

Questions and Answers

WEBINAR 2: CREATING SUBREGIONAL PLANS: A LOCAL GOVERNMENT PRIMER

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Jurisdictional Progress

Question: You mentioned three required consultations with BCDC staff. Has BCDC already started to hold these required consultations with jurisdictions, and if so, what have you learned so far about how these will work?

Answer: No jurisdictions have officially initiated yet, so the required consultations have not started. However, we have developed materials and resources in preparation for these initial consultations, including introductory materials to guide the conversation and an intake survey to better understand where each jurisdiction stands in the process. We are encouraging local governments to meet with us early to discuss and ensure alignment with the Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan Guidelines and have held many meetings with local governments who are in the early stages of Plan development. Since these local governments have not formally initiated, we consider these to be “pre-consultation” meetings, and not part of the required consultations. We will cover the consultation process and available resources in more detail during our fourth webinar. There is still a lot to learn once formal consultations begin, but so far we’ve had productive meetings, great questions, and we are preparing for those next steps.

Question: Does BCDC have a central resource to see what coordination has already happened with local governments?

Answer: We will soon have a resource on our website that tracks which jurisdictions have officially initiated a Subregional Plan, when, and where they are in the process. We do not plan to publicly share details about pre-initiation coordination, since those conversations are ongoing and evolving. We can help connect local governments to others who are planning but will do that in more of a one-on-one basis. Once a Plan is officially initiated, that information will be clearly available on our website.

Question: Is BCDC tracking which jurisdictions have received this information? And are you also tracking which jurisdictions plan to do their own Plan versus participating in a multi-jurisdiction Plan?

Answer: Yes, we are actively tracking both. Over the last few months, our team has been working across the region to make sure we're reaching jurisdictions and recording that outreach. One of our goals is to ensure that every city and county subject to SB 272 hears directly from us. In addition to the four webinars, we've been doing direct outreach and holding smaller presentations and meetings with local governments across the Bay Area. We are tracking that outreach, but if you're with a local government and haven't heard from us yet, please reach out. We want to make sure everyone is connected and informed. In terms of tracking who is doing their own Plan vs a multi-jurisdictional plan – yes, we are tracking that information to the best of our ability. We are tracking who we've met with and what we understand about their planning process. Again, we won't share all of that pre-initiation information publicly until the official notice occurs, but we're happy to make connections between jurisdictions when requested. If a local government asks what their neighbors are doing, we can help facilitate those conversations. Once a Subregional Plan is officially initiated, it will be posted on our website with the required notice. That includes information such as which jurisdictions are involved, whether there is a website, and where more details can be found.

Question: For local governments not under BCDC's purview but recommended to submit a Subregional Plan, will they be held to the same standards and requirements as those that are required to complete one?

Answer: Yes, if a local government that is not required under the law chooses to submit a Subregional Plan and wants BCDC to approve it, that Plan would need to meet the same requirements and follow the same process as those that are required. This can be beneficial as projects within BCDC-approved Plans will be prioritized for state funding. Additionally, while we cannot require jurisdictions outside our purview to participate, if they are part of a Subregional Plan that seeks BCDC approval, the full set of Guidelines and Standards apply.

Planning Timeline & Coordination

Question: Is there a deadline for creating Subregional Plans?

Answer: Yes, January 2034.

Question: Will the county be the lead agency in the coordination of municipalities?

Answer: Counties are not required to be the lead agency as long as they prepares a Plan that covers their unincorporated shoreline areas. That's what's required by the law. We have suggested roles for both cities and counties outlined in the RSAP. Many counties are stepping up to lead coordination, often by developing a countywide plan that includes cities. For example, Contra Costa County received funding to develop one such Plan.

Question: What do the asterisks mean next to some local governments on the slide listing jurisdictions required to submit a plan?

Answer: The asterisks indicate jurisdictions that are *not* within BCDC's jurisdiction. These areas are not legally required to submit a Plan under SB 272. However, they are still vulnerable to

short- or long-term flooding and should consider preparing a Plan or partnering with neighboring jurisdictions that are required to do so. While they're not subject to the law, we strongly recommend they engage in the adaptation planning process.

Funding and Resources

Question: Where can we find out who our subregional liaison is for our region?

Answer: That information is available on [our website](#). Subregional liaisons and their emails are listed by county, and there's a quick link to schedule a 30-minute call if you prefer to ask your question live. <https://www.bcdc.ca.gov/local-sea-level-rise-plans/required-jurisdictions-and-their-subregional-liaisons/>

Question: How will funding be allocated?

Answer: BCDC is not a funding agency and does not provide funding directly. However, we are partnering with the Ocean Protection Council's SB 1 Grant Program, which is currently accepting applications on a rolling quarterly basis to support development of Subregional Plans. Several jurisdictions have already received funding through this program. To be eligible, applicants must meet the SB 1 Grant guidelines, which are aligned with the RSAP Guidelines. Coastal Quest is also offering technical assistance to help eligible applicants prepare and submit SB 1 Grant applications. <https://opc.ca.gov/sb-1-funding/>

Question: Is there funding through the SB1 mechanism for all jurisdictions that want to apply? Or is it competitive amongst applicants?

Answer: Yes, funding is available, and the SB 1 Grant program is noncompetitive.

Public Access & Nature-Based Solutions

Question: Has BCDC considered swimmable waterfronts as part of shoreline adaptation or public access strategies, particularly in terms of recreational equity or activating underutilized shoreline areas?

Answer: We do consider a variety of shoreline access and recreation strategies, including beaches, the Bay Trail, and the Water Trail, as ways to support adaptation and expand public access. While swimmable waterfronts are not specifically called out, they could be included in a comprehensive adaptation strategy that combines public access and shoreline protection.

Question: What is Component D in the Adaptation Strategies and Pathways? We talk a lot about nature-based solutions and shorelines, but many of those involve fill, which can be confusing. Is fill allowed in these Plans, and what is BCDC's general take on beneficial use?

Answer: We are glad you noticed our emphasis on prioritizing natural and nature-based adaptation. It is a key focus of the RSAP. Component D outlines Adaptation Strategies and Pathways, which at a minimum must be developed to a conceptual level. While the RSAP

provides high-level guidance, specific projects will still need to comply with BCDC's permitting requirements and Bay Plan policies during implementation. BCDC law and policy do not prohibit fill in the Bay; rather, they aim to manage it carefully. For any fill to be permitted, public benefits must exceed detriments, the fill must be the minimum amount required for the project, harmful environmental effects must be minimized, no suitable upland alternative should exist, and the fill should support water-oriented uses or public access. Shoreline protection projects often require some fill, and BCDC can permit such projects accordingly. Plans should consider how to minimize fill, but it remains something we evaluate on a Plan-by-Plan and project-by-project basis. Adaptation Strategy #13 specifically encourages planners to consider BCDC's fill policy during Plan development. So yes, fill can be part of an RSAP-aligned strategy, especially when it serves habitat or adaptation purposes, but it will still need to undergo project-level review and meet existing policy standards. We are continuing to evolve our approach as we work with local partners on both planning and permitting.

Question: Could you explain more fully what role natural and nature-based solutions play in the Guidelines for Plans? How important is it to BCDC to have an ecologically healthy Bay after adaptation?

Answer: This was a central topic during the development of the RSAP. A future Bay with healthy, diverse, complete, and connected habitats is a key priority for BCDC and for the Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan. Ecosystem health and resilience is one of our eight topic areas and is supported by a full set of visions and strategies. It is also one of our Strategic Regional Priorities. As Dana mentioned in the presentation, local governments with assets identified in the Strategic Regional Priorities must show how they are meeting the associated Standards. This includes assessing local habitats and prioritizing natural and nature-based adaptation wherever feasible. We reference a number of partner resources in the Guidelines, including data from the San Francisco Estuary Institute on habitat mapping and migration opportunities, as well as regional habitat goals identified by the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture. These help guide where and how habitats can be protected or expanded. One of our Adaptation Strategy Standards prioritizes the use of natural and nature-based adaptation in all plans. When hard infrastructure is necessary, we ask jurisdictions to consider how to integrate habitat enhancements into those designs. Our vision is a future Bay where ecological health and human benefits go hand in hand.