

As many of you know, FEMA is creating new and updated flood maps for York and Cumberland Counties, which includes Scarborough. So our old paper flood maps will soon be replaced by new digital flood insurance rate maps.

Many properties that were not in a special flood hazard area will find that they now are in a special flood hazard area. Some properties that were in one type of flood hazard area will find that they are now in a different type of flood hazard area, and still others will find that they are in the same type of flood hazard area but now have a different and sometimes higher base flood elevation assigned to that area. We are working to analyze which properties are going to be affected by these types of changes in hope that we can notify them individually. Until that analysis is completed, here's a quick and pretty easy way for individuals to check the status of their property if you have access to a computer and the internet.

First, navigate to www.scarboroughmaine.org, then;

Scroll down to the little box labeled "Web GIS" and click on it, then;

Scroll down to the map labeled "FEMA Maps" and click on it.

The map viewer will load in your browser, and you'll see a statement that explains a little about the viewer and how to use it, which you should carefully read. The text tells you that this viewer has something called a "Swipe" tool, which looks like the icon pictured in the center of the text. The swipe tool allows you to see either the current flood map areas, or the preliminary (or proposed) flood map areas simply by dragging it to the left or right. I'll show you how it works in a little bit. When you're ready to move on just click "OK".

You should now see a map of the town with some colored areas that designate where the various special flood hazard areas are located.

You'll also see in the upper right hand corner of the viewer, a search bar with the words "Owner, Location, MapLot" in it. This allows you to search for your property by name, address, or map and lot number. Just type it in and click the little magnifying glass icon. To illustrate this, let's use a random address, say 15 Morning Street. As I type in the address, a few selections appear from which I can just click the correct one and it takes me directly to a zoomed in view of that address. Note that the map shows you the property dimensions (50'x100'); the street address number (15); and a gray block that overlays the actual house location on the lot.

You'll also see that the lot is shaded in blue; this indicates that the preliminary flood maps have placed this lot in a special flood hazard area. We know this because the preliminary maps are shown in solid color shading while the current effective maps are shown in cross hatched color shading. Note that at about the north property line of 15 Morning Street, you'll see a yellow dashed line. This is referred to as a gutter line and it separates different special flood hazard areas from one another. In this location, you'll see in white outlined characters "AE14" south of the gutter line, and "AE13" north of the gutter line. This means that the preliminary maps place 15 Morning Street in a numbered A zone with a base flood elevation of 14, while 17 Morning street is in a numbered A zone with a base flood elevation of 13. If you want to see how the

current flood mapping map and new preliminary flood mapping are different, click the “swipe” tool icon in the upper right hand corner on the blue ribbon next to the search bar.



You'll see a vertical bar appear with a “handle” in the middle, and that on the right side of the bar, there is some cross hatched color shading indicating the current flood mapping, and to the left of the bar, solid color shading indicating the preliminary flood mapping. If you place your cursor on the handle and left click, you can drag the bar left or right to see how the mapping is changed from current to preliminary. In this case, there was no shading on 15 Morning Street with the current flood maps, meaning that the lot was not in a special flood hazard area at all, but as I drag the swipe tool to the right, I see that the lot will be placed in a special flood hazard area, specifically a numbered A zone with a base flood elevation of 14.

In the upcoming days and weeks, we'll try to do more videos on facebook, and post more information in the town newsletter and on the town website to explain exactly what these designations mean to you the property owner or potential buyer. Until then, this is a really nice and easy to use web GIS tool to help you see the flood map changes up close.