shorelines in order to minimize flood damage, stabilize the shore, and maintain adaptability to future sea-level rise conditions.
- 2.1.3 Incorporate living coastlines into storm surge reduction projects, as feasible.
- 2.1.4 Coordinate beach stabilization techniques with state agencies.
- 2.1.5 Require public access at any private beach that is renourished at public expense.
- 2.1.6 Preserve and restore, as feasible, coastal ecosystems to maintain and enhance natural coastal barriers to natural hazards.
- 2.1.7 Collaborate with regulatory agencies to prohibit the destruction or degradation of natural inter-tidal and sub-tidal vegetative communities for the purpose of developing new man-made beaches.
- 2.1.8 Expand the use of living shorelines and living breakwater systems as the preferred method of shoreline stabilization and storm surge reduction.
- 2.1.9 Evaluate shoreline setbacks and identify the potential for updates to protect vulnerable structures from the effects of long-term sea-level rise.

- 2.1.10 Where the maintenance and/or alteration of existing hardened shoreline is allowed, the County may require mitigation of environmental impacts. Such mitigation may include but is not restricted to the installation of appropriate living shorelines.
- 2.1.11 Encourage the enhancement of existing hardened shorelines by installing oyster reefs or other vegetation where appropriate and feasible.

Objective 2.2

Manage historic and archaeological resources to protect and preserve their historical value in the Coastal Planning Area.

Policies

- 2.2.1 Continue to collaborate with the Florida Division of Historical Resources to maintain a registry of historical and archaeological assets.
- 2.2.2 Maintain criteria, standards, and procedures to protect historical and archaeological assets and sites from natural hazards.
- 2.2.3 Collaborate with public, private, local, state, and/or federal historical conservation entities to restore or maintain structures of historical value.

GOAL 3

Reduce or prevent the unnecessary exposure of human life and property to natural hazards to facilitate rapid and efficient recovery in the event of a disaster.

Objective 3.1

Ensure development and redevelopment has the ability to prepare and plan for, absorb, recover from, and more successfully adapt to natural hazards.

Policies

- 3.1.1 Support local and regional mapping, modeling and monitoring programs to assure the most current and locally specific data on climate change vulnerability and sea-level rise is available.
- 3.1.2 Continue to make flood elevation certificates available to the public and digitally enter them into a geographic database to aid with assessment and other resiliency efforts.
- 3.1.3 Continue to Implement the "Coastal High Hazard Area" (CHHA) policies and regulations and delineate on zoning maps. Where the definition found in the definition's section of the Comprehensive Plan and any graphic representation of this area is not consistent, the definition shall govern.
- 3.1.4 The Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) Report is incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan by reference.
- 3.1.5 Develop strategies to identify and incorporate climate adaptation strategies in cooperation with the EPC, the Planning Commission and other agencies into program areas.
- 3.1.6 Educate and inform the public regarding the impacts of natural hazards, including hurricanes, storm surge and flooding within the CHHA and 100-year floodplain.
- 3.1.7 Uphold the flood-resistant construction requirements in the Florida Building Code and applicable floodplain management regulations outlined in 44 C.F.R. part 60.

- 3.1.8 Meet or exceed building codes and development regulations, such as risk-based setback provisions, structural connections, and other site control and overlay zones, to reduce future property damages and losses.
- 3.1.9 Encourage the use of stilted structures rather than fill to meet flood elevation construction requirements within flood-prone areas.
- 3.1.10 Promote programs for sellers of real property within the CHHA to notify buyers of structures and properties of the hazards associated with the CHHA designation.
- 3.1.11 New hospitals, nursing homes and assisted living facilities in the Coastal High Hazard Area are prohibited. Siting or expansion of hospitals or care facilities in Evacuation Level B zones is discouraged.
- 3.1.12 Continue to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS) administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to maintain a CRS score of 5 or better.
- 3.1.13 Proactively seek assistance in public acquisition of abandoned properties and undeveloped land in the Coastal Planning Area.
- 3.1.14 Consider measures to mitigate flood and storm surge risk to new structures and provide incentives to move development out of high-risk areas such as the existing/pre-development 25-year floodplain, such as but not limited to transfer of development rights or clustering. This does not preclude the development of water-dependent uses, water-related and water-enhanced uses, stormwater management structures, non-habitable structures, and passive recreational uses where appropriate.
- 3.1.15 Consider the implementation of Adaptation Action Areas for low-lying zones that experience coastal flooding due to extreme high-tide or king tides, storm surge and are vulnerable to the impacts of sea level rise.
- 3.1.16 Review, update and maintain the Post Disaster Redevelopment Plan (PDRP) to reduce the impacts and eliminate the exposure of human life, public and private property; and facilitate rapid recovery from natural hazards.

- 3.1.17 Ensure the risk of existing contaminated lands is addressed in appropriate planning efforts, including the LMS and PDRP.
- 3.1.18 Encourage post-disaster redevelopment in areas with less vulnerability to storm surge, inundation, flooding, sea-level rise and other impacts of climate change, and encourage locally appropriate mitigation and adaptation strategies.
- 3.1.19 Effectively address during redevelopment existing and potential flooding problems when identified within floodplains and low-lying areas subject to tidal inundation and/or sea-level rise, as identified on the floodplains and Coastal High Hazard Area maps.
- 3.1.20 Reconstruct structures with damage exceeding 50 percent of pre-storm market value or that are substantially improved to ensure compliance to all applicable codes and regulations, including the High-Velocity Hurricane Zone portion of the Florida Building Code for structures located in the “V” and “Coastal A” Zones and for others in the A zone or the 100-year floodplain.
- 3.1.21 Maintain an inventory of repetitive loss properties and target hazard mitigation planning and technical assistance programs to these areas.

Objective 3.2

Maintain adequate evacuation clearance times and shelter space.

Policies

- 3.2.1 Utilize the Florida Statewide Regional Evacuation Study For Tampa Bay when determining if proposed developments or redevelopments will cause roadways to fall below acceptable level-of-service standards for hurricane evacuation and if sheltering needs are met.
- 3.2.2 Review, update and maintain the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP).
- 3.2.3 Facilitate public knowledge of the need to evacuate at various threat levels.

- 3.2.4 Maintain evacuation clearance time standards on and protect from flooding, all identified major evacuation routes maintained by the County.
- 3.2.5 The Level of Service for out-of-county hurricane evacuation (Intra-State Movements) for a category 5 storm is 28 hours.
- 3.2.6 No plan amendment within the Coastal High Hazard Area that increases density will be approved that would exceed a 16-hour evacuation Level of Service for a category 5 storm unless the increase in density is mitigated pursuant to accepted techniques; whereby, the mitigation technique accepted will maintain the evacuation clearance time at, or less than, the 16-hour limit.
- 3.2.7 Meet the public's shelter space needs based on a standard of 20 square feet per person.
- 3.2.8 Require new development and redevelopment to demonstrate adequate shelter space is available or fully mitigate its impacts.
- 3.2.9 Whenever possible, new or expanded County buildings shall be located, designed, and constructed so they may be utilized as shelter space.

GOAL 4

Water-dependent and water-related uses are directed to suitable areas of the County that meet or exceed applicable criteria.

Objective 4.1

Existing ports and marinas will be targeted for concentrations of marine-related land uses.

Policies

- 4.1.1 Encourage existing public and private marina sites to expand prior to siting new marina facilities.
- 4.1.2 The following criteria shall serve as the County's marina siting guidelines
- A. Support Services (Utilities/Public Facilities)
1. Adequate Uplands/Access: Marinas shall demonstrate that they have sufficient upland area to accommodate all needed utilities and marina support facilities with minimal environmental impacts. Only facilities providing parking areas that minimize stormwater runoff and mitigate pollution shall be permitted.
 2. Wastewater Capacity: All new marinas shall provide adequate capacity to handle wastewater in accordance with state standards, either by means of on-site pump-out and treatment facilities or connection to a treatment plant. All marinas with fueling facilities should provide pump-out facilities at each fuel dock. Marinas that serve liveaboards or overnight transient traffic shall provide shower, restroom and wastewater treatment facilities at the dock. Facilities of 50 slips or more shall provide permanent pump-out facilities.
 3. Spill Containment: All applicants shall provide documentation of their capability to respond rapidly and effectively to contain any spills of petroleum or other hazardous materials within the leased area boundaries.

B. Resource Constraints (Environmental Considerations)

1. Sensitive Areas: In the following sensitive areas, the applicant shall be required to demonstrate that a marina is clearly in the public interest and in accordance with all pertinent rules of appropriate regulatory agencies before approval to build is granted.
 - Aquatic Preserves
 - Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Critical Wildlife Areas
 - Outstanding Florida Waters
 - Class I Waters
 - Class II Waters
 - Marine or Estuarine Sanctuaries
 - Manatee Sanctuaries or Critical Manatee Habitats
 - Areas approved or conditionally approved by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for shellfish
 - Other highly productive or unique habitats as determined by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, based on vegetation or wildlife species
 - Areas designated as particularly sensitive to oil spills

2. Water Depth: Only those docking facilities in locations having adequate water depths to accommodate the proposed boat use shall be permitted. A minimum water depth of 4-feet mean low water shall be required. Greater depths shall be required for those facilities designed for or capable of accommodating boats having greater than a 3-foot draft. These depth requirements shall also apply to the area between the proposed facility and any natural or other navigation channels, inlet or deep water. Where necessary, marking of navigational channels may be required.

3. Access/Dredging: Preference shall be given to docking facilities that require minimal or no dredging or filling to provide access by canal, channel or road. This restriction applies to widening or deepening any existing canal or channel, but not to regular maintenance dredging and filling to meet depth standards of existing canals or channels. Preference shall be given to marina sites adjacent to naturally maintained channels.
4. Environmental Restoration: In reviewing applications for new docking facilities or renewal of existing leased facilities, an effort shall be made to identify ways to improve, mitigate or restore adverse environmental impacts caused by previous activities. This may include shallowing dredged areas, restoring wetlands or submerged vegetation or making navigable channels. Such mitigation or restoration could be required as a condition of approval for new, renewed or expanded facilities.
5. Cultural Resource Protection: Facilities must demonstrate no adverse impact on archaeological or historic properties.
6. Access Markers: Immediate access (ingress and egress) points shall be delineated by channel markers, indicating speed limits and any other applicable regulations.
7. Erosion Prevention: On sites with historically erosion-prone shorelines, applicants shall ensure that appropriate shoreline protection measures (as determined by Port Tampa Bay and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection) will be taken.

Objective 4.2

Cooperate with the Port Tampa Bay to restrict dredge and fill operations within the coastal area to activities that facilitate the continued use of existing channels, activities associated with appropriate water-dependent uses, water-related uses, and uses pursuant to the Port Master Plan, and activities that correct environmental degradation.

Policies

- 4.2.1 Except as provided herein, filling of surface waters of Tampa Bay and its rivers and tributaries up to the distance of navigability as defined by Port Tampa Bay jurisdiction for development purposes is prohibited. This policy shall not apply to
 - 1. Incidental Fill; or
 - 2. Governmental projects that are necessary to promote public health, safety or general welfare, including activities that facilitate the continued use of existing channels, activities associated with appropriate water-dependent uses, water-related uses, and uses pursuant to the Port Master Plan, and activities that correct environmental problems.

- 4.2.2 Work with Port Tampa Bay to maximize the use of existing deep water access to avoid impact to shallow water bay bottom and undeveloped shoreline.

- 4.2.3 Encourage environmentally sound development and redevelopment of Port Tampa Bay along with infrastructure to serve the Port and related maritime industries.

- 4.2.4 Support Port Tampa Bay's efforts to:
 - A. Seeking the acquisition of other appropriate lands for future port expansion and diversification in accordance with Port Tampa Bay's Master Plan.

 - B. Continue to assure coordination of its submerged land management and permitting programs with County land use regulations.

- C. Participate in efforts to establish regional wetland and bay bottom management strategies by maintaining active membership in the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council's, Agency on Bay Management and cooperating with the Southwest Florida Water Management District to implement the Surface Water Improvement and Management Plan for Tampa Bay.
- D. Continue the support and implementation of estuarine resource restoration research and management programs.
- E. Continue mitigation projects to offset ecological impacts of future port development projects on Hookers Point.
- F. Continue to implement an efficient consolidated berth maintenance dredging program under requisite authorizations (permits) of the FDEP and the Army Corps of Engineers, including a long-term Dredged Material Management Plan (DMMP).
- G. Continue to develop methods for the management and maintenance of bird nesting and feeding habitats on diked disposal islands while maintaining the utility of those areas for dredged material disposal operations.
- H. Monitor and mitigate adverse impacts on water quality during harbor deepening and maintenance dredging projects according to issued permits.
- I. Incorporate cost-effective and innovative stormwater treatment capability into Port Tampa Bay's projects; to the extent that such systems do not compromise port safety, displace critical shoreline properties, and are practicable from an engineering standpoint.