

San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

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TO: Engineering Criteria Review Board Members

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SUBJECT: Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan Draft Guidelines
(For Engineering Criteria Review Board consideration October 15, 2024)

Project Summary

Project Representatives

Dana Brechwald, Assistant Planning Director for Climate Adaptation, Jaclyn Perrin-Martinez, Senior Climate Adaptation Planner.

Project Background

Coastal adaptation to rising sea level is a state priority to avoid devastating impacts to people, the economy, and natural habitats. Despite having only one-third of the state's coastline, two-thirds of California's economic losses due to rising sea level are forecast to occur in the nine-county Bay Area, absent adaptation actions. The San Francisco Bay is a state-protected resource that is the largest estuary on the West Coast of the Americas, a key part of the Pacific Flyway for migrating waterfowl, and a critical economic driver of the State's economy.

With the assistance and leadership of BCDC, significant progress has been made in the Bay Area by cities and counties to plan for a changing shoreline and establish shoreline ecosystem restoration and other flood protection projects. Yet many of the adaptation plans and projects already occurring within the Bay Area are disconnected and disjointed. Absent regional collaboration and a shared vision, we risk: disproportionate impacts to less affluent, disadvantaged communities; a patchwork of protective actions with varying levels of protection; inconsistent interpretation and application of the best statewide science; competition, not collaboration, for limited funding; near-term loss of wetlands; and, no way to measure collective progress.

BCDC created and continues to lead Bay Adapt — a collaborative regional planning program to develop a consensus-driven strategy to protect people and the built and natural environments from a rising Bay. The Bay Adapt Joint Platform lays out guiding principles, priority actions, and tasks whose implementation will enable the region to adapt faster, better, and more equitably to a rising Bay.

The Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan (RSAP) is one of the initiatives coming out of Bay Adapt with the aim of implementing multiple tasks in the Joint Platform. The RSAP consists of 1) a One Bay Vision, 2) a set of Strategic Regional Priorities, and 3) guidelines for local governments to follow as they create, submit, and seek approval for Subregional Shoreline Adaptation Plans, along with associated resources, best practices, and data and maps to support implementation. Together, these components establish common standards and values for adaptation planning along the San Francisco Bay shoreline and guide



local jurisdictions in making adaptation decisions that contribute to not only local benefits but also to regional adaptation goals.

The RSAP describes the vision, goals and local guidelines for how the cities and counties surrounding San Francisco Bay can collectively plan for this unprecedented challenge. The guidelines will be used by local jurisdictions for developing Subregional Shoreline Resiliency Plans that effectively address local and regional sea level rise-related flood risks.

Senate Bill (SB) 272: Sea level Rise Planning and Adaptation

Senate Bill (SB) 272 (Laird 2023): Sea level Rise Planning and Adaptation now requires all local governments in the State's coastal zone to address sea level rise (SLR) through Local Coastal Programs or San Francisco Bay Shoreline Resiliency Plans by January 1, 2034. Jurisdictions that complete this requirement will be prioritized for state funding. Vulnerability assessments and adaptation plans will be based on best available science, cover specified priorities, and will get updated on a timeline agreed upon by the local governments and the Coastal Commission or BCDC. The measure also requires the Commission and BCDC to collaborate with the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) and the Sea Level Rise State and Regional Support Collaborative on the establishment of guidelines to assist local governments in this work by December 31, 2024.

Implementing SB 272 in the San Francisco Bay will require a new era of regional and local collaboration to protect and enhance San Francisco Bay for this and future generations from rising sea level. To ensure that people, infrastructure, and habitat are protected, Bay-wide and local plans must work in coordination with one another to provide large-scale regional protection and avoid conflict among jurisdictions. Local plans must embed social equity and environmental justice, prioritize and protect the natural environment, be developed with both local and regional priorities, be action-oriented and implementable, and meet State policy and standards.

The RSAP is BCDC's answer to fulfill SB 272. Staff is on track to complete the guidelines and seek Commission approval by the end of 2024. The current public draft of the RSAP Guidelines incorporates feedback from numerous advisory committees and stakeholder groups. The public draft of the RSAP Guidelines (<https://bcdc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/354/2024/09/Appendix-A-Regional-Shoreline-Adaptation-Plan.pdf>) are out for public comment and the comment period closes October 18, 2024. Following the close of the public comment period, staff will make any necessary revisions to the public draft and circulate a final version, which will go before the Commission for a vote at their December 5, 2024 meeting.

Accompanying the Draft RSAP Guidelines and also out for public comment are proposed revisions to Bay Plan Climate Change Findings and Policies to incorporate the provisions of SB272 (<https://bcdc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/354/2024/09/Appendix-B-C-Detailed-Staff-Analysis-of-Proposed-Revisions-Bay-Plan-Climate-Change-Findings-and-Policies.pdf>).

Lastly, BCDC staff have prepared a set of spatial data layers to assist municipalities in preparing their Subregional Adaptation Plans, and a draft version can be viewed here:

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/5d9dc19692de485aa32bd8b2607dc5e8>

Review by the Board

In June 2024, the Engineering Criteria Review Board (ECRB) reviewed and provided comments on a preliminary internal draft version of the RSAP Guidelines.

With this review, staff are seeking feedback primarily on:

- 3.1.3 Element C: Vulnerability Assessment
- 3.1.4 Element D: Adaptation Strategies and Pathways
- 3.2.1 Minimum Standards: Coastal Flood Hazards and Sea Level Rise Scenarios Standard
- 3.2.4 Minimum Standards: Adaptation Strategy Standards
- 4.1 Data Sources and Analytical Methodology

Board Questions

Staff requests the Board frame its remarks on the proposed planning guidance with regard to professional practice in implementing the proposed requirements and recommendations, the Board's experience in preparing technical documents for local cities and counties, and in consideration of the areas of practice of the Board, including coastal engineering, geotechnical engineering, structural engineering, and engineering geology.

Staff has the following specific questions for the Board's consideration:

1. Is there anything missing from the technical standards or anything that needs additional explanation?
2. Are there any components of the guidelines that are missing or that are too burdensome?
3. Do you think the adaptation strategy standards are leading to the right kinds of projects?
4. What are some of the tradeoffs or challenges you could anticipate in applying the guidelines?
5. What kind of technical assistance would be helpful to ensure the guidelines are most usable to cities and counties?