



Town of San Anselmo

525 San Anselmo Avenue
San Anselmo, CA 94960

Staff Report

TO: Town Council

Meeting of 1/11/2022

FROM:

Elise Semonian, Planning Director

SUBJECT:

Resolution in Support of Bay Adapt: Regional Strategy for a Rising Bay

RECOMMENDATION

That the Town Council adopt a Resolution in Support of Bay Adapt: Regional Strategy for a Rising Bay, Attachment 1

BACKGROUND

For the last two years, the Bay Area Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) has led Bay Adapt: Regional Strategy for a Rising Bay - a voluntary, diverse, and collaborative regional initiative to develop a consensus-driven strategy to protect people and the built and natural environments from a rising Bay. The Bay Adapt Joint Platform (see Attachment 2) lays out nine priority actions and 21 tasks that will enable the region to adapt faster, better, and more equitably to a rising Bay. Hundreds of local and regional leaders, community members, and technical experts were instrumental in shaping the Joint Platform.

The Climate Action Commission considered Bay Adapt Regional Strategy for a Rising Bay at their December 2021 meeting and recommended that the Town Council support the strategy.

DISCUSSION

Coastal adaptation to rising sea level is a state priority to avoid devastating impacts to people, the economy, and natural habitats. Despite having only one-third of the state's coastline, two-thirds of California's economic losses due to rising sea level are forecast to occur in the nine-county Bay Area, absent adaptation actions. The San Francisco Bay is a state-protected resource that is the largest estuary on the West Coast of North and South America, a key part of the Pacific Flyway for migrating waterfowl, and a critical economic driver of the State's economy.

BCDC is a pioneer in the realm of sea level rise planning, both within the Bay Area and nationally. BCDC considered sea level rise in its coastal planning efforts as early as 1982. Over the past decade, the Commission's rising sea level emphasis has expanded from being primarily regulatory in nature to also leading and collaborating with diverse stakeholders to provide more direct adaptation services to communities, local governments, and the region.

With the assistance and influence of BCDC, significant progress has been made in the Bay Area by cities and

counties to plan for a changing shoreline and establish shoreline ecosystem restoration and other flood protection projects. Yet many of the adaptation plans and projects already occurring within the Bay Area are disconnected and disjointed. Absent regional collaboration and a shared vision, we risk: disproportionate impacts to less affluent, disadvantaged communities; a patchwork of protective actions with varying levels of protection; inconsistent interpretation and application of the best statewide science; competition, not collaboration, for limited funding; near-term loss of wetlands; and, no way to measure collective progress.

To protect people, property, and habitat and prevent this “tragedy of the commons,” BCDC created and has dedicated the last two years to leading Bay Adapt - a voluntary, diverse, and collaborative regional initiative to develop a consensus-driven strategy to protect people and the built and natural environments from a rising Bay. The Bay Adapt Joint Platform (see Attachment 2) lays out guiding principles, nine priority actions, and 21 tasks whose implementation will enable the region to adapt faster, better, and more equitably to a rising Bay. Together, fulfilling the Joint Platform will:

- Reduce flood risks for communities, businesses, infrastructure, and habitats.
- Protect natural areas and wildlife.
- Integrate adaptation into community-focused local plans.
- Recognize and equitably support low-income communities.
- Accelerate permitting and project construction.
- Increase technical assistance for local governments.
- Develop and implement a funding strategy to help pay for what is necessary.

ANALYSIS

BCDC is requesting that cities and counties endorse the joint platform principles and strategies to help BCDC advocate for regional implementation. The platform does not bind the Town to any specific actions, but lays out a regional approach, based on collaboration between local communities and regional actors, that can help bring consistent approaches, and consistent sources of scientific information to address sea level rise. Additionally, the joint regional strategy is intended to position the Bay Area to obtain funding for adaptation measures.

While the Town of San Anselmo will not be directly impacted by sea level rise, Sea Level Rise could impact the San Anselmo and its economy with disruption of transportation of goods and services to the Town and to places of employment, increased demand for housing and increased housing prices as residents retreat from coastal areas, and increased demand on infrastructure networks.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with adopting the resolution.

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY

The Town General Plan Conservation Element was drafted in 1975 and revised in 1984 and does not address Sea Level Rise. The platform is consistent with programs and polies in the General Plan, including to preservation of affordable housing.

CEQA AND CLIMATE ACTION PLAN CONSISTENCY

The support of the joint platform would not be considered a project subject to review under the California Environmental Policy Act.

CONCLUSION

Adopt resolution supporting Bay Adapt Regional Strategy and Joint Implementation Framework.