



The Waterfront Revitalization Program

2012 WRP Revisions - FAQs

What is the Waterfront Revitalization Program (WRP)?

The New York City Waterfront Revitalization Program (WRP) is the city's principal coastal zone management tool. It establishes the City's policies for development and use of the waterfront and provides the framework for evaluating the consistency of local, state and federal discretionary actions in the Coastal Zone.

What are the origins of the WRP?

In 1972, the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) passed which recognized the nation's coastal resources and directed coastal states to create coastal zone management programs. In 1981, New York State adopted the Waterfront Revitalization of Coastal Areas and Inland Waterways Act. This act enables municipalities to adapt statewide policies to local coastal management programs. New York City was the first municipality in the state to do so in 1982, with the first citywide Waterfront Revitalization Program. The program was last revised in 2002. Today, 34 out of the 35 coastal states in the U.S. have Coastal Zone Management Programs.

What types of projects require WRP consistency review?

The WRP reviews projects that require a city, state, or federal discretionary action and fall within or impacts the city's Coastal Zone. Typically, these actions are defined as Type I or Unlisted under New York State Environmental Quality Review Act. Discretionary actions include all ULURP applications (such as rezoning, city map changes, or disposition of city-owned land), as well as city capital projects. State and federal permits for in-water construction are also reviewed. This includes the construction of piers, docks, and bulkheads. In addition, the use of federal funds for a project triggers WRP review.

For the list of all federal actions subject to consistency review with New York State's CMP, and with New York City's WRP, please see *New York's Listed Federal Actions Table 2, Federal Activities Affecting Land and Water Uses and Natural Resources in the Coastal Zone of New York State*, which can be found in New York State's CMP document.

How is the WRP different than Vision 2020?

Vision 2020 is a strategic 10-year plan for the city's waterfront. The WRP is a regulatory review tool that reviews individual projects within the Coastal Zone. The proposed revisions to the WRP aim to tie the goals and priorities of *Vision 2020* with a review mechanism that can begin to carry them out.

How has the WRP improved projects?

Over the past 30 years, thousands of projects have undergone WRP consistency review, ensuring that public and private projects within the Coastal Zone align with the City's planning goals for the waterfront. Through this process public agencies are able to identify potential conflicts between overlapping regulations and seek modifications to projects to comply with all applicable standards. Through the WRP process, all regulatory bodies and applicants must consider a variety of goals and develop a plan that reconciles competing interests.



Why is the WRP being updated?

The Department of City Planning is proposing a series of revisions to the WRP in order to proactively advance the long-term goals laid out in [Vision 2020: The New York City Comprehensive Waterfront Plan](#), released in 2011. The WRP was last updated in 2002.

What types of changes are being proposed to the WRP?

The proposed revisions to the WRP offer a more fine-grained set of policies to address the city's varied coastal conditions. In its current form, the WRP consists of a description of the program (Part I), 10 policy areas (Part II), and maps (Part III). The proposed revisions to Part I aim to clarify the legislative authority of the WRP and how the consistency review process works. In Part II, while the 10 policy areas are retained, a series of modifications and additions to the policies are proposed. For example, the revisions aim to improve projects within the coastal zone through promoting climate resilient designs, increasing public access to the waterfront when appropriate and achievable, and improving interagency coordination to foster a clear, predictable development process. In Part III, the revisions include modifications to existing maps and creation of new maps. See below for more information.

What changes are proposed for the special mapped areas?

The Coastal Zone Boundary will be updated to include the floodplain boundary based on the 2007 FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs). FIRM is the official map of a community on which FEMA has delineated both the special flood hazard areas and the risk premium zones for insurance applicable to the community.

The Special Natural Waterfront Areas (SNWAs) and Significant Maritime and Industrial Areas (SMIAs) maps are being redrawn based on GIS data and current land use conditions.

SNWA maps changes:

- The boundary lines have been redrawn to align to street center lines, lot lines, or zoning boundaries. In-water boundaries have been aligned with bulkhead, pier head, or lot line (whichever is the furthest seaward).
- Significantly developed sites have been removed from the boundaries.
- Boundaries have been expanded to include additional ecologically significant sites identified in recent restoration plans and reports.
- Northwest Staten Island SNWA has been revised to reflect the Arthur Kill Ecologically Sensitive Maritime and Industrial Area.

SMIA map changes:

- The boundary lines have been redrawn to align to street center lines, lot lines, or zoning boundaries. In-water boundaries have been aligned with bulkhead, pier head or lot line (whichever is the furthest seaward).
- Blocks with residential buildings or zoning that allows for residential uses have been removed from the boundary
- Inland blocks without waterway access have been removed
- A new SMIA, the Staten Island West Shore Significant Maritime and Industrial Area, has been mapped.

The revisions also include three new mapped areas: The Arthur Kill Ecologically Sensitive Maritime and Industrial Area, Recognized Ecological Complexes, and Priority Marine Activity Zones.



What is the Coastal Zone Boundary?

The Coastal Zone Boundary is a defined area which includes all waterfront land up to the first upland street at least 300 feet inland. It also includes all coastal wetlands, waterfront parks, floodplains, and other significant coastal features.

See the current [Coastal Zone maps](#). See the [proposed revisions to the Coastal Zone maps](#).

What is the Arthur Kill Ecologically Sensitive Maritime and Industrial Area (ESMIA)?

On the West Shore of Staten Island, a new area designation to promote industrial development in concert with preservation and enhancement of ecological resources is proposed. A portion of the Northwest Staten Island Special Natural Waterfront Area would be re-mapped as the Arthur Kill Ecologically Sensitive Maritime Industrial Area. There is no other area within the city's Coastal Zone that presents similar opportunities and constraints. The area is both well suited for a mix of maritime and industrial development—with large tracts of vacant, industrially zoned land, close proximity to the New York Container Terminal, connections to rail and highways, and access to deep water—and is home to among the most extensive concentrations of intact tidal wetlands in the city.

The new WRP policies for this area will promote redevelopment for industrial uses of suitable sites, the preservation of intact wetlands, and the use of design strategies to minimize the impact of development on adjacent natural resources.

What are Priority Marine Activity Zones?

Priority Marine Activity Zones (PMAZs) are special area designations that assist WRP consistency review. The Priority Marine Activity Zones are areas with concentrations of waterborne transportation uses and are important nodes that support the city's waterborne transportation and maritime activities. These areas are characterized by shorelines used for vessel docking, berthing, or tie-up and where the maritime infrastructure—such as bulkheads, docks, piers, and fendering—is designed to support such uses.

What are Recognized Ecological Complexes?

Recognized Ecological Complexes (RECs) are special area designations that assist WRP consistency review. The RECs are clusters of valuable natural features which are more fragmented than those in the SNWAs and are often interspersed with developed sites. These sites include protected parkland or sites identified as priority acquisition or restoration sites by local, state, and regional plans. Many are substantially environmentally deteriorated and require an active approach to restoration.

How will the revisions to the WRP impact specific projects that are currently underway or proposed?

The revisions are not intended to substantially change projects underway, as they will not be applied retroactively or affect projects that are already approved. Upon approval by the NYS Department of State and the US Department of Commerce, the revised policies will be applicable to Local, State and Federal discretionary actions. In the interim, land use applications that are in [the Pre-Certification Process](#) should include an assessment of both the [current](#) and the [proposed revised](#) WRP policies as part of their WRP consistency assessment.

How does the WRP address climate change and sea level rise?

The proposed revisions to the WRP incorporate policies that, for the first time, address the risk of climate change and sea level rise by promoting the use of climate change projections in the planning and design of projects. The City convened the New York City Panel on Climate Change, a group of climate scientists and other experts, to create projects that are specific to New York City. The revised WRP asks applicants to prepare an analysis of current and future vulnerabilities to flood risks based on the range of sea level rise



projects available and the lifespan of the project. It then encourages applicants to take measures to minimize these risks through design strategies that will enhance their ability to withstand and quickly recover from weather-related events. See Policy 6.2 for more details about the proposed revisions related to climate change.

When do the revisions to the WRP go into effect?

While the revisions to the WRP were approved by the City Council on October 30, 2013, they must also be approved by the NYS Secretary of State be incorporated by the federal Office for Coastal Management into the State's Coastal Management Program. On December 17, 2014, the State's required 60-day review period began. Comments can be submitted until February 20, 2015. For more information, visit the [NYS DOS website](#).

Until State and Federal approval of the revisions, the current 2002 WRP should be used for consistency review purposes. However projects in the planning or pre-application phase are encouraged to review both the current and the proposed revised WRP policies as part of the WRP consistency review.