

Jerry Brown unveils \$1.5B Oakland waterfront deal

Matthai Kuruvila

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- A rendering of a redevelopment of 65 acres of waterfront property on the Oakland Estuary of San Francisco Bay, near Jack London Square. The project, called Brooklyn Basin, will consist of 3,100 residential units, approximately 200,000 square feet of retail and commercial space, and a marina with up to 200 boat slips. More than 30 acres have been set aside for waterfront parks and open space. Photo: -, Signature Development Group

(04-10) 10:55 PDT Oakland -- Gov. [Jerry Brown](#) on Wednesday

announced a \$1.5 billion investment by a Chinese holding group to transform a 65-acre waterfront property adjacent to Jack London Square into a community with housing, retail, commercial space, parks and restored wetlands. Brown, who made the announcement in Beijing during a trade mission, said the Brooklyn Basin project will break ground in 2014 and create 10,000 jobs, 3,100 housing units, 30 acres of parks and 200,000 square feet of retail and commercial space.

"This massive influx of Chinese investment will put thousands of Californians to work and dramatically improve Oakland's waterfront," Brown, a longtime Oakland resident, said in a statement. "This project is just one example of what's possible when business leaders in two of the world's most dynamic regions connect." Brown said Oakland Mayor [Jean Quan](#) was "instrumental in connecting" the Chinese investors, [Zarsion Holdings](#), with the Oakland developer, [Signature Development Group](#).

"One of the great, unique opportunities of my administration has been to introduce investors from China to the many amazing opportunities for them here in Oakland," said Quan, who is Chinese American. The development was originally conceived a decade ago, when Brown was the city's mayor. But it has struggled to move forward due to lack of financing. Among other things, the site had been considered for a possible baseball stadium as well as a second location for [Lawrence Berkeley Lab](#).

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<http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Jerry-Brown-unveils-1-5B-Oakland-waterfront-deal-4424173.php#ixzz2Q5nLRgNw>

[RISE: Climate Change and Coastal Communities](#)

News Watch

Posted by [Guest Blogger](#) in [Ocean Views](#) on March 29, 2013

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A seabird in San Francisco Bay. Photo: Claire Schoen Media

By Claire Schoen Media

Most of the great cities, the world over, are built along the water. So are many towns, hamlets, and villages. But [sea level rise](#) and [extreme weather](#), both fueled by climate change, threaten to reclaim coastal lands and the communities that are built on them. The destruction of New York's shoreline, in the wake of [Super Storm Sandy](#), has made this all too clear.

The [RISE series](#) looks at this international issue through the lens of a single place: the San Francisco Bay and the 7 million people who live and work in cities that ring its shores. Moving beyond the headlines, RISE asks hard questions — and finds some interesting answers. (See the previous post "[Paddling San Francisco Bay](#).”)

Producer [Claire Schoen](#) has been creating award-winning radio, film, video, and multimedia stories about the environment for over 25 years. Longer versions of the RISE stories are available as audio podcasts at searise.org/podcasts.

Story 1: Beside the Tide

Climate change. We talk about it as this big problem, up ahead of us, in our future. But climate change is already our problem. Record heat waves, record cold snaps, increasing storms, hurricanes, floods – and sea level rise. And this is just the tip of the iceberg. Especially as icebergs continue to melt.

For coastal cities, the impacts can be devastating as roads, airports, sewage treatment plants, and hospitals are inundated. From Miami to Los Angeles, from the Pacific Islands to Bangladesh, how will this change our lives?

Story 2: Hard Choices

Across the globe, rising waters are lapping at our shores. While we must work to slow climate change, which is causing the seas to rise, it is now too late to roll it back altogether. So it is time to start adapting to the impacts that are now inevitable. The Pacific island nation of Tuvalu plans to evacuate its entire population to New Zealand. The Dutch are building higher and higher defenses against the North Sea.

How will other communities adapt to sea level rise and increasingly severe weather?

Story 3: Rooted at the Water's Edge

Sea level rise. We hear about it more and more. It's described as a looming disaster movie – in slow motion. Climate change is causing sea level rise and also creating bigger storms. For cities, towns, villages, and farms along the world's coastlines this may mean a big change: families forced to move off their land, communities broken apart, a way of life erased like footprints on the beach.

Are we willing to face this reality? Steve Mello's family doesn't want to.

Story 4: Mortgaging the Future

When it comes to tackling tough problems, America is known for innovation and ingenuity. But there are some problems staring right at us, that we seem unwilling to face. Like sea level rise. We know the ice caps are melting: the Petermann Glacier in Greenland recently lost a chunk four times the size of Manhattan.

How will Americans handle sea level rise? We don't know, yet. But we must start asking the questions.

Story 5: The Flood Next Time

Even if we were to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to a screeching halt, today, the impact of climate change on coastal communities will be severe; rising water levels, bigger storms, higher tides and waves, all hitting cities built along the water. We need to figure out how to adapt. In many spots around the world projects are underway to protect coastal regions. The tiny hamlet of Alivso has taken on this big task.

See more from the media project [RISE: Climate Change and Coastal Communities](#).

Planning for whole Bay Area: Nothing sinister about it

By Supervisor Jim Spering *TheReporter.Com*

Posted:

TheReporter.com

One of the issues I give great consideration to is what kind of Solano County will we leave for our children and grandchildren? Will they be able to afford to live here? Will they even want to?

Planning is underway to examine housing and transportation needs through 2040 -- a seemingly distant time but one that will arrive quickly. Known as Plan Bay Area, this is an integrated, long-range transportation and land-use/housing plan for the San Francisco Bay Area, including Solano County.

There's nothing revolutionary about Plan Bay Area. It builds on earlier efforts to develop an efficient transportation system and grow in a financially and environmentally responsible way. You would think otherwise, however, if you listen to those claiming the plan is part of a United Nations conspiracy to take our personal liberties and property.

Rather than abetting imaginary global villains, Plan Bay Area simply responds to state law. Senate Bill 375, passed in 2008, requires regions such as the Bay Area to plan for needed housing growth while reducing emissions from cars and light trucks. One of the advantages of this law is that Solano County's elected officials, and not legislators in Sacramento, are at the table making decisions on what's best for our communities.

As an elected member of the Solano County Board of Supervisors, I serve on the board of one of the agencies tasked with developing Plan Bay Area -- the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. MTC, along with the Association of Bay Area Governments, will release a draft plan for public comment later this month.

My job as Solano County's representative is to ensure the plan positions Solano for the best possible future in terms of transportation, housing and economic development. That means keeping all land-use decisions local, preserving what we love about our cities and farmlands, working to unclog our highways and maintain our local streets, and encouraging business development and jobs where it makes sense -- while still making room for future generations.

Solano residents historically have looked forward. Nearly 30 years ago voters passed the Orderly Growth Initiative, and then reaffirmed it in 2008 with more than 75 percent support. This locally grown vision will have far more to do with how our cities and county develop than anything adopted at the regional level.

The Orderly Growth Initiative specifically directs urbanized growth into incorporated cities and limits encroachment on farms and open space. Plan Bay Area concentrates new growth in areas chosen by local governments, with most of it taking place toward the center of our region in large cities like San Francisco, Oakland and San Jose.

To quote Dwight Eisenhower, "Plans are nothing, but planning is everything." As Allied commander in World War II, General Eisenhower knew the importance of planning. As president, his vision gave us an interstate highway system that spurred economic growth and united America. We would do well to follow Eisenhower's lead and work together for a better future.

By setting local and regional priorities now, we can create a Solano County we'll be proud to leave to future generations.

The author, a Suisun City resident, represents District 3 on the Solano County Board of Supervisors.

State flood risk high, coordination low

Michael Cabanatuan

Updated 3:01 am, Wednesday, April 3, 2013

California may be known for its vulnerability to earthquakes and wildfires, but the state also faces the risk of devastating floods, according to a report being released Wednesday by the state Department of Water Resources and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The report blames much of the danger on the state's fragmented efforts at flood management, the lack of stable funding, and an absence of cooperation and focus in attempting to manage and prevent floods. It calls on the state to coordinate, streamline or even consolidate the 1,343 agencies that deal with flood management and to set priorities for future investments.

"The stakes are tremendous," said Terri Wegener, manager for the Department of Water Resources statewide flood management-planning program. "Millions of lives are exposed to flooding and billions of dollars worth of structures."

The report, the most comprehensive statewide study of flooding ever conducted, found that 7.3 million Californians - 19 percent of the state's population - including more than 1 million in the Bay Area, are exposed to significant risk of being affected by floods. Damage to structures and farmland could be as high as \$575 billion statewide with \$130 billion in the Bay Area. More than \$7 billion in crops are endangered by flooding, including \$20 million in the Bay Area.

Santa Clara County is particularly at risk, according to the report, which ranks it second in the state in potential flood losses and third in the number of people exposed to flood danger. Craig Conner, who handles flood risk management for the corps' San Francisco district, said the bay shorelines and the watersheds of Guadalupe and Coyote creeks pose much of the danger. The district runs from the North Coast to the Central Coast.

According to the report, the entire state is at risk of flooding. All 58 California counties have suffered flooding significant enough to warrant state of emergency declarations in the past 20 years, it says, and every county faces future risk from at least one type of flooding.

"There's risk everywhere," said Kim Carsell, a water resource planner for the Army Corps of Engineers.

The study looked at every county and its flood risks, identifying the number of people living in 500-year floodplains, a standard that indicates a 1-in-500 chance of flooding every year, Conner said.

Coastal flooding

Compared with other parts of the state, the Bay Area is at greater risk of coastal flooding. Researchers were well aware of flood risks in the Bay Area, Carsell said, but were surprised that so many people in the region live in floodplains.

The report makes seven recommendations: Conduct regional risk assessments to better understand statewide risks; boost public knowledge of flood risks; increase funding for flood preparedness, response and recovery; promote land-use planning that reduces flood dangers; approach flood management projects with a regional or statewide rather than local focus; increase collaboration among agencies planning and funding flood control; and establish adequate and stable ways of funding flood management.

The report does not recommend how much the state should spend on flood control, though it identifies about \$50 billion in projects either under construction or in various stages of planning and concludes that is not sufficient. But more important, Wegener said, is to coordinate efforts and set priorities.

"We want to be effective and efficient," she said.

Ahead of the curve

Conner said the Bay Area is ahead of many other areas in coordinating planning and funding for flood prevention. He also singled out Santa Clara County as one of only a few counties funding flood control. In November, Santa Clara voters passed Measure B, a \$548 million parcel tax to fund clean water and flood protection efforts.

The report, a draft for public review, will be the subject of a series of statewide public hearings. Elected and appointed officials on all levels will need to act to achieve both short-term goals such as limiting development in floodplains and educating the public on flood risks, and long-term achievements like realigning or consolidating government agencies and developing a sufficient and consistent funding source, the report concludes.

"We need to take action now," said Wegener.

The report

"California's Flood Future" can be viewed at www.water.ca.gov.

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