

Town of Ipswich, Massachusetts

Modeling Future Effects of Coastal Storms and Sea Level Rise

Introduction

Like many communities along the North Shore of Massachusetts, the Town of Ipswich is vulnerable to climate-driven hazards, including sea level rise and storm surge. Predicted sea level rise and increased storm surge have the potential to significantly impact the town's coastal economy and the natural systems that the community depends upon. Understanding where and how these hazards are likely to impact the community is a necessary first step in addressing vulnerability.

Given its exposure to climate-driven hazards, the Town of Ipswich took part in a mapping effort to identify areas that are particularly vulnerable to coastal inundation. This poster highlights the results of this effort and is intended to help support the Town of Ipswich as it works to identify adaptation strategies that reduce its vulnerability to sea level rise and storm surge.

Mapping Coastal Flooding

These maps illustrate current (2013) and future (2070) probability of coastal inundation in Ipswich, Massachusetts. Results are based on a hydrodynamic model developed for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Famely et al. 2016). Note: This data does not take into account inland freshwater flooding.

This advanced hydrodynamic model incorporates:

Modeled Storm Events

Including hurricanes and nor'easters, as well as climatology projections

Sea Level Rise Projections

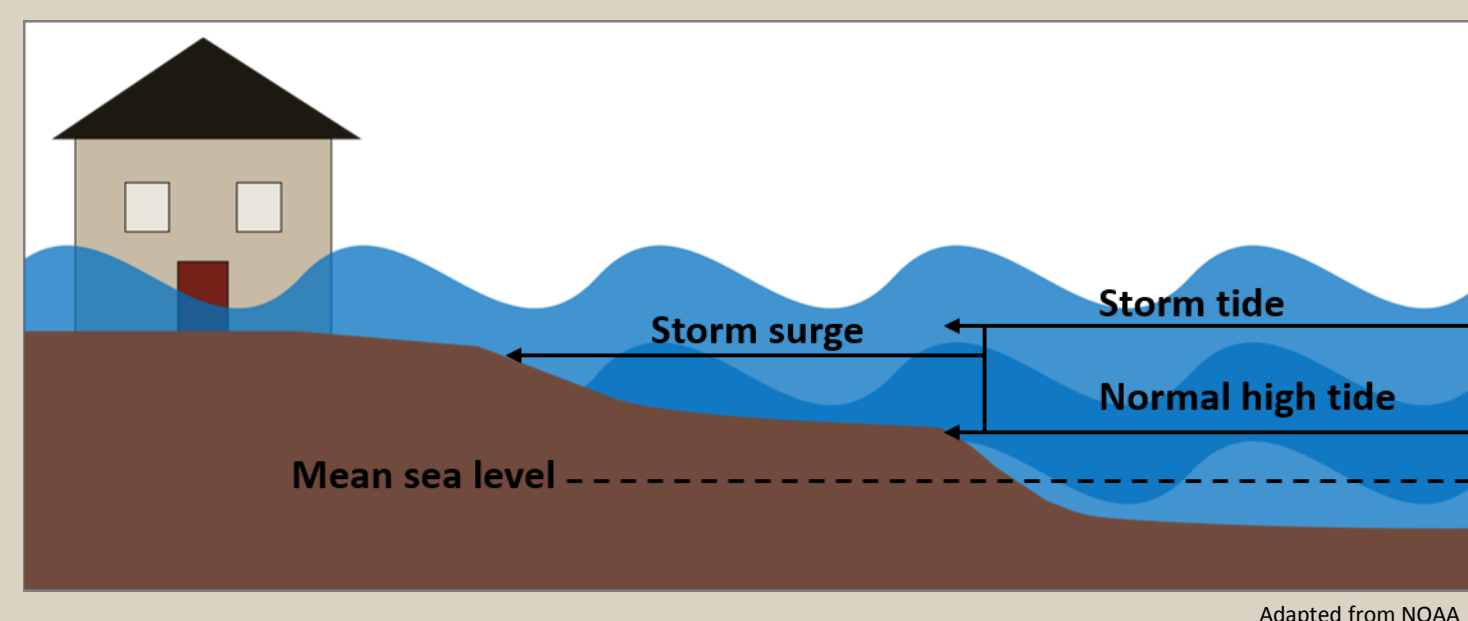
Consistent with both the US National Climate Assessment and projections specific to Massachusetts

Dynamic Coastal Processes

Driven by wave effects, wind, tides, and storm surge

Hydrodynamic Model

What is Storm Surge? An abnormal rise of water generated by a storm, over and above the normal tide range.



Coastal Inundation Probability

Probability of inundation is defined as the likelihood that at least 2 inches of flood water will encroach on the land at a particular location at least once in a calendar year. Note that the 1% probability of inundation shown on the present day maps (2013) roughly corresponds to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) 100-year storm.

How much sea level rise?

- ❖ Present day (considered 2013) results incorporate existing sea level conditions
- ❖ 2070 results incorporate 3.4 feet of sea level rise, which is also approximately the "Intermediate-High" scenario for 2090 (Figure 1)

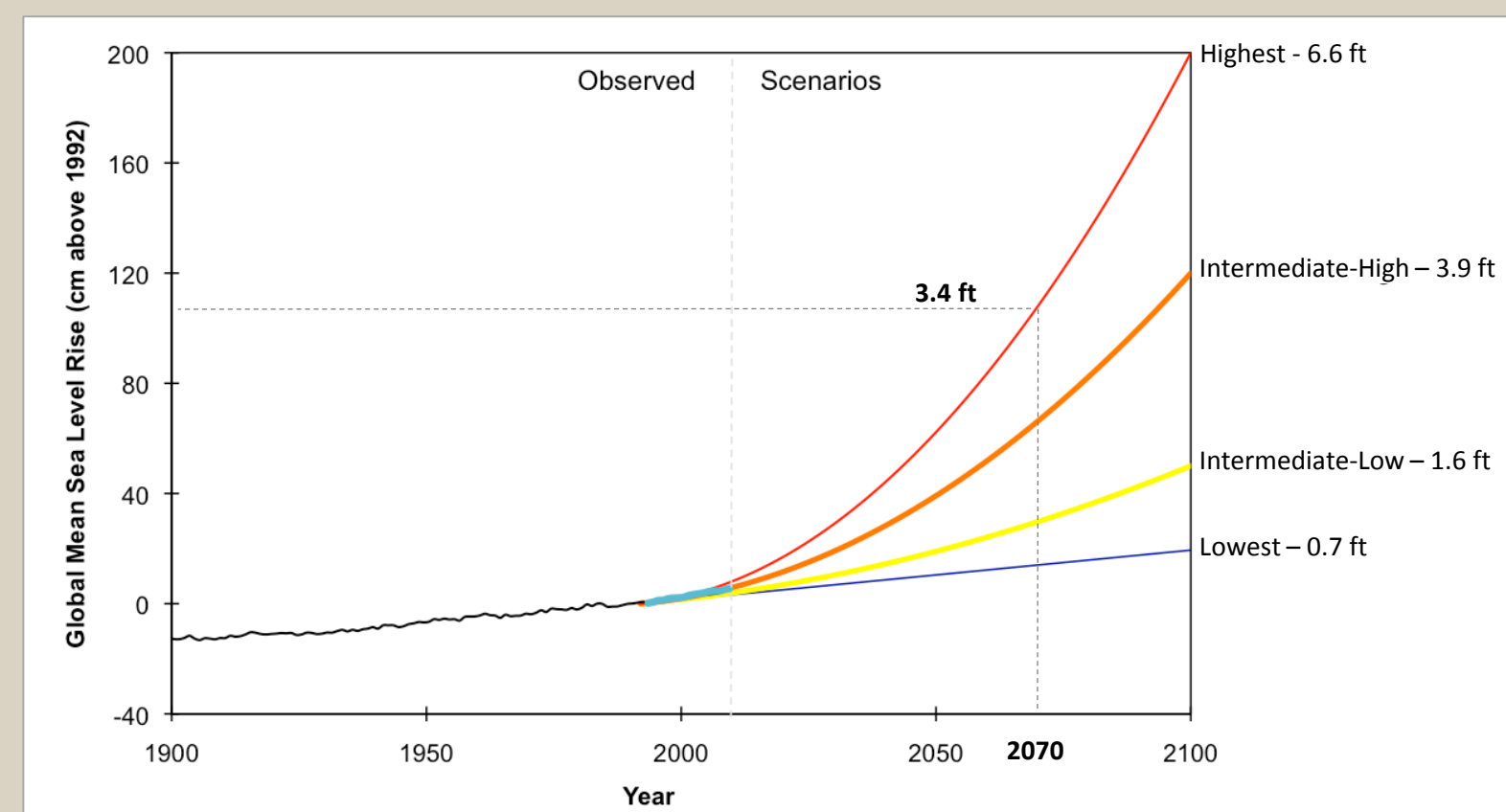
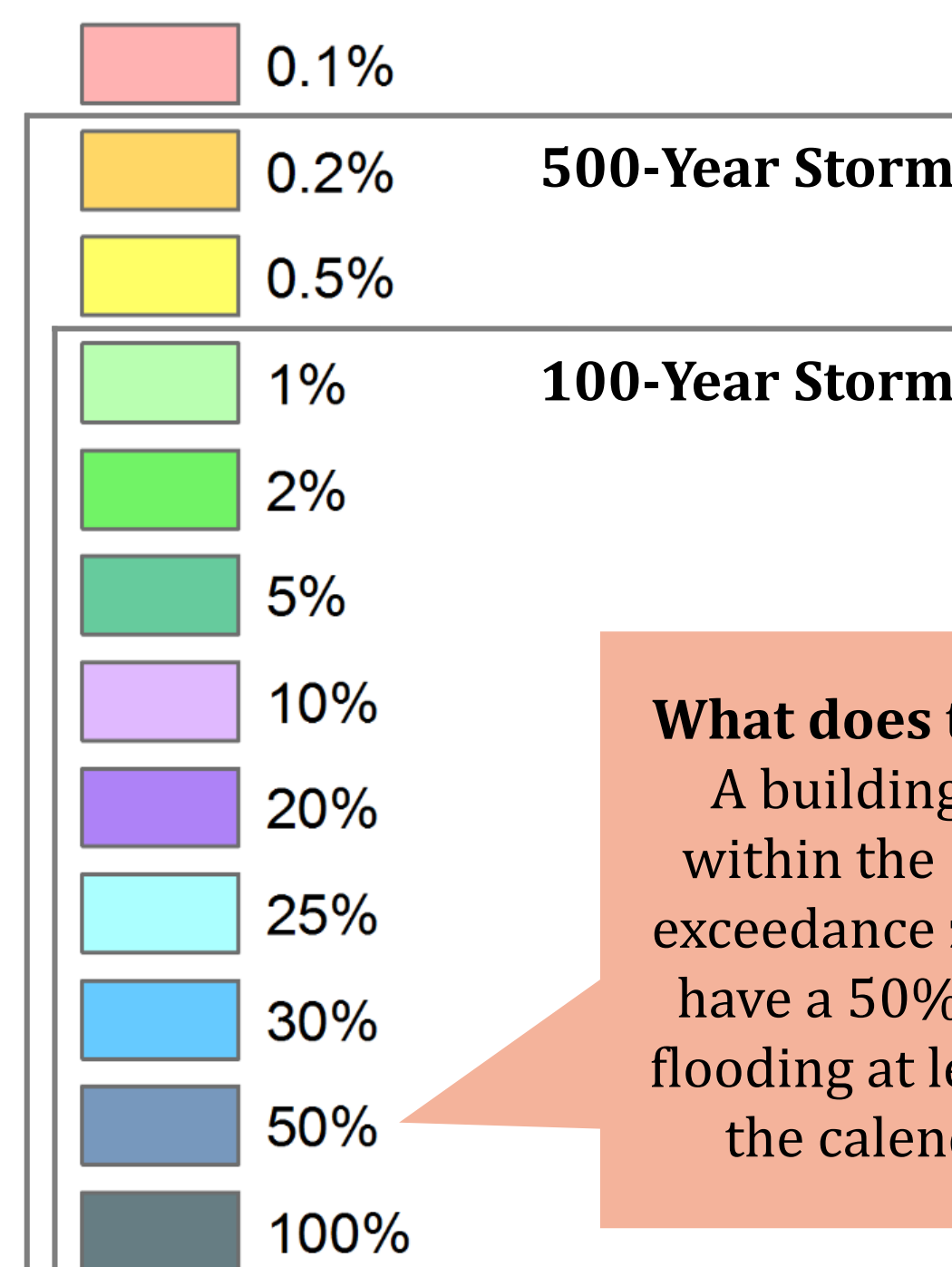


Figure 1. Global Mean Sea Level Rise Scenarios. The highest, or worst case, scenario is based on estimated rise in ocean temperatures leading to thermal expansion combined with maximum melting of the glaciers and ice sheets. The lowest scenario assumes a historical rate of sea level rise with no increase due to climate change. Adapted from the US National Climate Assessment (Melillo et al. 2014) and NOAA (Parris et al. 2012).

Percent Risk of Coastal Flooding



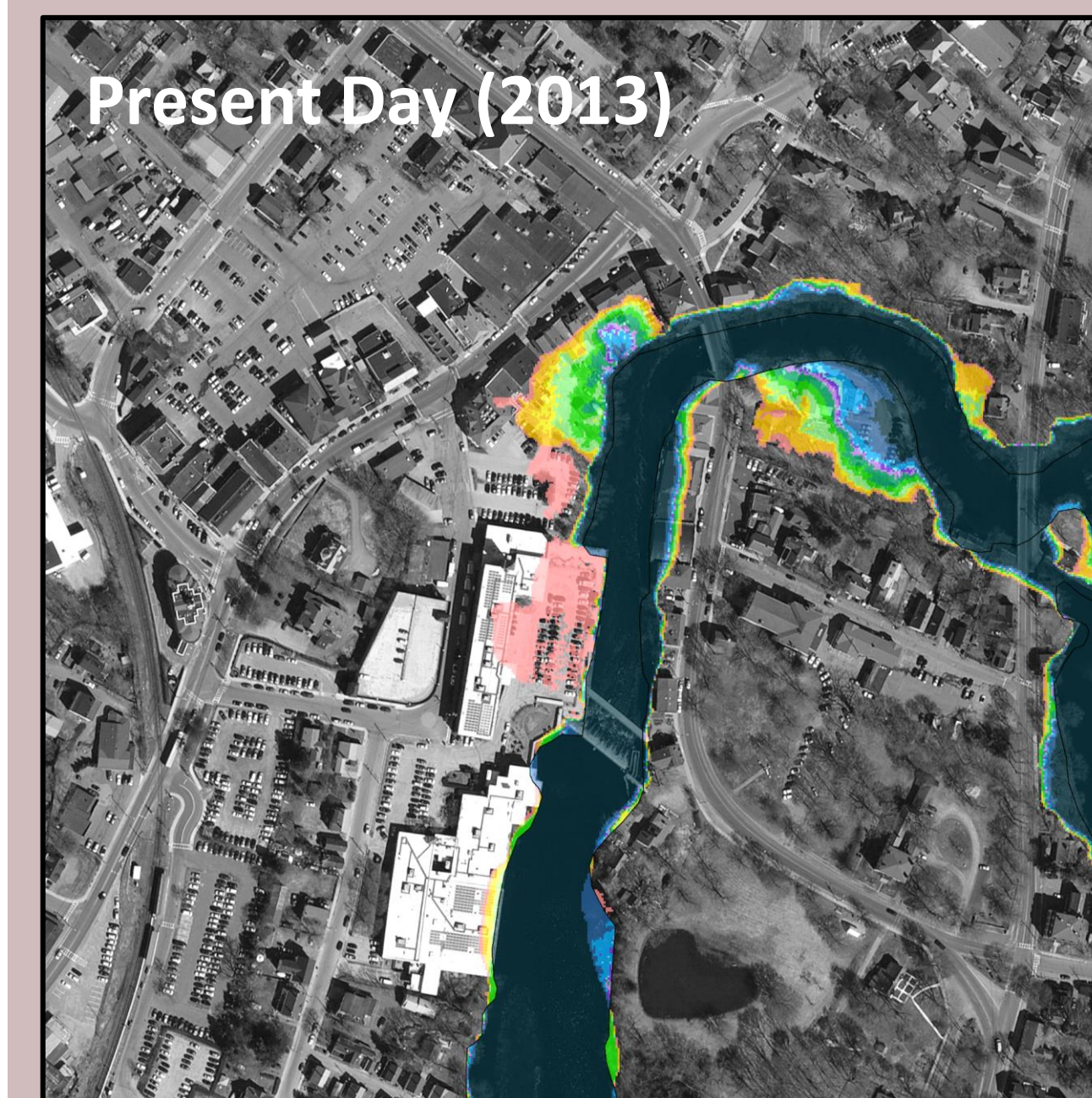
What does this mean?

A building that lies within the 50% flood exceedance zone would have a 50% chance of flooding at least once in the calendar year.

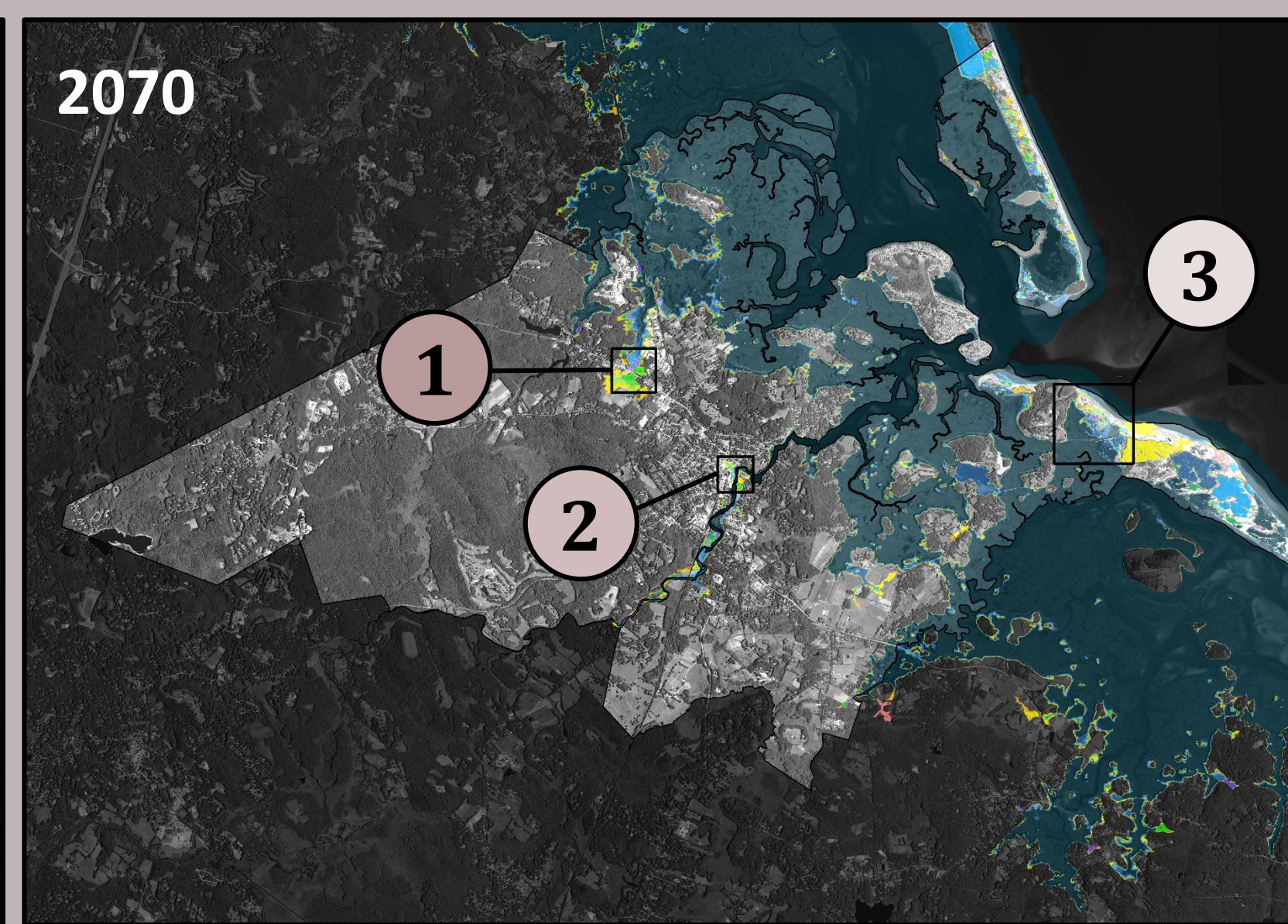
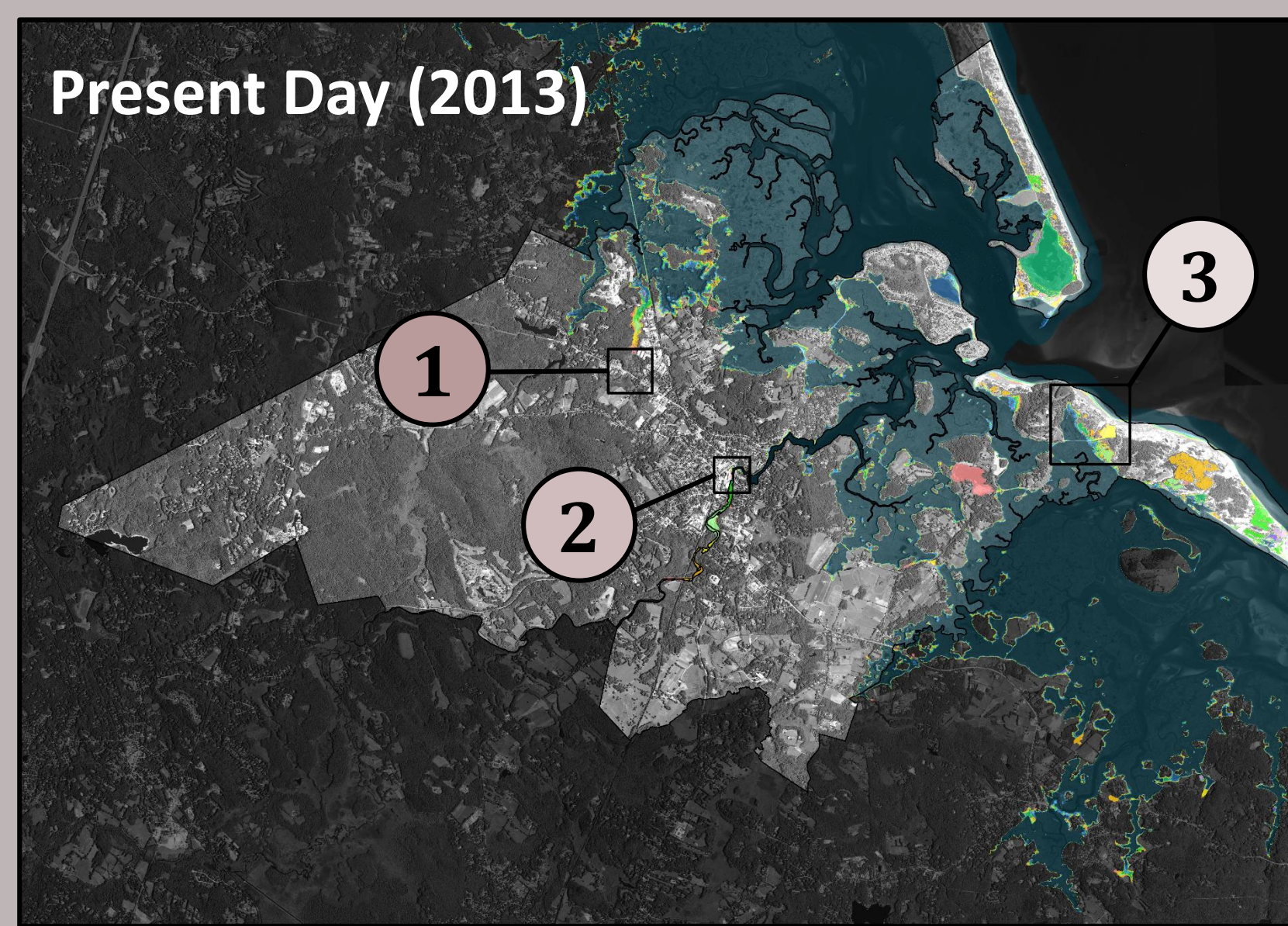
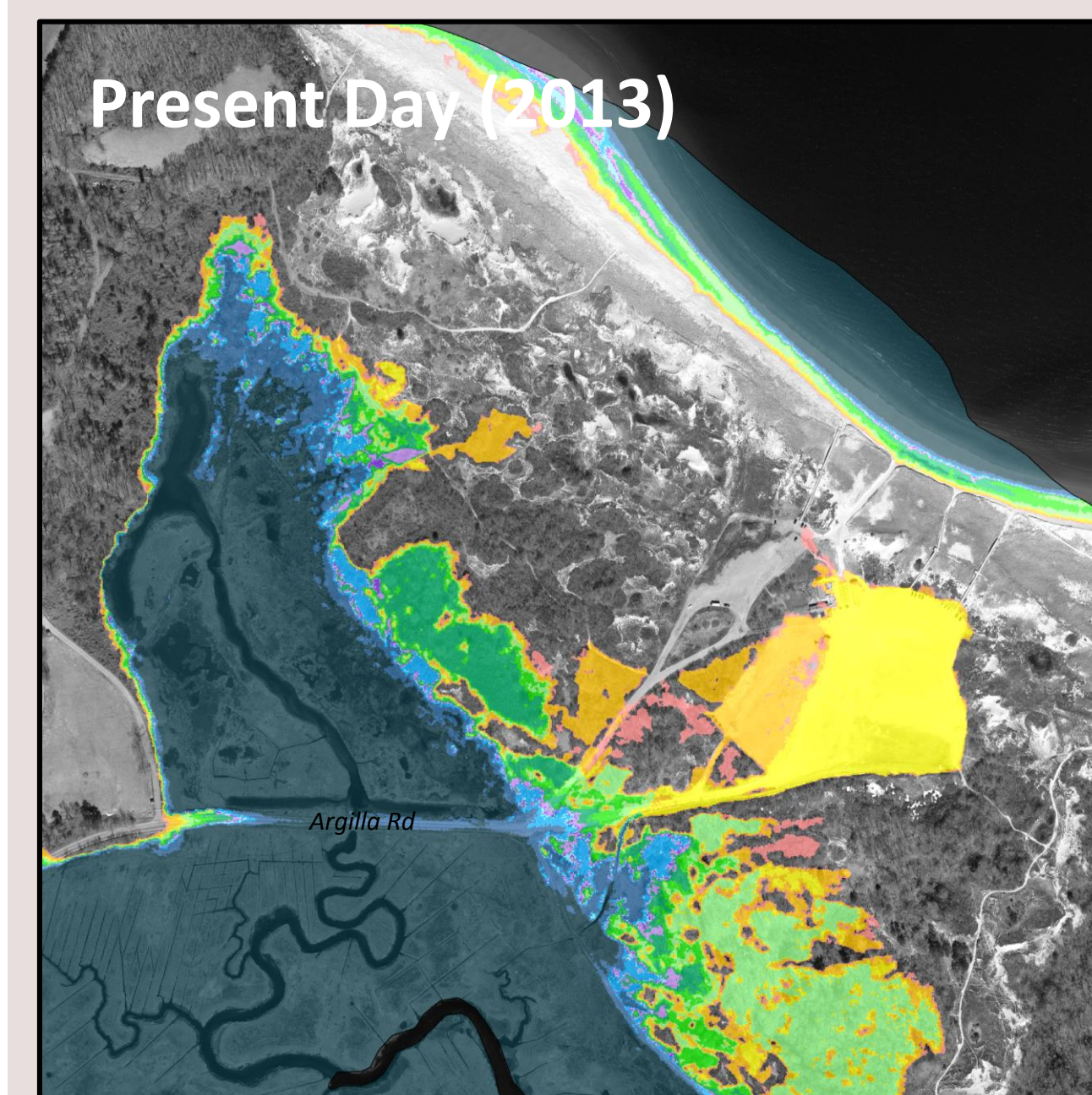
1 Route 1A at Muddy Run



2 Downtown Ipswich



3 Entrance to Crane Beach



Created by the National Wildlife Federation with funding provided by the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management through their Coastal Community Resilience Grant Program.

Literature Cited

Famely, J., K. Bosma and B. Hoffnagle. 2016. *Sea Level Rise and Storm Surge Inundation Mapping – Great Marsh Communities (Essex County, MA)*. Prepared by Woods Hole Group for National Wildlife Federation and U.S. Geological Survey.

Melillo, J.M., T.C. Richmond, and G.W. Yohe, Eds. 2014. *Climate Change Impacts in the United States: The Third National Climate Assessment*. Washington, DC: U.S. Global Change Research Program, 841.

Parris, A., P. Bromirski, V. Burkett, D. Cayan, M. Culver, J. Hall, R. Horton, K. Knuuti, R. Moss, J. Obeysekera, A. Sallenger, and J. Weiss. 2012. *Global Sea Level Rise Scenarios for the United States National Climate Assessment*. NOAA Tech Memo OAR CPO-1. Silver Spring, MD: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 37.