

BCDC

San Francisco Bay Conservation & Development Commission

San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission Draft Strategic Plan Update

This Draft Strategic Plan Update has been developed by the BCDC Drafting Team (consisting of Todd Hallenbeck, Anniken Lydon, Christine Nutile, Matthew Trujillo, and Larry Goldzband) in coordination with Kearns & West, Senior Staff, and BCDC Commissioners. It incorporates input received from several sources, including: surveys conducted with staff, Commissioners, and the public; two staff workshops and a Commissioner/public workshop; internal staff assessments of 2013-2017 Strategic Plan accomplishments; review sessions with Regulatory and Planning Divisions; and Senior Staff/Commissioner/Drafting Team meetings held on March 21 and April 18. This draft plan includes an introductory section, vision and mission statements, core goals and objectives, proposed actions to accompany each objective, a conclusion, and a bibliography. The proposed actions form the basis for an implementation plan to be developed later this year.

This draft is intended for review by the Commission and the public at the Commission's May 4th meeting. Please send feedback and comments to strategicplan@bcdcc.ca.gov.

Strategies for an Evolving Bay

There may not be a decade in BCDC's history that has required us to more fully examine our strategy and operations than this past decade – other than our first. Simply put, to fulfill our statutory responsibilities we must adapt our operations to the Bay Area's changing natural circumstances. Just as important, it is clear that we must grow to succeed.

Ten years ago, the Commission published its first rising sea level inundation maps. Today, we have better information that indicates it is rising quicker than expected. We and other organizations have conducted groundbreaking research that demonstrates the multiple benefits of healthy wetlands, but rising sea level will put both natural resources and shoreline development in peril.

The Great Recession severely hampered our operations and exacerbated human resources problems, and we continue to feel those effects. And, while the Bay Area's staggering post-recession economic boom and population growth have helped Bay Area residents recognize the Bay's natural benefits, they also test the historic flexibility of our regulatory framework. Moreover, concerns about the Bay Area's ability to govern itself regionally in light of these and

other challenges that must be resolved holistically – such as how housing and transportation challenges can be met in light of climate change – reveal possible impediments to progress on all fronts.

In the 2013 Strategic Plan, we created a strategic approach to making policy decisions that anticipated these and other challenges. Commissioners, staff, and the public worked together through several months of introductions and problem solving to forge a new way for us to prioritize our work. The Plan succeeded on several fronts, including:

- Enabling staff and the Commission to approve a wide variety of large and small development projects – both natural and man-made;
- Driving the implementation of the Adapting to Rising Tides Program with our regional partners and leading the Bay Area’s response to rising sea level;
- Developing our first data-driven enforcement strategy and resolving several longstanding enforcement cases;
- Creatively encouraging the beneficial reuse of dredged sediment in conjunction with a wide variety of partners; and,
- Advocating for an increase in our base funding that has stimulated the hiring of many new, highly qualified staff.

That being said, this Strategic Plan will be implemented differently than our last. For instance, the 2013 Strategic Plan did not include a comprehensive work plan, and it was not referenced systematically throughout its shelf life. Additionally, while its development started a very beneficial continuing process to increase communication and trust among Commissioners and staff members, we now see it as being too general in its direction. Therefore, we are concentrating now on what is new and what is difficult, while at the same time acknowledging what we are already doing well. This Strategic Plan concentrates on three specific issues:

- Continually improving our strategic daily work;
- Leading the Bay Area’s efforts to increase its resilience in the face of rising sea level; and
- Bettering our organizational health and expanding our staff to meet and conquer these challenges head on.

The Commission cannot fulfill its statutory responsibility to lead the Bay Area’s response to rising sea level within our current level of resources and existing technologies. The success of this 2017-2020 Strategic Plan will depend on acquiring additional resources and expanded staff capacity. This requirement is made clear through the adoption of our third goal to improve our organizational health and performance, without which the first two goals cannot be attained.

How to Use this Strategic Plan

This Strategic Plan is intended to actively guide the work of the Commission and its staff; it is not meant to sit on a shelf. It should be used to educate new Commissioners and staff members as part of their on-boarding processes, drive the development and implementation of a detailed work plan, and serve as a guidepost by which to measure progress in achieving the Agency's mission, goals, and objectives during regular Commission and staff meetings.

We shall monitor the implementation of the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan systematically by creating a work plan with achievable actions whose progress can be measured, providing regular updates to the Commission and BCDC staff on its implementation, and convening a Commission Working Group to review our progress.

Overview of Vision, Mission, and Goals

VISION: Be the national model for coastal management.

MISSION: To protect and enhance the San Francisco Bay and to encourage the responsible and productive use of its resources for this and future generations.

GOAL 1: Enhance the unique value of the Bay Area and enable all communities to flourish

GOAL 2: Increase the resilience of the Bay's natural and built communities to rising sea level

GOAL 3: Improve organizational health and performance

GOAL 1: Enhance the unique value of the Bay Area and enable all communities to flourish

Objective 1.1 Encourage and implement Bay habitat restoration

Proposed Actions:

- Encourage restoration programs and projects that align with the [Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals Update and Subtidal Habitat Goals Reports](#).
- Increase staff capacity to use the best available science and understand emerging trends in habitat connectivity among streams, watersheds, and Bay habitats.
- Determine whether, and how, a policy amendment, regulation change, or other approach, may be necessary to develop a more efficient permitting process for restoration projects.
- Standardize monitoring plan requirements for habitat restoration projects by supporting BCDC's Wetland Habitat Assessment Team.
- Track authorized restoration projects to better integrate data and information into lessons learned for future restoration projects.

Objective 1.2 Expand and promote diverse, high quality public access

Proposed Actions:

- Inventory existing public access and identify gap areas in public access and/or public amenities.
- Improve the public access tracking system to evaluate the diversity of access and uses around the Bay.
- Develop a regulatory toolkit to facilitate the use and enjoyment of public access.
- Collaborate with others to develop and disseminate a public access guide.
- Update the [Public Access Design Guidelines](#), [Design Review Board pamphlet](#), and [Engineering Criteria Review Board pamphlet](#).

Objective 1.3 Update key statutes, policies, and regulations

Proposed Actions:

- Determine whether, and how, to amend our statutes, policies, and regulations, with special attention to those identified in this Strategic Plan.
- Prioritize amendments to statutes, policies, and regulations based on recommendations from Commissioners, staff, collaborating agencies, and the public.

- Evaluate the efficacy of current public engagement and improve outreach to non-traditional audiences.

Objective 1.4 Implement a systematic approach to enforcement

Proposed Actions:

- Adopt an enforcement strategy that enables staff to identify, prioritize, and resolve existing violations that have harmed Bay resources and public access.
- Develop and implement a permit compliance system.
- Engage the Enforcement Committee to determine how to continually improve the enforcement program.

GOAL 2: Increase the resilience of the Bay's natural and built communities to rising sea level

Objective 2.1 Use the Adapting to Rising Tides (ART) Bay Area Program to lead the development of a Regional Adaptation Plan (RAP) for rising sea level

Proposed Actions:

- Form a RAP working group with public, private, and NGO organizations to understand regional vulnerabilities and recommend adaptation approaches.
- Host and facilitate public workshops to develop and vet the RAP recommendations.
- Develop a RAP that identifies resilience and adaptation actions that can be taken both locally and regionally.

Objective 2.2 Support local efforts to become more resilient to rising sea level and highlight environmental justice¹ issues across the region

Proposed Actions:

- Engage a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including those from environmental justice communities, during the development of the RAP through ART Bay Area.
- Continue to actively engage environmental justice communities in Commission planning and permitting processes.
- Inventory local climate resilience and assessment projects to help connect projects between and among various jurisdictions.
- Continue training agency staff on environmental justice issues.

Objective 2.3 Better coordinate and integrate rising sea level planning and regulatory functions

Proposed Actions:

- Develop an intra-agency process through which planning and regulatory information, requirements, and decisions are shared internally.
- Ensure that planning staff are assigned to each major permit application and regulatory staff are assigned to each plan, policy, and regulation amendment.
- Make rising sea level data products and practices available to all staff and the public.
- Advocate before the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) on how to best

¹ "Environmental Justice" is the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

integrate the new [California rising sea level guidance](#) into planning and permitting decisions specific to the Bay.

Objective 2.4 Increase the use of sediment as a resource to help the Bay prepare for rising sea level

Proposed Actions:

- Determine whether, and how, a policy amendment, regulation change, or other approach, may be necessary to increase beneficial reuse of sediment in the region.
- Encourage other regulatory agencies, including the Army Corps of Engineers, and others in the dredging and restoration communities, to prioritize the beneficial reuse of sediment in restoration and green infrastructure projects.
- Continue to develop a Bay-wide Regional Sediment Management Plan.

Objective 2.5 Promote adaptive management approaches to address scientific, economic, and social uncertainties inherent in analyzing responses to rising sea level

Proposed Actions:

- Develop a permitting toolkit to clarify how adaptive management plans should be incorporated in proposed projects, including compliance monitoring and enforcement.
- Determine whether, and how, a policy amendment, regulation change, or other approach, may be necessary to ensure the use of adaptive management in appropriate projects.
- Determine how to integrate adaptive management compliance into BCDC's enforcement program.
- Continue to lead the [Financing the Future Working Group](#) to recommend how best to finance local adaptation projects and regionwide efforts.

Objective 2.6 Encourage the development of green infrastructure² where appropriate in the San Francisco Bay and Suisun Marsh

Proposed Actions:

- Support the creation of a planning and regulatory “help desk” function to connect green infrastructure project proponents, the Commission, and the public with technical experts.
- Determine whether, and how, a policy amendment, regulation change, or other approach, may be necessary to address regulatory limitations on green infrastructure shoreline protection projects and include strategies such as monitoring and triggers, to ensure the long term viability of these projects.
- Support the development of guidance for local governments and applicants on the design and implementation of green infrastructure shoreline protection solutions, through BCDC and partner efforts.

Objective 2.7 Develop an education campaign to increase the public's understanding of rising sea level vulnerabilities and resilience strategies

Proposed Actions:

- Develop and implement, with partners, a public information program to inform the public about rising sea level vulnerabilities and resilience strategies.
- Use a broad set of communication tools, such as social media, to inform difficult-to-reach communities.
- Disseminate the best available rising sea level data and information through a web-based portal for the public.

² "Green Infrastructure" or "Living shoreline" is a broad term that encompasses a range of shoreline stabilization techniques along estuarine coasts, bays, sheltered coastlines, and tributaries. A living shoreline has a footprint that is made up mostly of native material. It incorporates vegetation or other living, natural “soft” elements alone or in combination with some type of harder shoreline structure (e.g. oyster reefs or rock sills) for added stability. Living shorelines maintain continuity of the natural land – water interface and reduce erosion while providing habitat value and enhancing coastal resilience.

GOAL 3: Improve organizational health and performance

Objective 3.1 Expand staff in light of BCDC's increasing responsibilities

Proposed Actions:

- Advocate before the CNRA and Department of Finance for sufficient permanent staff to accomplish statutory tasks and this plan's goals and objectives.
- Attract a more diverse applicant pool than traditionally seeks employment at BCDC by using non-traditional channels.
- Continue to pursue grants and contracts from public agencies and private foundations for special projects.
- Move to the Regional Headquarters Building at 375 Beale to efficiently accommodate existing and additional staff, and facilitate interagency collaboration.

Objective 3.2 Retain top talent to increase organizational strength

Proposed Actions:

- Determine what job classifications best reflect necessary positions, reclassify positions as appropriate, and support opportunities for career advancement.
- Advocate with other state agencies, unions, and policy partners that CalHR modernize statutes, regulations, and policies to enable incoming personnel to negotiate higher salaries and establish location-based compensation packages that could include transit subsidies and housing assistance.
- Shift limited-term staff to permanent status and fill vacancies with permanent positions.
- Support flexible work options as much as possible.
- Ensure that all employees receive a timely annual performance review that includes the opportunity to assess their supervisors' management.
- Initiate an employee health and wellness program that promotes a healthier work environment.
- Conduct periodic employee surveys.

Objective 3.3 Integrate recent proven technology to improve workflow efficiency

Proposed Actions:

- Implement a database that integrates the agency's document management system, permit tracking, application processing, and GIS tools.
- Add functions to the BCDC website that enable the public to access a full suite of online services.

- Increase effectiveness of internal GIS tools and data management by improving the types and quality of information collected about each permit.
- Administer an agency-wide electronic document delivery system to reduce paper correspondence.
- Implement online processes for timesheets and other internal administrative forms.
- Institutionalize ongoing document digitization and data management programs.
- Ensure all staff use technology efficiently.

Objective 3.4 Improve information sharing and communication among divisions

Proposed Actions:

- Standardize as many practices and procedures as possible.
- Ensure that each division prioritizes and tracks significant projects, and collaborate to share resources.

Objective 3.5 Continue to build our human resources program

Proposed Actions:

- Develop and implement a new and comprehensive orientation program.
- Ensure that each employee has an up-to-date professional development plan that includes both short-term and long-term goals and incorporates professional development classes.
- Encourage and fund continuing education and training for staff at all levels to develop and refresh technical and interpersonal skills.

Conclusion

The 2017-2020 Strategic Plan reflects the combined efforts of BCDC Commissioners, staff, and public comments. It aims to list the most pressing objectives and actions we need to accomplish within the next few years. Each of the proposed actions listed under the above Goals and Objective holds a specific value and weight in terms of urgency, especially those that pertain to rising sea level challenges to the San Francisco Bay.

While BCDC is the nation's oldest coastal zone management agency (celebrating our 52nd anniversary), our actions and work processes must adapt to the Bay Area's changing circumstances if we are to fulfill our mission in this rapidly evolving region. Adopting this Strategic Plan is a major step toward that end.

The drafting team would like to thank all the staff at BCDC, the Commissioners, and participating members of the public for their extensive contributions and insight they provided throughout the Strategic Plan drafting process. If you have any questions or inquiries pertaining to this Strategic Plan, you may contact BCDC staff at (415) 352-3600 or info@bcdcc.ca.gov.

Online versions of the various laws, plans, and guidelines mentioned in this Strategic Plan can be viewed at the BCDC Library page of our website at: <http://www.bcdcc.ca.gov/publications/>.

Guides, technical reports, and case studies regarding our Adapting to Rising Tides (ART) program are available on the ART Supplies page of the ART website at: <http://www.adaptingtorisingtides.org/howto/art-supplies/>

Appendix A – Bibliography

(listed in order of appearance)

Introduction

BCDC's 2013 Strategic Plan: http://www.bcdc.ca.gov/reports/strategic_status_rpt.pdf

Adapting to Rising Tides: <http://www.adaptingtorisingtides.org/>

Statutes

McAteer-Petris Act: http://www.bcdc.ca.gov/plans/mcateer_petris.html

Suisun Marsh Preservation Act of 1977:

http://www.bcdc.ca.gov/plans/suisun_marsh_preservation_act.html

Regulations

Title 14. Natural Resources; Division 5. San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission:

<https://goo.gl/y1jOIL>

Policies/Plans

San Francisco Bay Plan: <http://www.bcdc.ca.gov/pdf/bayplan/bayplan.pdf>

Suisun Marsh Protection Plan: http://www.bcdc.ca.gov/plans/suisun_marsh.pdf

San Francisco Bay Area Seaport Plan: <http://www.bcdc.ca.gov/seaport/seaport.pdf>

LTMS Management Plan 2001 (Dredging and Disposal Strategy):

http://www.bcdc.ca.gov/LTMS/ltms_mgemnt.html

Goal 1

Public Access Design Guidelines:

http://www.bcdc.ca.gov/planning/reports/ShorelineSpacesPublicAccessDesignGuidelinesForSFBay_Apr2005.pdf

Design Review Board Pamphlet: http://www.bcdc.ca.gov/drb/drb_pamphlet.pdf

Engineering Criteria Review Board Pamphlet: http://www.bcdc.ca.gov/ecrb/ecrb_pamphlet.pdf

Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals Update: <http://baylandsgoals.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Baylands-Complete-Report-2016.pdf>

San Francisco Subtidal Habitat Goals Project: <http://www.sfbaysubtidal.org/report.html>

Goal 2

New California rising sea level guidance: <http://www.opc.ca.gov/climate-change/updating-californias-sea-level-rise-guidance/>

Financing the Future Working Group: <http://www.bcdc.ca.gov/fwg/meetings.html>

Goal 3

California Natural Resources Agency: <http://resources.ca.gov/>

Department of Finance: <http://www.dof.ca.gov/>