

Flooding and Sea Level Rise Interagency Memorandum of Understanding Annual Progress Report, Fiscal Year 2025-2026

Background:

The [Flooding and Sea Level Rise Interagency Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#), executed in July 2024 among eight partner agencies, continues to strengthen coordination on climate adaptation planning, funding, technical assistance, regulatory alignment, and project delivery across the Bay Area. During its second year, the partnership helped advance implementation of SB 272 shoreline adaptation planning requirements, expand regional technical assistance resources, secure significant state and federal funding, improve project permitting coordination, and strengthen collaboration among agencies responsible for addressing flood risk and sea level rise.

Despite a challenging federal environment in fiscal year (FY) 2025-26, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency was able to offer a very generous funding round for water quality improvements and ecosystem restoration allowing SFEP, SCC, and partners to support several key projects. Unfortunately, some partners lost funding for flood management projects that had been previously awarded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and some U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects were frozen.

MOU Partner Agencies:

- Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) / San Francisco Estuary Partnership (SFEP)
- Bay Area Air District (Air District)
- Bay Area Regional Collaborative (BARC)
- California Department of Transportation-District 4 (Caltrans-D4)
- California State Coastal Conservancy (SCC)
- Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)
- San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC)
- San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board)

FY2025-26 Key Accomplishments and FY2026-27 Goals:

The Interagency MOU identifies activities across five focus areas and assigns lead and supporting agencies to advance this work collaboratively. This annual progress report provides a complete summary of all Interagency MOU-related activities undertaken by the partner agencies over FY2025-26. This is followed by priority activities that MOU signatory partners plan for FY2026-27.

Category 1: Planning

A fundamental driver of this category is the creation of large-scale planning efforts that identify climate adaptation pathways leading to project level engineering and design. BCDC successfully released its Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan (RSAP) guidelines in FY25-26. Ideally, all the San Francisco Bay shoreline will be included in these subregional adaptation planning efforts with an eventual pipeline of vetted project designs ready for funding.

- Twelve local jurisdictions formally initiated subregional shoreline adaptation planning efforts to comply with SB 272 requirements and BCDC's Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan, with most receiving state grant funding through the Senate Bill (SB) 1 Adaptation Planning Grant Program from the Ocean Protection Council. Many other jurisdictions have received funding but have not yet formally initiated their plans.
- To assist jurisdictions, BCDC developed an implementation approach focused on timely review of local plans, provision of technical assistance to jurisdictions, and support for regional coordination.
- Building on studies that estimated regional costs for sea level rise and flooding at \$96 billion, BCDC, in partnership with MTC-ABAG, are developing the draft *Bay Adapt Project and Funding Navigator*. Slated for release in fall 2026, this is a living dashboard that tracks the cost of sea level rise adaptation and empowers the San Francisco Bay Area to connect and explore adaptation projects and funding opportunities.
- BCDC added new projects and made further improvements to the Shoreline Adaptation Projects Map (SAPMAP).

FY2026-27 Goals

- Launch the Bay Adapt Project and Funding Navigator tool and conduct outreach (BCDC/MTC-ABAG).

- Scope and begin development of a Regional Sea Level Rise Funding and Investment Strategy (BCDC, SCC, and others).
- Continue to advance Subregional Shoreline Adaptation Plans through initiation, plan development, Commission approval and implementation (BCDC, SFEP, Caltrans, Water Board, SCC).
- Complete a strategic update to the Bay Adapt program and consider recommendations to improve regional governance of sea level rise adaptation (BCDC).

Category 2: Fund Management

Partner agencies continued to secure and leverage state and federal investments needed to address the region's estimated \$96 billion adaptation funding need over the coming decades. However, ongoing federal funding cuts to support coastal resilience, alongside slow release of State Climate Bond funds under Proposition 4, have tempered funding availability for projects.

- A key milestone was the partnership between SCC, BCDC, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to initiate development of the Shoreline Funding Pathways Project, with SCC providing matching funds to support the effort. This project uses information from the Bay Adapt Funding and Project Navigator to identify shoreline adaptation projects and connect them to potential sources of funding.
- SCC also secured \$16 million in USACE funding to support beneficial reuse of dredged sediment in wetland restoration and resilience projects and together celebrated the completion of the Reaches 1-3 levee segments as part of the South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Project, a multi-benefit project which has received over \$60 million from the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority (SFBRA). SFBRA also continues to support the multi-benefit North Richmond Living Levee Project and the SAFER Bay Planning Project to which it has contributed close to \$9 million.
- Another important federal funding source is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), which provides both direct and competitive grant funding to the San Francisco Estuary Partnership, nested within ABAG. SFEP and close partners have been initially selected to receive approximately \$36 million from the USEPA to advance shoreline adaptation, water quality improvements, and multi-objective planning and implementation projects with local partners in Novato, North Richmond, Emeryville Crescent, and Palo Alto.

- SCC distributed USEPA funds to support implementation of the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project, the Regionally Advancing Living Shorelines (RALS) Project, the Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team (BRRIT), and beneficial reuse of dredged sediment for wetland restoration.
- Caltrans continued to engage in collaborative planning and project development with local partners along several transportation corridors, such as the Marin 101 Sea Level Rise Adaptation Study and initiating alignment alternatives with the SAFER Bay project and the Harward-San Mateo Bridge east landing. Caltrans has started engaging in the RSAP subregional shoreline adaptation planning work like the Emeryville Crescent (led by SFEP) to ensure the adaption plans and state right-of-way are also aligned.
- MTC collaborated with many partners on USEPA grants for integrated/resilience-oriented projects for Resilient Highway 37, including for Tolay Creek Bridge Replacement for the excavation and reuse of soils and for Strip Marsh East. MTC also met with the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the SCC to evaluate fit for natural resource funding sources. MTC continues to evaluate tolling for financing, High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) prioritization, and congestion management.
- SCC successfully lobbied for the release of \$70 million in federal disaster funds included in the 2025 American Relief Act to address winter storm damage within the San Francisco Bay Refuge Complex, including repair of levees and berms protecting communities and highways.
- SCC awarded state climate resilience and flood management bond funds for the Bay Farm Island Near-Term Sea Level Rise Adaptation Project in Alameda and for elements of the South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Project.
- SCC, in collaboration with BCDC and NOAA, hosted a regional workshop on funding for sea level rise adaptation. The workshop aimed to: (1) build a shared understanding of funding and financing opportunities, (2) strengthen coordination around four current funding initiatives, and (3) identify opportunities for collaboration
- MTC-ABAG accomplished one of its top federal advocacy priorities for 2026 with the introduction in Congress of the Accelerating Demonstration Approaches for Protecting Transportation Assets Act (ADAPT Act) by North Bay U.S. Representatives John Garamendi and Mike Thompson. If enacted, this would provide as much as

\$10 billion in federal funding over five years for up to 10 grants nationally to advance large-scale demonstration projects that protect critical transportation infrastructure from rising sea levels or other natural hazards.

FY2026-27 Goals

- SCC will fund the Bay Area Council to engage regional funding stakeholders, including Save the Bay, and gauge public opinion about shoreline adaptation needs and their support of revenue measures.
- SCC will continue to apply for and distribute USEPA and other federal funds.
- SCC will continue to make climate resilience and coastal and combined flood management project awards using 2024 California Climate Bond (Prop 4) funds.

Category 3: Technical Assistance (TA)

MOU partners increased support to local jurisdictions through planning assistance, webinars, data and mapping tools, and project development support. Partner efforts are routinely shared at monthly cross-agency coordination meetings to ensure awareness for referrals and offer guidance for improvement. While many of the partners provide some degree of technical assistance, the current state of practice is largely “a la carte”, presenting a challenge for TA seekers to find the appropriate provider for their needs.

- BCDC added to its RSAP Technical Assistance portfolio for jurisdictions by launching a local planning webpage, conducting a three-part webinar series, developing mapping and community engagement support tools, holding one-on-one consultations, and reviewing 20 SB 1 Planning Grants to date.
- After BARC compiled an inventory of technical assistance last year, the Bay Area Climate Adaptation Network (BayCAN) added to it and produced a public-facing online Climate Adaptation TA Library. This is a sortable and filterable table of TA offerings shown as thumbnail descriptions. BayCAN also offers one-on-one consultation with their Climate Librarians to help TA seekers more quickly and reliably find what they are looking for.
- MTC, Caltrans, SCC, SFEP, and the Water Board provided direct support on local and regional planning and implementation efforts such as Resilient 37, Highway 101 in Marin, the Regionally Advancing Living Shorelines Project, and the Emeryville Crescent RSAP, Hayward Shoreline Planning initiatives, including the First Mile Horizontal Levee, the Palo Alto Horizontal Levee and the San Francisco Waterfront Resilience Program respectively.

- SFEP convened partners as part of the *Transforming Shorelines Collaborative*, A nature-based solutions community of practice for the San Francisco Bay. SFEP hosted five Collaborative meetings spanning field visits, case studies and technical deep dives on emerging best practices.
- SCC, in partnership with San Francisco State University, the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, and others collaborated with faculty and deans from seven community colleges around San Francisco Bay to develop a nature-based SLR adaptation curriculum.
- Finally, SFEP released an RFP for consultant assistance to evaluate ABAG's existing Environment and Resilience technical assistance programming, including seismic, wildlife, conservation planning and sea level rise adaptation planning, and develop a cohesive and coordinated strategy for the future.

FY2026-27 Goals

- ABAG/SFEP will initiate the Environment and Resilience TA Program Evaluation and Strategy. After procuring a consultant, priorities will include engagement with key partners about TA needs and identification of initial findings.
- SFEP will continue to deliver regional TA support through the Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) State of Play, a regional engagement tool on nature-based solutions as well as through the Transforming Shorelines Collaborative.

Category 4: Regulatory Alignment

The Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team (BRRIT), comprised of six key state and federal regulatory agencies funded by the SF Bay Restoration Authority and SCC, continued to improve permitting for multi-benefit habitat restoration projects.

- Seven projects were fully permitted, and one project completed construction: Coyote Hills Regional Park - Restoration and Public Access Project. The BRRIT also provided guidance for successful completion of bioassay studies evaluating material from the BART Silicon Valley Phase II Extension for beneficial reuse in the South Bay Salt Ponds.
- BCDC, Caltrans, and the Water Board worked on new regulations, internal guidance, and policies to simplify, enable, and/or better align permitting requirements and regulations with sea level rise adaptation pathways.
- The Water Board reviewed and approved the last three Long-Term Flood Protection Plans for 19 bayfront and oceanfront landfills and eight industrial facilities. The plans evaluate the potential and predicted impacts of climate change, specifically

groundwater rise, sea level rise, and extreme climate events based on the latest state guidance and emerging science. Most landfills and industrial facilities have committed to working collaboratively with cities, neighboring properties, and other applicable permitting agencies with jurisdiction over planning and adaptation projects.

FY2026-27 Goals

- BCDC plans to adopt a Bay Plan Amendment on Beneficial Reuse of Soil Sediment and modernize its programmatic and administrative permit processes to accelerate restoration and smaller projects.

Category 5: Collaborative Decision-Making Structures

The BARC Governing Board did not convene in FY25-26, but there were strategic planning meetings with the BARC Executive Leaders' Management Team from September 2025 through January 2026. MOU partners continue to collaborate across a variety of standing meetings as well as on project- and program-specific issues.

- The monthly Cross-Agency Resilience Working Group meetings continued to be a forum for information sharing, collaboration, and incubation of technical assistance ideas and strategies amongst MOU signatories.
- The BCDC Bay Adapt Implementation Coordinating Group met quarterly, bringing a wide range of partners and collaborators to identify and help solve regional barriers to sea level rise adaptation at scale.

FY2026-27 Goals

- MTC-ABAG staff will continue to host monthly cross-agency working group meetings to proactively identify opportunities for collaboration and alignment.