

Section 5: Coastal Issues

As a result of questions posed to several Town organizations, Town Officials and representatives of interested groups, and investigation of existing coastal uses and resources, several issues regarding the future of Clinton's coastal area emerged. General and specific issues are stated below.

Issue 1: The Need to Maintain and Enhance Clinton's Coastal Resources.

Issue 1a: Encroachment of man-made uses into environmentally sensitive coastal resource areas

- Intrusion into tidal and inland wetlands.
- Loss of the remaining barrier beach areas to development, especially undeveloped portions of Cedar Island.
- Loss of the limited bluffs overlooking the Hammonasset River.

Issue 1b: Degraded water quality of the Hammonasset, Indian and Hammock Rivers and the Inner Harbor

- Biological quality of the rivers and inner harbor such that shellfish cannot be taken from these areas for direct human consumption.
- Possible decrease in water quality in the future as a result of inadequate wastewater disposal from homes and businesses located on sites unsuitable for wastewater disposal or from poorly maintained systems.
- Amount of sediment entering the rivers and harbor, especially the Hammonasset River.
- Possible degradation of water quality in the harbor because of oil and other wastes discharged from boats.
- Water quality degradation due to lack of or improper treatment of stormwater runoff.

Issue 1c: Small shellfish populations

- Apparent lack of desirable quantities and types of shellfish within the rivers and harbor.
- Loss of public and commercial shellfishing due to expanded recreational boating and especially dredging to widen and extend the Federal Navigation Channel.
- Lack of maintenance of existing shellfish beds.

Issue 1d: Degraded tidal wetlands

- Damage to the tidal wetlands, such as the large tidal wetlands to the east of Beach Park Road, from invasive species such as *Phragmites australis*.
- Small tidal wetland areas have been disturbed by various activities, such as historic dredging and filling.

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- Damage to healthy tidal wetlands from excessive sediment.
- Damage to tidal wetlands from stormwater runoff from both contaminants and quantities of fresh water.

Issue 2: Minimal Public Access to the Coast

Issue 2a: Poor physical access to the coast through State or Municipally owned properties and through the coastal site plan review process

- Insufficient public beach areas.
- Lack of open space and walkways along the storefront and riverfronts.
- The height of jetties/groins, and the lack of stairs over same, impedes the public's ability to walk along the storefront.
- Residents have erected fences or walls that extend below the mean high tide line preventing passage along the storefront.

Issue 2b: Poor visual access to the coast

- Existing views may be lost as additional development occurs.
- Views of marshes and open water are blocked in certain locations as a result of the growth of Phragmites.
- Residents have constructed fences and/or walls that block the view from the public way of marshes and open water.

Issue 3: The Need to Maintain the Current Character and Mix of Development

Issue 3a: Over-development of the harbor area while needed to provide continued economic growth

- Number and size of additional boats that should be allowed to use the harbor has not been limited.
- The narrow and shallow channel of the Hammonasset River prevents passage of vessels during low tide.
- Forcing out other harbor uses such as swimming, water-skiing and shellfish by increasing the number of boats using the harbor.



Issue 3b: Lack of maintenance of historic and architecturally significant buildings

- Buildings may be torn down to make way for more modern buildings.

Issue 3c: Lack of a balanced, developed storefront

Cannon located at the foot of Waterside Lane used to defend Clinton during the War of 1812.

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Issue 4: The Need to Improve Construction Standards and Town's Infrastructure to Reduce Loss of Property from Natural Disasters

Issue 4a: Lack of strict regulations

- Building codes do not provide protection from natural disasters.
- Zoning Regulations contain the minimum standards required by FEMA.

Issue 4b: Lack of public awareness

- Public unaware of dangers caused by natural disasters.
- Public unaware of how their actions may reduce loss of property.

Issue 4c: Lack of maintenance plans

- There are insufficient plans for the maintenance of shoreline protection structures.

Issue 4d: Impassible roadways during 100-year storm events

Issue 5: Lack of Open Space within Coastal Boundary for Conservation Purposes

Issue 5a: Lack of an Open Space Plan that provides for the acquisition of specific parcels for open space

Issue 6: Encroachment into 50' Tidal Wetlands Buffer

Issue 6a: Agencies granting variances to encroach into 50' tidal wetland buffer area

Issue 6b: Existing structures within the 50' tidal wetlands buffer area