

COMMUNICATING HOW TO ASSESS RISK AND WHAT TO DO NEXT

*Dawn Kotowicz and Michelle Carnevale, Coastal Resources Center, Rhode Island Sea Grant,
University of Rhode Island*

The Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act (RIGL 45-22.2) requires all cities and towns in Rhode Island to plan for natural hazards and the impacts of climate change in their municipal comprehensive plans by June 2016. The authors worked with one municipality to compile a catalogue of resources to aid coastal municipalities in conducting vulnerability assessments and potential planning adaptation strategies to meet this requirement. Subsequently, the work sessions were organized to present this information to representatives in six coastal municipalities of Washington County in Rhode Island. The purpose of these work sessions was two-fold: 1. To introduce the process of risk assessment at the municipal level, and 2. To provide tools and resources to aid in risk assessment and planning for adaptation as municipalities identify their vulnerabilities and prepare their comprehensive plans. During these workshops, we collected qualitative and quantitative data about attendees' priorities for planning for coastal hazards, and their feedback about the adaptation strategies presented to them. This paper will describe the methods used to communicate risk assessment to municipal officials, and their feedback regarding the priorities, potential first steps, barriers to planning for natural hazards and the impacts of climate change in their municipalities.