

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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# What's in this chapter?

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## **Project Team**

Organization of the project team and the Steering Committee.

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## **Public Outreach**

An overview of outreach events and a summary of public feedback.

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## **Scenario Planning Exercise**

Results of a planning exercise for high- and low-water scenarios.

# Project Team

Development of the CLEAR Plan was led by a multi-disciplinary team of technical experts in community planning, resiliency, floodplain management, landscape architecture, civil and coastal engineering, and economic development. Their work was guided and overseen by a Steering Committee of representatives from Monroe County, several local municipalities, and regional and community agencies. The Department of State (DOS) and the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) provided additional technical expertise and guidance.

The work of these subject-matter experts was informed by continual public outreach and feedback throughout the project, as explained on the following pages.

### Steering Committee

The Steering Committee guided the overall direction of the project and provided feedback on deliverables to ensure accordance with the community vision and needs. Its members included representatives from:

- Monroe County Department of Planning and Development
- Monroe County Department of Environmental Services
- Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District
- City of Rochester
- Town of Greece
- Town of Hamlin
- Town of Irondequoit
- Town of Webster
- Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC)
- The Nature Conservancy
- Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County
- Sandy Harbor Beach Association
- Charlotte Community Association
- Reel Em In Sportfishing

### Community Engagement

Continual public outreach and feedback was used to inform and support the work of the Project Team (see next page for details).

# Project Team

## State Agencies

The NYS Department of State, Office of Planning, Development, and Community Infrastructure (DOS) was the lead state agency on the project. Additional technical expertise and guidance was provided by DEC, including from the Region 8\* Director, the Region 8 Chief for Western Flood Protection and Dam Safety, and Region 8 engineers and permit administrators.

\* Monroe County is located in NYSDEC's Rochester/Western Finger Lakes Region 8. DEC manages the Braddock Bay Wildlife Management Area (WMA) along the Lake Ontario shoreline as well as several other areas in southern Monroe County.

## Consultants

**Bergmann** was the primary consultant selected by DOS to lead the CLEAR Plan, supported by several sub-consultants with technical expertise in a variety of areas including:

**Camoin Associates**, Economic development/market analysis

**Michael Baker International**, Coastal engineering

**Prudent Engineering**, Civil engineering

**Sue Steel Landscape Architecture, PLCC**, Landscape architecture

**Groundpoint Engineering**, GIS and visualization

## Planning Partners

**New York Sea Grant** was retained as a Lake Ontario expert, provided guidance at Steering Committee meetings, and served as an educational liaison at public workshops.

## Community Engagement

Continual public outreach and feedback was used to inform and support the work of the Project Team (see next page for details).

# Public Outreach

**Community feedback was critical to the development of the CLEAR Plan. Residents' and business owners' experiences with flooding were key to creating an in-depth and on-the-ground understanding of how flooding impacts the community and what needs to be done to mitigate the issue. Community feedback also informed the development of the proposed projects.**

### **Outreach Events**

#### **Steering Committee Meetings**

Steering Committee meetings were held on a monthly basis to allow the Committee to regularly provide feedback on work completed to date and to provide updates on the project status.

#### **Public Workshops**

Public workshops were held at key

milestones during the project including: at the visioning stage, after the risk assessment and needs and opportunities analysis, and during the development of project profiles. At each workshop, participants were able to engage in multiple interactive activities to share their ideas and ask questions directly to the Project Team. (Due to the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic at the time, the public workshops were held virtually.)

#### **Surveys**

At the conclusion of each workshop, a survey was made available on the project website for those who missed the workshop but still wanted to participate in the interactive exercise and have their feedback recorded. An in-person survey was also conducted in partnership with Cornell Cooperative Extension at seven sites throughout Monroe County.

#### **Look-and-Listen Tour**

The Project Team met with local leaders in several municipalities to tour the shoreline and other areas historically impacted by flooding. This exercise helped the Project Team better understand the direct impact of high-water events in CLEAR communities.

#### **Project Website**

Throughout the duration of the CLEAR Initiative, project information, public workshop notices and summaries, and a comment form were available at the project website at:

[www.MonroeCountyCLEAR.com](http://www.MonroeCountyCLEAR.com).

# Engagement Timeline

## Steering Committee Meetings

Monthly meetings to provide project updates to the Steering Committee and get feedback on interim deliverables.

**Public Workshop 1**

Participants learned about the CLEAR Initiative and helped craft the community vision.

**Public Workshop 2**

Participants commented on the results of the risk assessment and identified needs and opportunities.

survey opportunities

**Public Workshop 3**

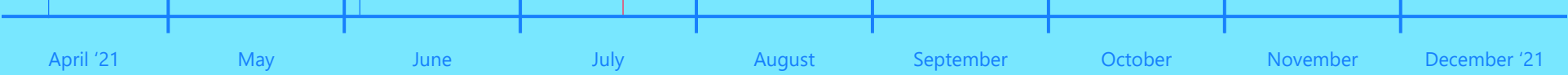
Participants prioritized projects and identified how they wanted their communities to use the CLEAR Plan.

**On-site Public Survey**

Conducted at seven waterfront sites in Monroe County.

## CLEAR Website

Available online any time for community members to learn about and provide comment on the CLEAR Plan.



# What We Heard

I'm hoping the CLEAR Plan can help my community obtain funding for resiliency and mitigation infrastructure projects.

Community planning efforts should be undertaken at regional scales, not municipality by municipality.

Help with costs. And relax ridiculous red tape.

Provide support to residents for relocation, prioritizing low-income people who will need more support.

Elevate, retreat/relocation, and removal with a different option have to be on the table.

Establish a 50-year plan to address and prevent further damage.

We should not be mitigating erosion of beaches, dunes, and bluffs. This is a natural process that provides sand and coarse sediment that maintains shorelines and beaches.

Establish building codes to safeguard land and building and shore areas.

Reserve vulnerable areas as parks/nature preserves.

There are shoreline reaches of Hamlin Beach State Park such as Devil's Nose that are providing a service to the entire shoreline. Hardening of these areas reduces resiliency in other parts of the shoreline.

Design parks and open spaces as if they are meant to be flooded.

Coordinate efforts so one area doesn't impact another area when breakwalls, etc. are installed.

Build another wastewater treatment plant.

We need to think about upstream green infrastructure projects aimed specifically at containing and absorbing storm water runoff before it carries downstream.

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



**140** Direct Engagements

**8** Steering Committee Meetings

**7** Involved Communities

**4** Survey Opportunities

**3** Public Workshops



# Scenario Planning Exercise

Representatives from Monroe County, the Towns of Webster, Irondequoit, and Greece, and the City of Rochester participated in a series of scenario planning exercises with the Project Team. During these exercises, the representatives were asked to imagine how their communities would be impacted by the following potential future scenarios:



## What is scenario planning?

Scenario planning helps communities think about and analyze multiple plausible versions of the future. In the case of the Lake Ontario shoreline, while we can't predict with certainty how water levels will change in the future, we know there are three potential scenarios that could reasonably occur. Considering all three scenarios in decision making makes the policies and projects that result from this planning process more well thought out, more adaptable, more effective, and more likely to be implemented.



### Extreme Fluctuating Scenario

In this scenario, water levels are expected to fluctuate at extreme levels, with highs and lows being either 3-feet higher or lower, in addition to increased storm surges, wave action, drought, and shoreline erosion.



### High Water Scenario

In this scenario, high water levels are expected to increase over time, with 2-foot increases expected every 10 years. This will result in increased storm surges and wave action as well as increased shoreline erosion.



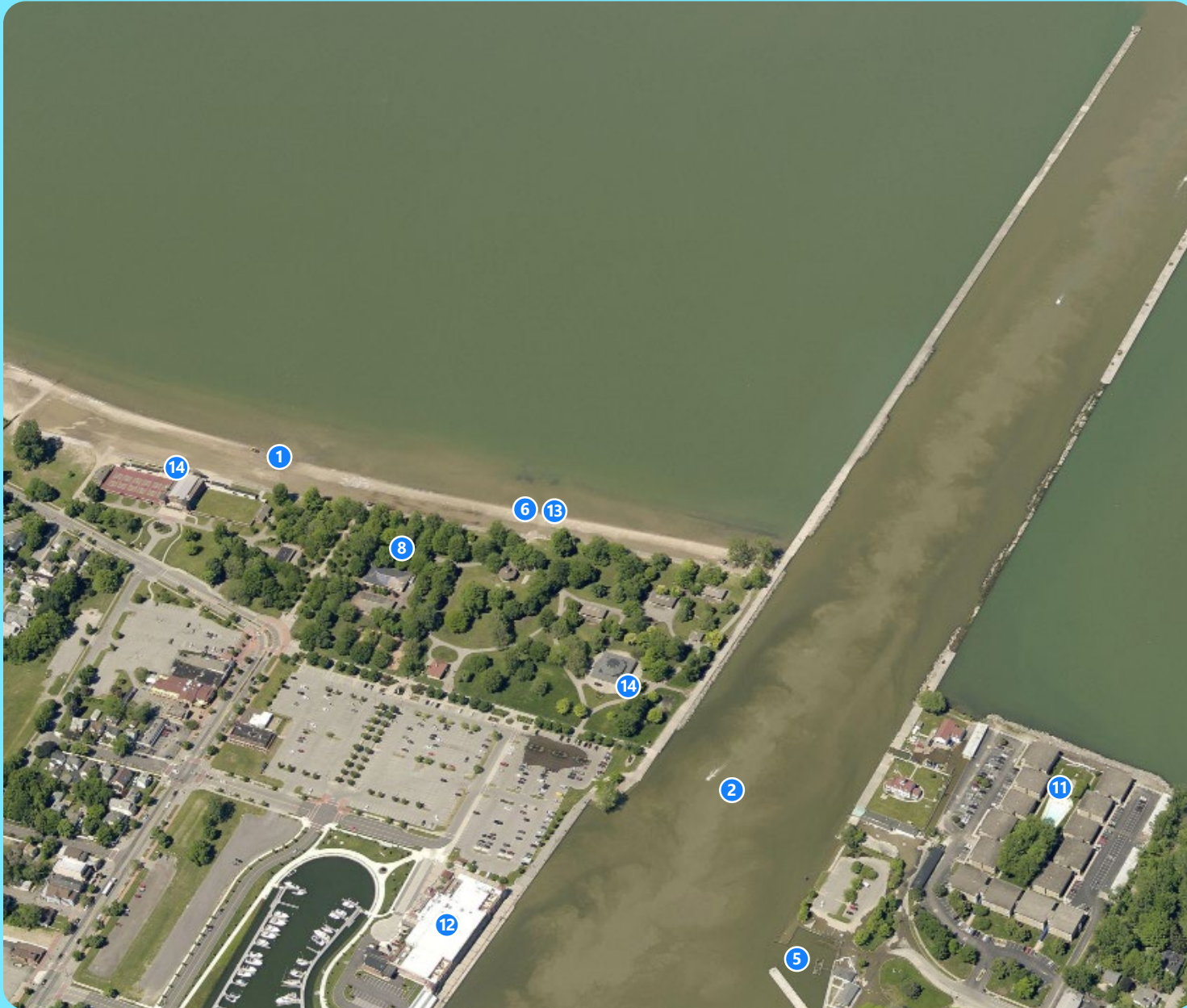
### Low Water Scenario

In this scenario, low water levels are expected to decrease over time, with 2-foot decreases expected every 10 years. This will result in potential drought as well as increased shoreline erosion.



# Extreme Fluctuating Scenario

## Potential Impacts



### 2020

- 1 Limited access to lakefront properties and businesses and to the water and floating facilities
- 2 Impacts on boating (low water requires dredging and limits access for larger boats and cruise liners; high water hides underwater obstructions)
- 3 Need for education to help people understand natural fluctuations and what "controls" lake levels
- 4 Need to implement a long-term planning and preparedness approach

### 2030

- 5 Damage to floating facilities due to increased fluctuations and erosion
- 6 Reduced aesthetic quality of shoreline due to exposed sediments and debris

### 2040

- 7 Shift in perception of "lakefront" property; may require buffer between water and residences
- 8 Consider designing beach and open spaces to be floodable

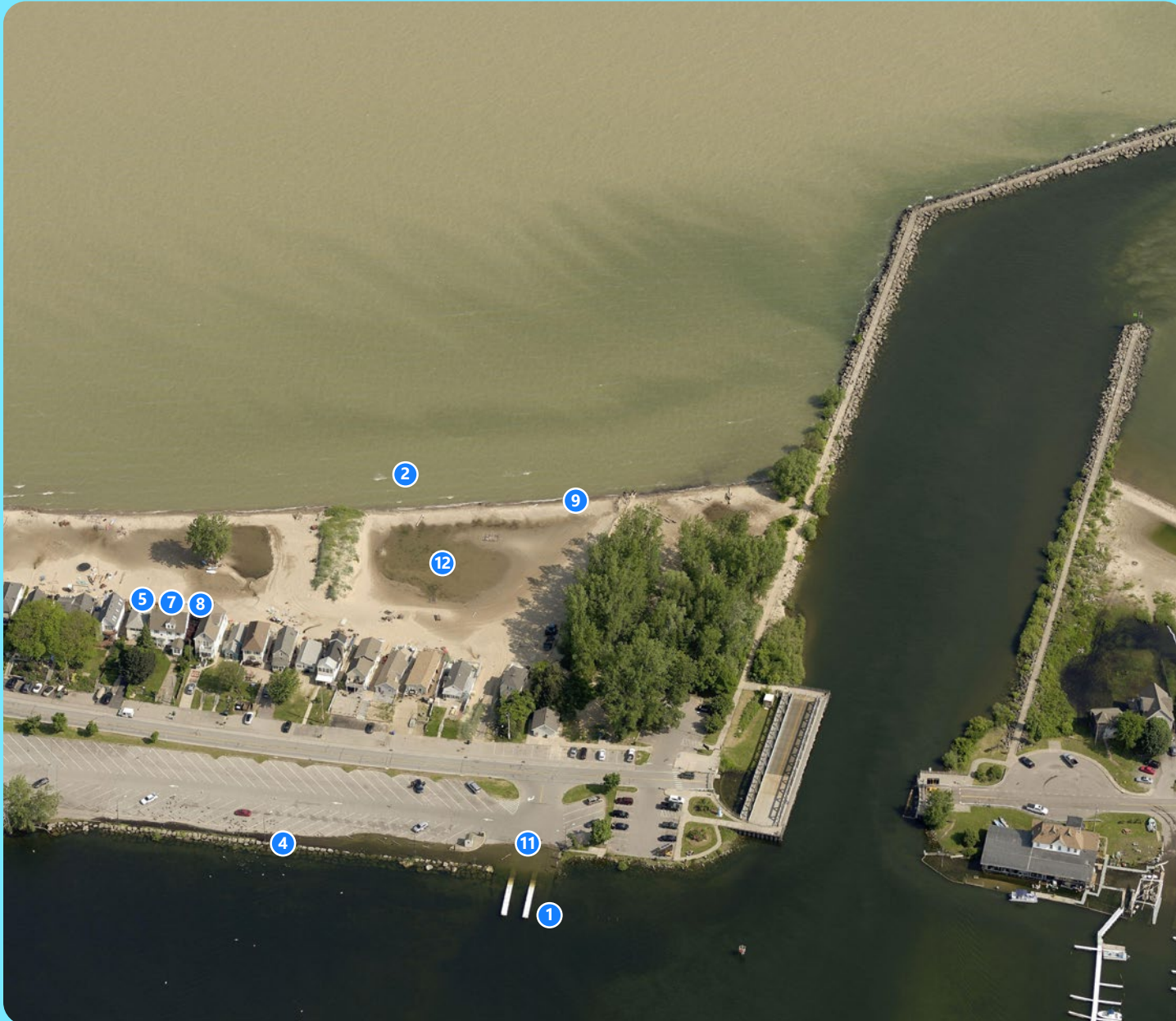
### 2050

- 9 Financial strain on municipalities from increased emergency response costs
- 10 Potential shifts in floodplains and impacts on flood insurance costs
- 11 Depreciation of property values and reduced tax base as lakefront homes become uninhabitable
- 12 Potential reduction in businesses that are interested in developing along the lake and/or near the Port
- 13 Reduced aesthetic quality of shoreline due to need for large and heavy-duty flood protection infrastructure
- 14 Current traffic generators are gone (i.e. carousel, Robach Community Center)



# High Water Scenario

## Potential Impacts



### 2020

- 1 Inability to use docks and launches
- 2 Wave action hitting and damaging homes
- 3 Need to address sewers; sewer backups create public health issues

### 2030

- 4 Raising breakwalls
- 5 Need for stricter regulations to elevate or retrofit homes and to incorporate resilient standards into the State code
- 6 Succession planning for water-dependent businesses (i.e. "mom and pop" shops on the coast)

### 2040

- 7 Relocation of homes and businesses on the coast
- 8 Potential need for buyout program

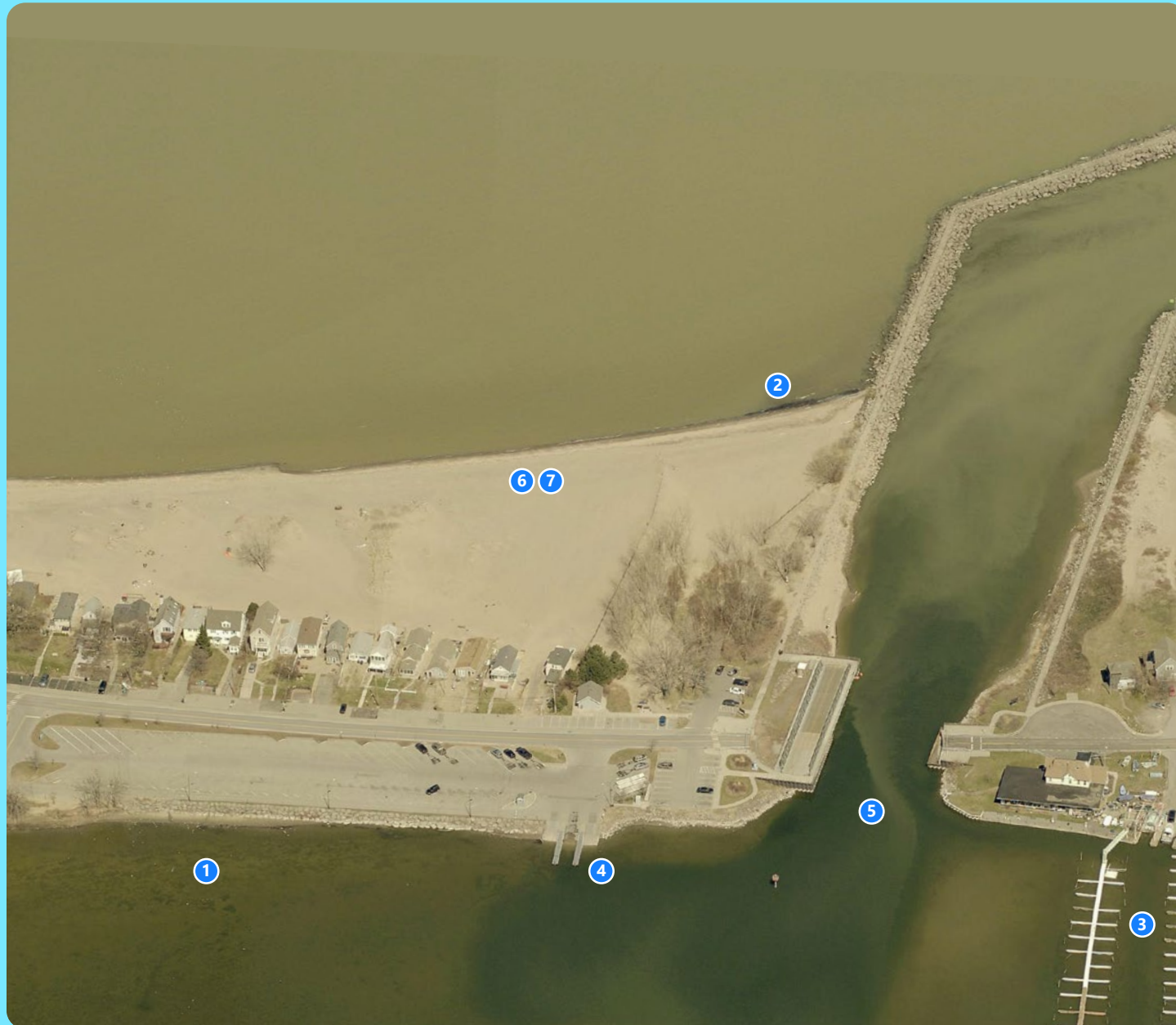
### 2050

- 9 Creation of a "second shoreline" where current lakefront homes become uninhabitable
- 10 Impacts to tax assessments of "new" lakefront properties
- 11 Potential for coastal land to be permanently underwater
- 12 Potential creation of new regulatory wetlands and shifts in coastal erosion hazard areas and floodplains
- 13 Buyout program would result in loss of revenue from property taxes and draw on local resources for maintenance
- 14 Impacts to community networks due to property acquisitions and relocations



# Low Water Scenario

## Potential Impacts



### 2020

- 1 Declining water quality and potential for odors and vegetation growth
- 2 More exposure of the shoreline; coastal trash and debris diminish aesthetic appearance

### 2030

- 3 Potential for loss of economic drivers, like recreational boating and water-based businesses
- 4 Need to reconsider launch and dock design (possibly extending launches or creating floating docks)
- 5 Need for dredging to maintain usability of navigation channels

### 2050

- 6 Potential for formerly underwater land to be reclaimed (and added to the tax base)
- 7 Questions about property ownership for reclaimed land