

Guide offers smart growth help for coastal and waterfront planners and developers

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NOAA, along with the Environmental Protection Agency, the International City/County Management Association and Rhode Island Sea Grant, has released a guide to bring smart growth to coastal and waterfront communities.

"Smart Growth for Coastal and Waterfront Communities" offers communities 10 coastal and waterfront-specific guidelines to help them balance development with the environment and the economy while maintaining the quality of life that makes these communities attractive.

Among its recommendations, the report suggests that communities:

- Plan for natural hazards;
- Use natural buffers to protect people and property from potential hazards;
- Preserve and restore critical environmental areas; and
- Plan for public access to waterfront and coastal waters.

"Coastal and waterfront communities face development pressures that could affect their economy, environment, and quality of life for decades to come," said John H. Dunnigan, NOAA assistant administrator of the National Ocean Service. "These coastal and waterfront smart growth

guidelines will help communities plan for growth and development while protecting their natural and economic resources, maritime heritage, and traditional sense of place."

[Sea level rise](#) and other impacts of climate change are adding new challenges to waterfront community development. More than half the U.S. population lives in coastal counties, which cover less than 17 percent of U.S. land area. An additional 180 million people visit coastal areas every year and many others visit lake and riverfront communities.

The Smart Growth Network started in 1996 as a collaborative effort between the [Environmental Protection Agency](#) and several nonprofit and government organizations. It was a response to increasing community concerns about the need for new ways to grow while boosting the economy, protecting the environment, and enhancing community vitality. Today its partners include environmental groups, historic preservation organizations, professional organizations, developers, real estate interests, and local and state government entities.

To download a copy of "Smart Growth for Coastal and Waterfront Communities," see www.coastalsmartgrowth.noaa.gov or www.epa.gov/smartgrowth .

Source: NOAA

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