San Francisco Planning

49 South Van Ness Avenue, Suite 1400
San Francisco, CA 94103
628.652.7600
www.sfplanning.org

MEMO TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

HEARING DATE: JULY 23, 2026

Record No.: 2025-004469CWP-02
Staff Contact: Danielle Ngo – (628) 652-7591
Danielle.Ngo@sfgov.org

RECOMMENDATION: **Adopt resolution to prepare shoreline adaptation plan**

Grant Award

California State Senate Bill (SB) 272 (2023) requires local governments within the jurisdiction of the California Coastal Commission (CCC) and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) to prepare a shoreline adaptation plan by January 2034. To comply with SB 272, the Planning Department was awarded three separate grants to prepare a shoreline adaptation plan for the City and County of San Francisco. Two of the grants were reviewed with the Commission last year.[1] This staff report and resolution pertains to a grant from the California Ocean Protection Council (OPC) to support development of the shoreline adaptation plan along the City's ocean side, complying with CCC's Sea Level Rise Policy Guidance. **Adoption of the attached resolution by the Planning Commission is required by OPC to secure the $664,000 grant award.**

Project Description

The San Francisco Shoreline Adaptation Plan ("Shoreline Plan") will guide how the City prepares the coastline for sea level rise and related challenges, such as flooding. The Shoreline Plan is a two-year planning effort to develop a coordinated, science-based, and community-driven road map.

Sea levels are rising, and San Francisco needs a proactive, comprehensive approach to protect its shoreline. Many residents have already experienced flooding during high tides and storms such as in their basements and along city streets. As recently as January 2026, high tides drenched roadways along the Embarcadero, which affected travel and access to this important corridor. Without coordinated action, approximately 10% of the City—including neighborhoods, parks, and critical infrastructure—could face frequent flooding in coming years.

The Shoreline Plan will incorporate adaptation plans that have been already prepared and fill in gaps where adaptation has yet to be completed. With this comprehensive planning approach, the Shoreline Plan will

[1] The $1,500,000 grant from OPC was presented to the Commission on March 27, 2025. The $628,000 grant from CCC was presented to the Commission on July 27, 2025. With this OPC award of $664,000, the grant awards total $1,292,000.

help ensure that the City's waterfront remains safe, accessible, and thriving for generations to come. This work will be initiated by staff in late 2026.

Adaptation Planning

San Francisco has conducted numerous citywide and area-specific efforts for sea level rise over the past decade. This includes the Sea Level Rise Vulnerability and Consequences Assessment (2020), the Yosemite Slough Neighborhood Adaptation Strategy (2026), the San Francisco Waterfront Coastal Flood Study (ongoing), and numerous development agreements along the waterfront.[2] Both CCC and BCDC encourage incorporating relevant and recent efforts by reference to minimize the work that needs to be redone by local jurisdictions.

The Shoreline Plan will conduct analyses where sea level rise work has yet to be done; identify locations where current work will need to be updated to meet state requirements; incorporate projects that have conducted extensive adaptation planning work by reference (e.g., Waterfront Resilience Program [Port], Shoreline Protection Plan [SFO]); and knit all these components together in a coherent citywide plan to comply with SB 272. The Shoreline Plan will also focus outreach efforts to communities and neighborhoods that have not yet been engaged in adaptation planning.

With varying levels of completeness in the City's sea level rise planning, SF Planning will lead an effort to prepare a Shoreline Plan that:

- Identifies areas of vulnerability for sea level rise and coastal flood hazards;
- Analyzes exposure levels and potential consequences from inaction;
- Develops and evaluates adaptation strategies to reduce flood risk;
- Prepares a land use and policy plan, implementation plan, and funding strategy; and,
- Collects and includes public and stakeholder feedback into the planning process.

Beyond the Shoreline Plan, the management and implementation of coastal adaptation is the responsibility of the City agencies who have jurisdiction as owners and managers of shoreline areas and assets.

Plan Area

The Shoreline Plan's study area encompasses the City's shoreline, from the Pacific Ocean to the San Francisco Bay. In addition to mainland San Francisco, it will include Treasure Island, Yerba Buena Island (except the southern portion of federal land managed by the U.S. Coast Guard), and the land owned and managed by the City and County for the San Francisco International Airport (part of the unincorporated shoreline of San Mateo County). The exact extent of the plan area will be guided by the City's Sea Level Rise

[2] Released in 2016, the City's Sea Level Rise Action Plan defines an overarching vision and set of objectives for future sea level rise and coastal flooding planning and mitigation in San Francisco. It was followed in 2020 by the Sea Level Rise Vulnerability and Consequences Assessment, which established the Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Zone (66 inches of sea level rise plus 42 inches of tidal and storm surge, an upper-range scenario for end of century). In specific areas of San Francisco, numerous City agencies have led efforts that have focused on and incorporated coastal resilience, such as: Islais Creek Southeast Mobility and Adaptation Strategy, Ocean Beach Climate Change Adaptation Project, and Treasure Island / Yerba Buena Island Development Project. There are other relevant and recent efforts that can be incorporated into the Shoreline Plan as well.

Vulnerability Zone (2020),[3] the Environmental Justice Communities Map (2023),[4] and other relevant background efforts.

The Shoreline Plan will not plan for state or federal lands. Areas such as the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (National Parks Service) and Candlestick Point State Recreation Area (State Parks) are excluded, despite being within the boundaries of the City and County of San Francisco. The Shoreline Plan will document the vulnerabilities and planned strategies in those areas and align the City's strategies with them. The Shoreline Plan will also exclude small portions of land that are within the County but not owned and managed by the City, such as a portion of the City of Alameda's northwestern shoreline.[5]

Plan Components

The Shoreline Plan's goal is to prepare an equitable, actionable, and resilient plan for sea level rise along San Francisco's entire shoreline within the City's jurisdiction. It will not analyze or plan for state or federal lands. To develop a robust plan, there will be a strong emphasis on both technical analysis and outreach and engagement. These two emphases will iterate upon one another to develop the Shoreline Plan.

- **Technical Analysis**

  To comply with both CCC and BCDC regulations, the Shoreline Plan's technical analysis will use the State of California Sea Level Rise Guidance: 2024 Science and Policy Update[6] as its foundation. This will inform the Shoreline Plan's exposure analysis, vulnerability analysis, consequences analysis, strategies and pathways development, and other components of the plan.

  The Shoreline Plan will incorporate the latest scientific understanding of the following exposure scenarios: 0.8 feet (2050), 3.1 feet (2100 Intermediate), 4.9 feet (2100 Intermediate-High), and 6.6 feet (2100 High) along with the following types of coastal flood hazards:

  - Tidal inundation (MHHW);
  - Storm surge (100-year);
  - Emergent groundwater; and,
  - Shallow groundwater (<9 feet).

- **Outreach and Engagement**

[3] San Francisco Sea Level Rise Vulnerability and Consequences Assessment. San Francisco Planning Department. 2020. https://sfplanning.org/sea-level-rise-action-plan#info
[4] San Francisco Environmental Justice Communities Map. San Francisco Planning Department. 2023. https://generalplan.sfplanning.org/Environmental_Justice_Framework.htm
[5] Alameda Point and West End. Alameda Shoreline Adaptation Plan. City of Alameda. 2025. https://www.alamedaca.gov/Departments/Planning-Building-and-Transportation/Sustainability-and-Resilience/Shoreline-Adaptation-Plan
[6] State of California Sea Level Rise Guidance: 2024 Science and Policy Update. California Ocean Protection Council. May 8, 2024: https://opc.ca.gov/sea-level-rise/

Both CCC and BCDC regulations emphasize robust community outreach and engagement and contributing to regional and statewide resilience planning efforts.[7] The Shoreline Plan will need to reach a wide spectrum of groups all along the City's shoreline and target groups that have not historically been included in the planning process. This will inform the Shoreline Plan's existing conditions, visioning, strategy evaluation, policy, and other components of the plan.

The Shoreline Plan will build on prior and existing efforts to minimize participation fatigue, maximize relationship-building between the City and community, and focus efforts on:

- A variety of activities focused on hearing from and collaborating with those most vulnerable to sea level rise, coastal flooding, and environmental justice;
- A Sea Level Rise Stakeholder Group comprised of representatives from affected communities, vulnerable communities, local businesses, and property owners; and,
- A Shoreline Plan Working Group comprised of City staff with subject-matter expertise, technical expertise, and experience with community engagement.

Timeline

The Shoreline Plan will begin in 2026 and is anticipated to be completed by late 2028, plus local adoptions and regulatory approval by both CCC and BCDC in early 2029. *The timeline below is subject to change.*

2026

- Establish vision and goals
- Document existing conditions
- Begin technical analysis
- Conduct outreach

2027

- Complete technical analysis
- Conduct outreach
- Draft and refine adaptation strategies and pathways

2028

- Conduct outreach
- Release a draft Shoreline Plan for public review
- Finalize and adopt a Shoreline Plan

The Shoreline Plan does not anticipate conducting environmental analysis under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). It is not required by either CCC or BCDC; both agencies defer the need for CEQA review to be determined by the City. At this time, SF Planning does not expect the Shoreline Plan to contain the level of detail that would trigger CEQA review. Therefore, CEQA is not included in the timeline.

[7] Some examples of state and regional resilience planning efforts include: State Agency Sea Level Rise Action Plan for California (2024): https://opc.ca.gov/sea-level-rise/ and Bay Adapt: Regional Strategy for a Rising Bay (2021): https://www.bayadapt.org/

The Shoreline Plan is anticipated to be completed by Summer 2028, plus local adoptions and regulatory approvals. The Shoreline Plan must be updated at least every 10 years.

Interagency Coordination

SF Planning is the lead agency responsible for the overall preparation and final delivery of the Shoreline Plan. The Office of Resilience and Capital Planning (ORCP) is providing technical support for citywide climate resilience and data analysis. There are additional interagency partners who are participating on the Shoreline Plan Working Group as the primary venue for interagency coordination. The interagency partners are responsible for guiding SF Planning with their subject matter expertise, work experience in designing and implementing City policies and programs, and insight on solutions that could be tailored for success in San Francisco. These agencies were selected based upon their jurisdictional areas that are most relevant to the successful development of a citywide sea level rise adaptation plan. This includes agencies that are land and asset owners and managers along the shoreline, long-range planners and capital planners, and direct service providers along the shoreline:

- Office of Community Investment & Infrastructure
- Port of San Francisco
- San Francisco Department of Public Works
- San Francisco Environment Department
- San Francisco International Airport
- San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency
- San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
- San Francisco Recreation & Park Department

There are additional other City agencies that work on climate matters (e.g., San Francisco Department of Public Health) who will be critical to the development of the Shoreline Plan, and SF Planning will coordinate with them separately. SF Planning is available for 1:1 agency meetings, leadership briefings, and facilitating review and feedback about specific components of the work.

Anticipated Approvals and Adoptions

The Shoreline Plan must be approved by local policy bodies, CCC, and BCDC (**Table 1**). For the local adoptions process, the SF Planning will bring the Shoreline Plan to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors (including the Land Use and Transportation Committee). *The table of anticipated approvals is subject to change.*

Table 1: Anticipated Hearings at Local, Regional, and State Policy Bodies

Hearing Purpose	Action by Policy Body	Timeline	Policy Body
Informational hearings for key milestones	Review and comment	Ongoing	Planning Commission, Capital Planning Committee, *and other agencies' policy bodies, as needed*

Hearing Purpose	Action by Policy Body	Timeline	Policy Body
Approval hearings for policies in Local Coastal Plan related to environmental justice and potential habitat areas (ocean side)	Adopt General Plan Amendment and/or Planning Code Amendment Certify Local Coastal Plan Amendment	Summer 2027	Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors California Coastal Commission
Approval hearings for policies related to CCC's Sea Level Rise Policy Guidance (ocean side)	Adopt General Plan Amendment and/or Planning Code Amendment Certify Local Coastal Plan Amendment	Spring 2028	Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors California Coastal Commission
Approval hearings for Shoreline Plan (entirety)	Adopt Shoreline Plan	Fall 2028	Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors, *and other agencies' policy bodies, as needed*
Approval hearings for the components that comply with BCDC's Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan Guidelines (bay side)	Approve Subregional Plan (Elements A through G)	Fall 2028 / Winter 2029	Bay Conservation and Development Commission
Approval hearings for Local Coastal Plan amendments related to Shoreline Plan (e.g., land use, adaptation strategies) (ocean side)	Adopt General Plan Amendment and/or Planning Code Amendment Certify Local Coastal Plan Amendment	Fall 2028 / Winter 2029	Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors California Coastal Commission

Final Deliverable

The end product is a sea level rise adaptation plan to manage coastal flood risks in San Francisco; protect community assets, public access, and critical infrastructure; and meet requirements from both CCC and BCDC. The Shoreline Plan will consist of an online document that includes an executive summary, main report (e.g., methodology, findings), and technical appendices. The content on the ocean side will meet CCC's Sea Level Rise Policy Guidance[8] and be adopted by the City's local process and approved by CCC. The content on the bay side will meet BCDC's Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan (RSAP) Guidelines[9] and be adopted by the City's local process and approved by BCDC.

[8] Sea Level Rise Policy Guidance: Interpretive Guidelines for Addressing Sea Level Rise in Local Coastal Programs and Coastal Development Permits. California Coastal Commission. November 2024. https://www.coastal.ca.gov/climate/slrguidance.html

[9] Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan: One Bay Vision, Strategic Regional Priorities, and Subregional Shoreline Adaptation Plan Guidelines. San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission. December 2024. https://www.bcdc.ca.gov/local-sea-level-rise-plans/

Attachment:

Exhibit A – Draft Resolution Language