

# San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

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**TO:** Commissioners and Alternates

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**SUBJECT: Commissioner briefing on summary and outcomes of Commission Rising Sea Level Workshops 7, 8 and 9**  
(For Commission briefing on July 20, 2017)

## Summary

Over the last year and a half, the Commission has been holding a series of public workshops, providing an opportunity to work with others in the region to develop an action plan to address current and future flooding and build regional resilience. The first four workshops focused on identifying the adaptation issues and actions that participants and the Commission thought should be prioritized by BCDC. The Commission voted on revised adaptation actions and a set of principles during the fifth public workshop. The eight adaptation actions and the principles that the Commission will follow when implementing the actions can be found here: <http://www.bcdc.ca.gov/cm/2017/SLR-Policy-Recommendations.html>.

The focus of the Rising Sea Level Workshops 7, 8 and 9 were the Commission's laws, policies and regulations. These workshops were designed to determine how to implement Adaptation Action 5: Change existing laws, policies and regulations to more fully consider the local and regional impacts of rising sea levels in permitting and decision-making processes as needed. During these three workshops, participants identified the priority actions and issues to advance first. The adaptation actions and issues are described in more detail below.

## Staff Report

**Background.** BCDC staff has been leading a Commission Workshop Series on rising sea level for the last 18 months. The first four workshops were designed to identify the adaptation actions and issues that the Commission should prioritize and to share some of the projects, programs and work that BCDC's Adapting to Rising Tides Program and others had been engaged

in to increase resilience of the region's shorelines and communities. The Commission voted on adaptation actions and issues to prioritize and principles to follow when implementing adaptation actions in the fourth and fifth workshops. The Commission selected the following principles to follow and adaptation actions to pursue:

**When implementing the following recommendations, the Commission and its staff will adhere to the following principles:**

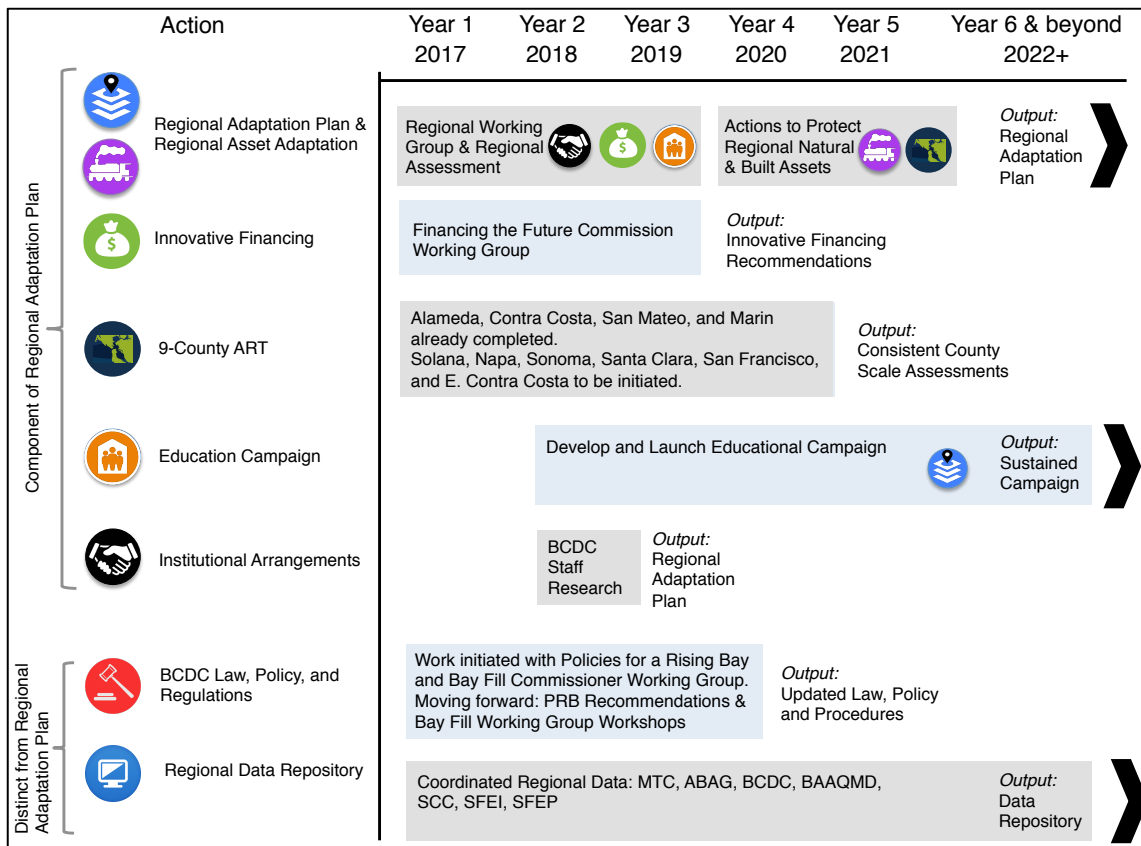
- Regional and local economic vitality relies on a strong and functioning network of regional assets.
- All community members need safe and healthy housing, access within their communities to jobs and reliable goods and services. The region should pay particular attention to these issues in disadvantaged communities.
- Healthy and vibrant ecological systems are necessary to maintain the quality of life for natural and human communities. Therefore, the preservation and restoration of these systems must be a priority.
- Understanding and addressing current governance challenges is critical to improve the region's climate resilience and strengthen other aspects of sustainability including economy, equity and the environment.
- The path to climate protection includes reducing emissions and transitioning to alternative forms of transport and energy.

**Commission Adaptation Actions:**

1. Create a regional sea level rise adaptation plan that serves as a framework for implementing future actions, while allowing for immediate early actions to be developed in advance of the plan;
2. Complete multi-sector, county-scale sea level rise vulnerability assessments for all nine counties using the Adapting to Rising Tides Program;
3. Explore new institutional arrangements to address the impacts of climate change in a way that promotes a shared regional perspective and increases collaboration;
4. Identify regionally significant natural and built assets and vulnerable communities and develop approaches to minimize and mitigate damage from flooding in ways that adapt to changing natural circumstances such as rising sea levels;
5. Change existing laws, policies and regulations to more fully consider the local and regional impacts of rising sea levels in permitting and decision-making processes as needed;
6. Work with others to develop a regional educational campaign to increase awareness of rising sea level and how the Bay Area can adapt successfully to its challenges;

7. Assist efforts to define, identify, and fund one or more regional data repositories to collect and share data in ways that best inform rising sea levels strategies and actions; and
8. Develop a new Commissioner Working Group on innovative financing called Financing the Future, which would consist of Commissioners, Alternates, and external stakeholders.

In addition to the principles and the adaptation actions, staff also presented a timeline for completing the adaptation actions:



The sixth workshop highlighted the projects and efforts that have been completed or that are in progress around the region, including the Adapting to Rising Tides Program Contra Costa County and Alameda County projects, Marin County’s C-SMART and BayWAVE projects and San Mateo County’s Sea Change project. Participants in the sixth workshop were able to learn more about these projects at a poster session and hear about key findings, challenges and opportunities from a panel of those leading these projects. BCDC staff explained how these efforts will be used to complete the first and second of the Commission’s adaptation actions, the regional adaptation plan/framework and county-scale vulnerability assessments.

The seventh, eighth and ninth workshops were designed to summarize several Commission projects and efforts, the Bay Fill Policies Commission Working Group: <http://www.bcdc.ca.gov/bayfill/bayFillmtg.php> and the Policies for a Rising Bay project: <http://www.bcdc.ca.gov/prb.html> and to prioritize the actions the Commission should take to implement Adaptation Action 5: Change existing laws, policies and regulations to more fully consider the local and regional impacts of rising sea levels in permitting and decision-making processes as needed. The participants in these workshops helped staff and the Commission identify eight issues to prioritize. These issues included:

1. Fill for Habitat Projects;
2. Green Infrastructure for Flood Protection;
3. Beneficial Use of Sediment;
4. Fill as Protection from Flooding (Tide gates, levees and seawalls);
5. Adaptive Management;
6. Mitigation in the Face of Rising Tides;
7. Social Equity and Environmental Justice; and
8. Regional Planning.

Through further refinement by staff and input from the workshop participants, including Commissioners, the issues and actions were narrowed and made more specific. At the ninth workshop, participants identified the following specific actions for the Commission and BCDC staff to pursue over the next three years as part of implementing Adaptation Action 5. These actions include:

1. Amend the *San Francisco Bay Plan* to include social equity and environmental justice;
2. Amend the *San Francisco Bay Plan* to address adaptation to sea level rise in habitat projects;
3. Pursue legislation to have social equity and environmental justice incorporated into the McAteer-Petris Act or into BCDC's laws through some other legislative action;
4. Develop guidance for local government to assist with adaptation planning;
5. Develop guidance for long-term sustainability for habitat projects; and
6. Conduct an economic analysis of ocean disposal versus beneficial reuse.

Over the next few months the staff will bring these actions forward for Commission consideration and refinement. At the July 20<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Commission will hear presentations on three of the six actions above, including two brief descriptive notices for the *San Francisco Bay Plan* amendments and a Commission briefing on legislation regarding social equity and environmental justice.

For more information on the Commission Workshop Series and the presentations, summaries, and material from each workshop: <http://www.bcdc.ca.gov/workshops.html>.

**Next Steps**

Staff will bring the prioritized actions for Adaptation Action 5 to the Commission for initiation. The other priority actions from the seventh, eighth and ninth workshops, such as mitigation, adaptive management and flood protection will be implemented as we complete actions above. Additionally, staff will regularly brief the Commission on the progress, findings and outcomes for the other eight actions.