

How BCDC is changing permitting to accelerate climate adaptation



The San Francisco Bay Area needs to rapidly implement shoreline adaptation and habitat restoration projects to protect the Bay's communities and ecosystems from rising sea levels. We're working to improve BCDC's permitting program to accelerate the pace at which resilient shoreline adaptation projects are reviewed and built.

For additional information: Rylan Gervase, rylan.gervase@bcdC.ca.gov

Why accelerating adaptation is important

\$110 billion

Estimated cost to protect the Bay's shoreline from projected sea level rise and storm surges by 2050.

7

The number of state and federal agencies involved in reviewing and permitting most multi-benefit restoration projects.

5 years

How long the Bay Area has left to meet its regional goal to protect 100,000 acres of healthy tidal marsh.

Building on our progress

BCDC has already taken steps to rethink how we approach permitting.

- ✓ **Flexible policies for a rising Bay.** BCDC's San Francisco Bay Plan has gone through major updates and now includes a science-driven and flexible approach for "getting to yes" on nature-based adaptation projects that are good for the region and the Bay.
- ✓ **A new model for government collaboration.** BCDC and our partners in state and federal government founded the Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team (BRRIT), a nationally recognized model for multi-agency integrated permitting that we can build on.
- ✓ **Roadmap for action.** BCDC invited a year-long external evaluation of our permitting program and identified priority actions we will take to improve permitting outcomes and reduce wait times.

What BCDC will accomplish

We've set out the following goals to improve BCDC's permitting program:

Permitting that's more effective, efficient, and transparent

Cut green tape to speed up project timelines, make the rules of permitting easier to understand, and ensure better outcomes for regional resilience.

Greater capacity to implement the region's resilience vision

Build organizational and staff capacity to resolve complex and challenging proposals, working in close collaboration with other government agencies to achieve regional goals for resilience.

Permitting for a resilient shoreline roadmap

Our action plan to accelerate good permitting outcomes for regional resilience projects.

Roadmap priorities	Steps we're taking
1. Cut green tape Reduce permitting timelines, especially for natural and nature-based adaptation projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Expand the number of projects eligible for expedited reviewStreamline rules to reduce permitting burdens for straightforward projects
2. Implement regional resilience goals Rethink and redesign BCDC's regulatory program around accelerating progress toward the region's resilience vision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide technical support to projects using nature-based solutionsIn implementing the Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan, consider pathways between local sea level rise plans and permittingClose regulatory "gaps" for regional adaptation
3. Communicate in plain language Make plans, regulations, and guidance easier for everyone to understand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Adopt plain language standardsWrite clearer policies and regulationsWrite permit requirements that are easier for permittees to follow and comply with
4. Modernize the application process Utilize new technology and project management techniques to become more effective and efficient.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Move to an online permit application platformCreate a more robust and faster pre-application process to resolve issues earlyUse modern project management methods to improve processing times
5. Coordinate better across agencies Increase the level of interagency coordination on permitting for resilience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Enhance early and ongoing collaboration among agenciesBetter integrate permitting processes across agencies
6. Build a strong and capable workforce Recruit and train a workforce that can meet BCDC's growing role in regional climate adaptation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Build staff expertise and capacity through advanced trainingGrow staffing levels to meet the region's needs

Timeline with selected priority actions

