Town of Scarborough Conservation Commission

August 27, 2025 | 6:00 pm | Hybrid: Town Hall and via Zoom

Minutes

Present in person:

Commission: Kate Borduas, Christine Labaree, Crescie Mauer, Cathleen Miller, Abel Plaud, Crayton Silsby, Pete Slovinsky

Staff: Jami Fitch, Autumn Speer

Present on Zoom:

Commission: Maggie Vishneau

Meeting recording

Call to order

1. Meeting is called to order at 6:02 pm.
2. Cathleen offers a land acknowledgement to recognize the Wabanaki People as traditional stewards of Scarborough.
3. Abel motions to accept minutes from the 7/23/25 meeting, Crayton seconds. Rollcall vote is unanimous. Motion passes.
4. Cathleen asks the Commission's next meeting focus on goal setting, including an overview of the Open Space Plan and Vulnerability Assessment.

Public Comment

1. None.

Old Business

1. Planning Board Submittals
   - None for the Commission to review this month.
2. Sustainable Scarborough Day
   - Commissioners have been working outside of meetings to prepare for Sustainable Scarborough Day. They plan to focus on the importance of trees.
   - Jami notes that if the Commission needs supplies for the event to let her know by September 15.
   - A 10x10 canopy and tables will be provided for the Commission.
   - Autumn suggests talking about Tree City USA and needing volunteers for the Tree Board.
   - Kate shares she is doing a talk about trees at the library the week before Sustainable Scarborough Day.

New Business

1. Spurwink Marsh Restoration Project

- Jami provides an overview of the project. Slides are attached. She also explains some of the arguments against the project, including that removing the road will impact inland properties.
- Pete explains that as soon as the road overtops, it no longer provides any protection from inland properties. Removing the road will increase tidal flow to the marsh, but it will not increase flooding from storms. Storm flooding will happen whether the road is there or not.
- Kate asks about the role of the Commission in this process. Jami asks Commissioners who support the project attend upcoming meetings and speak in favor of the project.
- The first public meeting is Wednesday, 9/24 at 6:00 pm in Town Council chambers. A Town Council public hearing will also be scheduled, likely in October.
- Jami notes that Scarborough's Town Council has supported the project over the past several years, but Council support in Cape Elizabeth is waning.
- The Commission requests copies of public comments about the project that have been received and the grant proposal.
- **ACTION: JAMI will send the requested documents to the Commission.**

2. Scottow Hill Road
   - Jami provides an overview of the challenges around the failed culverts on Scottow Hill Road. The culverts failed in May 2025 and the road has been closed due to public safety. There are several reasons the road has not been repaired yet: work in close proximity to the Marsh cannot occur until late fall, and the culverts are tidal restrictions.
   - The Vulnerability Assessment recommends tidal transparency in the marsh, which means tidal restrictions should be addressed as opportunities arise.
   - The Town has decided to apply for a Maine Natural Resources Conservation Program grant to remove the crossing and restore the stream to address the tidal restriction.
   - Jami explains there are plans to do address the upstream restrictions on Payne Road. Scarborough partnered with GPCOG on a proposal to complete modeling and design for the Payne Road sites.
   - Pete asks if the Town is working with Flaherty Farm to address the restriction created by their store that is over the stream. Jami explains that the Flaherty's store is not part of the project at this point.
   - Jami requests the Conservation Commission provide a letter of support for the project. A draft letter was included with the agenda.
   - Scarborough Land Trust, Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Department of Marine Resources, and DOT are providing letters.
   - The Commission would like the letter to include the following items:
     - Context of the letter is preparing for the future and dealing with a global phenomenon.
     - Wise use of taxpayer funds, because the Town has many roads to address due to sea level rise.
     - Forward-looking project because it is part of a larger project including Route 1 and Payne Road.
     - Public safety to address a high crash location.
   - *Abel motions to provide a letter of support for the project that includes the above listed points. Crescie seconds. Rollcall vote was unanimous. Motion passes.*
   - **ACTION: JAMI will revise the draft letter based on the Commission's feedback and work with Cathleen to finalize it for the proposal.**

Updates

1. Town Council
   - Nothing this month.
2. Parks and Conservation Land Board (PCLB)
   - PCLB is working on realigning its land evaluation form with the Open Space Plan.

- Scarborough Land Trust is working a grant proposal to expand Pleasant Hill Preserve and other projects in the works that will be brought to the PCLB.

3. Transportation Committee
   - The Transportation Committee reviewed the Vulnerability Assessment. The Committee discussed the need for the Town to select a scenario to plan to.
4. Sustainability Committee
   - A consultant for the Climate Action Plan has been selected.
5. Vulnerability Assessment
   - Project is wrapping up. Meetings are planned at Pine Point and Higgins Beach neighborhoods to review the results.
   - Drone flights of sections of Pine Point and Higgins Beach are planned in September to help document beach recovery processes. Pete notes that September is a good month to do the flights and shares that the ground swells from the recent offshore hurricane should have washed a lot of sand onto our beaches.
   - The Town plans to conduct annual beach flights.
   - The goal is for the Assessment to be adopted by the Town Council at their 10/15 meeting.
   - Maggie asks if Black Point Road is in the list to be evaluated. Jami shares that the road is on the Town's radar but can't speak to when it will be addressed.
6. Other updates
   - LD1829
     - Autumn notes that GPCOG recently held a meeting about LD1829 in Scarborough. The meeting was well attended by Scarborough staff and officials, as well as representatives of other communities in the region. Autumn will share the presentation from the meeting.
     - Crescie expresses concern about what the bill means for Scarborough's growth and natural resources. Autumn explains that the Council will be formulating the Town's response over the next several months.
   - Low Impact Development (LID)
     - Pete asks about the status of the pending LID ordinance.
     - Jami shares that the Town just received the final LID requirements from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. The Town is required to adopt an LID ordinance by 8/1/2026.
     - **ACTION: JAMI will share DEP's LID requirements with the group.**

Next meeting: October 22, 2025

Meeting adjourned at 7:34 pm.

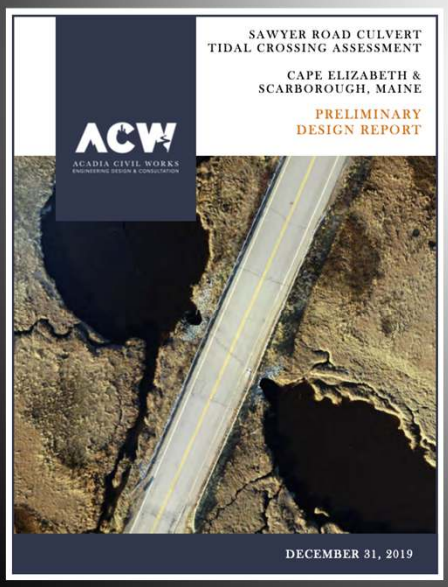
SPURWINK MARSH RESTORATION & SAWYER STREET REMOVAL PROJECT



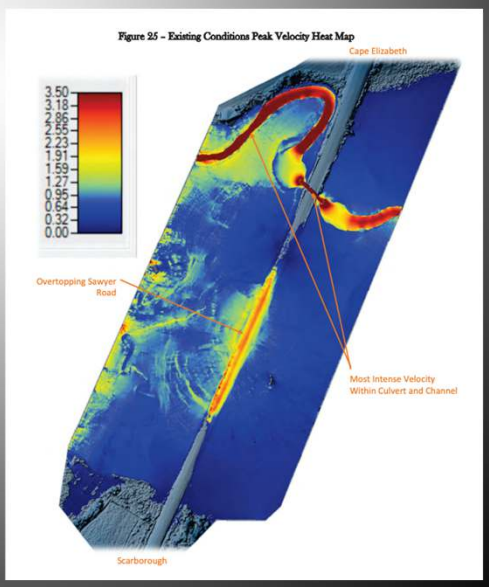
HOW DID WE GET HERE?

- 2015 CAPE ELIZABETH SEA LEVEL RISE VULNERABILITY STUDY
- 2019 CAPE ELIZABETH HABITAT AND CULVERT ASSESSMENT
- 2019 SAWYER ROAD CULVERT TIDAL CROSSING
- 2022 JOINT TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP
- 2023 MNRCP GRANT PROPOSAL
- 2024 JOINT TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP





CULVERT REPLACEMENT: $2M – 5.5M



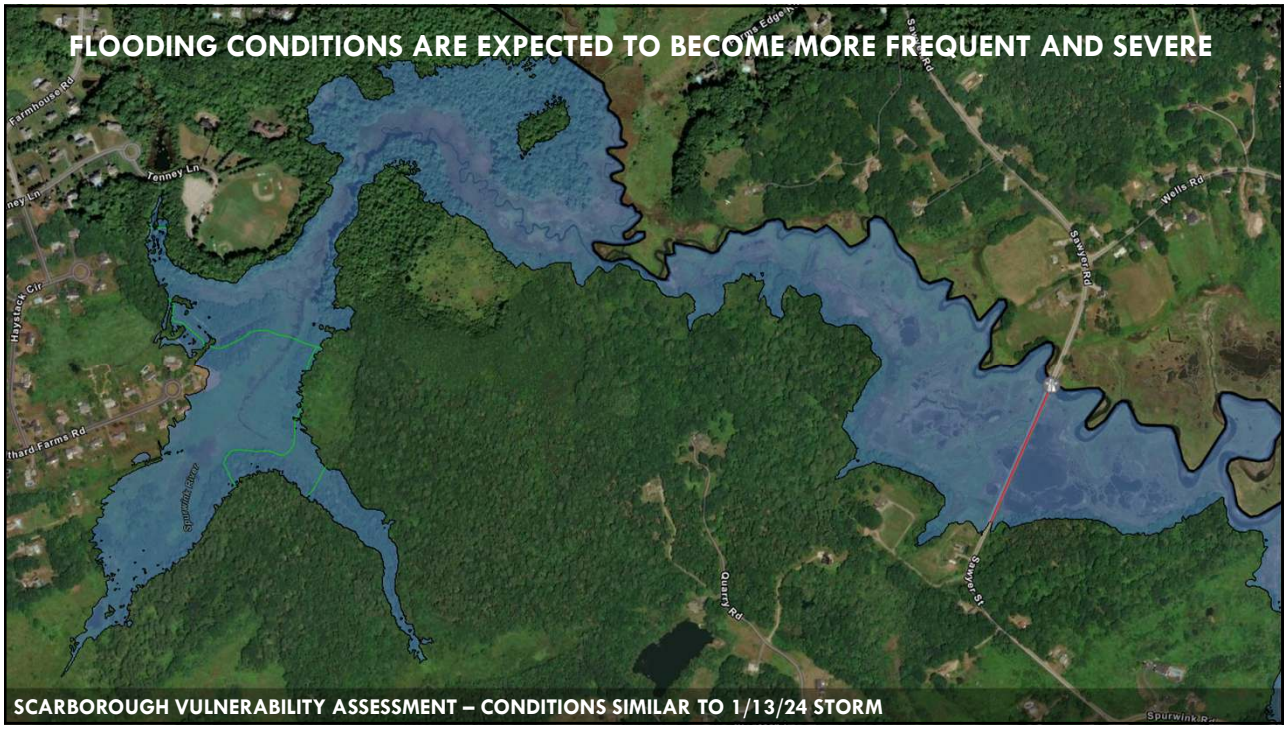
ROAD WILL STILL FLOOD

PROJECT SUMMARY

- THE TOWNS RECEIVED $1.59M FROM THE MAINE NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION PROGRAM (MNRCP) TO REMOVE 1,400 FEET OF ROAD FROM SPURWINK MARSH
- 62+ ACRES OF SALTWATER WETLAND RESTORATION OR ENHANCEMENT (REQUIRES COMPLETE ROAD REMOVAL)



FLOODING CONDITIONS ARE EXPECTED TO BECOME MORE FREQUENT AND SEVERE

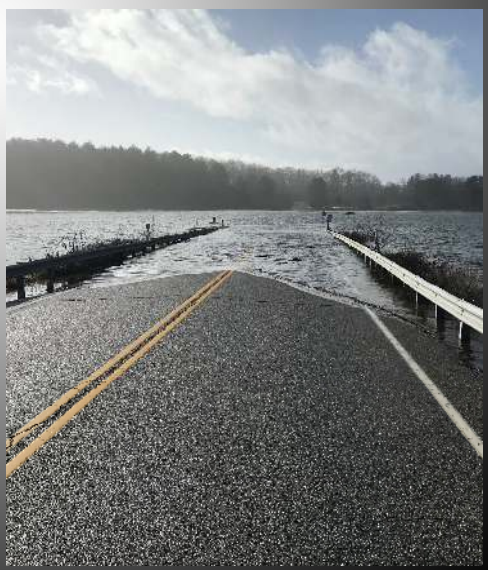


SCARBOROUGH VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT – CONDITIONS SIMILAR TO 1/13/24 STORM

SAWYER STREET/ROAD – JANUARY 10, 2024

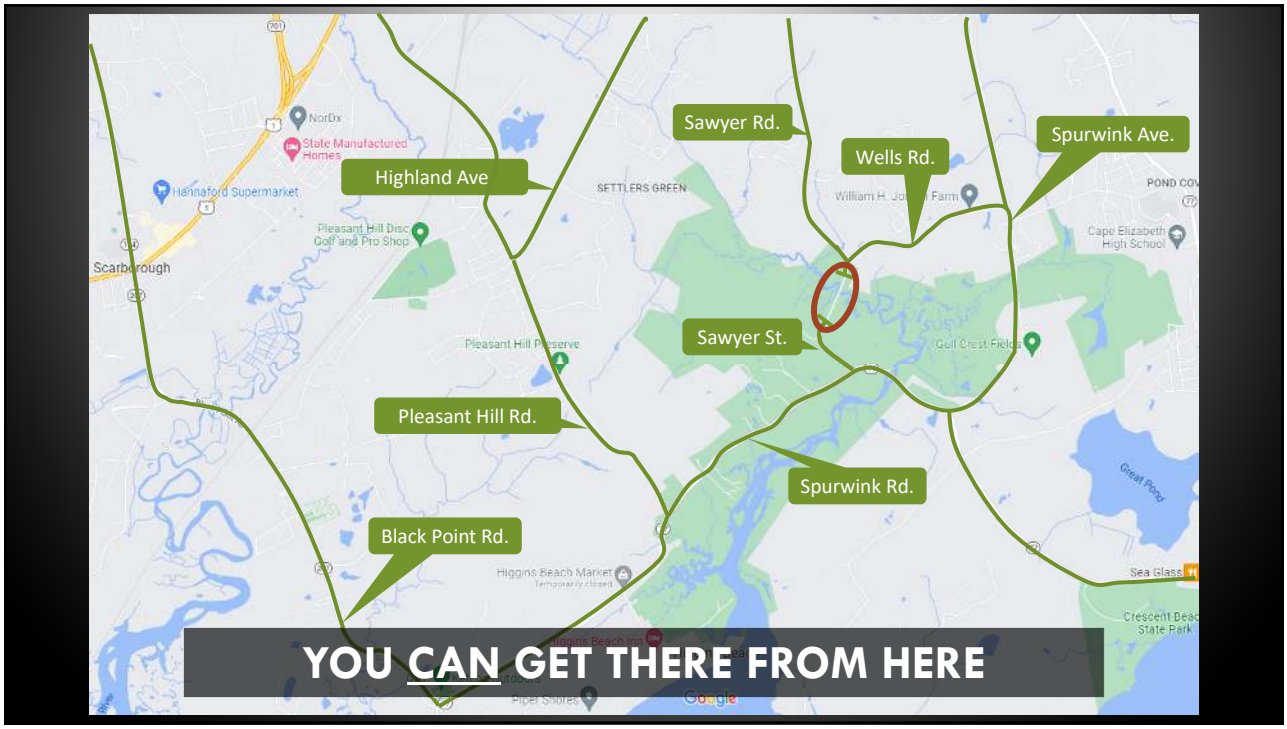


SCARBOROUGH VIEW

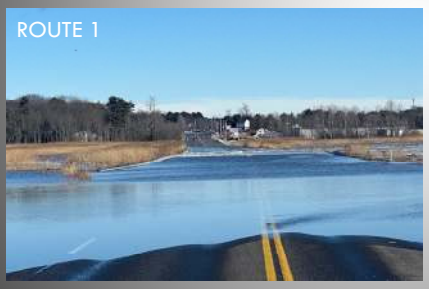


CAPE ELIZABETH VIEW


November 16, 2020 | King Tide


Sawyer Rd.
Wells Rd.
Spurwink Ave.
Highland Ave
Sawyer St.
Pleasant Hill Rd.
Spurwink Rd.
Black Point Rd.
YOU CAN GET THERE FROM HERE

ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIES IN SCARBOROUGH







PLUS:

- SCOTTOW HILL ROAD
- BLACK POINT ROAD
- PINE POINT AREA
- HIGGINS BEACH AREA

UPCOMING WORK

CURRENT:

- MARSH VEGETATION SURVEYS
- ROAD ROW SURVEY
- MARSH ENHANCEMENT DESIGN

FALL 2025 / WINTER 2026:

- ROAD REMOVAL DESIGN
- STATE & FEDERAL PERMITTING
- IN-MARSH WORK



December 23, 2022 | Credit: Matt Craig

FUTURE WORK

FALL 2026 / WINTER 2027

- ROAD REMOVAL

2027

- MARSH RESTORATION

2028 - 2035

- ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING



December 23, 2022 | Credit: Matt Craig

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

TO DATE:

- MARCH 2022 – JOINT WORKSHOP
  RESIDENTS NOTIFIED: SAWYER STREET (SCARBOROUGH); SAWYER ROAD + WELLS ROAD (CAPE ELIZABETH)
- FEBRUARY 2024 – JOINT WORKSHOP
  RESIDENTS NOTIFIED: SAWYER STREET + SPURWINK ROAD (SCARBOROUGH)

MOVING FORWARD:

- FALL 2025 – PUBLIC MEETINGS IN BOTH COMMUNITIES



December 23, 2022 | Credit: Matt Craig


UPCOMING DATES
• SEPTEMBER 24
PUBLIC MEETING
• OCTOBER TOWN COUNCIL
ROAD DISCONTINUANCE
PUBLIC HEARING & VOTE
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
PARTICIPATION IS HELPFUL
January 10, 2024 | Credit: Matt Craig