FUTURE SEA LEVEL AND RECURRENT FLOODING RISK FOR COASTAL VIRGINIA

CCFR Report 1 | February 2020
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Executive Summary ................................................................. 6
- Background ................................................................. 7
- Relative Sea Level Rise Modeling ................................................................. 10
  - Vulnerable Land Area ............................................................. 10
  - Impacted Parcels ............................................................... 12
  - Impacted Buildings .............................................................. 13
  - Vulnerable Roads ............................................................... 14
  - Cumulative Results ............................................................ 15
- Minor and Moderate Flooding with RSLR Modeling ........................................... 16
  - Land Area Vulnerable to Minor Flooding .................................................... 17
  - Buildings and Roads Impacted by Minor Flooding ....................................... 17
  - Minor Flooding Cumulative Results ........................................................... 19
  - Land Area Vulnerable to Moderate Flooding ............................................... 20
  - Buildings and Roads Impacted by Moderate Flooding .................................... 21
  - Moderate Flooding Cumulative Results ..................................................... 22
- Web Map Results and Data Sharing ......................................................... 24
- Study Limitations ........................................................................... 25
- Conclusions and Future Work .......................................................... 26
- Appendix ..................................................................................... 28
FIGURES

Figure 1. Relative Sea Level Rise Scenario Projections for Sewells Point, VA. .................. 8
Figure 2. Future Sea Level: Coastal Virginia Planning Districts ................................. 9
Figure 3. Present-day land area (including wetlands) flooded by sea level rise. ............. 11
Figure 4. Present-day land area (excluding wetlands) flooded by sea level rise. .......... 11
Figure 5. Existing Parcels by planning district that will be impacted by sea level rise. ......... 12
Figure 6. Existing buildings by planning district that will be impacted by sea level rise ....... 13
Figure 7. Miles of roadway by planning district that will be impacted by sea level rise .... 14
Figure 8. Annual flood frequencies with 1950-2013 quadratic trends in Norfolk .............. 16
Figure 9. Land area flooded by sea level rise and at-risk during minor tidal flooding events. 17
Figure 10. Buildings flooded by sea level rise and at-risk during minor tidal flooding events. 18
Figure 11. Roads flooded by sea level rise and at-risk during minor tidal flooding events .... 18
Figure 12. Land area flooded by sea level rise and at-risk during moderate flooding events .... 20
Figure 13. Buildings flooded by sea level rise and at-risk during moderate flooding events . . 21
Figure 14. Roads flooded by sea level rise and at-risk during moderate flooding events ......... 21

TABLES

Table 1. Total land and street flooding for coastal Virginia PDCs ............................... 15
Table 2. Total parcels and buildings impacted by sea level rise in coastal Virginia ........... 15
Table 3. Total additional land and roads at-risk from minor tidal flooding .................... 19
Table 4. Total additional parcels and buildings at-risk from minor tidal flooding ........... 19
Table 5. Total additional land and streets at-risk from moderate flooding ..................... 22
Table 6. Total additional parcels and buildings at-risk from moderate flooding .............. 22
# FIGURES, TABLES, AND MAPS

## MAPS

Map 1. All Planning Districts .......................................................... 28  
Map 2. Accomack-Northampton PDC  ........................................... 29  
Map 3. Crater PDC ........................................................................ 30  
Map 4. George Washington RC ..................................................... 31  
Map 5. Hampton Roads PDC ............................................................ 32  
Map 6. Middle Peninsula PDC .......................................................... 33  
Map 7. Northern Neck PDC .............................................................. 34  
Map 8. Northern Virginia RC .......................................................... 35  
Map 9. Plan RVA (Richmond VA Regional PDC) .............................. 36  
Map 10. Norfolk, large area ............................................................. 37  
Map 11. Norfolk, small area ............................................................. 38  
Map 12. The Hague, Norfolk, SLR + Moderate flooding year 2040 .... 39  
Map 13. Guinea, large area ............................................................. 40  
Map 14. Guinea, small area ............................................................. 41  
Map 15. Guinea, SLR + Moderate flooding, year 2040 ..................... 42
A report developed in response to a request from the Secretary of Natural Resources and Special Assistant to the Governor for Coastal Adaptation and Protection to assist with meeting the Executive Order No. 24 (2018), Increasing Virginia’s Resilience to Sea Level Rise and Natural Hazards directive set forth in Section 2 Part A requiring the development of a Coastal Resilience Master Plan.

The report presents analysis of the best available existing data on coastal land elevation, sea level rise projections, vertical land motion (subsidence), and building and transportation assets. Sea level rise (SLR) projections are analyzed as Relative SLR (RSLR), combining the effects of vertical water rise (or “eustatic” change) with regional trends in vertical land motion, or subsidence. The study made use of available Commonwealth LiDAR elevation data, buildings, and roads as well as several sources of federal data, including sea level trends, tidal flooding and datums, and peer-reviewed and government reports. Maps of potential future inundation provided here represent a baseline assessment of impacts to land areas, including wetlands, parcels and development, roadways and buildings within the Commonwealth.

The total area at risk with RSLR in coastal Virginia is 424 square miles in 2040, 534 square miles in 2060, and 649 square miles in 2080. An additional 144 square miles will be vulnerable to minor tidal flooding by the year 2040, with similar areas of impact for 2060 and 2080. The total length of roadway potentially affected by RSLR and tidal flooding is 545 miles in 2040, 972 miles in 2060, and 1762 miles in 2080. The total number of buildings potentially affected by RSLR and tidal flooding is 30,795 in 2040, 57,740 in 2060, and 111,545 in 2080. Hampton Roads, the Eastern Shore, and the Middle Peninsula are the most severely and critically impacted. Additional metrics describing the potential risk from RSLR, minor (tidal) flooding, and moderate flood events can be found in the body of this report.

Impacted parcels, buildings, and roads are tabulated and presented in a series of charts, tables, and maps delimited by Planning District Commissions across coastal Virginia. The maps and related digital data promote sub-regional comparison and provide these organizations and municipalities a spatial product for first-order risk assessment and planning. Maps and tables are provided digitally in this report are also available as digital geospatial data for local spatial planning. The report further outlines inherent limitations and future improvements in the available data and emerging methods and scientific understanding to reduce uncertainty.
This report provides information in furtherance of the objectives of Executive Order No. 24 (2018) Increasing Virginia’s Resilience to Sea Level Rise and Natural Hazards and at the request of the Special Assistant to the Governor for Coastal Adaptation and Protection.

Inundation modeling was conducted to determine the extent of permanent flooding due to relative sea level rise for the years 2040, 2060, and 2080 in support of the Commonwealth’s initial Coastal Resilience Master Plan. These benchmark timelines were selected to closely coincide with common planning time horizons, similar to the Hampton Roads Coastal Resilience Working Group’s adopted Sea Level Rise Planning Policy. Following the recommendation of the Commonwealth Center for Recurrent Flooding Resiliency (CCRFR), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA) 2017 Intermediate-High curve was used to model flood surfaces. Values for these flood surfaces were obtained by examining the NOAA Intermediate-high curve at tide stations throughout coastal Virginia. The US Army Corps of Engineers Sea Level Rise Calculator (USACE) was used to derive the relative SLR heights of tidal flooding, combining a NOAA SLR projection (Intermediate-High) for eustatic water level rise with local subsidence taken from regional measurements. The graph shown in FIGURE 1 details sea level rise predictions for the Sewells Point tide gauge in Norfolk, Virginia.

For any given scenario, sea level rise estimates vary slightly throughout coastal Virginia and the Chesapeake Bay. Accordingly, inundation modeling was conducted independently for the following four geographically contiguous coastal study areas: (1) southern Bay and Atlantic (Hampton Roads), (2) Middle Peninsula, (3) Northern Neck and Northern Virginia, and (4) the Eastern Shore.

The examined geographic regions include the member cities and counties that comprise the following 8 coastal planning districts: Northern Virginia Regional Council (NVRC), George Washington Regional Council (GWRC), Northern Virginia Regional Planning District Commission.
Inundation modeling was conducted utilizing methods modified from those outlined in the “Mapping Coastal Inundation Primer” produced by NOAA’s Office for Coastal Management⁴. Future sea level surfaces for the years 2040, 2060, and 2080 were created using values derived from the NOAA (2017) intermediate-high scenario. Each surface was adjusted to the mean higher high water (MHHW) datum to ensure that modeled inundation represents land area that would be inundated during normal tidal cycles. Digital depth models (DDMs) that define the areal extent and depth of flooding predicted by the model were developed using the best available LiDAR elevation data. All calculations for the impacts of RSLR for each modeled year (2040, 2060, 2080) are naturally inclusive of all prior years and not additive. However, calculations of the additional impacts of minor and moderate flooding are in addition to the impacts of RSLR.

To enhance their utility in ongoing planning efforts throughout the Commonwealth, these data were aggregated to the planning district level. The Appendix contains an expanded version of Figure 2 and eight additional map figures that provide an overview of sea level rise inundation for each of the coastal planning districts.

⁴ NOAA Office for Coastal Management (formerly Coastal Services Center). April 2012. Mapping Coastal Inundation Primer.
FIGURE 2
Future Sea Level: coastal Virginia planning districts. Shown larger in Appendix I. Gloucester was included in the Middle Peninsula PDC for this study.
Land Area Vulnerable to Sea Level Rise:

Virginia statewide land cover data (2016) were analyzed in conjunction with modeled sea level to assess the amount of predicted inundated area for the following land cover classes: Open Water, Developed, Barren, Forested, Shrub/Scrub, Harvested/Disturbed, Turf Grass, Planted/Cultivated, Wetlands. For the purpose of examining and highlighting potential disparity of impact between coastal regions, the flooded area total for the entire coastal region was broken down to the planning district level. **FIGURES 3** and **4** provide graphical representation of permanent sea level inundation for each district.

Cumulative inundation for all land cover (open water excluded) for coastal Virginia was predicted to be 424 square miles in 2040, 534 square miles in 2060, and 649 square miles in 2080 (figures rounded to the nearest mile). Calculation of dry land-only inundation (wetlands excluded) predicted a total combined flood extent for coastal Virginia of 40 square miles in 2040, 86 square miles in 2060, and 170 square miles in 2080. In comparison, the total areas of Alexandria, Norfolk, and Richmond are 15 square miles, 54 square miles, and 60 square miles, respectively.

As RSLR impacts to wetlands include both loss and migration inland, these environmental resources are at great risk and require additional, careful study and monitoring.

Further analysis was conducted to approximate the impact of future sea level inundation on real property parcels, buildings, and major roads throughout coastal Virginia and within each planning district. Data for these features were obtained through the Virginia GIS Clearinghouse data portal hosted by the Virginia Geographic Information Network (VGIN) through the Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA).  

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FIGURE 3
Present day land area (including wetlands) in each planning district that will be flooded by sea level rise

FIGURE 4
Present day land area (excluding wetlands) in each planning district that will be flooded by sea level rise
Real Property Parcels Impacted by Sea Level Rise:

Real property comprises land ownership boundaries (parcels) and the buildings on them. For the purpose of this assessment, we subdivide the analysis into potential parcel impacts and buildings.

For parcels, the study considers a potential impact any inundation that either wholly or partially overlays with the predicted relative sea level rise extent. Such parcels are tallied as “impacted” by future sea level rise.

Hence, it provides a first approximation of exposure of a parcel, whereas more detailed vulnerability study would also incorporate susceptibility of a parcel flooding by functional use, assessed value, or damage, including acreage of land loss to permanent flooding. **FIGURE 5** enumerates the number of impacted parcels for each planning district at each modeled year. This overlay by intersection captures the extent that future high tide extends within the boundary of a parcel, thereby reducing or eliminating (in many cases) the land area available for use or development.
Buildings Impacted by Sea Level Rise:

Impacts to existing buildings and other building-like structures were also modeled. The data supplied by VGIN for this analysis are described as follows, “Building footprints are polygon outlines of built structures digitized by Virginia Base Mapping Program’s digital ortho-photogrammetry imagery, or digitizing of local government subdivision plats.” Those buildings that have a footprint either entirely within or intersecting the predicted future sea level boundary were considered to be impacted by sea level rise.

It is probable that buildings at or below the future high tide line will be rendered entirely unusable, necessitating relocation or demolition. FIGURE 6 details the number of impacted buildings for each planning district at each modeled year.

It is unlikely that the building footprint data set captures 100% of buildings in the study area. However, the data are sufficiently complete to provide an indication of relative risk to buildings in the coastal planning districts.

Roadways Flooded by Sea Level Rise:

The impact of future sea level on roadways was also considered. Portions of the street centerline located within the boundaries of future predicted sea level, and therefore below the high tide line, were deemed to be impacted.

This preliminary, screening-level assessment does not differentiate among road type or function, USDOT classification, or vehicle miles traveled per day. Nonetheless, the spatial overlay of future flooding and existing roadways provides a baseline for further detailed transportation studies, including capturing vulnerability and susceptibility and structural adaptation or mitigation.

Many states, for instance, are conducting detailed transportation planning studies to inform future capital improvements, state and federal budget priorities, and identifying engineering alternatives for mitigation or roadway adaptation. Roadway impacts are also notable for potential underestimation, such as not considering the right of way and stormwater drainage conveyance, vegetated swales, or culverts and catch-basins bridges, etc. In addition, indirect impacts are not addressed here, including ecological flows, stormwater, fish passages, and other cascading impacts beyond this study. **FIGURE 7** details the total miles of roadway lost to sea level rise for each planning district at each modeled year.

**FIGURE 7**

*Miles of roadway in each planning district that will be flooded by sea level rise*
Cumulative Exposure of Relative Sea Level Rise:

TABLES 1 and 2 detail the exposure of sea level rise for each of the study area planning districts and the cumulative total for coastal Virginia.

**TABLE 1**
Total land and street flooding from sea level rise for coastal Virginia PDCs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLANNING DISTRICT</th>
<th>LAND AREA (mi²)</th>
<th>STREETS (mi)</th>
<th>LAND AREA (mi²)</th>
<th>STREETS (mi)</th>
<th>LAND AREA (mi²)</th>
<th>STREETS (mi)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accomack-Northampton</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crater</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Washington</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampton Roads</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Peninsula</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Neck</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Virginia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>424</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>649</td>
<td>952</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 2**
Total parcels and buildings impacted by SLR in coastal Virginia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLANNING DISTRICT</th>
<th>PARCELS</th>
<th>BUILDINGS</th>
<th>PARCELS</th>
<th>BUILDINGS</th>
<th>PARCELS</th>
<th>BUILDINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accomack-Northampton</td>
<td>13,833</td>
<td>1,656</td>
<td>18,509</td>
<td>6,294</td>
<td>21,766</td>
<td>9,755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crater</td>
<td>1,128</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1,335</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>1,477</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Washington</td>
<td>1,931</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>2,104</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>2,255</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampton Roads</td>
<td>43,951</td>
<td>2,614</td>
<td>56,840</td>
<td>12,022</td>
<td>79,692</td>
<td>36,612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Peninsula</td>
<td>16,567</td>
<td>974</td>
<td>19,387</td>
<td>3,537</td>
<td>22,576</td>
<td>7,231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Neck</td>
<td>10,322*</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>11,057*</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>11,887*</td>
<td>1,425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Virginia</td>
<td>1,321</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>1,570</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>2,175</td>
<td>409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>2,758</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>2,950</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>3,504</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>91,811</td>
<td>6,204</td>
<td>113,752</td>
<td>23,433</td>
<td>145,332</td>
<td>56,178</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NNPDC data excludes Northumberland County, for which no parcel data was available through the VA GIS Clearinghouse
Reports of recurrent tidal flooding, often called “nuisance” flooding, in coastal Virginia have been increasing. Nuisance flooding is defined as a water level measured by NOAA tide gauges above the local NOAA National Weather Service (NWS) threshold for minor impacts established for emergency preparedness (Sweet and Marra, 2016). A study by Fugro (2016) confirmed that tidal flooding in Norfolk’s Lafayette River watershed occurs frequently and is expected to worsen over time as sea level rises.

A study by Fugro (2016) confirmed that tidal flooding in Norfolk’s Lafayette River watershed occurs frequently and is expected to worsen over time as sea level rises.

In 2016, Sweet and Marra (2016) calculated the “nuisance flooding” threshold level for Norfolk, VA to be 0.53m above MHHW and predicted an accelerating trend of tidal flooding days per year (FIGURE 8).

NOAA has established three thresholds for coastal flood severity: (1) minor, (2) moderate, and (3) major. These thresholds are “based upon water level heights empirically calibrated to NOAA tide gauge measurements from years of impact monitoring.” Minor refers to flooding which is more disruptive than damaging (includes tidal nuisance flooding), moderate refers to damaging flooding, and major is used to describe destructive flooding.

Concurrent with our analysis of SLR impacts using

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NOAA’s intermediate-high curve, we have modeled the additional potential impacts of both minor (tidal) and moderate flood events for the entire study region for the years 2040, 2060, 2080. Tidal flooding water surface elevation data provided directly by NOAA were employed in these modeling efforts. Per NOAA staff, these experimental data are “based on interpolation from the NOAA report thresholds” (M. Pendleton, personal communication, September 17, 2019).\(^\text{11}\)

Rather than relying only on a single tidal flooding threshold value (i.e. 0.53m), these surfaces establish a range of tidal water levels which would generate minor or moderate flooding throughout coastal Virginia. Predictive modeling using these data reveals which areas are at highest risk of being inundated during minor and moderate flooding events.

**Land Area Vulnerable to Minor (Tidal) Flooding with RSLR:**

Our model predicts that over 140 square miles of land will be vulnerable to frequent recurrent tidal flooding, often called “nuisance” flooding by the year 2040. **FIGURE 9** shows the cumulative area of potential inundation from both sea level rise and minor flood events for each planning district. Hampton Roads, the Eastern Shore, and the Middle Peninsula display significant vulnerability to tidal and other minor recurrent flooding.

**Buildings and Roadways impacted by Minor (Tidal) Flooding with RSLR:**

**FIGURES 10 & 11**, respectively, show the number of buildings and miles of roadway located within the area of highest risk during minor flooding events. Hampton Roads’ high population density, coastal proximity, and low relief result in disproportionately elevated risk to infrastructure.

**FIGURE 9**

Present-day land area (including wetlands) in each planning district that will be flooded by sea level rise (blue) and at-risk during minor flooding events (orange). The stacked bars indicate that sea level rise progressively increases the extent of flooded areas.

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FIGURE 10
Buildings potentially affected by relative sea level rise (blue) and at-risk during minor flooding events (orange)

FIGURE 11
Streets potentially flooded by sea level rise (blue) and at-risk during minor flooding events (orange)
Cumulative Exposure of Minor (Tidal) Flooding with RSLR:

TABLES 3 and 4 detail the additional potential exposure of minor flooding with increasing relative sea level.

### TABLE 3

Total additional land and streets at-risk from minor flooding for coastal Virginia PDCs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>2040</th>
<th>2060</th>
<th>2080</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLANNING DISTRICT</td>
<td>LAND AREA (mi²)</td>
<td>STREETS (mi)</td>
<td>LAND AREA (mi²)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomack-Northampton</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crater</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Washington</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampton Roads</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Peninsula</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Neck</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Virginia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 4

Total additional parcels and buildings at-risk from minor flooding for coastal Virginia PDCs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>2040</th>
<th>2060</th>
<th>2080</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLANNING DISTRICT</td>
<td>PARCELS</td>
<td>BUILDINGS</td>
<td>PARCELS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomack-Northampton</td>
<td>5,721</td>
<td>5,970</td>
<td>3,478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crater</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Washington</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampton Roads</td>
<td>15,795</td>
<td>14,200</td>
<td>23,939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Peninsula</td>
<td>3,612</td>
<td>3,439</td>
<td>3,282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Neck</td>
<td>919*</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>849*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Virginia</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>27,151</td>
<td>24,591</td>
<td>32,926</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NNPDC data excludes Northumberland County, for which no parcel data was available through the VA GIS Clearinghouse.
Land Area Vulnerable to Moderate Flooding with RSLR:

Areas at risk from moderate flood events are naturally inclusive of those that would also be impacted by minor tidal flooding. The threshold for moderate flooding, as defined by NOAA, is met when there is damaging flooding not associated with tropical storms (includes hurricanes). **FIGURE 12** shows the cumulative area of potential inundation from both sea level rise and moderate flood events for each planning district.

**FIGURE 12**

Present-day land area (including wetlands) in each planning district that will be flooded by sea level rise (blue) and at-risk during moderate flooding events (orange).

The additional areas of potential inundation by moderate flooding are significant, particularly in Hampton Roads, the Eastern Shore, and the Middle Peninsula. Examination of the potential impact to buildings and roadways once again underscores regional disparities and highlights the critical nature of the problem for Hampton Roads. **FIGURES 13 & 14**, respectively, show the number of buildings and miles of roadway located within the area of highest risk during moderate flooding events.
FIGURE 13
Buildings flooded by sea level rise (blue) and at-risk during moderate flooding events (orange).

Number of buildings at least partially inundated by SLR & moderate flooding

FIGURE 14
Roads flooded by sea level rise (blue) and at-risk during moderate flooding events (orange).

Miles of roadway potentially inundated by SLR & moderate flooding
Cumulative Exposure of Moderate Flooding with RSLR:

TABLES 5 and 6 detail the cumulative exposure of moderate flooding with rising relative sea level for the entire study region.

TABLE 5

Total additional land and streets at-risk from moderate flooding for coastal Virginia PDCs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>2040</th>
<th>2060</th>
<th>2080</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLANNING DISTRICT</td>
<td>LAND AREA (mi²)</td>
<td>STREETS (mi)</td>
<td>LAND AREA (mi²)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomack-Northampton</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crater</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Washington</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampton Roads</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Peninsula</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Neck</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Virginia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 6

Total additional parcels and buildings at-risk from moderate flooding for coastal Virginia PDCs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>2040</th>
<th>2060</th>
<th>2080</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLANNING DISTRICT</td>
<td>PARCELS</td>
<td>BUILDINGS</td>
<td>PARCELS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomack-Northampton</td>
<td>7,561</td>
<td>7,808</td>
<td>5,279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crater</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Washington</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampton Roads</td>
<td>29,908</td>
<td>30,756</td>
<td>46,626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Peninsula</td>
<td>5,432</td>
<td>5,575</td>
<td>4,922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Neck</td>
<td>1,471*</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>1,469*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Virginia</td>
<td>792</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>1,594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>641</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>1,178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>46,425</td>
<td>45,640</td>
<td>61,565</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NNPDC data excludes Northumberland County, for which no parcel data was available through the VA GIS Clearinghouse
This study focused on developing the future potential extent of various tidal and non-tidal flooding events, presented in the included maps and charts. In addition, recurrent tidal flooding will have impacts attributed to frequency and duration of flooding, particularly for wetlands and roadway not previously affected by increasingly higher tides and, especially, salinity.

Another compounding factor bearing on recurrent flooding is that of “combined flooding” owing to both extreme rainfall and tidal flooding. As tidal flooding increases in extent, frequency, and duration with sea level rise, rainfall runoff co-occurring with tidal flooding will exacerbate flood extent, depth, and impacts. Multiple recent studies also point to increasingly extreme rainfall events, evidenced in rainfall intensity and shorter return periods and affirming predicted regional climate change.\textsuperscript{12,13} Thus, combined flooding bears further research and study, as rainfall hydrology is likely to co-occur and compound tidal flooding. In order to meet the need for an expedited assessment, this study was not able to include the rapidly developing scientific understanding of combined flooding and the interaction of extreme rainfall and increasing tidal water levels.


Data developed by this study for land areas, buildings, and streets vulnerable to inundation by sea level rise and both minor (tidal) and moderate flooding are available for viewing in a web map at the below address (subject to future update).

**Web Map:** Coastal Virginia Sea Level with Minor and Moderate Flooding (NOAA Int-High Scenario2017)


Planners or other users can access the publicly shared map as streaming Web Map Services (WMS) layers or may email geovis@olddominion.onmicrosoft.com to request download access.
STUDY LIMITATIONS

The accuracy of inundation modeling is largely dependent upon the quality of digital elevation data used in the analysis. Errors in elevation surfaces will naturally propagate to final model results. Elevation discrepancies may result in shifts in the predicted flood boundary. These shifts may have the effect of either over- or under-predicting flooding extent depending on the direction (positive or negative) of elevation error.

The use of high-quality LiDAR-derived elevation surfaces for this study helps to minimize positional errors. Further improvements could be developed to refine the areas of impact by applying fine scale hydrocorrection (Allen and Howard 2014), which would also improve roadway and drainage analyses and property susceptibility by reducing areas of omission of flooding impacts.

In addition to the accuracy of underlying elevation data, some variables were not modeled and require further research, such as dynamic geomorphology and the developing data on vertical land motion and subsidence, infrastructure improvements, storm water system connectivity, groundwater hydrology, and other local factors may all impact future flooding severity and connectivity.

Local land subsidence data are very limited and presented a constraint to this study, which relied on long-term, high-precision tide gage data.

The study did not address storm surges and changes in storminess associated with climate change that will co-occur with sea level rise. Integrating climate change more widely into sea level rise risk assessment requires highly computational modeling and consideration of multiple, interacting probabilistic changes (increasing tidal flooding, increasing storm energy, potential increase frequency of storms) well beyond the scope of tidal flooding in this project.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE WORK

Model results and related graphics clearly illustrate that the Hampton Roads, Accomack-Northampton, and Middle Peninsula planning districts will be the most severely and disproportionately impacted.

Map data and graphics are included in both the online web map and in the Appendix to provide more detailed illustrations of the localized impacts of sea level rise and tidal flooding. Hydrologically disconnected areas of potential inundation were preserved to highlight areas of increased, yet uncertain, vulnerability. Identifying these potential vulnerabilities provides opportunity for further analyses needed to better define localized flooding risk.

Broad studies such as this should be used to inform and assist with the prioritization of more detailed, fine-scale analyses. The final maps in the Appendix provide examples of how the implications of sea level rise can be examined at local scales for areas of critical risk and/or high value. Localized impacts analysis allows for the inclusion of comprehensive and highly specific asset inventories, which are unique to each study area. Highly developed asset inventories, combined with sea level and tidal flooding modeling, are necessary for identifying and quantifying the level of risk and potential cost of response.

It is recommended that this work be extended, and additional analysis performed to quantify the regional impacts of SLR in smaller geographic areas. Areas of potential critical impact should be identified for high-resolution development of asset inventories and focused analyses of physical and economic impacts of SLR.

This screening-level assessment is distinctly different from narrow spatial and feature-based risk assessments driven by land or resource managers, engineers, or planners. The limitations noted above should not detract from the potential to utilize the products and GIS data for planning today. Nonetheless, a series of prioritized enhancements are provided below, which could increase resilience to coastal hazards associated with sea level rise, especially flooding.

1. Need for Fine-Scale Elevation Data
   This study used the best available elevation, tidal projections, and subsidence data, yet additional research has illustrated new techniques can further refine these data. Even higher resolution LiDAR, fine-scale hydrocorrection, digitally mapping ditches and low-relief drainage features, and expanding the availability of these improved GIS datasets could a) reduce the uncertainty that areas at risk are accidentally or unknowingly missed or omitted in flood risk mapping and b) provide more accurate data for detailed flooding modeling, stormwater engineering, and road or other construction, potentially reducing costs for adaptation and mitigation.
2. **Assess Compounding Risk from Combined Flooding**
   Only a few very recent studies have quantitatively verified the increases in extreme rainfall, corroborating global and regional climate models. Yet, few spatial risk assessments have been conducted that identify these risks and impacts (primarily in larger cities with the capacity to fund them). Projects that could support more extensive regional rainfall study and climatology could inform stormwater engineering and drainage planning as well as coupling dynamic rainfall interactions with tidal flooding and sea level rise.

3. **Assimilating Real Property, Building, and Infrastructure Data**
   Some data gaps were revealed in the analysis of coastal parcels. Building structures almost universally lack detailed First Floor Elevations (FFE) which are essential to assessing susceptibility and mitigating flood risks. Future studies might develop cost-effective techniques to capture FFEs as well as building structural characteristics (e.g., foundation types) that are critical to damage assessment, flood insurance costs, and other floodplain policy and emergency management.

4. **Assessing Emerging Risks and Cascading Impacts**
   This project assessed potential SLR impacts in unique features, land areas, parcels, buildings and roads. However, interacting, indirect, and even cumulative impacts may affect vulnerability. Wetlands loss or migration, also not a focus of this study, could lead to increasing inundation and loss of flood protection and ecosystem services. Ground water inundation could reduce storage during tides and rainfall flooding, resulting in increased surface flooding and damage to underground septic systems and utilities.

5. **Storm Surge and Flood Modeling**
   Whereas this study focused on dynamic changes in sea level rise and tidal flooding, additional research is critically necessary to capture future storm surge flood risk. This would entail the inclusion of multiple, joint probabilities, including storminess, storm tracks and frequency, strength, and other meteorological dynamics with climate change (e.g., extreme rainfall, tropical storms, and extra tropical or nor’easter storms.)
APPENDIX

MAP 1
All Planning Districts

Future Sea Level: Coastal Virginia Planning Districts

- Flooded Assets
  - 2040: 424.3
  - 2060: 533.7
  - 2080: 649

- Land area (sq. miles)
  - 2040: 424.3
  - 2060: 533.7
  - 2080: 649

- # Parcels
  - 2040: 91,811
  - 2060: 113,752
  - 2080: 145,332

- # Buildings
  - 2040: 6,204
  - 2060: 23,433
  - 2080: 56,178

- Major roads (miles)
  - 2040: 185
  - 2060: 439
  - 2080: 952

Notes:
1. Shaded areas indicate calendar year of permanent flooding due to rising sea level.
2. Sea level data reflect the NOAA (2017) intermediate-high scenario.
3. Year 2040 sea level includes 2040 areas; year 2060 sea level includes 2060 areas.
4. Data do not reflect future changes in landform or the built environment.
5. Landowner, parcels, structures, and streets data were obtained from the Virginia GIS clearinghouse.
MAP 2
Accomack-Northampton PDC

Future Sea Level: Accomack-Northampton Planning District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Land area impacted (sq.mi.)</th>
<th>Number Parcels Impacted</th>
<th>Number Structures Impacted</th>
<th>Streets impacted (miles)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2040</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>13,833</td>
<td>1,656</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2060</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>18,509</td>
<td>6,294</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2080</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>21,766</td>
<td>9,755</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
1. Shaded areas indicate year of flooding due to rising sea level.
2. Sea level data reflect the NOAA intermediate-high scenario.
3. Areas include present day wetlands.

PREPARED BY: CCRFR
SEAL LEVEL DATA: NOAA BASEMAP DATA: ESRI, HERE, Garmin, OpenStreetMap
MAP 3
Crater PDC

Future Sea Level: Crater Planning District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2040</th>
<th>2060</th>
<th>2080</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land area impacted (sq. mi)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number Parcels impacted</td>
<td>1,128</td>
<td>1,335</td>
<td>1,477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number Structures impacted</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streets impacted (miles)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
1. Shaded areas indicate year of flooding due to rising sea level.
2. Sea level data reflect the NOAA intermediate-high scenario.
3. Areas include present day wetlands.

PREPARED BY: Civ. for Geospatial Science, Education, and Analytics
SEA LEVEL DATA: NOAA BASEMAP DATA: CRIM, HERE, ODRM, Opendatastack
MAP 4
George Washington RC

Future Sea Level: George Washington Regional Commission

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Land area impacted (sq.m)</th>
<th>Number of Parcels impacted</th>
<th>Number of Structures impacted</th>
<th>Streets impacted (miles)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2040</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1,031</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2060</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2,104</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2080</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2,255</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
(1) Shaded areas indicate year of flooding due to rising sea level
(2) Sea level data reflect the NOAA intermediate-high scenario
(3) Areas include present day wetlands.
MAP 5
Hampton Roads PDC

Future Sea Level and Recurrent Flooding Risk for Coastal Virginia

Future Sea Level: Hampton Roads Planning District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Land area impacted (sq. mi.)</th>
<th>Number Parcels impacted</th>
<th>Number Structures impacted</th>
<th>Streets impacted (miles)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2040</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>43,951</td>
<td>2,614</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2060</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>56,940</td>
<td>12,022</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2080</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>79,692</td>
<td>36,612</td>
<td>483</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
1. Shaded areas indicate year of flooding due to rising sea level
2. Sea level data reflect the NOAA intermediate-high scenario
3. Areas include present-day wetlands

PREPARED BY: Ctr for Geospatial Science, Education, and Analytics  SEA LEVEL DATA: NOAA  BASEMAP DATA: ESRI, HERE, Garmin, OpenStreetMap
Future Sea Level and Recurrent Flooding Risk for Coastal Virginia

MAP 7
Northern Neck PDC

Future Sea Level: Northern Neck Planning District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Land area impacted (sq.m.)</th>
<th>Number Parcels impacted</th>
<th>Number Structures impacted</th>
<th>Streets impacted (miles)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2040</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10,322</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2060</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11,057</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2080</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>11,887</td>
<td>1,425</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
1. Shaded areas indicate year of flooding due to rising sea level
2. Sea level data reflect the NOAA intermediate-high scenario
3. Areas include present clay wetlands
4. Northumberland Co. parcel data unavailable

Prepared by: CCRFR
Sea Level Data: NOAA
Base Map Data: ESRI, HERE, Garmin, OpenStreetMap
MAP 8
Northern Virginia RC

Future Sea Level: Northern Virginia Regional Commission

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Land area impacted (sq. mi)</th>
<th>Number Parcels impacted</th>
<th>Number Structures impacted</th>
<th>Streets impacted (miles)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2040</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1,321</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2060</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1,570</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2080</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2,175</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
(1) Shaded areas indicate years of flooding due to rising sea level
(2) Sea level data reflect the NOAA intermediate-high scenario
(3) Areas include present day wetlands

PREPARED BY: [Specify] for Geospatial Science, Education, and Analysis
SEALEVEL DATA: NOAA
BASEMAP DATA: ESRI
HERE, Garmin, OpenStreetMap
MAP 9
Plan RVA (Richmond VA Regional PDC)

Future Sea Level: Plan RVA Regional Commission

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Land area impacted (acres)</th>
<th>Number Parcels impacted</th>
<th>Number Structures impacted</th>
<th>Streets impacted (miles)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2040</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2,758</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2060</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2,959</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2080</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3,504</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
1. Shaded areas indicate years of flooding due to rising sea level.
2. Sea level data reflect the NOAA intermediate-high scenario.
3. Areas include present day wetlands.

PREPARED BY: Office of Geospatial Science, Education, and Analytics
SEA LEVEL: DATA: NOAA
BASEMAP DATA: ESRI, HERE, Google, OpenStreetMap
MAP 10
Norfolk
MAP 11
Norfolk
MAP 12

The Hague, Norfolk, including SLR and Moderate Flood Events for year 2040


GUIDE TO VISUALIZATION SERVICES | Education & Analytics and Commonwealth Center for Recurrent Flooding Resiliency

Year: 2040

Impacted by sea level
- flooded land area
- buildings
- streets

Vulnerable to moderate flood events
- land area
- buildings
- streets

Miles
MAP 13
Guinea

PREPARED BY: CI, for Geospatial Science, Education, & Analytics and Commonwealth Center for Recurrent Flooding Resiliency.
MAP 14
Guinea
MAP 15
Guinea (subset), including SLR and Moderate Flood Events for year 2040