

San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

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TO: Commissioners and Alternates

FROM: Lawrence J. Goldzband, Executive Director (415-352-3653; larry.goldzband@bcdc.ca.gov)
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SUBJECT: **Staff Recommendation to Enter into a Contract with SPUR to Provide Research and Stakeholder Engagement on San Francisco Bay Rising Sea Level Governance**
(For Commission consideration on August 6, 2026)

Summary

BCDC is examining the state, regional, and local governance barriers to effective, efficient, and funded regional adaptation to rising sea levels in San Francisco Bay through conversations with stakeholders and the Commission's Rising Sea Level Working Group. Staff propose to enter a contract for up to \$99,695 with the San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR), a nonprofit public policy organization with deep expertise in regional governance, public finance, and resilience planning, to support this work. The staff further recommends that the Commission authorize the Executive Director to amend the contract as necessary, so long as the amendment involves only non-substantive, or ministerial, changes.

Staff Report

Background

The Bay Area has made significant progress in planning for rising sea levels, including the Commission's adoption of the [Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan](#) (RSAP) and the requirement under Senate Bill 272 (Laird, 2023) that local governments prepare Subregional Shoreline Adaptation Plans. As the region shifts from planning to implementation, however, success will depend not only on individual plans and projects but on the underlying system of governance—the web of agencies, jurisdictions, agreements, and decision-making processes that determines how the region plans adaptation, implements projects, secures funding, and sets priorities.

That system presents real challenges to timely, coordinated action. In the Bay Area, these include:

- Conflicting priorities and authorities among local, state, and federal agencies and jurisdictions;
- The complexity and scope of adaptation planning;
- Gaps in authorities to incentivize or compel adaptation action;
- Coordination challenges among many independent decision-makers; and
- The lack of clear processes for Bay-wide coordination.



While these issues are closely connected to RSAP implementation and the requirements of SB 272, they extend beyond any single agency or planning process. BCDC has been working with stakeholders and the Rising Sea Level Commissioner Working Group to document the challenges of BCDC's current mandate and, more broadly, explore the barriers that prevent effective, efficient, and funded regional adaptation to sea level rise in San Francisco Bay.

Purpose

Through this contract, SPUR will support BCDC in building a shared understanding among stakeholders of the governance issues that complicate adaptation. SPUR, BCDC staff, Commission, and stakeholders will collaborate to identify potential solutions organized around three pillars: making sea level rise adaptation more effective, more efficient, and better funded. Potential recommended solutions could include policy or organizational changes, voluntary coordination agreements, new funding mechanisms, and new or improved authorities.

SPUR will contribute research on the challenges and draft solutions in preparation for a potential stakeholder or Commissioner workshop on these issues and will serve as co-organizer and facilitator. Key deliverables include two issue papers identifying governance challenges, model case studies, and areas for reform; two small-group pre-workshop stakeholder convenings; co-design and delivery of the workshop itself; and one post-workshop white paper on issues, solutions, workshop outcomes, and next steps.

This contract supports several strategies in BCDC's current Strategic Plan:

- 1.1 Successfully lead the Bay Adapt Program that will result in more aware, collaborative, and stronger frontline communities with access to resources to adapt to rising sea levels.
- 1.2 Develop an equitable and measurable Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan in collaboration with government agencies, frontline communities, and a wide variety of stakeholders.
- 2.1 Determine whether and how BCDC's regulatory and planning authority and jurisdiction should be expanded to foster larger scale adaptation efforts.

Summary of Tasks

The scope of work is organized into six tasks:

- **Task 1: Project Management & Coordination.** SPUR will hold a kick-off meeting with BCDC staff, coordinate activities through biweekly meetings across contract tasks, and provide regular progress reports to BCDC leadership.
- **Task 2: Research & Issue Paper Development.** SPUR will coordinate with BCDC staff to develop issue paper topics, conduct a literature review and expert interviews to identify and evaluate governance case studies, translate findings into takeaways for BCDC and stakeholders, and summarize findings in two issue papers.
- **Task 3: Communications & Messaging.** SPUR will work with BCDC staff to develop a communication strategy and clear, strategic messaging of governance challenges.

- **Task 4: Stakeholder Outreach.** SPUR will develop a stakeholder engagement strategy spanning local governments, regional agencies, state and federal partners, NGOs, community-based organizations, and private sector actors, and conduct targeted outreach leveraging SPUR's network with messaging tailored to policy, technical, community, and funding audiences.
- **Task 5: Workshop Design, Delivery & Facilitation.** SPUR will work with BCDC staff to define workshop objectives and outcomes, develop framing around the three pillars, define key topic areas and breakout structure, develop the facilitation approach and materials, and conduct pre-workshop engagement.
- **Task 6: Post-Workshop Project Wrap-Up.** SPUR will synthesize workshop outputs into key governance gaps and recommended actions, produce a post-workshop white paper with actionable recommendations tied to the three pillars.

Selection Process and SPUR's Qualifications

Staff prepared a Non-Competitive Bid (NCB) justification for this contract in accordance with the Public Contract Code and State Contracting Manual requirements, on the basis that SPUR is uniquely qualified to perform this scope of work. SPUR is a nonprofit public policy organization with longstanding expertise in regional governance, public finance, and climate resilience policy in the San Francisco Bay Area. SPUR has a demonstrated track record of pairing rigorous policy research with convening and facilitation at the Bay Area regional scale. In addition, they maintain a broad network of members and partners across local governments, regional agencies, state and federal partners, NGOs, community-based organizations, and the private sector, which will be engaged and mobilized through this initiative. The NCB was approved by Department of General Services (DGS) on July 01, 2026. The contract period is August 24th, 2026 through October 31, 2027 and is contingent on final approval by DGS.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission authorize its Executive Director to enter into a contract for up to \$99,695, terminating October 31, 2027, with SPUR to provide research, stakeholder engagement, and workshop support for Phase I of BCDC's Rising Sea Level Governance Initiative. Staff further recommends that the Commission authorize the Executive Director to amend the contract as necessary, so long as the amendment involves only non-substantive, or ministerial, changes.