



Ware, after the 1938 New England Hurricane

What is a Floodplain?

A floodplain is low-lying land relative to an adjacent river, stream or water body that, through either experience or calculation, is likely to have elevated water levels during frequent rain events and related water discharge.

Ware first adopted a Floodplain Overlay District in 1981. The purpose of the district is to protect public safety and to minimize damage caused by floods. It is an “overlay” district because it “sits on top of” the zoning districts in Town. All project proposals within the overlay district must comply with regulations for the “underlying” district as well as the “overlay” district. For example, the Highway Commercial (HC) district is an “underlying” district, and proposals for new development must comply with the provisions of that district as well as the requirements of the Floodplain Overlay District.

Need more information?

Please call or stop by the Planning & Community Development Department during normal business hours.

We are here to provide information and to assist you with your permitting process.

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Zoning Bylaws

At a Glance

Section 4.9.1

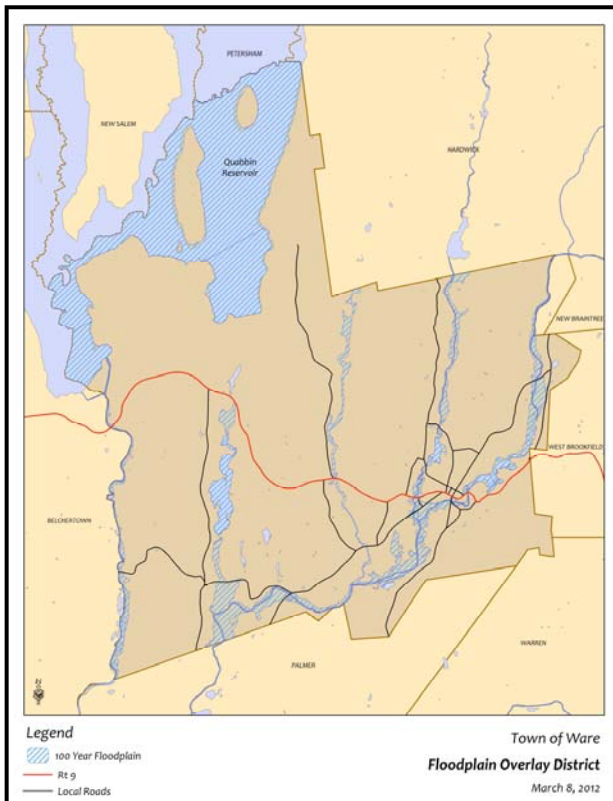
Addressing Floods

Floodplain Overlay District



Who determines the boundary and how?

The boundary was determined many years ago by a number of organizations working together to analyze historical floods such as the 1938 and 1955 floods. Using those studies and factoring in the controls that have since been built upstream, the probable water levels for a typical event at various locations along the river or stream are determined. Such controls include the Barre Falls Dam operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the flood control wall, levees, and dikes along the Ware River maintained by the Town of Ware.



These areas are shown on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) which are published by the National Flood Insurance Program, administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The maps are on line at <https://msc.fema.gov>

There are two different areas shown on the FIRM maps: the 100 year floodplain and the 500 year floodplain. The boundaries of the Ware Floodplain Overlay District are those depicted on the FIRM maps as the 100 year flood zone.

What is a 100 or 500 year flood?

A "100 year flood" means that in any given year there is a 1% chance that such a flood could occur. If it does occur, it does not mean that another flood will not occur again for 100 years. It could happen during the very next rain event! The term "500 year flood" is often used as an attempt to simplify the definition of a flood that statistically has a 0.2% percent chance of occurring in any given year. While unlikely, it is possible to have two 500 year floods within years or months of each other.

Why do we have this district?

This district encourages uses that will not be substantially affected by flooding, and to allow the ground to remain as permeable as possible so that water can be absorbed. This district also discourages constructing buildings or land

At Muddy Brook on West Main Street, near Vernon Street.



features that would raise the land elevation, thereby causing the water to get higher somewhere else downstream (such proposals require a special permit). The least intrusive uses are recreation, agriculture, and other uses that do not alter the land. Parking lots are okay since they allow flood storage, but they are not permeable. If a building is to be built in the floodplain, its primary area of occupancy must be above the 100-year floodplain. This is the reason why the building at 104 West Street (new CVS) was built so high above the ground. Buildings constructed prior to 1981 are exempt; although retrofitting may be required through the State Building Code. Any new construction or major reconstruction after a fire or storm requires a special permit and must meet the requirements of the floodplain district as well as the building code.