

Photo by Karl Nielson



Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan Community Engagement Planning Tool

Overview

Centering vulnerable communities in your planning process is essential to achieving equitable adaptation outcomes. Subregional shoreline adaptation plans that are co-created with the communities most affected by flooding and sea level rise can promote fairer results and help avoid disproportionate or cascading impacts. Thus, community input is a necessary component of a meaningful and robust planning process. Intentional inclusion of community voices ensures adaptation efforts reflect the lived experiences, needs, and priorities of local residents.

For this reason, the Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan Guidelines require local jurisdictions to perform meaningful community engagement throughout their subregional shoreline adaptation planning process. Community engagement appears in RSAP Elements A-D and is an integral component of the Equity Assessment Standard. This resource centralizes all the RSAP community engagement requirements in one place.

Equitable adaptation planning requires sustained, intentional practices that include socially vulnerable residents and Environmental Justice communities in decision-making, support community capacity for continued participation, and evaluate adaptation projects, programs, policies, and investments for equity impacts.

How to use this guide

Jurisdictions and local planning teams can use this tool as a reference guide to support development of their community engagement plans by consolidating community engagement requirements into a single, easy-to-use document.

Please note that this guide only covers the minimum RSAP requirements for community engagement. Additional RSAP Equity Assessment requirements that fall outside the scope of community engagement are not included in this tool but are required for full RSAP compliance. Planning teams are also encouraged to implement community engagement practices that go beyond the minimum requirements outlined in the RSAP and in this resource.

Community engagement key requirements

Before beginning your planning efforts, make sure to have the right planning team. Element A1-b's Equity Assessment Standard indicates that you should strive to include a representative planning team that matches the diversity of the planning area. Seek to include people from vulnerable groups, such as:

- Tribal representatives
- Diverse linguistic communities
- Unhoused community
- People with disabilities
- LGBTQIAA+ communities
- Youth
- Elders

When to engage

Community engagement must occur throughout the planning process and is required across Elements A-D. Ongoing engagement ensures that diverse voices and lived experiences inform local priorities, and that input from communities historically excluded from planning is meaningfully included. Use the checklist below to confirm you are engaging at each minimum required touchpoint throughout the process.

Outreach should occur at **all** the following stages (minimum) (A4-b):

- Identifying populations, assets, services, sectors, and land uses (B3)
- Identifying community assets and priority areas (C1 and C2)
- Developing local vision and goals aligned with the One Bay Vision (D1)
- Identifying adaptation strategy alternatives (D2)
- Evaluating adaptation alternatives (D3)

Who to engage

While conducting engagement, it is important to ensure you are engaging with the right people and communities. Element A of the RSAP provides specific guidance on who to identify and prioritize for targeted outreach. Use the checklist below as you write your plan to confirm you are engaging the required groups throughout the outreach process.

Community-Based Organization (CBO) Partnerships

A4-b Equity Assessment Standard

- CBOs and community groups are identified and partnered with
- Partnerships support equitable outreach and engagement
- Fiscal or formal partnership arrangements described (if applicable)

Tribal Engagement & Consultation

A1-d Equity Assessment Standard

- Tribes are identified within or connected to the planning area
- Government-to-government consultations are conducted
- Fiscal or formal partnership arrangements described (if applicable)
- Tribal engagement efforts are documented

Prioritization of Vulnerable Communities

A4-b Equity Assessment Standard

- Outreach prioritizes environmental justice and socially vulnerable communities
- Outreach meetings are hosted in vulnerable communities
- Local CBOs are partnered with and provided fiscal support to conduct outreach
- Accommodations are provided to make meetings more accessible to people from vulnerable communities

Affected Parties

Guideline A1-c

- Special districts, including transit and open space
- Asset owners, operators, and managers
- Major landowners, industries, or businesses
- Tribes, both federally recognized and non-federally recognized
- Neighborhoods, communities, and/or community groups or community-based organizations
- Environmental organizations

How to engage

Not all engagement practices are created equal. This section outlines engagement tools that prioritize communities that have been historically underrepresented in planning processes. Reducing barriers to participation helps support sustained, meaningful involvement and enables communities to co-develop the adaptation plan, rather than relying on one-time input. Use the list below to ensure your engagement process supports participation by individuals and communities who may face greater barriers to participation in the public process.

Language Access & Multilingual Engagement

A1-b Equity Assessment Standard

- Provide language services
- Translate key documents
- Provide translation at meetings
- Have multilingual FAQs or outreach materials
- Allocate a budget for language access

Participation Support Provided

A4-b Equity Assessment Standard

- Offer childcare (where appropriate)
- Provide food
- Offer participation stipends or compensation
- Provide accommodations to make meetings more accessible to people from vulnerable communities
- Host outreach meetings in vulnerable and environmental justice communities

How to document engagement

All community engagement conducted must be documented for BCDC review. Though you won't document engagement efforts and outcomes until they have been completed, the list below can be used to ensure that adequate documentation is occurring throughout the engagement process and meets the submittal requirements of the RSAP.



Want feedback?

BCDC is available to review engagement plans and provided feedback as needed throughout the planning process.

Remember that plans must include **summaries of equitable outreach and engagement efforts**, not just descriptions of intent. While conducting your local engagement process, remember to always document and include:

- ✓ Summaries of outreach activities tied to each stage
- ✓ Descriptions of equity-centered outreach methods and supports
- ✓ Descriptions of how community input shapes the identification of priority areas
- ✓ Partnership descriptions and consultation summaries

Key takeaways

Community engagement is required throughout RSAP Elements A–D and is a core part of meeting the Equity Assessment Standard; it must be built into the full planning process, not treated as a one-time step. This community engagement planning tool aims to help you plan for a successful community engagement process that meets RSAP guidelines.

Remember to:

- Start with a diverse planning team that reflects the planning area and documents steps taken to include diverse perspectives from vulnerable groups.
- Conduct engagement throughout the planning process and ensure it happens at the minimum required touchpoints.
- Engage environmental justice and socially vulnerable communities, partner with community-based organizations, and conduct Tribal engagement and government-to-government consultation.
- Reduce access barriers by providing participation support. This can look like, childcare, food, stipends, and language access (translation/interpretation and budget).
- Prioritize projects and engagement that benefit vulnerable communities and build capacity.
- Clearly document every step taken throughout the engagement process with the respective required narratives by RSAP Element and the Equity Assessment Standard.

Equity Assessment Standard Documentation Requirements by Element

Element A

- Description of what efforts were taken to include **diverse perspectives** on the project planning team. (A1-b)
- Description of how **language services** were included in the planning effort. (A1-b)
- Description of how the **engagement** process includes people from **vulnerable communities**. (A4-b)
- Description of efforts to engage **communities and Tribes** in partnerships. (A4-b)

Element B (informed by community engagement)

- Description of known relationships of **communities and ecosystems** and values towards natural and nature-based adaptation. (B2-c)
- Description of what **community assets and services** were identified by communities. (B3-a)
- Description of how **land uses** may have contributed to **displacement risk**. (B3-b)
- Description of if and how vulnerable communities have specific **service dependencies**. (B3-c)
- Description of the state of connection to and **safety of public access**. (B3-d)
- Description of known challenges of transportation **mobility and affordability**. (B3-e)
- Description of the status of contamination in communities in **known and unknown sites**. (B3-f)
- Description of if and how funding was included for **community and tribal partnerships** in project budgets. (B3-g)

Element C & D

- Description of how **communities provided input** to shape the identification of **priority areas**. (C2-a)
- Description of how the **vision** takes into consideration and elevates **vulnerable community needs**. (D1-a)