The San Francisco Bay. Photo by SF Baykeeper, Cole Burchiel, and LightHawk.

The San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC)'s

Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan

Rising sea levels from climate change are already encroaching along our shorelines and will only accelerate in the coming decades.

The impacts of sea level rise – and resources to plan and prepare for them – are unevenly distributed across the nine-county Bay Area. If everyone "goes it alone," we risk maladaptation - catastrophic consequences such as unintentional flooding of our neighbors, leaving behind communities most at risk and with the least resources to adapt, and missing out on opportunities to find shared solutions that benefit both local communities and the region as a whole.

The Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan (RSAP) is a region-wide plan for the San Francisco Bay shoreline that guides the creation of coordinated, locally planned sea level rise adaptation actions that work together to achieve a regional One Bay Vision. This includes BCDC's guidelines for how local governments must meet the requirements of SB 272, a new State mandate that requires all local governments along the shoreline to prepare a Subregional Shoreline Adaptation Plan (Subregional Plan) by 2034. The RSAP includes:

One Bay Vision: A unified vision for the future of shoreline adaptation, promoting a collective approach to tackling sea level rise.

Strategic Regional Priorities: Identifies key areas and actions where local adaptation efforts will contribute to broader regional benefits.

Subregional Plan Guidelines: Provides detailed instructions for local governments to create their Subregional Shoreline Adaptation Plans, ensuring compliance with SB 272.

The RSAP will be updated every five years to incorporate new research, evolving conditions, and ongoing policy developments.

What does the RSAP do?

- Establish a regional vision for successful sea level rise adaptation.
- Align local and regional priorities.
- Reduce flood risk through improved multi-jurisdictional coordination.
- Standardize and simplify adaptation methods and data.
- Drive regionally coordinated project implementation.

Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan

An implementing project of BAY ADAPT

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Palo Alto Baylands Nature Preserve.
Photo by Stanislav Sedov, CC BY 2.0.

SB 272 Requires Local Governments to develop Subregional Shoreline Adaptation Plans

In 2023, Governor Newsom signed SB 272: Sea Level Rise Adaptation and Planning (Laird, 2023), which the Commission supported. The law will ensure that local governments across the California coast and San Francisco Bay plan for adaptation to rising sea levels with the targeted assistance of the State. The law charges BCDC with developing planning guidelines by the end of 2024, to be used by Bay local governments. The guidelines must build on Bay Adapt's Guiding Principles and be developed in coordination with the California Coastal Commission (CCC), the Ocean Protection Council, and the California Sea Level Rise State and Regional Support Collaborative. It also gives the Commission approval authority over the proposed local government plans, which must be submitted to BCDC by January 1, 2034.

The bill also includes an important carrot: projects and strategies contained within plans approved by BCDC or CCC will be prioritized for State funding. BCDC is on track to deliver the guidelines in 2024 through its Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan.

Benefits of SB 272

- Regional Preparation: SB 272 and the RSAP set consistent, region-wide guidelines for sea level rise adaptation, ensuring a unified approach across various jurisdictions.
- Coordination: The RSAP and SB 272 will compel communities to prepare adaptation plans that prioritize disadvantaged communities, science and critical infrastructure – without endangering their neighbors, habitat, or infrastructure.
- Priorities and Funding: The RSAP helps identify where and when to invest in at-risk, low-income communities, natural areas, and critical infrastructure. These priorities can then be linked to state funding for implementation.

Learn more at:

www.Bayadapt.org/regional-shoreline-adaptation-plan/

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Who is BCDC?

The San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission ("BCDC") is a California State regulatory and planning agency in the nine county San Francisco Bay Area with a mission to protect and enhance the resources of the San Francisco Bay and ensure its responsible and productive use for this and future generations. For more information, visit www.bcdc.ca.gov.

What is Bay Adapt?

Bay Adapt: Regional Strategy for a Rising Bay is a BCDC-led initiative that brings together partners across the San Francisco Bay Area to establish regional agreement on the actions necessary to protect people and the natural and built environment from rising sea levels. The Joint Platform was adopted by BCDC in 2021 and has been endorsed by 55 cities and counties, regional, state, and federal agencies, non-profit organizations and more.

www.BayAdapt.org