



SAN MATEO COUNTY: CALIFORNIA'S GROUND ZERO FOR SEA LEVEL RISE

[Issue](#) | [Summary](#) | [Glossary](#) | [Background](#) | [Discussion](#) | [Best Practices](#) | [Findings](#)
[Recommendations](#) | [Request for Responses](#) | [Methodology](#) | [Bibliography](#) | [Appendices](#) | [Responses](#)

ISSUE

The San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District (“OneShoreline”) began operating in 2020. It was designed to coordinate countywide efforts to combat the harms of sea level rise caused by climate change. Is OneShoreline on course to adequately address the sea level rise challenge that has been assigned to it, and does it have the support it needs?

SUMMARY

San Mateo County has been declared the California County most at risk from sea level rise (SLR). *Its Bayside communities have billions of dollars of residential and commercial property at risk.* Its five wastewater facilities and three airports, including San Francisco International, are all at risk for flooding from the rising sea. Transportation systems, schools, medical facilities, homes, and parks are all at risk. The Pacific coast communities are also vulnerable to flooding and erosion from higher seas.¹

Sea level rise is a complex problem with an uncertain timetable that demands ongoing long-term solutions. It requires people to think differently and to truly collaborate. While solutions are still being developed, they will require planning, funding, and collaboration between affected cities, the County, and private entities.

OneShoreline was created from the County Flood Control District, has countywide jurisdiction, and focuses on SLR in addition to flooding from creeks. The official name for OneShoreline is the “San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District.”

OneShoreline provides expertise in the complex process of designing and building SLR and flood mitigation projects, including guidance through the complex maze of federal and state funding for projects. Major SLR projects can take five to ten years to plan, engineer, permit, and construct. Each SLR project will require regulatory permitting by regional, state, and federal agencies. OneShoreline could also guide County officials and regional legislators as they lobby Congress and state and federal agencies for funding and regulatory reform to address this serious problem.

¹ Hillary Papendick, Jasneet Sharma, Carolyn Raider, Avana Andrade, Emi Hashizume, Montserrat Plascencia, Sally Prowitt, et al. 2018, March, “County of San Mateo, Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment” Final Report, Redwood City: County of San Mateo, https://seachangesmc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2018-03-12_SLR_VA_Report_2.2018_WEB_FINAL.pdf

To effectively implement SLR projects, OneShoreline must earn the confidence of San Mateo County (SMC) residents. Some people may not see the need for the expensive SLR projects and will need convincing that the expense cannot be avoided. Others will prefer to simply delay projects, causing costs to increase dramatically. OneShoreline has an agreement with the San Mateo County Office of Sustainability, and others, to educate the public to ensure that the residents understand that SLR is a real threat and that waiting until flooding is imminent is not a viable choice. Powerfully effective public engagement campaigns about SLR will be necessary to meet such challenges.

Currently, OneShoreline's operational funding comes primarily from contributions by the County and its twenty cities and towns. It needs a stable source of funding, one that will not be vulnerable to competing concerns of the communities it serves. Obtaining funds for projects to reduce the damage caused by sea level rise is a major challenge. Such projects are very expensive and are often funded by a combination of federal, state, and local funds. Obtaining required funding can be a complicated, slow, and somewhat costly process.

This Grand Jury recommends that:

- the County and its cities and towns support steady, reliable funding for OneShoreline's basic operations;
- OneShoreline consider establishing and administering a low interest revolving loan fund to enable jurisdictions to prepare the initial engineering and planning necessary to obtain federal and state financial support for SLR projects; and
- the County, its cities, and OneShoreline, along with other Bay Area counties and cities, lobby the federal and state governments for regulatory changes to enable SLR projects to proceed more easily.

Additionally, this Grand Jury urges all residents of San Mateo County to keep themselves informed as to the risks of SLR, and the need to stay ahead of SLR in order to minimize the damage it could cause in San Mateo County. *The glaciers are melting, and the clock is ticking.*

GLOSSARY - TERMS

King Tide – a non-scientific term for exceptionally high tides.

MOU – Memorandum of Understanding; defines a relationship among the parties that outlines terms and details of an agreement, without the terms of a legally enforceable contract.

Reaches – stretches of land bordered by water, often used in flooding projects as a way to divide the project into segments defined by the nature of the land and water.

RFP – Request for Proposal; announces a project, describes it, and solicits bids from qualified contractors to complete it.

SLR – sea level rise.

Storm Surge – the temporary rise in sea level caused by a strong storm’s wind and waves.

GLOSSARY – AGENCIES

Army Corps – United States Army Corps of Engineers – For SLR and flooding, the Army Corps is the primary agency for levees.

BCDC – San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission was founded in the mid-1960s; and became a state agency in 2008 with the passage of AB 2094. It is the State agency responsible for leading the Bay Area’s preparedness for, and resilience to, rising sea level, tides, and storm surge due to climate change.

FEMA – the Federal Emergency Management Agency. For SLR & flooding, FEMA administers the national flood insurance program and manages mitigation efforts involving berms, dikes, and other efforts.

LAO – the California Legislative Analyst’s Office, the California Legislature’s nonpartisan fiscal and policy advisor.

NFIP – National Flood Insurance Program, overseen by FEMA.

OneShoreline – the short name for the San Mateo County Flood & Sea Level Rise Resiliency District; it is the successor to the San Mateo County Flood Control District.

Office of Sustainability – a department of the County of San Mateo that “strives to improve the sustainability of the County’s operations and the greater community.”²

Resource Conservation District of San Mateo County – a special district that helps “meet the need for voluntary resource conservation.”³

SFCJPA – San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority – leads projects that mitigate the risk of flooding along San Francisquito Creek and the San Francisco Bay. The cities of East Palo Alto, Palo Alto, and Menlo Park, along with OneShoreline and the Santa Clara Valley Water District, are members of the JPA.

USFWS – United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

² Contact Us – SMC Office of Sustainability (smcsustainability.org), <https://www.smcsustainability.org/contact-us/>

³ About the RCD | San Mateo RCD, <http://www.sanmateorcd.org/about/>

BACKGROUND – SEA LEVEL RISE AND THE THREAT TO SAN MATEO COUNTY

How Big Is the Problem?

Global sea level has been rising over the past century, and the rate has increased in recent decades. In 2014, global sea level was 2.6 inches above the 1993 average – the highest annual average in the satellite record (1993-present). Sea level continues to rise at a rate of about one-eighth of an inch per year.

Higher sea levels mean that deadly and destructive storm surges push farther inland than they once did, which means more frequent nuisance flooding. Disruptive and expensive, nuisance flooding is estimated to be from 300% to 900% more frequent within U.S. coastal communities than it was just fifty years ago.⁴

San Mateo County (SMC) covers 455 square miles with a 2019 population of 766,573. The County consists of twenty incorporated cities, twenty-three school districts, 78,000 acres of natural land (including 8,381 acres of wetlands), twenty County parks (over 17,000 acres), 190 miles of County and local trails, 12.9 miles of beaches, 21,528 businesses, and an employed workforce of 416,263.⁵

San Mateo County faces several complications from SLR. “Sea level rise has a clear and direct impact on any coastal or bayside community, any people or businesses within inundation zones, and any ecosystem subject to erosion and flooding. Sea level rise causes direct physical damage to property and habitats, and it can have huge economic repercussions for both individuals and communities.”⁶ In addition to flooding, “waves crashing further up the shore will erode ... coastal cliff walls,” and “higher ocean water levels could force up the water levels underneath the ground as well, leading to flooding, saltwater intrusion into fresh groundwater supplies, and toxic contamination by carrying hazardous materials to the surface.”⁷

“Sea level rise (SLR) is one of the most serious consequences of climate change and it will have a significant effect on San Mateo County, which has more people and property value at risk from the rising sea than any other county in the state.”⁸ Future flooding and coastal erosion could pose considerable risks to life, safety, critical infrastructure, the economy, and the County’s natural and recreational assets. Flood damage could exceed \$1 billion and assessed values of parcels exposed to erosion and flooding in the long term totals roughly \$39.1 billion. More than 30,000 residential parcels and 3,000 commercial parcels could be vulnerable in the long term.

⁴ Is sea level rising? (noaa.gov), <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/sealevel.html>

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: San Mateo County, California (2019), <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/sanmateocountycalifornia>

⁶ Papendick, et al., *Vulnerability Assessment*, 2018

⁷ Ehlers, Rachel. *What Threat Does Sea-Level Rise Pose to California*, 2020, LAO Publication, Sacramento: Legislative Analyst's Office, p. 4, <https://lao.ca.gov/reports/2020/4261/sea-level-rise-081020.pdf>

⁸ C/CAG, Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency Agency Proposal, Dec. 21, 2018, https://ccag.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/6.3_A3-Water-Agency-Proposal_122118.pdf

Vulnerable infrastructure includes wastewater treatment plants, schools, and essential transportation: BART, Caltrain, Highway 101, and Highway 1.⁹ Electrical distribution facilities, and facilities related to the San Francisco International Airport (SFO), located in SMC, are also at risk.

In addition to the monetary losses, SLR may impact “affordable” housing disproportionately. “Already half of East Palo Alto sits within a federally designated flood zone. According to projections, in 10 years or so up to two-thirds of the land within city limits may regularly experience flooding.”¹⁰ Redwood City, Pacifica, and unincorporated areas of the County also have areas of affordable housing subject to flooding.¹¹



Flooding in a bayside mobile home park in south San Mateo County. (Photo from OneShoreline website)

Additionally, SMC residents who do not live near a shoreline may think SLR is not their problem. This is incorrect. All residents, including inland residents, need: access to highway 101,

⁹ Papendick, et al., *Vulnerability Assessment*, 2018.

¹⁰ What Can the Bay Area Do About Rising Seas? East Palo Alto Has a Few Great Answers | KQED, <https://www.kqed.org/science/1973805/climate-solutions-in-east-palo-alto>; see also the 2015 Preliminary FEMA, NFIP map for East Palo Alto and portions of Menlo Park, https://www.cityofepa.org/sites/default/files/fileattachments/community_amp_economic_development/page/2531/fe_ma_maps_2015_201509011239377956.pdf

¹¹ Grand Jury interview.

to take Caltrain, or to use SFO. All key wastewater treatment plants are located at the shoreline, and everyone needs “toilets that flush.”¹²

An interactive map showing the effect of SLR and storm surges is available at <https://explorer.adaptingtorisingtides.org/explorer>. Below is an example showing the flooding from a 36-inch increase in water level along the Bay at the southern end of the County. As shown in the graphic below, a 36-inch increase can be experienced from no sea level rise and a “50-year” storm, six inches of sea level rise and a “25-year” storm, and other combinations.



Options for Responding to Sea Level Rise

There are only few options for dealing with the threat of SLR. They are:

- **Protect** the land and structures by berms, levees, sea walls, pumping stations and other structures, and raise mudflats and bay marshes to prevent erosion or flooding.
- **Modify** assets to withstand periodic flooding.
- **Relocate** the facilities to higher land.
- **Abandon** land and structures that will be flooded.¹³

¹² Grand Jury interviews.

¹³ Grand Jury interviews.

Sea Level Rise is a Present Threat: Reports since 2016

In 2015 the San Mateo County Grand Jury issued a report titled: “Flooding Ahead: Planning for Sea Level Rise.”¹⁴ That report called for the creation of a countywide agency to address the problems brought on by SLR. Since then, numerous other reports examined SLR in California, the Bay Area, and San Mateo County. New significant reports from governmental and non-governmental agencies appear several times a year. Some of the recent and more significant reports include:

In March 2018, the County Office of Sustainability issued: *County of San Mateo Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment*.¹⁵ This report focused on understanding sea level rise risk, the level of risk is in each area, how people are affected, and our adaptive capacity.¹⁶ **The report cited San Mateo County as the county with the highest risk of damage in the Bay Area, and one of the hot spots in the nation.** At least 32% of the population live in vulnerable areas. (See Appendix A - Selected Demographics). San Mateo County’s three airports, San Francisco International, San Carlos, and Half Moon Bay, are all threatened by SLR. In addition, environmentally sensitive areas – closed landfills, former industrial sites, underground storage tanks and other contamination sites – may be damaged by SLR and contaminate the area. The County has 29 known sites classified as containing hazardous materials or cleanup sites that are vulnerable to flooding in the near term. Up to 665 sites are at risk in the long term.

Also in March 2018, Stanford Public Policy Program issued *Adaptation Planning for Sea Level Rise in San Mateo County - An Examination of 11 Bayside Cities*, a report prepared for the County Office of Sustainability.¹⁷ It found that San Mateo County was “ground zero” for SLR vulnerability. That report noted that a mid-level projected sea level rise of 3.3 feet would impact 22,000 acres of land, 30,600 residential parcels, and five wastewater facilities. The Stanford study encouraged the cities and County to share up to date SLR information with the public.

In December 2019, the California Legislative Analyst Office (LAO) issued a report titled *Preparing for Rising Seas*,¹⁸ which noted that SLR will impact California’s coastlines in extensive and expensive ways. It posits that most of the responsibility for SLR preparation will lie with local governments and private property owners – none of whom have faced anything like this before – and observes that delaying preparations will only increase the cost dramatically. The LAO’s report makes recommendations for the support of local adaptation efforts, and emphasizes the benefit of taking action early, as shown in the graphic below.

¹⁴ Flooding Ahead: Planning for Sea Level Rise (sanmateocourt.org), http://www.sanmateocourt.org/documents/grand_jury/2014/sea_level_rise.pdf

¹⁵ Papendick, et al., *Vulnerability Assessment*.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Enrique, Alex, Isabelle Foster, and Will La Dow, *Adaptation Planning for Sea Level Rise in San Mateo County - An Examination of 11 Bayside Cities*, March 2018, Consulting Stanford, California: Stanford Public Policy.

¹⁸ Ehlers, Rachel, *Preparing for Rising Seas: How the State Can Help Support Local Coastal Adaptation Efforts*, December 2019, LAO Publication, Sacramento: Legislative Analyst’s Office.

Benefits of Taking Action Early to Prepare for Sea-Level Rise (SLR)

- ✓ **Planning Ahead Means Adaptation Actions Can Be Strategic and Phased.** Early planning can allow coastal communities to adopt a phased approach that undertakes escalating actions when certain predetermined conditions or “triggers” are reached.
- ✓ **Undertaking Near-Term Actions Can “Buy Time” Before More Intensive Responses are Needed.** Putting certain adaptation projects and strategies in place now can help postpone and extend the period before which subsequent, more difficult-to-implement actions are needed.
- ✓ **Early Implementation Provides the Opportunity to Test Approaches and Learn What Works Best.** Acting to implement adaptation strategies in the near term will provide the opportunity to monitor, evaluate, and revise them in the coming years before SLR threats become more pressing.
- ✓ **Taking Action Earlier May Make Overall Adaptation Efforts More Affordable.** Undertaking a multiyear, multistep strategic plan for coastal adaptation can allow local governments to spread costs over a longer period of time.
- ✓ **Coming Decade Is Key Window for SLR Preparation.** Some adaptation strategies—such as fortifying certain tidal marshes—may not be effective against SLR unless they are implemented before sea levels rise to higher levels.

In March 2020, The San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission/Association of Bay Area Governments (MTC/ABAG), issued: *Adapting to Rising Tides Bay Area: Regional Sea Level Rise Vulnerability and Adaptation Study*.¹⁹ The report, available both in a long form (205 pages) and in a summary form (36 pages), focuses on “consequences the Bay Area may face as sea levels rise in the absence of coordinated, prioritized adaptation.”²⁰ The Adapting to Rising Tides “ART Portfolio” website contains tools and information tested and refined by BCDC. It offers key sector impact data, maps, sample projects, and guidance for cities seeking to develop adaptation strategies against sea level rise.²¹

In August 2020, the LAO issued another SLR report, titled: *What Threat Does SLR Pose to California?*²² This report describes available research on how rising seas threaten California’s coast in seven categories of impacts: public infrastructure, private property, vulnerable

¹⁹ Adapting to Rising Tides 2020. *Adapting to Rising Tides Bay Area: Regional Sea Level Rise Vulnerability and Adaptation Study*. San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) and Metropolitan Transportation Commission/Association of Bay Area Governments (MTC/ABAG), March 2020, San Francisco, CA., http://www.adaptingtorisingtides.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/ARTBayArea_Main_Report_Final_March2020_ADA.pdf

²⁰ Adapting to Rising Tides 2020. *Adapting to Rising Tides Bay Area: Short Report Summary of Regional Sea Level Rise Vulnerability and Adaptation Study*. San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) and Metropolitan Transportation Commission/Association of Bay Area Governments (MTC/ABAG), March 2020, San Francisco CA. at p. 5., http://www.adaptingtorisingtides.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/ARTBayArea_Short_Report_Final_March2020_ADA.pdf

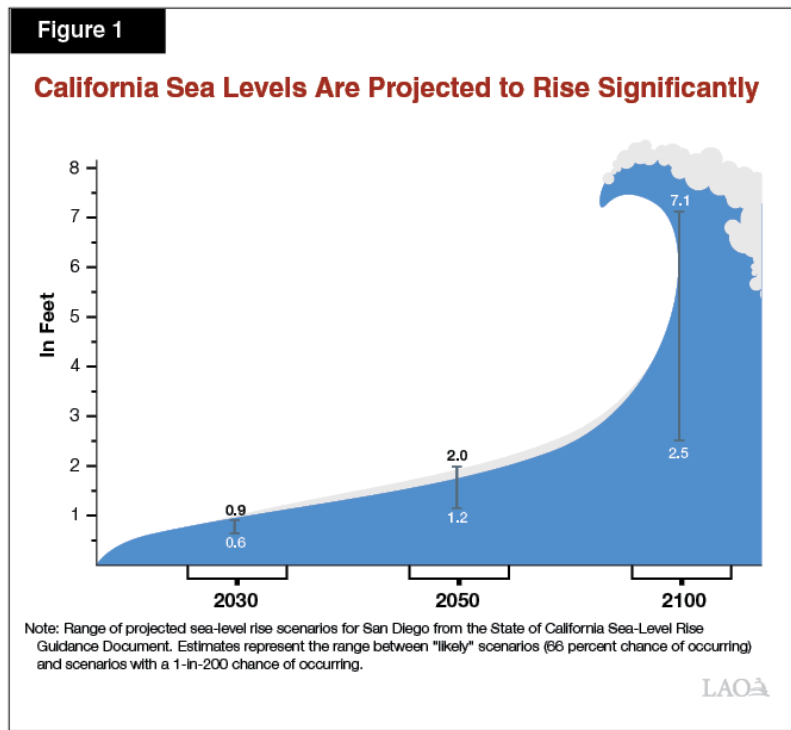
²¹ Adapting to Rising Tides, <https://www.adaptingtorisingtides.org>

²² Ehlers, Rachel. *What Threat Does Sea-Level Rise Pose*, *supra*.

communities, natural resources, drinking and agricultural water supplies, toxic contamination, and economic disruption.

In April 2021, the San Francisco Estuary Institute issued: *Sediment for Survival: A Strategy for the Resilience of Bay Wetlands in the Lower San Francisco Estuary*,²³ which proposes using sediment that is dredged from the Bay’s shipping channels (and currently barged out to sea or to deep parts of the bay) to restore wetlands and mudflats in such a way that they could help in adapting to sea level rise. It estimates this approach could offer cost savings, in some locations, over building seawalls to protect homes, businesses, highways and airports. These reports offer a wealth of information on sea level rise in California, and the Bay Area in particular.

Figure 1, below, showing the variability in SLR projections, is from the August 2020, LAO report, *What Threat Does SLR Pose to California*, mentioned above.



San Mateo County – Office of Sustainability

“Formed in July 2014, as a part of the County Manager’s Office, the Office of Sustainability strives to improve the sustainability of the County’s operations and the greater community through work in areas of renewable energy and energy efficiency; resource conservation;

²³ Dusterhoff, Scott, Katie McKnight, Letitia Grenier, and Nate Kauffman, *Sediment for Survival: A Strategy for the Resilience of Bay Wetlands in the Lower San Francisco Estuary*, April 2021, https://www.sfei.org/sites/default/files/biblio_files/Sediment%20for%20Survival%20042121%20med%20res.pdf

alternative transportation; and greenhouse gas emission reductions.”²⁴ An important part of its work is climate change, including SLR. In 2015, the Office of Sustainability launched a program called “Sea Change San Mateo County” which led to the San Mateo County Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment, discussed above.

It also functions as a “communications department” for public engagement on sea level rise in the County. The Office of Sustainability provides curricula for schools on sea level change as well as managing a Youth Climate Ambassadors Leadership Program for 9th to 11th grade students from across the County. This program empowers youth to take climate action into their own hands by having them develop projects designed to drive change within the County.²⁵

The Office of Sustainability’s description of SLR states: “San Mateo County is actively preparing for sea level rise. While the changing climate and rising sea pose many risks to the people and places in San Mateo County, together we can plan ahead to protect our people and manage our valuable resources responsibly.”²⁶

Origin of OneShoreline

In 2015, the San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury issued a report titled “Flooding Ahead: Planning for Sea Level Rise.” As a result of that report and efforts by members of the Board of Supervisors, State and Federal legislators, and others, San Mateo County and its twenty cities and towns agreed to convert the County’s Flood Control District to a new District called the “San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District,” also known as “OneShoreline.” OneShoreline is perhaps the only countywide agency dedicated solely to sea level rise and flooding west of the Mississippi. A table comparing the basics of the old district to the new, is in Appendix D.

DISCUSSION

San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District – OneShoreline

In 2019, state legislation created OneShoreline, which began operation on January 1, 2020. Its geographic boundaries and spheres of influence include addressing SLR in the entire County, not just flooding in the three creek flood zones.²⁷ Its seven-member board is made up of five city council members from different regions in the County, and two members of the County Board of

²⁴ May 19, 2020 - New Director of Sustainability: San Mateo County on “Front Lines” of Regional Challenges | County Manager’s Office (smcgov.org), <https://cmo.smcgov.org/press-release/may-19-2020-new-director-sustainability-san-mateo-county-%E2%80%9Cfront-lines%E2%80%9D-regional>

²⁵ Youth Climate Ambassador – SMC Office of Sustainability (smcsustainability.org), <https://www.smcsustainability.org/climate-change/youth-climate-ambassador/>

²⁶ Office of Sustainability, Sea Change San Mateo County, <https://seachangesmc.org/>

²⁷ Our History – OneShoreline, <https://oneshoreline.org/our-history/>, see also Assembly Bill 825 (2019, Mullin) https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AB825

Supervisors.²⁸ The board hired the former director of the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority (SFCJPA) as the CEO of OneShoreline. Initial funding came from the County and the 20 cities, with contribution amounts varying by city population.

OneShoreline's mission is to address SLR, flooding, coastal erosion and large-scale storm water infrastructure improvements through integrated regional planning, design, permitting, project implementation and long-term operations and maintenance.²⁹

OneShoreline was created to look at the SLR problem holistically, emphasizing collaboration among all affected by a SLR project. SLR is a complex issue that requires cities to work together. The old approach of designing a project with just enough protection to escape a requirement that property owners obtain flood insurance is inadequate. A rising sea level means that flood insurance maps will be revised more frequently, requiring expensive flood insurance or a new project to provide protection.³⁰

OneShoreline monitors proposed development on the shoreline to urge cities to consider SLR in the planning, design, and engineering of projects built in vulnerable areas. Cities must be aware of the long-term risks posed by development projects that are inadequately designed and planned. SLR should not be ignored no matter the short-term benefits that a development project promises to the developer or the locality in the short term.³¹ If development projects, whether commercial and residential neighborhoods, roadways, or infrastructure, are rushed through without fully contemplating the long-term effects of SLR, the inevitable result will be future problems that are much harder to fix.

OneShoreline's current operational funding is \$1.5 million per year for its first three years, plus portions of flood zone taxes when those areas have active projects. As more projects get underway, the OneShoreline staff of four will likely need to expand. Long-term, stable funding is critical to the success of this organization but does not currently exist. Many avenues of secure revenue streams for funding OneShoreline operations have been considered; currently OneShoreline is evaluating the support for a countywide parcel tax that would support both SLR and wildfire mitigation efforts³²

Outreach and public engagement are essential for OneShoreline's success. To effectively implement SLR projects, OneShoreline must ensure public support from County residents. Some may not see the need for the expensive SLR projects and will require convincing that the expense cannot be avoided. OneShoreline will need to work with the County Office of Sustainability, and

²⁸ AB 825, (2019, Mullin) San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District, (2019), Section 4.5(a) prescribes the Board of Directors membership.

²⁹ OneShoreline, *FY2021 Audited Financial Statements*, https://oneshoreline.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/FSLRRD-FY20_Financial_Statement.pdf

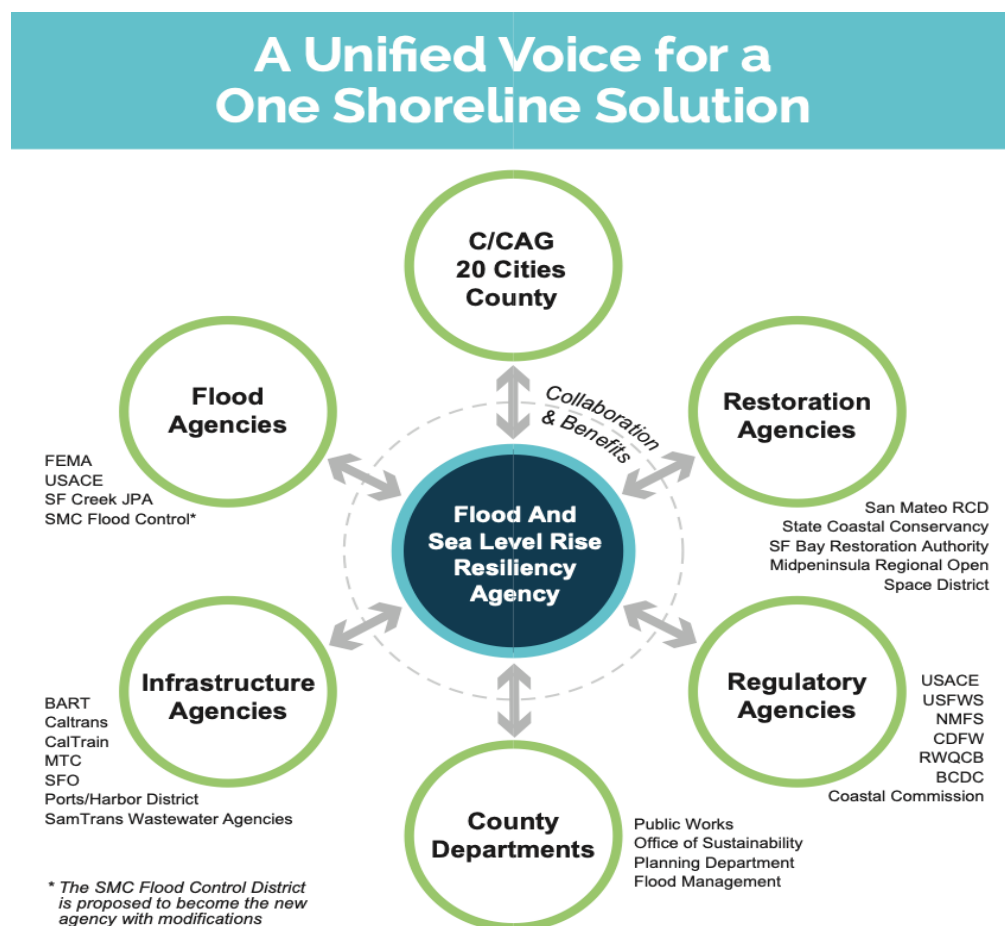
³⁰ Grand Jury interviews.

³¹ Grand Jury interviews and Papendick, et al., *Vulnerability Assessment*.

³² Grand Jury interviews.

others, to ensure that residents understand that SLR is real, and that waiting until flooding is imminent is not a reasonable choice. It is partnering with the League of Women Voters and other officials to provide six public forums on SLR in 2021.³³ OneShoreline representatives are also meeting with city and town managers, and councils. Educating city elected officials and staff about the hazards of SLR and mitigation strategies is essential, since turnover of city council members is high, and SLR projects can take many years to plan and build.

OneShoreline was envisioned as the hub connecting multiple interested parties in combating SLR as seen in this diagram.³⁴



³³ The last two forums are on September 2 and October 14, 2021. South San Mateo County | MyLO (lww.org)South San Mateo County | MyLO (lww.org), <https://my.lww.org/california/south-san-mateo-county>

³⁴ Graphic from https://resilientsanmateo.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Brochure_ExecutiveSummaryProposal_122118_PRINT-11x17-1.pdf, on April 29, 2021, (website not accessible on June 7, 2021). Similar diagram in C/CAG, *Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency Agency Proposal*, Dec. 21, 2018, at p. 11.

OneShoreline's First Year (2020)

In its first year of operations, OneShoreline set up its board of directors and commenced operations. The board is composed of elected representatives from different regions of the County. An executive director supervises a staff of four with expertise in flood prevention in San Mateo County. It maintains an informative website containing up-to-date documents on its projects, financing, and outreach efforts. By publishing a digital newsletter, OneShoreline has reached out to the city and town councils in the County. Importantly, the OneShoreline management and board are aware that its most pressing need is to secure a reliable source of funding for its operations.³⁵

OneShoreline currently operates through a master services agreement with the County, under which it coordinates with the Office of Sustainability on outreach to keep the residents informed of SLR needs.

OneShoreline's current activities include:³⁶

- obtaining long-term support, along with its constituent cities, to address funding of projects identified as necessary to mitigate hazards caused or exacerbated by sea level rise;
- addressing projects inherited from the San Mateo County Flood Control District;
- overseeing the Bayfront Canal project, with construction starting in 2021;
- offering to assist communities with other SLR and flooding projects;
- consulting with cities and towns about new projects; and
- managing multi-jurisdictional projects.

OneShoreline is most interested in working on projects: where meaningful objectives are achievable and enjoy local support; where OneShoreline can add value (such as projects involving multiple jurisdictions); and where the project makes fiscal sense.

In its interviews, the Grand Jury identified the following potential roles for OneShoreline:³⁷

- *Work with the County and neighboring counties* to lobby state and federal governments for regulatory change for SLR projects;
- *Share expertise* for SLR and flooding projects;
- *Set standards* for determining the amount of SLR that cities and towns, the County, and private property owners must plan for;
- *Set guidelines* for the kinds of projects OneShoreline will prioritize;

³⁵ Grand Jury interviews and OneShoreline website.

³⁶ Grand Jury interviews and OneShoreline website.

³⁷ Grand Jury interviews.

- *Assist in obtaining federal and state funding* for SLR and flooding projects, by providing a unified voice when communicating with governmental agencies;
- *Work with congressional representatives* for authorizations and appropriations for initial project studies; and
- *Reach out to the San Francisco District of the Army Corps* to identify problems and discuss possible projects for the County.³⁸
- *Facilitate and coordinate between interested parties* and the various state and federal regulators for projects;
- *Assist the cities* in obtaining permits for projects;
- *Keep local governments and the County informed* – regarding its operation and SLR risks; and
- *Coordinate with the County Office of Sustainability* on SLR and flooding outreach programs for the schools and community organizations.

OneShoreline Projects

OneShoreline’s website contains a current list of its projects at <https://onshoreline.org/projects>; brief descriptions of some of those projects are available in Appendix C. One project currently under construction is the Bayfront Canal & Atherton Channel Flood Protection and Ecosystem Restoration Project³⁹ which, among its several goals, will protect mobile home parks near the bayfront from flooding.

Funding OneShoreline Operations

OneShoreline is working to build a strong reputation before its initial operational funding runs out in 2023. Many interviewees informed the Grand Jury that OneShoreline required secure funding commitments in order to perform its functions beyond the initial three-year funding period.

Recently, the Strategic Planning Committee for OneShoreline’s Board of Directors examined various potential sources of long-term stable funds for OneShoreline operations, as well as project support. The only funding option identified that would provide long-term, stable yet flexible funding for projects and for operations was a countywide parcel tax. “Polling is

³⁸ Grand Jury interviews.

³⁹ Bayfront Canal & Atherton Channel Flood Protection and Ecosystem Restoration Project – OneShoreline – at <https://onshoreline.org/projects/bayfront-atherton-flood-protection/>

beginning ... to test a few of these scenarios and public perceptions of this issue so that we may solidify potential ballot language.”⁴⁰

If such a tax is not feasible, OneShoreline may have to continue relying on contributions from cities and the County, renewed in multi-year commitments. OneShoreline has successfully obtained grants from the state for specific work (California Department of Water Resources \$1 million grant from the Urban Streams Restoration Program, and funds for the flood warning system). While private funding is an alternative source that OneShoreline has considered, interviewees expressed their concern that such funding sources are unlikely to be reliable as long-term funding.

Funding SLR Projects

Levees, sea walls, raising marshes and mudflats, and similar capital projects are *expensive*. For example, Levee Improvement Bond Measure P passed by Foster City voters in 2018,⁴¹ authorized Foster City to issue \$90 million in general obligation bonds to fund critical levee improvements. The property tax levy to repay this borrowing will continue for 30 years. The first-year rate was approximately \$36 per \$100,000 of assessed property value. Subsequently, the rate will be an estimated \$33 annually, with continuing decreases assuming assessed property valuations continue to rise.⁴²



Foster City Levee upgrade, March 26, 2021 (Grand Jury photo)

⁴⁰ OneShoreline Board of Directors presentation April 26, 2021. Available at: <https://oneshoreline.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/FSLRRD-Board-mtg.-4.26.2021-presentation.pdf>

⁴¹ Measure P | Foster City California, <https://www.fostercity.org/cityclerk/page/measure-p>

⁴² Frequently Asked Questions | Foster City Levee Project, <https://fostercitylevee.org/faqs/>

OneShoreline inherited funding that is limited for earmarked use in the flood areas in the County for established projects. Projects directly connected with one of the three creek flood zones (Colma, San Bruno, San Francisquito) may be funded from dedicated property taxes for the specific flood zone.⁴³

State funding may be available if a proposed Bond Act is passed by the voters. This measure would raise approximately \$7 billion to fund climate change and sea level rise projects statewide.⁴⁴

The Army Corps of Engineers and FEMA also provide funding for some SLR projects, but each agency has a complex set of requirements for such funding. For example, federal funding requires that a preliminary engineering and design study must be prepared prior to application for the funds. OneShoreline will serve as a valuable resource to guide projects through the study, engineering, and funding application phases. To receive federal funds, the community must contribute funds for the project. As a result of such complexities communities and agencies similar to OneShoreline typically hire consultants to guide a proposal through the federal process.⁴⁵

OneShoreline could operate a revolving loan fund, or a portion of a regional loan fund, “capitalized by a federal investment, like the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, and offer below-market rates. Savings on insurance premiums from improved ratings under FEMA Community Rating Systems, among other sources, could repay the funds.”⁴⁶ The loan fund could be used to pay for the preliminary engineering and design studies required to apply for federal funding.

Delays in adapting to SLR can result in flood remediation costs of up to six times greater than the cost of planned adaptations. A “FEMA-sponsored study by the National Institute of Building Sciences found that for every \$1 the federal government invested in various types of pre-disaster mitigation activities in recent years, it avoided public and private losses totaling \$6.”⁴⁷

⁴³ FSLRRD-FY2020-21-Operations-and-Flood-Zones-Budgets-Approved-June-8-2020.pdf (oneshoreline.org), <https://oneshoreline.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/FSLRRD-FY2020-21-Operations-and-Flood-Zones-Budgets-Approved-June-8-2020.pdf>

⁴⁴ Bill Text - AB-1500 Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparation, Flood Protection, Extreme Heat Mitigation, and Workforce Development Bond Act of 2022. (ca.gov), https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB1500

⁴⁵ Grand Jury interview.

⁴⁶ Grand Jury interview and Four Key Actions to Solve for Coastal Flooding and Sea Level Rise in the Bay Area: a Governance Proposal | SPUR, <https://www.spur.org/news/2020-02-20/four-key-actions-solve-coastal-flooding-and-sea-level-rise-bay-area-governance>; <https://www.epa.gov/cwsrf>. See also: Fact Sheet | How Can Revolving Loan Funds Make Our Coasts More Resilient? | White Papers | EESI at <https://www.eesi.org/papers/view/fact-sheet-how-can-revolving-loan-funds-make-our-coasts-more-resilient>

⁴⁷ Ehlers, Rachel, LAO 2019, *Preparing for Rising Seas, supra*, at p.7.

Will Regulatory Complexities Delay SLR Projects?

In addition to financial hurdles, sea level rise projects face serious regulatory delays. The “lengthy process for attaining approvals from state and federal agencies to implement adaptation projects is a significant barrier to getting more projects underway.”⁴⁸ It has been suggested that regulatory reform at both the federal and state level is needed to allow SLR projects to be proposed, designed, and constructed with less delay and cost. It would be beneficial if OneShoreline, along with the Board of Supervisors, the cities and towns, and neighboring counties, worked together to lobby state and federal governments for appropriate reform.⁴⁹

Multiple regulatory agencies must evaluate, and issue permits for a single project. Large SLR projects (i.e., via the Army Corps of Engineers) can require a decade to design, approve, and build. Whether it is the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission or the California Coastal Commission, regulatory systems were not designed for the threat of SLR.

Regulatory complexity may be reduced by lobbying the federal and state governments for reform, or by forming interagency teams to streamline the permit application process under existing law and regulations. One example of the later approach is the SF Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team (BRITT),⁵⁰ which expedites and simplifies the permitting process across nine Bay Area counties for Measure AA projects (“multi-benefit wetland restoration projects and associated flood management and public access infrastructure” projects).⁵¹ BRITT coordinates permit reviews across all the applicable state and federal agencies for those projects.

The complexity of even a relatively simple current project is illustrated below, where the project required five funding sources, land easements among multiple parties, and permits from six agencies.⁵²

⁴⁸ <https://lao.ca.gov/reports/2019/4121/coastal-adaptation-121019.pdf> at p. 26.

⁴⁹ Grand Jury Interviews; see also W. Chabot and others. April 28, 2021, during “Conversation With Kevin : Collaborating to Address Climate Change” hosted by Speaker Pro Tempore Kevin Mullin, video available at [Conversation With Kevin Collaborating to Address Climate Change \(facebook.com\)](https://www.facebook.com/102284836614761/videos/789035602040576/?__so__=channel_tab&__rv__=all_videos_card) https://www.facebook.com/102284836614761/videos/789035602040576/?__so__=channel_tab&__rv__=all_videos_card.

⁵⁰ California State Coastal Conservancy, San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority, “San Francisco Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team (BRITT)”, <https://www.sfbayrestore.org/san-francisco-bay-restoration-regulatory-integration-team-britt>

⁵¹ [Combined Permitting overview, agreements, performance measures May 11 2018 \(00409201-5\).DOCX \(sfbayrestore.org\)](https://www.sfbayrestore.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/Permitting_agreements_and_performance_measures.pdf) https://www.sfbayrestore.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/Permitting_agreements_and_performance_measures.pdf

⁵² [4.26.2021 presentation \(oneshoreline.org\)](https://www.oneshoreline.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/FSLRRD-Board-mtg.-4.26.2021-presentation.pdf); <https://oneshoreline.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/FSLRRD-Board-mtg.-4.26.2021-presentation.pdf>

OneShoreline's first construction project:

Bayfront Canal and Atherton Channel Flood Protection and Ecosystem Restoration Project

- Funding from 3 cities, County, and State
- Land Easements among OneShoreline, 2 cities, County, Cargill, plus land agreements with USFWS and Caltrans
- Permits: USACE, USFWS, NMFS, CDFW, RWQCB, BCDC



The US Army Corps of Engineers – Expertise, Funding, and Regulation of SLR Projects

The US Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps) has decades of experience in protecting against flooding, especially with the use of levees. It serves a regulatory function in issuing permits, can be a source of funds, and can provide engineering expertise. Involving the Army Corps for federal funding is complex, involves Congressional action, and can take many years.⁵³

An Army Corps project requires a local sponsor to provide initial funding for the design of the SLR protection. During planning and development, the local sponsor provides approximately 70% of the money and Army Corps provides the balance. During construction this reverses – the local sponsor provides approximately 30% and Army Corps provides the balance.

The Army Corps works best for big projects. Few communities can afford capital costs in the tens or hundreds of millions of dollars, or more. An article published by the Yale School of the Environment discussing the costs nationwide noted that, “In San Francisco, voters approved a \$425 million bond to pay a quarter of the costs of fortifying a sea wall.”⁵⁴ A simplified outline of the Army Corps process, as the Grand Jury understands it, is included in Appendix F.

⁵³To get an idea of the complexity of applying for a permit see: San Francisco District > Missions > Regulatory > How to Apply for a Permit (army.mil), <https://www.spn.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory/How-to-Apply-for-a-Permit>

⁵⁴ [Who Will Pay for the Huge Costs of Holding Back Rising Seas?](https://e360.yale.edu/features/who-will-pay-for-the-huge-costs-of-holding-back-rising-seas) - Yale E360 <https://e360.yale.edu/features/who-will-pay-for-the-huge-costs-of-holding-back-rising-seas>. See also [SF's Embarcadero seawall measure wins easily](#)

The Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2020 changed how the Army Corps evaluates projects. New regulations are expected later in 2021 and will require the evaluation to be based on “best available, peer-reviewed science and data.”⁵⁵ The WRDA also requires an evaluation of the projected benefits of a project for a *50-year period* after the expected completion date.

The Army Corps evaluates socio-economic and environmental justice effects of a proposed plan during the study phase, and solicits public involvement, to understand the views and values of the community. The Army Corps is required to consider low-cost alternatives. One non-structural measure that might be considered is a managed retreat (relocation). The Army Corps considers the fair market value of vulnerable low-cost housing. If the cost to protect the housing is more expensive than replacing the housing elsewhere, then the Army Corps may prefer the relocation alternative. If a local sponsor wants to protect areas that the Army Corps does not consider economical, the cost difference will be borne by the local sponsor.⁵⁶

FEMA – Flood Zone Maps, Mitigation, and Prevention

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in addition to providing aid after a disaster, also provides flood hazard and risk data to help guide mitigation actions. Flood mapping is an important part of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Flood maps are the basis for the NFIP regulations and flood insurance⁵⁷ requirements. FEMA’s flood mapping program is called Risk Mapping, Assessment, and Planning, or Risk MAP.⁵⁸ FEMA maintains and updates data through flood maps and risk assessments.⁵⁹ FEMA redraws its maps as new SLR data is collected, so that NFIP requirements will increase over time.

Designating an area as a flood zone can impact property owners financially, because the consequence is that properties in the flood zone are required to carry flood insurance, which is expensive. In the Foster City example discussed above, residents chose to raise their property taxes to fund levee improvements, because doing so protected mortgage-holding residents from having their property designated as within a flood zone, and therefore requiring that they pay high flood insurance premiums.

(sfchronicle.com); <https://www.sfchronicle.com/politics/article/SF-s-Embarcadero-seawall-measure-on-track-to-13369575.php>

⁵⁵ Section 113, Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2020. Water Resources Development Act of 2020 (congress.gov), <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF11700>

⁵⁶ Grand Jury interviews.

⁵⁷ Flood Insurance | FEMA.gov, <https://www.fema.gov/flood-insurance>

⁵⁸ Risk Mapping, Assessment and Planning (Risk MAP) | FEMA.gov, <https://www.fema.gov/flood-maps/tools-resources/risk-map#>

⁵⁹ Flood Maps | FEMA.gov, <https://www.fema.gov/flood-maps>

States, communities, and private levee owners are responsible for maintaining and operating the levees they own according to specific design criteria.⁶⁰ While FEMA maps flood hazards impacted by levee systems, it does not build, own, or certify levees. Instead, other parties (such as the Army Corps) build, inspect, and maintain the levees they own.

FEMA can provide funds for flood mitigation projects (such as SLR projects) through a competitive application process. FEMA will become deeply involved with permitting for any project occurring in a floodplain.

Other Regulatory Agencies

The **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** (USFWS) regulates projects that affect fish and wildlife.⁶¹ A new USFWS online planning tool is available to streamline the USFWS environmental review.⁶²

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) is involved on the ocean-side of SMC. Under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act, NOAA Fisheries, through its scientific support and permitting, protects ocean species while a construction project is ongoing.⁶³

The **San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board** (Water Board) regulates discharges into the waters and requires cleanups of unplanned or illegal discharges. Regulating discharges is done through a variety of permits, including those that control erosion and storm water runoff during construction, as well as National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permits, and stream and vegetation permits. Under the federal Clean Water Act, either dredging or wetland fill activities require permits from the Army Corps. The Water Board must certify that those federal permits meet State water quality standards and that the projects minimize impacts on water quality. Most permits are adopted by the Water Board in public hearings after opportunities for public comment, which can increase delays.⁶⁴

The **California Department of Fish & Wildlife** (CDFW) provides environmental review and permits in two key programs: the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Review⁶⁵ and

⁶⁰ FEMA, Cooperating Technical Partners and Engineers, accessed May 2021, <https://www.fema.gov/flood-maps/living-levees/technical-partners-engineers>

⁶¹ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: An Overview - EveryCRSReport.com, https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/R45265.html#_Toc519853442

⁶² The tool is called IPac – Information for Planning and Consultation. IPaC: Home (fws.gov), <https://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/>

⁶³ Welcome to NOAA | NOAA Fisheries, <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov>

⁶⁴ Permits We Issue | San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (ca.gov), https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay/water_issues/programs/permits.html

⁶⁵ California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Review, <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Environmental-Review/CEQA>

the Lake and Streambed Alteration (LSA) Program.⁶⁶ Both programs have separate regulations and permits.

The **California Coastal Commission (CCC)** “is an independent, quasi-judicial state agency.” “In partnership with coastal cities and counties, [it] plans and regulates the use of land and water in the coastal zone. Development activities, which are broadly defined by the Coastal Act to include (among others) construction of buildings, divisions of land, and activities that change the intensity of use of land or public access to coastal waters, generally require a coastal permit from either the Coastal Commission or the local government.”⁶⁷ The CCC has a dedicated section on its website on Sea Level Rise Planning and Permitting.⁶⁸ A chart illustrating the CCC regulatory process is shown in Appendix E. The CCC does not regulate the land and water in San Francisco Bay. That area is under the jurisdiction of the BCDC.

Since 2008, the **San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC)** “has been the State agency responsible for leading the Bay Area’s preparedness for rising sea level, tides, and storm surge due to climate change.”⁶⁹ BCDC oversees the adaptation strategy to be used by the Bay Area’s regional agencies. All levels of government will need to collaborate with public and private property owners who are affected by rising sea level.⁷⁰ BCDC issues permits for work in the Bay or within 100 feet of the shoreline, including filling, dredging, dredged sediment disposal, shoreline development and other work. “A public hearing is mandatory for a major permit application⁷¹ and the application may be reviewed by the Commission’s Design Review Board and/or the Engineering Criteria Review Board.” BCDC’s permitting process also includes an emphasis on environmental justice.

City Awareness of Sea Level Rise

The 2014-15 Grand Jury SLR report “*Flooding Ahead: Planning for Sea Level Rise*”,⁷² made recommendations that contributed to the formation of OneShoreline. That report also made recommendations that SMC cities and towns include the threat of SLR in their General Plans.⁷³ The current Grand Jury looked at the General Plans of South San Francisco, Pacifica, Redwood City, Woodside, Menlo Park, and East Palo Alto, and found that all, except South San Francisco, had SLR in their General Plans. Not all of the General Plans covered SLR protection of transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities and hazardous material

⁶⁶ Lake and Streambed Alteration Program (ca.gov), <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Environmental-Review/LSA>

⁶⁷ California Coastal Commission, <https://www.coastal.ca.gov/whoweare.html>

⁶⁸ Planning & Permitting (ca.gov), <https://www.coastal.ca.gov/climate/slr/planning-permitting/>

⁶⁹ BCDC - about us (ca.gov), <https://www.bcdc.ca.gov/aboutus/>

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ BCDC PERMIT APPLICATION FORM, <https://www.bcdc.ca.gov/forms/appform.pdf>

⁷² Flooding Ahead: Planning for Sea Level Rise (sanmateocourt.org), http://www.sanmateocourt.org/documents/grand_jury/2014/sea_level_rise.pdf

⁷³ Recommendation 6 of *Flooding Ahead*, at pg. 18

sites. South San Francisco, which has active SLR projects, is in the process of amending its General Plan to include SLR.⁷⁴ For more information on the cities, see Appendix B.

This investigation also sought to determine whether city and town councils were aware of the nature of the SLR problem – its long-term impact and significant costs. Interviews with city employees revealed that, in general, the city and town councils, staff, and residents seem more aware of the impact of SLR now than they did six years ago. City representatives interviewed by this Grand Jury acknowledged the need to regularly update new council members on the SLR projects due to the prolonged time it takes for a SLR project to be designed, approved, funded, and built.⁷⁵

OneShoreline – SMC’s Future for Responding to Sea Level Rise

San Mateo County remains at risk from sea level rise and will continue to be for many generations. OneShoreline is the County’s special district with the mission to protect the County from SLR and flooding, and to work with cities, towns, and the County. Although it is just a year old, OneShoreline appears to be heading in the right direction. OneShoreline must be sustainably funded in order to do the work needed to protect San Mateo County from the unavoidable problems caused by sea level rise.

BEST PRACTICES

- Cities and towns can respond to SLR by looking beyond the immediate FEMA-based flood insurance criteria and require project designs for new developments take into account long-term SLR. A project should not be viewed in isolation; consideration must be given to how it might affect nearby structures.⁷⁶
- To build critical public support for sea level rise mitigation projects, public officials should demonstrate current and future sea level rise impacts to the community, emphasize the financial benefits of timely projects, and solicit community input in the choice of solutions to address the sea level rise problem.⁷⁷

FINDINGS

- F1. Sea level rise will seriously damage critical San Mateo County infrastructure and assets unless the County and its cities and towns prepare now.
- F2. Sea level rise infrastructure projects can take more than a decade to plan, fund and build.

⁷⁴ South San Francisco, Request for Proposals, General Plan 2040, January 11, 2019, p. 4, <https://www.ssf.net/Home/ShowDocument?id=14571>

⁷⁵ Grand Jury interviews.

⁷⁶ Grand Jury interviews.

⁷⁷ Vulnerability Study, *supra*, at p. 201

- F3. Complex federal and state regulations and procedures delay and increase the costs of already expensive sea level rise mitigation projects. They need to be revised.
- F4. Delaying sea level rise projects will increase costs.
- F5. To remain effective, OneShoreline needs steady, long-term, operational funding.
- F6. Coordination between neighboring jurisdictions is important to reduce costs and improve the effectiveness of a SLR project.
- F7. Competing budget priorities among the entities in a sea level rise project make the projects difficult to fund and manage, leading to risk of delays and missed deadlines.
- F8. Numerous hazardous material sites in the County must be protected from sea level rise flooding.
- F9. Storm surge and sea level rise threaten the County's wastewater treatment plants affecting everyone in the County – even inland County residents.
- F10. OneShoreline is uniquely positioned to augment San Mateo County's ability to combat sea level rise by its planning, funding, permitting expertise, and guidance.
- F11. Destruction of low-cost housing on the Bay and coast by flooding and erosion due to sea level rise will further increase inequities in communities such as Belle Haven (Menlo Park), East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and Pacifica.
- F12. OneShoreline effectively collaborates with the Office of Sustainability and others on public engagement campaigns to educate individuals on how sea level rise will affect San Mateo County.
- F13. A loan program to provide cities and towns funds for the required preliminary engineering necessary to obtain partial state or federal funding for SLR projects would be beneficial.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Grand Jury recommends:

- R1. At a public meeting, each city and town council, or board of supervisors should take at least one concrete action toward establishing a continuing funding source for OneShoreline, identify that action in response to this report, and potentially adopt a resolution expressing support for a parcel tax or property tax by June 30, 2022.
- R2. A coordinated lobbying strategy with participation by the County, by San Mateo County cities and towns, by OneShoreline, and by other interested Bay Area cities and counties for federal and state regulatory simplification by January 31, 2022.
- R3. OneShoreline consider establishing and administering a low interest revolving loan fund to enable jurisdictions to prepare the initial engineering and planning necessary to obtain federal and state funding for SLR projects, establishing such program by December 31, 2021.

R4. The County Board of Supervisors and each city and town council, should ensure that their general plans regarding SLR protection include transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous material sites by March 31, 2022.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code Section 933.05, the Grand Jury requests responses as follows from the indicated government entities.

Responses to the Findings:

OneShoreline’s board of directors should respond to Findings:

F1 through F13.

The County Board of Supervisors should respond to Findings:

F1 through F13.

The City and Town Councils (or Governing Bodies) should respond to Findings:

F1 through F13.

Per Government Code Section 933.05(a), “as to each grand jury **finding**, the responding person or entity shall indicate one of the following:

- 1) The respondent agrees with the finding.
- 2) The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefor.”

Responses to the Recommendations

OneShoreline’s board of directors should respond to Recommendations:

R2 and R3.

The County Board of Supervisors should respond to Recommendations:

R1, R2 and R4.

The City and Town Councils should respond to Recommendations:

R1, R2 and R4.

Per Government Code Section 933.05(b), “as to each grand jury **recommendation**, the responding person or entity shall report one of the following actions:

- 1) The recommendation has been implemented, **with a summary regarding the implemented action.**
- 2) The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, **with a timeframe for implementation.**
- 3) The recommendation requires further analysis, **with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe** for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. **This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.**
- 4) The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, **with an explanation therefor.”**

The governing bodies indicated above should be aware that the comment or response of the governing body must be conducted subject to the notice, agenda, and open meeting requirements of the Brown Act.

METHODOLOGY

Documents

Numerous reports, news articles, and webpages were consulted in preparation of this report, from the cities and towns, the County, OneShoreline, as well as the California Legislative Analyst’s Office and other organizations. For a complete list see the Bibliography below.

Interviews

Reports issued by the Civil Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code Section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Civil Grand Jury.

All interviews were conducted via videoconference using Zoom or Google Meets, or via written questions. For this report the Grand Jury interviewed:

- City or Town managers or members of city or town councils.
- At least one County Supervisor.
- At least one member of the Board of the San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District, aka OneShoreline.
- At least one member of the staff of OneShoreline.
- At least one officer of an Environmental Organization.
- At least one consultant with knowledge of FEMA and the Army Corps.

- Elected Legislators at the State and Federal Level or their designated staff.
- A representative of the Army Corps of Engineers.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- California Assembly, 2019, Mullin, “AB 825 AB-825 San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District.”
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AB825
- California Assembly, 2021, Garcia & Mullin, et al. “AB 1500 - Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparation, Flood Protection, Extreme Heat Mitigation, and Workforce Development Bond Act of 2022.”
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB1500
- Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC). Undated. “About us”
<https://www.bcdc.ca.gov/aboutus/> accessed April 2021.
- Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC). Adapting to Rising Tides website. <https://www.adaptingtorisingtides.org/> accessed May 1, 2021.
- Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC). Undated. “BCDC Application Form” <https://www.bcdc.ca.gov/forms/appform.pdf>
- Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC). ART Bay Shoreline Flood Explorer (adaptingtorisingtides.org). <https://explorer.adaptingtorisingtides.org/explorer>, Accessed May 15, 2021.
- Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) and Metropolitan Transportation Commission/Association of Bay Area Governments (MTC/ABAG). 2020, March. “Adapting to Rising Tides Bay Area: Regional Sea Level Rise Vulnerability and Adaptation Study.” San Francisco CA. http://www.adaptingtorisingtides.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/ARTBayArea_Main_Report_Final_March2020_ADA.pdf
- California Coastal Commission. Undated. “Our Mission: Protecting & Enhancing California's Coast” <https://www.coastal.ca.gov/whoweare.html> accessed April 2021.
- California Coastal Commission. 2018. *California Coastal Commission - Sea Level Rise Policy Guidance - Interpretive Guidelines for Addressing Sea Level Rise in Local Coastal Programs and Coastal Development Permits*. Agency Policy Guidance, San Francisco: State of California – Natural Resources Agency. [California Coastal Commission Sea Level Rise Policy Guidance](https://www.coastal.ca.gov/sea-level-rise-policy-guidance)
- California Coastal Commission. Undated. “Sea Level Rise: Planning & Permitting.”
<https://www.coastal.ca.gov/climate/slr/planning-permitting>
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Undated. “California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Review” <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Environmental-Review/CEQA>

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Undated. “Lake and Streambed Alteration Program” <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Environmental-Review/LSA> accessed May 2021.
- California State Coastal Conservancy, San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority, “San Francisco Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team (BRRIT)” <https://www.sfbayrestore.org/san-francisco-bay-restoration-regulatory-integration-team-brrit>
<https://www.sfbayrestore.org/san-francisco-bay-restoration-regulatory-integration-team-brrit>
- C/CAG, *Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency Agency Proposal*, Dec. 21, 2018, 6.3_A3-Water-Agency-Proposal_122118.pdf (ca.gov) https://ccag.ca.gov/wp/content/uploads/2019/01/6.3_A3-Water-Agency-Proposal_122118.pdf
- City Clerk, Foster City. n.d. *Measure P / Foster City California*. Accessed May 14, 2021. <https://www.fostercity.org/cityclerk/page/measure-p>
- City of South San Francisco. January 11, 2019. “Request for Proposals, General Plan 2040 Comprehensive Zoning Code Update Environmental Impact Report” <https://www.ssf.net/Home/ShowDocument?id=14571>
- City of Pacifica, Planning Department. “General Plan Update Documents” https://www.cityofpacifica.org/depts/planning/general_plan_update/default.asp, accessed April 2021.
- Congressional Research Service. July 20, 2018. “U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: An Overview” https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/R45265.html#_Toc519853442, accessed May 2021.
- County Manager’s Office, County of San Mateo. Press Release: “May 19, 2020 - New Director of Sustainability: San Mateo County on “Front Lines” of Regional Challenges” <https://cmo.smcgov.org/press-release/may-19-2020-new-director-sustainability-san-mateo-county-%E2%80%9Cfront-lines%E2%80%9D-regional>
- Dusterhoff, Scott, Katie McKnight, Letitia Grenier, and Nate Kauffman. 2021. “Sediment for Survival: A Strategy for the Resilience of Bay Wetlands in the Lower San Francisco Estuary.” April. Accessed April 15, 2021. <https://www.sfei.org/documents/sediment-for-survival>
- Economic Development Research Group, Inc., 2019. “2019 Economic Impact Study of San Francisco International Airport.” https://www.flysfo.com/sites/default/files/SFO_Economic_Impact_Report_2019.pdf
- Ehlers, Rachel. 2019, December. *Preparing for Rising Seas: How the State Can Help Support Local Coastal Adaptation Efforts*. LAO Publication, Sacramento: Legislative Analyst's Office. <https://lao.ca.gov/reports/2019/4121/coastal-adaptation-121019.pdf>

- Ehlers, Rachel. 2020. *What Threat Does Sea-Level Rise Pose to California*. LAO Publication , Sacramento: Legislative Analyst's Office. <https://lao.ca.gov/reports/2020/4261/sea-level-rise-081020.pdf>
- Enrique, Alex, Isabelle Foster, and Will La Dow. 2018, March. *Adaptation Planning for Sea Level Rise in San Mateo County - An Examination of 11 Bayside Cities*. Consulting, Stanford, California: Stanford Public Policy, prepared for the San Mateo County Office of Sustainability.
- FEMA. 2019, November. “Guidance for Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping - Levees.” FEMA Guidance Document. https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-02/Levee_Guidance_Nov_2019_v2.pdf
- FEMA. Undated. “Cooperating Technical Partners and Engineers” <https://www.fema.gov/flood-maps/living-levees/technical-partners-engineers> accessed May 2021.
- FEMA. Undated. “Flood Insurance” <https://www.fema.gov/flood-insurance>, accessed April 2021.
- FEMA. Undated. “Flood Maps” <https://www.fema.gov/flood-maps> , accessed March 2021
- FEMA. Undated. “Risk Mapping, Assessment and Planning (Risk MAP).” <https://www.fema.gov/flood-maps/tools-resources/risk-map> accessed March 2021
- Foster City, City Clerk, Measure P, Ordinance 613, <https://www.fostercity.org/cityclerk/page/measure-p>
- Foster City, Community Development. “General Plan” <https://www.fostercity.org/commdev/page/general-plan> , accessed April 2021
- Foster City, Levee Improvements Project, Frequently Asked Questions, <https://fostercitylevee.org/faqs/>
- League of Women Voters of South San Mateo County. “2021 Climate Resilience Forums” <https://my.lwv.org/california/south-san-mateo-county> accessed May 5, 2021.
- Morrison, James. August 5, 2019. “Who Will Pay for the Huge Costs of Holding Back Rising Seas?” , Yale School of the Environment. <https://e360.yale.edu/features/who-will-pay-for-the-huge-costs-of-holding-back-rising-seas>, accessed May 2021.
- National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce. “Is sea level rising?” <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/sealevel.html>
- NOAA Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce. “About Us” <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/about-us> , accessed May 2021.
- OneShoreline. (undated). “*Bayfront Canal & Atherton Channel Flood Protection and Ecosystem Restoration Project*” <https://oneshoreline.org/projects/bayfront-atherton-flood-protection/> , accessed May 15, 2021.

- OneShoreline. April 26, 2021. Board of Directors Meeting presentation. <https://oneshoreline.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/FSLRRD-Board-mtg.-4.26.2021-presentation.pdf>
- OneShoreline. Dec. 10, 2020. *FY2021 Audited Financial Statements*, https://oneshoreline.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/FSLRRD-FY20_Financial_Statement.pdf
- OneShoreline. 2020. “Our History – OneShoreline” , accessed January 2021. <https://oneshoreline.org/our-history/>
- OneShoreline. 2021. “Current Project List.” <https://oneshoreline.org/projects/> accessed May 2021.
- OneShoreline. June 2020.“ San Mateo County Flood & Sea Level Rise Resiliency District Fiscal Year 2020-21 Operating Budget - Approved June 8, 2020” <https://oneshoreline.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/FSLRRD-FY2020-21-Operations-and-Flood-Zones-Budgets-Approved-June-8-2020.pdf>
- Orange County Register. January 23, 2016. “Pacifica declares local emergency after damage to sea wall” <https://www.ocregister.com/2016/01/23/pacifica-declares-local-emergency-after-damage-to-sea-wall>
- Papendick, Hilary, Jasneet Sharma, Carolyn Raider, Avana Andrade, Emi Hashizume, Montserrat Plascencia, Sally Prowitt, et al. 2018, March. *County of San Mateo, Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment*. Final Report, Redwood City: County of San Mateo. https://seachangesmc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2018-03-12_SLR_VA_Report_2.2018_WEB_FINAL.pdf
- Redwood City, Planning Services. “General Plan” <https://www.redwoodcity.org/departments/community-development-department/planning-housing/planning-services/general-plan-precise-plans/general-plan>
- Resource Conservation District of San Mateo County, About page, <http://www.sanmateorcd.org/about/>
- San Francisco Region, California Water Boards. Undated. “Permits we issue.” https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay/water_issues/programs/permits.html
- San Mateo County Grand Jury, 2015, “Flooding Ahead: Planning for Sea Level Rise”, http://www.sanmateocourt.org/documents/grand_jury/2014/sea_level_rise.pdf
- San Mateo County, Office of Sustainability. (undated). “*Contact Us – SMC Office of Sustainability (smcsustainability.org)*”. Accessed May 19, 2021. <https://www.smcsustainability.org/contact-us/>
- San Mateo County, Office of Sustainability. (undated) “Sea Change San Mateo County” <https://seachangesmc.org/> accessed April 2021.

- San Mateo County, Office of Sustainability. (undated) “Youth Climate Amabassadors Leadership Program.” <https://www.smcsustainability.org/climate-change/youth-climate-ambassador/> accessed April 2021.
- Tam, Laura and Julie Beagle. Feb. 20, 2020. “Four Key Actions to Solve for Coastal Flooding and Sea Level Rise in the Bay Area: a Governance Proposal.” <https://www.spur.org/news/2020-02-20/four-key-actions-solve-coastal-flooding-and-sea-level-rise-bay-area-governance>
- Stark, Kevin, Ezra David Romero. “What Can the Bay Area Do About Rising Seas? East Palo Alto Has a Few Great Answers.” April 22, 2021. KQED. <https://www.kqed.org/science/1973805/climate-solutions-in-east-palo-alto>
- United States Army Corps of Engineers, “Regulatory Permits” San Francisco District > Missions > Regulatory > How to Apply for a Permit (army.mil) <https://www.spn.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory/How-to-Apply-for-a-Permit/> accessed May 2021
- United States Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. “U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: San Mateo County, California” 2019. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/sanmateocountycalifornia>
- United States Congress. 2020. Water Resources Development Act of 2020, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF11700>
- University of Copenhagen. 2021. “New Research Shows Sea Level Will Rise Faster Than Previously Thought.” *scitechdaily.com*, February 2, 2021. <https://scitechdaily.com/new-research-shows-sea-level-will-rise-faster-than-previously-thought/>
- Woodside, Town of, Planning Dept. “General Plan 2012” <https://www.woodsidetown.org/planning/general-plan-2012-0> accessed March 2021.

Appendix A: Selected Demographics for the County and Certain Cities⁷⁸

Appendix A: Selected Demographics for the County and certain Cities							
CITY	POPULATION (2019 est.)	DENSITY (per square mile)	ELEVATION (in feet)	Housing Units	Owner-occupied housing (%)	Housing Density (per square mile)	Median Household Income (\$)
East Palo Alto	29,593	11,596	20	7,819	42.8	2,993	44,006
Foster City	33,997	8,138	7	12,458	57.9	3,317	135,470
Menlo Park	34,138	3,271	72	13,085	56.1	1,337	82,609
Pacifica	38,984	2,941	82	14,523	68.3	1,147	31,737
Redwood City	85,784	3,956	20	29,167	50.6	1,502	69,679
South SF	67,408	6,624	16	21,814	60.2	2,386	60,764
Woodside	5,542	451	387	2,157	87.1	184	212,917
SM County	767,423	2,753	n/a	284,471	Not available	789	69,306

⁷⁸ US Census Bureau, 2019, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/sanmateocountycalifornia> and other sources.

Appendix B – Examination of Selected Cities & SFO

This Grand Jury looked at certain cities and towns selected to represent the risks faced by the County as a whole. The cities are: South San Francisco, Pacifica, Redwood City, Woodside, Menlo Park, and East Palo Alto. This report added Foster City and the San Francisco International Airport, given their unique relevance to SLR today.

South San Francisco has levees, floodwalls, two wastewater treatment plants, a sealed hazardous waste area, parks and trails, a quarter of all outpatient health care facilities, acres of wetlands, Caltrain tracks and Highway 101, and a large biotech industrial district right on the SF Bay. All are at risk of SLR or flooding. Colma Creek frequently floods and has an established flood zone with a connected property tax.

SSF's General Plan, amended in 2018, does not mention SLR. In a recent presentation by OneShoreline, it was mentioned that OneShoreline was working with SSF to update its general plan regrading SLR and flooding.⁷⁹

South San Francisco takes several approaches to sea level rise:

- Development planning and zoning for the future, utilizing SLR predictive models.
- Community awareness of the problems and recognizing the likelihood of needing resident's financial support for sea level rise mitigation projects in the future.
- Using consultants to work with federal agencies (e.g., the Army Corps of Engineers) in order to receive funding and expertise for project planning, design, and construction.
- Remediation of bay water seepage into existing landfills as the result of sea level rise.

Many parts of South San Francisco are in FEMA flood zones. South San Francisco has been proactive in seeking solutions to its own sea level rise challenges and hired consultants to work with the Army Corps of Engineers on a project to protect a \$1billion water treatment plant located on the shoreline which cannot be moved. The funding, when working with the Army Corps, breaks down as follows: for design and development – SSF pays 70% and Army Corps 30%; for construction – SSF pays 30% and Army Corps 70%.

South San Francisco expects to collaborate with OneShoreline on projects such as the reconstruction of Colma Creek, which is funded via an existing property tax. SSF is also planning a water reclamation project and will look to OneShoreline for both funding and construction assistance.⁸⁰

Pacifica is susceptible to significant impacts due to SLR. High tides and severe storms result in shoreline erosion, especially in northern Pacifica. The high cliffs are particularly susceptible to erosion and required the city to condemn and remove apartment houses and infrastructure (e.g.,

⁷⁹ Presentation by the League of Women Voters, OneShoreline, and others, April 8, 2021.

⁸⁰ Grand Jury interviews & city documents.

wastewater, telecom). Permanent fixes are complicated and expensive. Pacifica must also be prepared for tsunamis.



Properties along Esplanade Ave can be seen perched on the edge of an eroding cliff Dec. 23, 2015, in Pacifica, Calif. The center property is vacant.
(Leah Millis/San Francisco Chronicle)

Pacifica adopted a Sea Level Rise Adaptation Plan because of the 2018 Sea Level Vulnerability Assessment. The city of Pacifica is looking to implement coastal resiliency strategies and policies that are consistent with Pacifica General Plan and Local Coastal Programs.

Pacifica’s General Plan recognizes the importance of global climate change and its impact on SLR. The plan describes how SLR affects coastal neighborhoods and habitats and acknowledges that “coastline-altering structures [may] be needed in the future to protect new development.” It recommends periodically conducting studies of the expected rate of coastal flooding and erosion.⁸¹ Pacifica has popular beaches, canyons, creeks and “mini-watersheds” that contribute to

⁸¹ City of Pacifica, CA -- General Plan Documents,
https://www.cityofpacificca.org/depts/planning/general_plan_update/default.asp

flooding from the inland areas. It constructed an Equalization Basin to handle wastewater overflow to prevent sewage from entering the ocean.

Pacifica must work closely with the California Coastal Commission, which regulates any development near the coast, causing delays when evaluating new projects. It has a Local Coastal Land Use Plan which specifies the land uses and an Implementation Program containing zoning and other elements.

Storm surges frequently cover the Pacifica Pier, a present-day reality of SLR, as shown in the photograph below.



Huge waves batter the coast on Beach Boulevard in Pacifica Jan. 23, 2016. The city of Pacifica has declared a local emergency due to El Nino storm damage.⁸²

Foster City, built entirely on bay fill, is protected by levees and is currently raising those levees to avoid being mapped as a flood zone requiring flood insurance. The \$85 million project is being funded by a 2018 voter passed property tax.

⁸² Pacifica declares local emergency after damage to sea wall – Orange County Register (ocregister.com), <https://www.ocregister.com/2016/01/23/pacifica-declares-local-emergency-after-damage-to-sea-wall/>

Foster City’s General Plan discusses SLR and describes other contributors to coastal flooding: tides, storm surge, wind-driven waves, El Nino events, and fresh-water flooding. The Plan recognizes secondary environmental conditions (rainfall, soil conditions, etc.); the impact of human mitigation measures (levees, control channels, and other flood-control features); and addresses specific hazards, studies, past mitigation efforts, as well as an “evaluation of future sea level rise.”⁸³

Woodside is not at *direct* risk from SLR and has minimal flooding risk. Woodside’s General Plan does not consider SLR to be much of a threat to the town, local infrastructure, or residents.⁸⁴ However, the plan acknowledges it has a vested interest in SLR mitigation given that its sole wastewater treatment facility is the Silicon Valley Clean Water Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant located in Redwood City, a facility extremely vulnerable to SLR. “Everyone needs to flush their toilets.”⁸⁵

Woodside would also be impacted by flooding of Highway/U.S. 101, other transportation resources, the loss of County industry and employers, and other infrastructure such as local airports, hospitals, and County government facilities.

Redwood City is currently working on several SLR projects namely, the Bayfront Canal and Atherton Channel Flood Improvement project with Menlo Park, Atherton, the County and OneShoreline. Improvements to the levees around Redwood Shores are being planned, with \$500,000 initially budgeted for preliminary design. Also in progress is a salt pond restoration project next to Redwood Shores which will help reduce flooding during storms and high tides and protect the mouth of Redwood Creek. The City is working with property owners in the Seaport Centre and Seaport Plaza areas to raise those levees to 14 feet (at the highest point), to meet FEMA standards. Property owners are covering design and construction costs of approximately \$13.5 million, while the City will be responsible for operation and maintenance.

The Redwood City General Plan cites specific SLR hazards posed to the Port of Redwood City, and the extensive development of residential, industrial, critical infrastructure, and coastal ecosystems on both sides of U.S. 101. The plan discusses:

- discouragement of development on land where SLR cannot be adequately addressed;
- consideration and mitigation of SLR in the planning process;
- supporting research and preparing adaptation plans for the effects of climate change;
- intent to consult with public agencies responsible for flood control; and
- preparing public awareness campaigns about climate change and how residents might become actively involved in solutions.

Redwood City plans to institute several SLR programs:

- Sea Level Rise Response Strategy;

⁸³ General Plan | Foster City California, <https://www.fostercity.org/commdev/page/general-plan>

⁸⁴ General Plan 2012 | Town of Woodside California (woodsidetown.org), <https://www.woodsidetown.org/planning/general-plan-2012-0>

⁸⁵ Grand Jury interview.

- Climate Change Consultation and Flooding Consultation;
- Upgrade levees to FEMA standards; and
- Improvements in the city’s abilities to contain and process stormwater.⁸⁶

Redwood City looks to OneShoreline to help on regional efforts and projects that span multiple jurisdictions and require the coordination of various agencies (FEMA, Army Corps, CA Environmental Protection Agency, Bay Conservation and Development Commission, etc.), as well as establishing uniform sea level rise standards throughout the County. Of special importance is the need for Redwood City to update the Redwood Shores levee, which, if not accomplished within a certain timeframe, will result in a large residential area being re-mapped by FEMA into a special flood hazard area, requiring homeowners carry expensive flood insurance.

Menlo Park understands that it must work cooperatively with its neighbors to solve the shared threat of SLR. “Water is fungible – it moves around.”⁸⁷

It is working with OneShoreline and the San Francisquito Joint Powers Authority (SFJPA) to address SLR and flooding. OneShoreline is currently leading project development pursuant to Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Bayfront Canal with Redwood City, Atherton, Menlo Park and the County. Menlo Park is also involved with OneShoreline and the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority to address concerns over flooding from the creek and the Bay in Menlo Park.

Menlo Park’s General Plan recognizes the need to “prepare the community for potential adverse impacts related to climate change, such as sea level rise...,” and includes a discussion of funding options. It acknowledges concerns of mortgage holders in the FEMA 100-year floodplain over the cost of mandatory flood insurance. Long-term planning for construction in SLR-vulnerable areas must be regulated to consider how development may be affected by SLR.

The Belle Haven area, located between the Bay and Highway 101, is particularly vulnerable to flooding from sea level rise. Menlo Park is working with OneShoreline, Redwood City, East Palo Alto, Atherton, PG&E and Facebook, to secure grants and other funding needed for levees to protect bayfront areas, including a PG&E substation – toward which PG&E has offered to contribute \$10 million.

East Palo Alto is laser-focused on finding solutions to its flooding threats. “The City of East Palo Alto has 335 acres of land at risk in the baseline scenario, 714 acres in the mid-level scenario, and 992 acres in the high-end scenario. A significant portion of East Palo Alto's population (nearly 60%) is vulnerable to sea level rise in the mid-level scenario.”⁸⁸ It is directly

⁸⁶ Redwood City General Plan.

⁸⁷ Grand Jury interview.

⁸⁸ Papendick, Hilary, Jasneet Sharma, Carolyn Raider, Avana Andrade, Emi Hashizume, Montserrat Plascencia, Sally Prowitt, et al. 2018, March. *County of San Mateo, Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment*. Final Report, Redwood City: County of San Mateo, at p. 130.

impacted both by SLR and freshwater flooding from the San Francisquito Creek. It has a history of involvement, with the SFCJPA, to address creek flooding and has SLR projects in the early stages of development.

East Palo Alto's General Plan discusses educating its residents to take personal steps to combat climate change as a basic approach to mitigating SLR. The plan addresses the history of flooding and future hazards posed by the proximity of several neighborhoods to San Francisquito Creek. East Palo Alto considers the inevitability of SLR in its general assessment and mitigation planning for all flooding.

East Palo Alto has already been hit hard by flooding, especially around "the Village." Many of its neighborhoods are in FEMA flood zones, obliging homeowners to purchase costly flood insurance. As the city seeks to approve new development, it requires builders to "build higher" to ensure that new construction is not compromised by flooding threats.

East Palo Alto has recently been awarded a grant for sea wall construction. The City, with the assistance of OneShoreline, is working on a project with three "reaches":

Reach 1: Protect the Garden area of East Palo Alto – this project is complete.

Reach 2: Replace bridges, including the Pope / Chaucer Bridge. OneShoreline is providing design assistance along with the Army Corps of Engineers. This reach is currently looking for funding.

Reach 3: Exploring options about the ongoing upstream protection of Stanford University.

San Francisco International Airport (SFO)

San Francisco International Airport, while owned by the City and County of San Francisco, is in San Mateo County. This is the single most valuable asset in all the County. "In FY 2018, SFO directly accounted for almost \$11 billion in business revenues, which supported more than 46,000 jobs at the Airport. Off-Airport businesses that depend directly on air service at SFO ... raise the direct Airport contribution to the Bay Area economy to \$42.5 billion in business sales, with more than 188,000 jobs."⁸⁹

SFO borders two cities and the County. The Airport is in the planning stage of a \$500 million project to increase the height of its levees. SFO has its own source of funding for SLR protection via airline ticket fees and other fees. SFO plans to work with OneShoreline to coordinate its SLR protection with its neighbors.

⁸⁹ SFO_Economic_Impact_Report_2019.pdf (flysfo.com), at p. 1, https://www.flysfo.com/sites/default/files/SFO_Economic_Impact_Report_2019.pdf

Appendix C – Some of OneShoreline’s Current Projects

OneShoreline is involved in several flooding and sea level rise projects, many already in progress in various stages when the district was formed. Some of the currently active projects are summarized below. (For more details on any of these projects, check the OneShoreline website.⁹⁰)

Bay Shoreline Project: Burlingame, Millbrae, and San Francisco International Airport

The long-term objective is to raise shoreline and creek bank elevations along 1.6 miles of Bay shoreline and 1.5 miles of creeks. The project will remove properties from the current FEMA 100-year floodplain and protect them from an additional roughly six feet of sea level rise – a water level approximately 10 feet above current daily high tide. SFO has a revenue stream and will protect the airport. OneShoreline’s role is, in part, to coordinate with SFO and the neighboring cities, as well as to help the cities design and finance their projects.

Bay Shoreline Project: Redwood Shores and San Carlos

Redwood Shores, built upon marshes of San Francisco Bay, is protected by a system of levees. In 2010, Redwood City raised the height of over three miles of levee surrounding Redwood Shores. In April 2020, FEMA notified Redwood City that the levees had to be raised again, or a certain residential area would be designated as a Special Flood Hazard Area requiring approximately 4,700 households to purchase flood insurance.

Bayfront Canal & Atherton Channel Flood Protection and Ecosystem Restoration Project

The Atherton Channel converges with the Bayfront Canal at the border of Redwood City and Menlo Park and empties into San Francisco Bay through a tide control structure. High tides keep the Canal and Channel from draining to the Bay. Even minor rainfall resulted in flooding of nearby mobile home parks and businesses 40 times over the past 70 years, most recently in 2017.

In 2017, Redwood City, Menlo Park, Atherton, and the County signed an MOU to establish funding for the design, environmental documentation, and land access agreements. This project consists of an underground culvert to divert excess flow from the Atherton Channel and the Bayfront Canal into managed ponds within the Ravenswood Complex of the South Bay Salt Ponds Restoration Project (SBSRP). In 2020, OneShoreline assumed the lead role to complete the project working with the cities and the County.

Colma Creek, San Bruno Creek, Navigable Slough, and nearby areas of the shoreline

Colma Creek, San Bruno Creek, and Navigable Slough are connected waterways within the cities of South San Francisco and San Bruno that are prone to flooding, especially during high tide levels in the San Francisco Bay. Colma Creek and San Bruno Creek comprise two of the three long-standing active flood zones that OneShoreline inherited from the former flood control

⁹⁰ <https://oneshoreline.org/projects/>

district. OneShoreline has conducted a survey of these studies and potential projects to establish potential priorities for upcoming projects.

Countywide Flood Early Warning System and Flood Emergency Action Plans

OneShoreline is managing a coordinated, countywide flood emergency preparedness and response program in collaboration with the Sheriff's Office and the County Office of Emergency Services. The program upgrades and expands the region's flood warning system (measurement and alarms) for emergency responders and the general public. The program includes extensive public outreach and emergency response personnel training, and the creation of a publicly accessible flood monitoring webpage.

OneShoreline is also leading the creation of site-specific Flood Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) to better define and coordinate emergency responsibilities before, during, and after flood events that cross jurisdictional boundaries for the following areas: Bayfront Canal and Atherton Channel; Belmont Creek; and Navigable Slough, Colma Creek, and San Bruno Creek.

1 **Appendix D – Comparing the Old District to OneShoreline**

Comparing the Old Flood Control District to OneShoreline		
	Flood Control District	OneShoreline
Formal name	San Mateo County Flood Control District	San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District
Year Established	1959	2019
Governance	Board of Supervisors of the County	Independent seven-member Board of Directors appointed from elected County and City officials ⁹¹
Staffing	None; borrowed from County and consultants	As of May 2021, full time staff of four professionals, and consultants
Area of operation	3 Areas near creeks ⁹²	Entire County
Focus	Flooding – 3 creeks	SLR and Flooding
Operating budget	No “operating” budget	\$1.5 million per year (2020-2022)
Funding	Property taxes from 3 flood zones by creeks	Operational: County & cities for approximately 3 years (with 2-year optional extension) Property taxes from three creek-side neighborhoods
Project Budgets	Flood zone property taxes, with some grants and matching	Flood zone property taxes, with some grants and matching, other agreements, and other assessments approved by voters

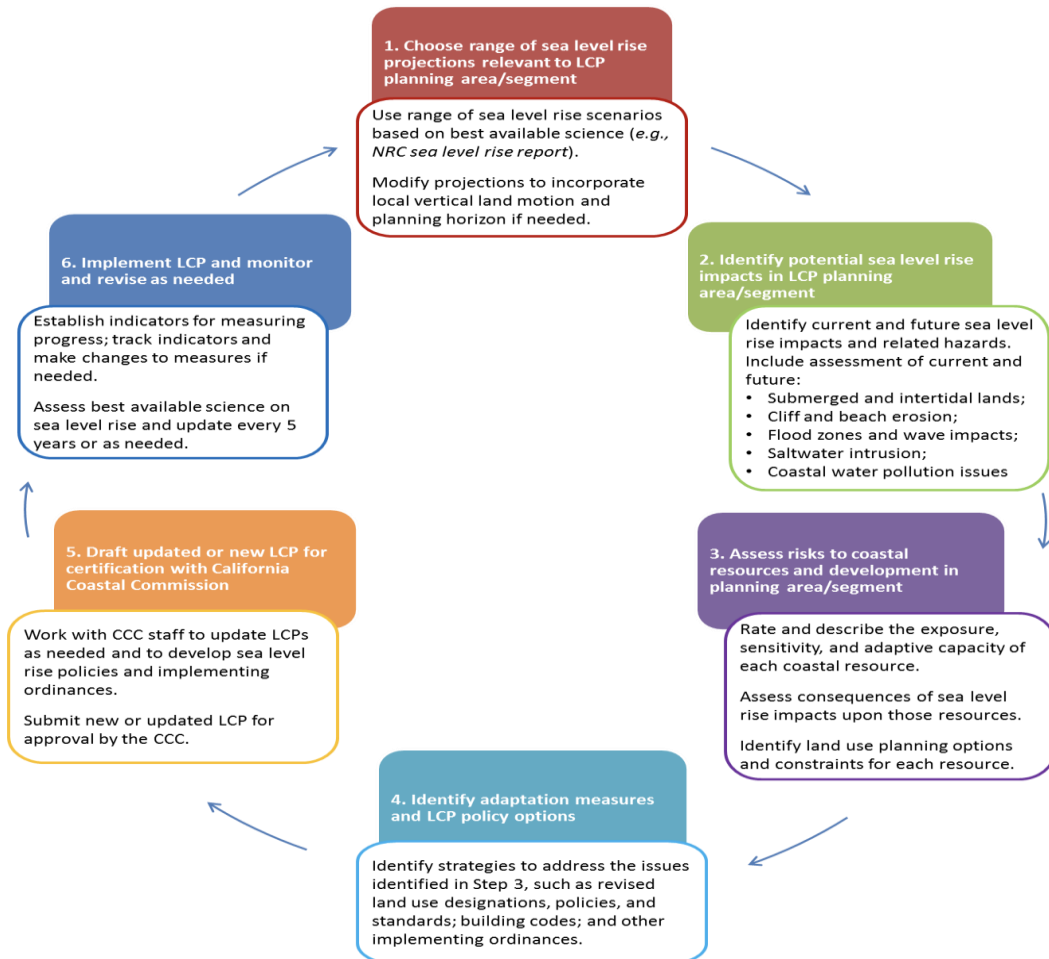
2

⁹¹ Section 4.5(a) of the San Mateo County Flood Control Act, as amended.

⁹² The three creeks are Colma, San Bruno, and San Francisquito.

Appendix E – California Coastal Commission Regulatory Diagrams

As an illustration of the complexity of the regulatory process, a chart from the “CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION SEA LEVEL RISE POLICY GUIDANCE - Interpretive Guidelines for Addressing Sea Level Rise in Local Coastal Programs and Coastal Development Permits”⁹³ is shown below.⁹⁴ While this only deals specifically with the Coastal Commission, a similarly complex iterative regulatory process will also be encountered with the BCDC, the Army Corps, and other agencies.



⁹³ California Coastal Commission, “CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION SEA LEVEL RISE POLICY GUIDANCE - Interpretive Guidelines for Addressing Sea Level Rise in Local Coastal Programs and Coastal Development Permits,” updated Nov. 7, 2018. Available at https://documents.coastal.ca.gov/assets/slr/guidance/2018/0_Full_2018AdoptedSLRGuidanceUpdate.pdf

⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 95.

APPENDIX F – The Army Corps of Engineers Procedures – “Simplified”⁹⁵

The sequential steps that are involved in an Army Corps flood control project include:

1. Non-federal sponsor identifies problem and requests feasibility study. The non-federal sponsor, typically a city, county, or state, has the legal and financial capability to provide its share of the project cost.
2. Congressional authorization to study required, and local sponsor submits letter of intent.
3. Funds appropriated and study authorized - funds can be requested by Army Corps from President’s budget, or Congress can appropriate funds.
4. Study process involves identifying problems, opportunities, objectives, and constraints, potential alternative plans, and identifies the:
 - a. National Economic Development (NED) based on maximizing net benefits relative to costs. Benefits are primarily avoiding economic damages from flooding. The costs are those of constructing and maintaining the project.
 - b. National Ecosystem Restoration (NER) alternative.
 - c. Local sponsors may identify plans beyond the NED or NER and can include those at their own cost; a levee built higher than what the NED plan included, for example
5. Draft integrated feasibility report which includes a draft environmental compliance plan.
6. Review of the draft by:
 - a. the public;
 - b. resource agencies;
 - c. stakeholders; and
 - d. Army Corps internal legal, policy and technical.
7. Recommended Plan includes greater level of design, economic, engineering, environmental, and other technical details.
8. Final Feasibility Study Report, including environmental.
 - a. Recommends project authorization.
9. Congressional Authorization and construction funding required.

The Army Corps in addition to looking primarily to avoid economic damages from flooding also evaluates based on:

- National Economic Benefit;
- Environmental Quality;
- Regional Economic Development;
- Other Social Effects;
- Views of the public;
- Federal regulatory agencies;
- State regulatory agencies; and
- Stakeholders.

⁹⁵ Grand Jury interview.

Civil works studies and projects compete nationally for congressional appropriations. The Army Corps also has a set of nine existing authorities under the Continuing Authority Program (CAP) to plan, design, and construct water resources projects of limited scope and complexity. CAP studies and projects do not require project-specific authorization from Congress. Potentially applicable CAP authorities applicable to coastal and fluvial water resources problems include Section 103 (Beach erosion and storm risk reduction); Section 204 (Beneficial Reuse of Dredge Material); Section 205 (Flood risk management); and possibly others.

October 26, 2021

The Honorable Judge Amarra A. Lee
Presiding Judge
San Mateo County Superior Court
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063

City of Belmont Response to the August 11, 2021 Civil Grand Jury Report

Dear Judge Lee:

On behalf of the Belmont City Council, I am submitting the following responses to the San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury Report titled “San Mateo County: California’s Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise” released on August 11, 2021 (“Report”). The response that follows detailing the Grand Jury Findings and Recommendations was presented to and approved by the City Council at its regular meeting on October 26, 2021.

The capacity and activities of OneShoreline are the focus of the Report and whether the organization is on course to adequately address the sea level rise challenge that has been assigned to it, and does it have the support it needs? Some solutions are sought in the form of the Civil Grand Jury’s four recommendations, most of which rely on the future actions of local governments and taxpayers more so than the OneShoreline organization. As requested by the Civil Grand Jury, this response indicates whether the City agrees with, partially agrees, or disagrees with each of the Report’s thirteen Findings and responds to Report Recommendations R1, R2 and R4.

Broadly speaking, the City agrees with the Report findings. However, there are number of significant issues as highlighted in the Report, among others not mentioned in the Report, which need robust engagement by the OneShoreline to bring about public education and ultimately taxpayer support.

Development of a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) - At the time of its creation, broad support was created for the new OneShoreline organization not only to address SLR, but also to better coordinate regional water quality, stormwater requirements, and develop a regional capital improvement plan (CIP) to assist with prioritization of programs and projects. Creation of such plan should be an important element of a well-coordinated effort to identify the needs, and cost estimates for the regional SLR projects. This plan should identify where we build, retreat, fortify, or restore habitat as tools to mitigate SLR. Absent this CIP, asking voters to support Recommendation 1 in the next nine months becomes very difficult, simply because there’s no way of knowing how exactly our city or the region will benefit and which projects are needed most, let alone how much they cost.

the environment is what is most needed and most lacking. Building resilience to future climate conditions will be easier and less costly by planning for it today.

F5. To remain effective, OneShoreline needs steady, long-term, operational funding.

Belmont: The City agrees with this finding. Without a long-term, stable source of funds for its operations, OneShoreline cannot meet its objective to make all of San Mateo County resilient to climate change impacts. OneShoreline needs to focus on developing a broad, comprehensive CIP with cost estimates so that all parties, but especially the public, are well-informed as to what they'll be getting, if and when they are asked to tax themselves to fund sea level rise, stormwater, and flooding resilience.

F6. Coordination between neighboring jurisdictions is important to reduce costs and improve the effectiveness of a SLR project.

Belmont: The City agrees with this finding. The ability of OneShoreline to work collaboratively and effectively to secure funding and deliver on larger scale multi-jurisdictional projects is fundamental to our regional resiliency efforts.

F7. Competing budget priorities among the entities in a sea level rise project make the projects difficult to fund and manage, leading to risk of delays and missed deadlines.

Belmont: The City neither agrees nor disagrees with the finding as we are unaware of what other local jurisdictions have undertaken in this regard. However, all government functions, including projects to protect against sea level rise, must compete with other budget priorities. A comprehensive needs assessment and commensurate CIP to address and estimate costs and funding sources associated with those needs will first need to be developed to better understand what exactly is needed and what the priorities are.

F8. Numerous hazardous material sites in the County must be protected from sea level rise flooding.

Belmont: The City agrees with this finding. The 2018 Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment found that nearly half of all hazard material sites in the County (183 sites, including four Superfund sites) are at risk from the current FEMA 100-year tide and approximately six feet of sea level rise.

F9. Storm surge and sea level rise threaten the County's wastewater treatment plants affecting everyone in the County – even inland County residents.

Belmont: The City agrees with this finding. The 2018 Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment found that seven of the nine wastewater treatment plants in this County will be substantially impacted by the current FEMA 100-year storm plus approximately six feet of sea level rise. The need to protect wastewater facilities is high, yet no plan as to how this should occur as been developed.

- F10. OneShoreline is uniquely positioned to augment San Mateo County’s ability to combat sea level rise by its planning, funding, permitting expertise, and guidance.
- Belmont: The City *partially agrees* with this finding. All jurisdictions in the County partnered to start OneShoreline and fund its initial three years. OneShoreline’s mission goes well beyond sea level rise, although SLR may be the most critical portion of the mission. The organization will only be as successful as its planning, messaging, project prioritization, and yet to be developed multi-faceted CIP and funding plan allow.
- F11. Destruction of low-cost housing on the Bay and coast by flooding and erosion due to sea level rise will further increase inequities in communities such as Belle Haven (Menlo Park), East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and Pacifica.
- Belmont: The City *agrees* with this finding.
- F12. OneShoreline effectively collaborates with the Office of Sustainability and others on public engagement campaigns to educate individuals on how sea level rise will affect San Mateo County.
- Belmont: The City partially agrees with this finding. As indicated previously we look forward to continued regional collaboration as initially envisioned to address SLR, and to develop a regional capital improvement plan (CIP) to assist with prioritization of programs and projects for water quality, erosion control and more.
- F13. A loan program to provide cities and towns funds for the required preliminary engineering necessary to obtain partial state or federal funding for SLR projects would be beneficial.
- Belmont: The City partially agrees with this finding. Funding to assist municipalities with the planning and design activities necessary to obtain state or federal funding for SLR projects may be beneficial. However, the structure of such funding requires further investigation, and the greater regional priority is the development of a long-term capital strategy for the region and its municipalities.
- Belmont Response to Recommendations 1, 2, and 4**
- R1. At a public meeting, each city and town council, or board of supervisors should take at least one concrete action toward establishing a continuing funding source for OneShoreline, identify that action in response to this report, and potentially adopt a resolution expressing support for a parcel tax or property tax by June 30, 2022.

Belmont: The City supports taking concrete action toward helping OneShoreline establish a continuing funding source. The City asks that OneShoreline develop a comprehensive CIP, with cost estimates and priority projects so that all property owners and voters have a detailed understanding of which projects are most needed, likely to be implemented first, and how such projects are prioritized. Once this happens, all jurisdictions in the county will be in a much better position to support parcel/property tax measures. There are seven projects listed at the time of drafting this letter on the agency's website, and one of those is a Belmont-led project, funded by a grant from the Department of Water Resources using matching grants provided by Belmont, San Carlos and San Mateo County. It is likely that dozens or even hundreds of projects are needed, large and small, bay side and coastal, and these projects need to be identified, costed out, and shown to voters as the likely slate of projects and benefits to be achieved in a 5-, 15- and 30-year time frame. As anticipated at its inception, OneShoreline was also created to help address erosion, stormwater infrastructure projects, and water quality requirements imposed by the Regional Water Quality Control Board. The City will be able to provide a summary of how and when this recommendation will be implemented after we have participated in and help create a CIP that incorporates all project types envisioned during the initial request for multi-agency support of the new OneShoreline entity.

R2. A coordinated lobbying strategy with participation by the County, by San Mateo County cities and towns, by OneShoreline, and by other interested Bay Area cities and counties for federal and state regulatory simplification by January 31, 2022.

Belmont: The City supports this effort and asks that OneShoreline work through the well-established C/CAG Stormwater Technical Advisory Committee to participate in and guide this effort. Work to date has occurred with little input from this committee or the City/County Engineers working group made up of Public Works Directors and City/Town Engineers of all jurisdictions in San Mateo County.

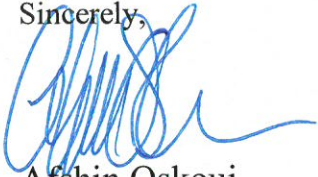
R4. The County Board of Supervisors and each city and town council should ensure that their general plans regarding SLR protection include transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous material sites by March 31, 2022.

Belmont: The City supports comprehensive SLR protection for all types of infrastructure and public facilities. The City of Belmont's 2035 General Plan adopted November 14, 2017, Section 6- Safety Element, addresses flooding hazards. Additionally, the City's Climate Action Plan contains adaptation strategies and measures to promote resiliency to climate change impacts, including sea level rise and increased flooding. The City's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan also addresses climate adaptation and resiliency strategies.

On behalf of the Belmont City Council, we look forward to partnering with our fellow jurisdictions and OneShoreline to develop the regional plan this letter calls for. Thank you for taking on the complex and urgent long-term task of addressing sea level rise and other flood risks and water

quality issues in San Mateo County. Please contact me (aoskoui@belmont.gov) or Public Works Director Peter Brown (pbrown@belmont.gov) if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



Afshin Oskoui
City Manager

cc: Belmont City Council
Len Materman, OneShoreline, CEO



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

APPROVED BY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

OCT 19 2021

BY  CLERK OF BOARD
DEPUTY

Department: COUNTY MANAGER

File #: 21-817

Board Meeting Date: 10/19/2021

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors
From: Michael P. Callagy, County Manager
Subject: Board of Supervisors' Response to the 2020-2021 Civil Grand Jury Report "San Mateo County: California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise"

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the Board of Supervisors' response to the 2020-2021 Civil Grand Jury Report, "San Mateo County: California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise."

BACKGROUND:

On August 11, 2021, the 2020-2021 San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury issued a report titled "San Mateo County: California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise." The Board of Supervisors is required to submit comments on the findings and recommendations pertaining to the matters over which it has some decision-making authority within 90 days. The Board's response to the report is due to the Honorable Judge Amarra A. Lee of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo, no later than November 11, 2021.

DISCUSSION:

The Grand Jury made 13 findings and four recommendations in its report. Staff has collaborated with cities and OneShoreline, where applicable, on the County's response to the Grand Jury Report. The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors (Board) responses follow each finding and the four recommendations that the Grand Jury requested that the Board respond to within 90 days.

FINDINGS

Finding 1:

Sea level rise will seriously damage critical San Mateo County infrastructure and assets unless the County and its cities and towns prepare now.

Response: The County of San Mateo *agrees* with this finding.

Finding 2:

Sea level rise infrastructure projects can take more than a decade to plan, fund and build.

Response: The County of San Mateo *agrees* with this finding.

Finding 3:

Complex federal and state regulations and procedures delay and increase the costs of already expensive sea level rise mitigation projects. They need to be revised.

Response: The County of San Mateo *partially agrees* with this finding. Federal and state regulations and procedures can be very complex as they relate to sea level mitigation projects due to the sheer number of factors that must be considered in projects of this scale and impact. These may or may not cause delays and increase the costs of already expensive sea level rise mitigation projects. Many regulations and procedures are designed to safeguard the environment and protect human safety and not all federal and state regulations and procedures will require revision though opportunities for revision likely exist.

Finding 4:

Delaying sea level rise projects will increase costs.

Response: The County of San Mateo *agrees* with this finding.

Finding 5:

To remain effective, OneShoreline needs steady, long-term, operational funding.

Response: The County of San Mateo *agrees* with this finding.

Finding 6:

Coordination between neighboring jurisdictions is important to reduce costs and improve the effectiveness of a SLR project.

Response: The County of San Mateo *agrees* with this finding.

Finding 7:

Competing budget priorities among the entities in a sea level rise project make the projects difficult to fund and manage, leading to risk of delays and missed deadlines.

Response: The County of San Mateo *partially disagrees* with this finding. The County agrees that the magnitude of costs associated with countering sea level rise poses difficulties in obtaining adequate funding for projects. If funding can be secured, there may be challenges for multiple entities working together, but in general properly scoped and managed projects can be successfully delivered on time and on budget.

Finding 8:

Numerous hazardous material sites in the County must be protected from sea level rise flooding.

Response: The County of San Mateo *agrees* with this finding.

Finding 9:

Storm surge and sea level rise threaten the County's wastewater treatment plants affecting everyone

in the County - even inland County residents.

Response: The County of San Mateo *partially agrees* with this finding. The County of San Mateo's Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment evaluated wastewater treatment plants and found that many of the plants are threatened by storm surge and sea level rise, but not all of the plants.

Finding 10:

OneShoreline is uniquely positioned to augment San Mateo County's ability to combat sea level rise by its planning, funding, permitting expertise, and guidance.

Response: The County of San Mateo *agrees* with this finding.

Finding 11:

Destruction of low-cost housing on the Bay and coast by flooding and erosion due to sea level rise will further increase inequities in communities such as Belle Haven (Menlo Park), East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and Pacifica.

Response: The County of San Mateo *agrees* with this finding. Based on the analysis completed in the County's 2018 Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment, additional areas in San Mateo, Burlingame, and San Bruno also have socially vulnerable communities at risk from flooding due to sea level rise.

Finding 12:

OneShoreline effectively collaborates with the Office of Sustainability and others on public engagement campaigns to educate individuals on how sea level rise will affect San Mateo County.

Response: The County of San Mateo *agrees* with this finding.

Finding 13:

A loan program to provide cities and towns funds for the required preliminary engineering necessary to obtain partial state or federal funding for SLR projects would be beneficial.

Response: This finding refers to cities and towns. As such, the County does not have a basis for a response.

RECOMMENDATIONS REQUESTING COUNTY RESPONSE

Recommendation 1:

At a public meeting, each city and town council, or board of supervisors should take at least one concrete action toward establishing a continuing funding source for OneShoreline, identify that action in response to this report, and potentially adopt a resolution expressing support for a parcel tax or property tax by June 30, 2022.

Response: *This recommendation is being explored.* OOS and County staff will continue to support OneShoreline in identifying long-term funding sources.

Recommendation 2:

A coordinated lobbying strategy with participation by the County, by San Mateo County cities and towns, by OneShoreline, and by other interested Bay Area cities and counties for federal and state

regulatory simplification by January 31, 2022.

Response: Elements of this recommendation are already implemented. In the County's 2021 Board of Supervisors adopted legislative platform, the County has stated that it will work closely with OneShoreline to "advocate for State and federal legislation and agency actions that bring new funding and modify policies and regulations that enable the District to achieve its climate resilience objectives throughout San Mateo County."

Recommendation 4:

The County Board of Supervisors, and each city and town council, should ensure that their general plans regarding SLR protection include transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous material sites by March 31, 2022.

Response: *This recommendation is in the process of being implemented and will not be completed by March 31, 2022.* The County is planning on initiating the effort to update the County's safety element of the general plan for the San Mateo County unincorporated areas and sea level rise will be one of the considerations in this update. This effort will include the evaluation of transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous material sites. The draft of the 2021 Multijurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJLMHP) includes two mitigation actions for the County of San Mateo related to this Recommendation:

- **Action SMC-16-**Complete the San Mateo County Climate Action Plan and the San Mateo County Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment. When complete, coordinate the implementation with the Local Climate Adaptation Policy Guide for Local Governments (Cal OES) to reduce risks exacerbated by climate change and sea level rise impacts and to adapt to those impacts. Integrate climate adaptation actions across regional and local General Plans (including Safety and Housing elements), Local Coastal Programs, Housing Plans, mitigation planning efforts, and infrastructure planning and development. Hazards Mitigated: Sea Level Rise/Climate Change
- **Action SMC-11-**Integrate the hazard mitigation plan into other plans, ordinances, and programs that dictate land use decisions in the community, including the County's General Plan, the Community Wildfire Protection Plan, the Green Infrastructure Plan, and the upcoming Climate Resilience Strategy, and develop appropriate implementation procedures following plan adoption. Hazards Mitigated: Sea Level Rise/Climate Change, Landslide/Mass Movements, Earthquake, Dam Failure, Flood, Severe Weather, Wildfire, Drought, Tsunami

FISCAL IMPACT:

This report has no fiscal impact. All programs described in this report are already funded through existing sources.



CITY OF BRISBANE

Department of Public Works
50 Park Place
Brisbane, CA 94005-1310
(415) 508-2130

October 7, 2021

Hon. Amarra A. Lee
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Jenarda Dubois
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Subject: Response to 2020-2021 Grand Jury 8/11/21 report "San Mateo County:
California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise"

Dear Judge Lee,

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the findings of the Grand Jury. This letter serves as the City of Brisbane's response to the findings and recommendations found therein. Please note this report was approved by the Brisbane City Council at its October 7, 2021 meeting.

FINDINGS

F1. Sea level rise will seriously damage critical San Mateo County infrastructure and assets unless the County and its cities and towns prepare now.

City Response to F1:

The city has not conducted its own independent research on this matter, but based on review of the studies quoted in the Grand Jury Report et al., we agree with this finding.

F2. Sea level rise infrastructure projects can take more than a decade to plan, fund and build.

City Response to F2:

The city has not conducted its own independent research on this matter, but based on review of the Grand Jury Report we agree with this finding.

F3. Complex federal and state regulations and procedures delay and increase the costs of already expensive sea level rise mitigation projects. They need to be revised.

City Response to F2:

Based on its own experience with state and federal regulatory agencies on non-sea level rise projects, the City agrees with this finding.

F4. Delaying sea level rise projects will increase costs.

City Response to F4:

Based on its own experience with delayed non-sea level capital improvement projects, the City agrees with this finding.

F5. To remain effective, OneShoreline needs steady, long-term, operational funding.

City Response to F5:

The City agrees with this finding.

F6. Coordination between neighboring jurisdictions is important to reduce costs and improve the effectiveness of a SLR project.

City Response to F6:

In the case of a SLR project that is physically located in one or more neighboring jurisdictions and/or has benefits to one or more jurisdictions, the City agrees with this finding.

F7. Competing budget priorities among the entities in a sea level rise project make the projects difficult to fund and manage, leading to risk of delays and missed deadlines.

City Response to F7:

Based on its own experience with competing budget priorities for non-sea level projects and programs, the City agrees with this finding.

F8. Numerous hazardous material sites in the County must be protected from sea level rise flooding.

City Response to F8:

The city has not conducted its own independent research on this matter, but based on review of the Grand Jury Report we agree with this finding.

F9. Storm surge and sea level rise threaten the County’s wastewater treatment plants affecting everyone in the County – even inland County residents.

City Response to F9:

The City agrees with this finding as it relates to the identified threats to the plant treating our wastewater in the City and County of San Francisco. As we do not have direct knowledge of the manner in which “inland County residents” wastewater is treated and disposed, we defer to the public agencies serving those residents as the most qualified respondent to this component of the finding.

F10. OneShoreline is uniquely positioned to augment San Mateo County’s ability to combat sea level rise by its planning, funding, permitting expertise, and guidance.

City Response to F10:

The City endorsed the establishment of the San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency Agency in its Resolution No. 2019-03, wherein we specifically noted the need for an entity with the attributes identified in the finding. With OneShoreline still in its nascent stage, we agree with the finding that it is uniquely positioned, and remain supportive that it will eventually develop and demonstrate the identified attributes.

F11. Destruction of low-cost housing on the Bay and coast by flooding and erosion due to sea level rise will further increase inequities in communities such as Belle Haven (Menlo Park), East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and Pacifica.

City Response to F11:

The city has not conducted its own independent research on this matter, but based on review of the Grand Jury Report we agree with this finding.

F12. OneShoreline effectively collaborates with the Office of Sustainability and others on public engagement campaigns to educate individuals on how sea level rise will affect San Mateo County.

City Response to F12:

As the City is not party to communications between the Office of Sustainability (OSS) and OneShoreline, nor are we aware of what parties are identified as “others” in the finding, we neither agree nor disagree, and defer to OSS as the most qualified respondent to this finding.

F13. A loan program to provide cities and towns funds for the required preliminary engineering necessary to obtain partial state or federal funding for SLR projects would be beneficial.

City Response to F13:

The City agrees with this finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. At a public meeting, each city and town council, or board of supervisors should take at least one concrete action toward establishing a continuing funding source for OneShoreline, identify that action in response to this report, and potentially adopt a resolution expressing support for a parcel tax or property tax by June 30, 2022.

City Response to R1:

The City has committed to provide three years of funding for the agency now known as OneShoreline, with that commitment based on the agency's advocates representing that a first priority action would be the development of a Flood & Sea Level Rise Investment Plan (Plan). As addressed in the City's resolution of support (Reso No. 2019-03), in addition to mitigating sea level rise, we anticipated the agency would also develop projects to address erosion, stormwater infrastructure projects, and water quality requirements imposed by the Regional Water Quality Control Board. The City will be able to provide a summary of how the recommendation will be implemented and the timeframe for implementation after we have received and reviewed a Plan that incorporates all project types envisioned during the initial request for support to the formation of the agency.

R2. A coordinated lobbying strategy with participation by the County, by San Mateo County cities and towns, by OneShoreline, and by other interested Bay Area cities and counties for federal and state regulatory simplification by January 31, 2022.

City Response to R2:

The City is willing to participate in the implementation of this recommendation, provided that some as yet to be identified entity develops a scope and time frame for said implementation.

R4. The County Board of Supervisors and each city and town council, should ensure that their general plans regarding SLR protection include transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous material sites by March 31, 2022.

October 7, 2021
Hon. Amarra A. Lee
Grand Jury SLR response
Page 5 of 5
08-01-06

City Response to R4:

The City is presently updating its Local Hazard Mitigation Plan as part of a countywide effort, the San Mateo County Multijurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan – 2021 Update (Plan). The Plan was scheduled to be released to the California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on 8/31/21. Assuming a favorable review can be obtained from CalOES and FEMA within 3 months, the final document will be presented to Brisbane City Council for adoption in December 2021.

Brisbane's General Plan Program 148a under the Community Health and Safety Element incorporates the City's adopted Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) by reference into the General Plan. Four of the seventeen hazard mitigation actions found in the city specific chapter of the Plan address sea level rise, including SLR protection for transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous material sites.

Please call me at (415) 508-2131 if there are any questions regarding this matter.

Very truly yours,

Randy L. Breault, P.E.
Director of Public Works/City Engineer

Cc: Grand Jury website (sent via email to grandjury@sanmateocourt.org)
Brisbane City Clerk



ANN O'BRIEN KEIGHRAN, MAYOR
RICARDO ORTIZ, VICE MAYOR
MICHAEL BROWNRIGG
DONNA COLSON
EMILY BEACH

The City of Burlingame

CITY HALL -- 501 PRIMROSE ROAD
BURLINGAME, CALIFORNIA 94010-3997

TEL: (650) 558-7201
www.burlingame.org

October 19, 2021

Honorable Amarra A. Lee
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Jenarda Dubois
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Subject: City of Burlingame's response to Civil Grand Jury Report entitled "California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise"

Dear Judge Lee:

After reviewing the Grand Jury report entitled "California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise," the following are the City of Burlingame's responses to the Grand Jury's findings:

Findings F1-F13: The City of Burlingame agrees with these findings.

The following are the City of Burlingame's responses to the Grand Jury's recommendations:

Recommendation R1 requires further analysis. The City agrees with the concept of establishing a continuing funding source for OneShoreline. However, this recommendation needs further analysis and study through a collaborative effort among the County and local agencies within the county. In order to achieve the goals of a continuing funding source, all participating agencies will need to agree to the methodology for implementing the continuing funding source. The manner and timeframe for such an effort cannot be stated by the City at this time because the process is dependent upon the agreement of the agencies involved. This effort may be led by OneShoreline, which is best positioned to take on this role. The City understands that this effort is focused on a dedicated funding source for the steady, long-term operational funding for OneShoreline only and does not encompass specific local needs for funding, which will be developed as the regional plan and improvements are identified.

Recommendation R2 has been partially implemented. This recommendation has been partially implemented in coordination with OneShoreline and other agencies, and implementation will be ongoing beyond January 31, 2022. The strategy to support this recommendation can be strengthened through the efforts of establishing a continuing operational funding source for OneShoreline.

The Honorable Amarra Lee
October 19, 2021
Page 2

Recommendation R4 has been implemented. This recommendation has been implemented with the City's recently updated General Plan. The General Plan currently states as a goal: "Protect vulnerable areas and infrastructure from flooding related to rising sea levels in the San Francisco Bay." Additionally, the language in the General Plan will be amended to include the specific language from the Grand Jury recommendation as stated in R4 by March 31, 2022.

The Burlingame City Council approved this response letter at its public meeting on October 18, 2021.

Sincerely,



Ann O'Brien Keighran
Mayor

c: Syed Murtuza, Director of Public Works

RESOLUTION NO. 127-2021

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BURLINGAME APPROVING THE CITY OF BURLINGAME RESPONSE LETTER TO THE SAN MATEO COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY REPORT "CALIFORNIA'S GROUND ZERO FOR SEA LEVEL RISE"

WHEREAS, the San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury released a report entitled, "California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise" on August 11, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the report examined the risk of Sea Level Rise (SLR) in San Mateo County, noting "more people and property are at risk from rising seas in San Mateo County than any other California county," and recommends collaboration among affected cities, the County, and private entities in order to find solutions to the complex, long-term problem of SLR; and

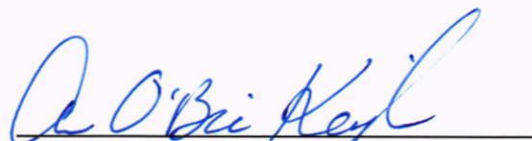
WHEREAS, the report included 13 findings and four recommendations; and

WHEREAS, the County has requested that each agency respond to the applicable findings and recommendations, and submit responses to the San Mateo County Grand Jury by November 11, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has received the proposed response letter for review.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BURLINGAME RESOLVES AND ORDERS AS FOLLOWS:

That the letter in response to the San Mateo County Grand Jury Report, "California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise", attached hereto, is hereby approved, and the Mayor is authorized to sign and convey said letter on behalf of the City.



Ann O'Brien Keighran, Mayor

I, Meaghan Hassel-Shearer, City Clerk of the City of Burlingame, do hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was introduced at a regular meeting of the City Council held on the 18th day of October, 2021, and was adopted thereafter by the following vote:

AYES: COUNCILMEMBERS: BEACH, BROWNRIGG, COLSON, O'BRIEN KEIGHRAN, ORTIZ
NOES: COUNCILMEMBERS: NONE
ABSENT: COUNCILMEMBERS: NONE



Meaghan Hassel-Shearer, City Clerk



CITY OF DALY CITY

333 - 90TH STREET

DALY CITY, CA 94015-1895

PHONE: (650) 991-8000

October 27, 2021

Hon. Amarra A. Lee
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Jenarda Dubois
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: San Mateo County: California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise

Dear Honorable Amarra A. Lee:

We are in receipt of the Grand Jury's final report, "San Mateo County: California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise." Please find the City of Daly City's responses to the findings and recommendations below. This response letter was approved by the City Council at a public meeting held on October 27, 2021.

Findings:

F1. Sea level rise will seriously damage critical San Mateo County infrastructure and assets unless the County and its cities and towns prepare now.

Response: *The City agrees with the finding.*

F2. Sea level rise infrastructure projects can take more than a decade to plan, fund and build.

Response: *The City agrees with the finding.*

F3. Complex federal and state regulations and procedures delay and increase the costs of already expensive sea level rise mitigation projects. They need to be revised.

Response: *The City agrees with the finding.*

F4. Delaying sea level rise projects will increase costs.

Response: *The City agrees with the finding.*

F5. To remain effective, OneShoreline needs steady, long-term, operational funding.

Response: *The City agrees with the finding.*

F6. Coordination between neighboring jurisdictions is important to reduce costs and improve the effectiveness of a SLR project.

Response: *The City agrees with the finding.*

F7. Competing budget priorities among the entities in a sea level rise project make the projects difficult to fund and manage, leading to risk of delays and missed deadlines.

Response: *The City agrees with the finding.*

F8. Numerous hazardous material sites in the County must be protected from sea level rise flooding.

Response: *The City agrees with the finding.*

F9. Storm surge and sea level rise threaten the County's wastewater treatment plants affecting everyone in the County – even inland County residents.

Response: *The City agrees with the finding.*

F10. OneShoreline is uniquely positioned to augment San Mateo County's ability to combat sea level rise by its planning, funding, permitting expertise, and guidance.

Response: *The City agrees with the finding.*

F11. Destruction of low-cost housing on the Bay and coast by flooding and erosion due to sea level rise will further increase inequities in communities such as Belle Haven (Menlo Park), East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and Pacifica.

Response: *Not applicable to Daly City.*

F12. OneShoreline effectively collaborates with the Office of Sustainability and others on public engagement campaigns to educate individuals on how sea level rise will affect San Mateo County.

Response: *The City disagrees partially with the finding due to lack of experience with OneShoreline's public engagement campaigns. Public engagement and education efforts have not effectively targeted the Daly City community.*

F13. A loan program to provide cities and towns funds for the required preliminary engineering necessary to obtain partial state or federal funding for SLR projects would be beneficial.

Response: *The City agrees with the finding.*

Recommendations:

R1. At a public meeting, each city and town council, or board of supervisors should take at least one concrete action toward establishing a continuing funding source for OneShoreline, identify that action in response to this report, and potentially adopt a resolution expressing support for a parcel tax or property tax by June 30, 2022.

Response: *The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable. The City asserts that identifying multiple, continuing funding sources for OneShoreline must be a strongly*

collaborative and regional effort that involves a coordinated plan. It is unreasonable for the City to pursue this recommendation on its own without that level of regional collaboration. Further, direct taxes generally do not receive a high level of support from the Daly City community, which has lower average household incomes than the overwhelming majority of San Mateo County and yet pays the highest tier in financial contribution to OneShoreline. The metric for determining a city's contribution rate is only based on population size and does not reflect a city's overall risk to sea level rise. According to sea level rise projections, Daly City faces less risk in terms of damage to assets than many bayside cities.

The Grand Jury report states that OneShoreline is currently evaluating support for a countywide parcel tax that would support both sea level rise and wildfire mitigation efforts but provides no further context or outcome of such evaluation. The City asserts that OneShoreline should also include a facilitation of expanded and unfunded requirements to mitigate stormwater impacts through regional projects that would be beneficial to multiple agencies in the county.

Additionally, the Grand Jury report was significantly focused on bayside development. Daly City is located on the Pacific coast, and the City would seek to ensure that OneShoreline funding for projects is allocated with an equity-based approach, so that Daly City residents are not paying more than their fair share for sea level rise projects in bayside cities that have permitted development in high-risk areas, such as infill development.

R2. A coordinated lobbying strategy with participation by the County, by San Mateo County cities and towns, by OneShoreline, and by other interested Bay Area cities and counties for federal and state regulatory simplification by January 31, 2022.

Response: *The recommendation requires further analysis. While the City welcomes this effort, OneShoreline should facilitate a coordinated lobbying strategy among all stakeholders. The City has not received information or requests to participate in lobbying from OneShoreline and defers to OneShoreline on timeline for coordinating such a lobbying strategy.*

R4. The County Board of Supervisors and each city and town council, should ensure that their general plans regarding SLR protection include transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous material sites by March 31, 2022.

Response: *The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, by the end of 2022.*

The City of Daly City appreciates the opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury Report, "San Mateo County: California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise."

Should the Grand Jury require additional information, please contact me directly at (650) 991-8127.

Sincerely,



Shawna Maltbie
City Manager



CITY OF EAST PALO ALTO

Office of the City Council

The Honorable Judge Amarra A. Lee
Judge of the Superior Court
San Mateo County Superior Court
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063

Dear Honorable Judge Lee:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury Report titled “San Mateo County: California’s Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise” released on August 11, 2021 (“Report”). The City Council of the City of East Palo Alto approved the following response to the Report at its November 2, 2021 meeting.

The City of East Palo Alto’s Response to Each Finding:

F1. Sea level rise will seriously damage critical San Mateo County infrastructure and assets unless the County and its cities and towns prepare now.

City of East Palo Alto: City of East Palo Alto *agrees* with this finding. East Palo Alto is one of the most vulnerable cities in San Mateo County to the first three feet of sea level rise (SLR) with respect to population, including underrepresented population, number of homes, property value, and number of contaminated sites. Building resilience to future climate conditions will be easier and less costly by planning for it today. SLR would impact the City as half of East Palo Alto is within a FEMA federal designated flood zone.

F2. Sea level rise infrastructure projects can take more than a decade to plan, fund and build.

City of East Palo Alto: City of East Palo Alto *agrees* with this finding. The City will work with San Mateo County and State and Federal Government to develop plans to construct critical infrastructure projects to address adverse impacts from SLR.

F3. Complex federal and state regulations and procedures delay and increase the costs of already expensive sea level rise mitigation projects. They need to be revised.

City of East Palo Alto: City of East Palo Alto *agrees* with this finding. Federal and State agencies can provide critical funding for these projects and fulfill an important role in ensuring that large projects do not harm the environment. However, the permitting and funding regimes of these agencies were largely developed decades ago and are not well suited to address a transformative and dynamic challenge like climate change. The City will support San Mateo County and OneShoreline efforts to ensure that the laws and guidelines used by Federal and State agencies recognize -- and take into account in the permitting process -- the multiple public benefits of climate resilience projects, including the benefit of establishing habitats that can thrive in future climate-

driven conditions and incorporate a resilience by design approach to address SLR impacts on the community.

F4. Delaying sea level rise projects will increase costs.

City of East Palo Alto: City of East Palo Alto *agrees* with this finding. The costs of reactive, emergency repairs or retrofitting developed lands far exceed the costs of proactive planning and construction focused on future conditions. Working with local municipalities and agencies, the City of East Palo Alto is well-positioned to support long-term land use policies, arrange private development partnerships, and plan and build projects across jurisdictions that align and connect protection against sea level rise, creek flooding, coastal erosion, and stormwater, as well as enhance trails and the environment.

F5. To remain effective, OneShoreline needs steady, long-term, operational funding.

City of East Palo Alto: City of East Palo Alto *agrees* with this finding. Without a long-term, stable source of funds for its operations, OneShoreline cannot meet its objective to make all of San Mateo County resilient to the climate change impacts listed in the response to F4. For this reason, the City of East Palo Alto supports San Mateo County’s plan to explore the possibility of asking voters throughout the County to support a ballot measure aimed at securing funding for operations and projects associated with climate resilience.

The City of East Palo Alto seeks to be involved in all discussions regarding future funding measures; it is important that equity and the impact on underserved communities be taken into account.

F6. Coordination between neighboring jurisdictions is important to reduce costs and improve the effectiveness of a SLR project.

City of East Palo Alto: City of East Palo Alto *agrees* with this finding. Meeting the transformative challenge of sea level rise in this county requires a holistic approach across jurisdictions. OneShoreline was created as a countywide agency to leverage partnerships to build long-term regional solutions that cannot be realized on a city-by-city basis. For example, the City of East Palo Alto is coordinating with adjacent cities such as Menlo Park and Palo Alto to develop SAFER Bay Projects that provide a holistic approach to create protection from SLR. The City in collaboration with the San Francisquito Creek JPA, took the lead and completed a SAFER Bay Study covering the shorelines of East Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Redwood City to protect major assets from the impact of SLR.

F7. Competing budget priorities among the entities in a sea level rise project make the projects difficult to fund and manage, leading to risk of delays and missed deadlines.

City of East Palo Alto: City of East Palo Alto *agrees* with this finding. Funding projects from many local government entities and external sources is more complicated and time-consuming than funding projects from a single source. However, all government functions, including projects to protect against sea level rise, must compete with other budget priorities. East Palo Alto does not see this issue as unique to these projects or even as the primary obstacle to achieving our objectives.

F8. Numerous hazardous material sites in the County must be protected from sea level rise flooding.

City of East Palo Alto: City of East Palo Alto *agrees* with this finding.

F9. Storm surge and sea level rise threaten the County’s wastewater treatment plants affecting everyone in the County – even inland County residents.

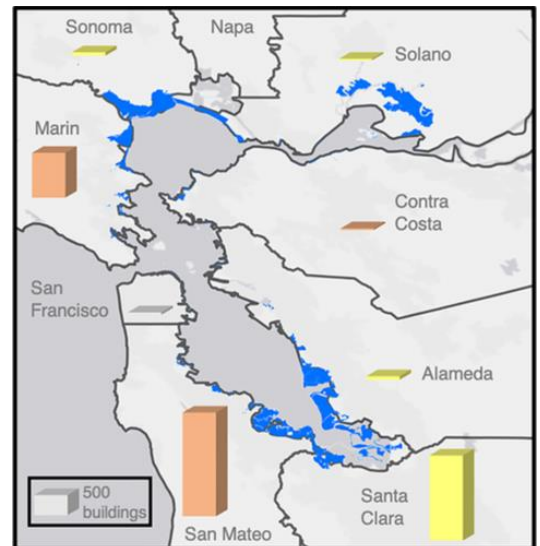
City of East Palo Alto: City of East Palo Alto *agrees* with this finding.

F10. OneShoreline is uniquely positioned to augment San Mateo County’s ability to combat sea level rise by its planning, funding, permitting expertise, and guidance.

City of East Palo Alto: City of East Palo Alto *agrees* with this finding. As the countywide agency established to focus on this issue and leverage resources and partnerships across jurisdictional boundaries, OneShoreline plays a key role in bringing together key stakeholders to establish common objectives and assumptions, utilize public and private land rights to meet project goals, and share technical information, environmental mitigations, and project costs.

F11. Destruction of low-cost housing on the Bay and coast by flooding and erosion due to sea level rise will further increase inequities in communities such as Belle Haven (Menlo Park), East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and Pacifica.

City of East Palo Alto: City of East Palo Alto *agrees* with this finding. East Palo Alto is considered a Disadvantaged Community with low median household income compared to nearby cities throughout San Mateo County. A study by Stanford University researchers published in July 2021 found that flooding in San Mateo County – more than any other Bay Area county – disproportionately impacts communities most at risk of financial instability. Researchers found that the household median income in the County’s floodplain is about \$30,000 lower than the County median. This is illustrated in the figure to the right, where the size of the bar indicates the number of residential buildings flooded during a 100-year tide and the color of the bars associated with each county indicate whether the median household income in the flooded zone is above (yellow) or below (orange) a county’s median household income.



F12. OneShoreline effectively collaborates with the Office of Sustainability and others on public engagement campaigns to educate individuals on how sea level rise will affect San Mateo County.

City of East Palo Alto: City of East Palo Alto *agrees* with this finding. East Palo Alto shall work with OneShoreline and communicate regularly with the County’s Office of Sustainability (OOS) on areas where efforts can complement one another, and OOS has augmented OneShoreline’s outreach efforts as OneShoreline builds its capacity. OneShoreline also works with cities, other special districts, the County Office of Education, and the League of Women Voters (LWV) chapters to

educate individuals on the risks facing this county and approaches to building resilience. This has included a year long series of public forums co-hosted by OneShoreline and the LWV on climate issues related to water and wildfire throughout the county. East Palo Alto residents have been very involved and engaged in such efforts.

F13. A loan program to provide cities and towns funds for the required preliminary engineering necessary to obtain partial state or federal funding for SLR projects would be beneficial.

City of East Palo Alto: City of East Palo Alto *partially agrees* with this finding. A source of funding to assist municipalities with the planning and design activities necessary to obtain state and/or federal funding for SLR projects would be beneficial. However, the structure of such funding (i.e., whether it would/could take the form of a loan program) requires further investigation and analysis. East Palo Alto has very limited resources and competing priorities. Addressing SLR impacts is beyond and above its ability to fund such improvements. Grants are preferred over loans.

City of East Palo Alto Response to Recommendations 1, 2 and 4:

R1. At a public meeting, each city and town council, or board of supervisors should take at least one concrete action toward establishing a continuing funding source for OneShoreline, identify that action in response to this report, and potentially adopt a resolution expressing support for a parcel tax or property tax by June 30, 2022.

City of East Palo Alto: This recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be by the deadline of June 30, 2022. On March 5th 2019, the City Council authorized the allocation of \$40,000 per year for three fiscal years (starting in FY 2019-2020) to help fund the Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency Agency.

R2. A coordinated lobbying strategy with participation by the County, by San Mateo County cities and towns, by OneShoreline, and by other interested Bay Area cities and counties for federal and state regulatory simplification by January 31, 2022.

City of East Palo Alto: This recommendation has been partially implemented, and implementation will be ongoing beyond January 31, 2022. OneShoreline has worked with San Mateo County and its lobbyists in California, as well as coalitions of water-related agencies, on many issues, including simplifying the process to permit climate resilience projects. Today's climate crisis has highlighted the need to simplify environmental regulatory requirements for restoration and climate resilience projects. There has been progress on this issue at the State level, including through the just-passed Senate Bill 155, which allows certain habitat restoration projects to be exempt from CEQA. OneShoreline is currently following how the State plans to implement this measure if signed by the Governor and whether this exemption would apply to its projects.

R4. The County Board of Supervisors and each city and town council, should ensure that their general plans regarding SLR protection include transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous material sites by March 31, 2022.

City of East Palo Alto: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future as the City of East Palo Alto is in the process of updating its Specific Plan within the coastal flooding zone. The plan shall include SLR protection of the City assets, including transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous material sites. The City completed a Climate Action Plan in 2010, outlining strategies at both the municipal and community-wide level to mitigate and adapt to climate change. In addition to energy-related topics such as energy efficiency and use of renewable energy, the climate action plan also points to material re-use and recycling, public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, urban green spaces, and compact development patterns as important strategies in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The City is currently working with the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority and other partners to secure funding to implement SAFER Bay. The conceptual plans for sea level rise protection in SAFER Bay would result in protection of transportation, utilities, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous material sites within the City of East Palo Alto. In addition, the City is currently updating its Local Hazard Mitigation Plan as part of a countywide efforts, the San Mateo County Multijurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Plan is currently undergoing review by the California Office of Emergency Services and FEMA, and is anticipated to be reviewed and approved by the City Council in early 2022.

If you have further questions, please contact Kamal Fallaha, Public Works Director at kfallaha@cityofepa.org or at 650-906-7482.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Carlos Romero', written over a horizontal line.

Carlos Romero, Mayor
City of East Palo Alto



City of Foster City

ESTERO MUNICIPAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

610 FOSTER CITY BOULEVARD
FOSTER CITY, CA 94404-2222

November 1, 2021

The Honorable Judge Amarra A. Lee
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Jenarda Dubois
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

RE: Response from the City of Foster City to the San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury Report "San Mateo County: California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise"

Honorable Judge Amarra A. Lee:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the above referenced Grand Jury Report issued on August 11, 2021. The City of Foster City's responses to both the findings and recommendations are listed below. Based on the research presented in the Grand Jury's Report, the City's responses which agree to the findings should not be interpreted as unconditional agreement on the accuracy of the report, but rather specific only to the information contained in the Grand Jury's Report and their stated research.

Responses to Grand Jury Findings:

F1. Sea level rise will seriously damage critical San Mateo County infrastructure and assets unless the County and its cities and towns prepare now.

Response to F1: The respondent agrees with the finding .

F2. Sea level rise infrastructure projects can take more than a decade to plan, fund and build.

Response to F2: The respondent agrees with the finding.

F3. Complex federal and state regulations and procedures delay and increase the costs of already expensive sea level rise mitigation projects. They need to be revised.

Response to F3: The respondent agrees with the finding.

F4. Delaying sea level rise projects will increase costs.

Response to F4: The respondent agrees with the finding.

F5. To remain effective, OneShoreline needs steady, long-term, operational funding.

Response to F5: The respondent agrees with the finding.

F6. Coordination between neighboring jurisdictions is important to reduce costs and improve the effectiveness of a SLR project.

Response to F6: The respondent agrees with the finding. The City recognizes the benefits of regional partnerships in advancing Cities'/towns' complex projects that connect multiple cities' shorelines to protect against sea level rise for the benefit of the common good. However, the City asserts that it is successfully meeting the challenge of sea level rise independently through the construction of the levee improvements project.

F7. Competing budget priorities among the entities in a sea level rise project make the projects difficult to fund and manage, leading to risk of delays and missed deadlines.

Response to F7: The respondent agrees with the finding.

F8. Numerous hazardous material sites in the County must be protected from sea level rise flooding.

Response to F8: The respondent agrees with the finding.

F9. Storm surge and sea level rise threaten the County's wastewater treatment plants affecting everyone in the County – even inland County residents.

Response to F9: The respondent agrees with the finding.

F10. OneShoreline is uniquely positioned to augment San Mateo County's ability to combat sea level rise by its planning, funding, permitting expertise, and guidance.

Response to F10: The respondent has no independent knowledge or information related to the finding and agrees with it based on the representations in the Grand Jury's report.

F11. Destruction of low-cost housing on the Bay and coast by flooding and erosion due to sea level rise will further increase inequities in communities such as Belle Haven

(Menlo Park), East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and Pacifica.

Response to F11: The respondent has no independent knowledge or information related to the finding and agrees with it based on the representations in the Grand Jury's report.

- F12. OneShoreline effectively collaborates with the Office of Sustainability and others on public engagement campaigns to educate individuals on how sea level rise will affect San Mateo County.

Response to F12: The respondent has no independent knowledge or information related to the finding and agrees with it based on the representations in the Grand Jury's report.

- F13. A loan program to provide cities and towns funds for the required preliminary engineering necessary to obtain partial state or federal funding for SLR projects would be beneficial.

Response to F13: The respondent has no independent knowledge or information related to the finding and agrees with it based on the representations in the Grand Jury's report. A source of funding to assist municipalities with the planning and design activities necessary to obtain state and/or federal funding for SLR projects would be beneficial. However, the structure of such funding (i.e., whether it would/could take the form of a loan program) requires further investigation and analysis.

Responses to Grand Jury Recommendations:

- R1. At a public meeting, each city and town council, or board of supervisors should take at least one concrete action toward establishing a continuing funding source for OneShoreline, identify that action in response to this report, and potentially adopt a resolution expressing support for a parcel tax or property tax by June 30, 2022.

Response to R1: The recommendation will require further analysis. The City will need to understand the future funding needs for OneShoreline before considering any action toward establishing a continued funding source. Once that information is known, the City can analyze what options are available for establishing a continuing funding source. Staff will prepare an item for City Council consideration and action after receiving information on the future funding needs for OneShoreline and options for the City to support.

- R2. A coordinated lobbying strategy with participation by the County, by San Mateo County cities and towns, by OneShoreline, and by other interested Bay Area cities and counties for federal and state regulatory simplification by January 31, 2022.

Response to R2: The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future. The City is available to participate in a coordinated lobbying strategy for federal and state regulatory simplification. The timeframe of the coordination will depend on the availability of the participating parties, but staff can be available to start participating by January 31, 2022.

R3. Not applicable to Foster City.

R4. The County Board of Supervisors and each city and town council, should ensure that their general plans regarding SLR protection include transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous materials sites by March 31, 2022.

Response to R4: The recommendation has been implemented. The Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and Safety Element, Chapter 7 of the City's General Plan addresses mitigation strategies to address Sea Level Rise protection (see Policy S-A-2 and implementation programs S-A-2-a, S-A-2-b, and S-A-2-c): https://www.fostercity.org/sites/default/files/fileattachments/community_development/page/30281/local_hazard_mitigation_plan_safety_element.pdf. In Foster City, the levee and lagoon management work together to provide protection from flooding and sea level rise. The City is currently constructing the Levee Protection Planning Improvements project. Project completion is scheduled for January 2024. Once complete, the levee improvements will ensure that the City's transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous materials sites are protected against storm/tide surges and meet sea level rise projections through the year 2050.

Pursuant to Penal Code Section 933.05 and the Brown Act, this response was considered by the City Council at a public meeting on November 1, 2021. Should you have any questions concerning this response, please contact Public Works Director, Louis Sun at (650) 286-3270.

Respectfully,


Sanjay Ravi Gehani (Nov 4, 2021 11:06 PDT)

Sanjay Gehani
Mayor, City of Foster City

Enclosure



CITY OF HALF MOON BAY

City Hall • 501 Main Street • Half Moon Bay • 94019

October 19, 2021

Hon. Amarra A. Lee
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Jenarda Dubois
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Subject: Response to Grand Jury Report titled "San Mateo County: California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise"

Dear Judge Lee:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the above-referenced Grand Jury report filed on August 11, 2021. Pursuant to Penal Code § 933(c), the City of Half Moon Bay's ("City") response to the findings and recommendations contained in the report are provided below.

Additionally, the City would like to highlight its recent climate resiliency efforts. In April 2021, the California Coastal Commission unanimously certified a comprehensive update of the City's Local Coastal Land Use Plan ("LCLUP"), which includes numerous policies to encourage smart growth, pre-emptive sea level rise adaptation, and use of best available science to take effective action towards climate resiliency. The City is also in the process of drafting a Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP), and continues to work with local and regional partners such as the San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District ("OneShoreline") and the San Mateo County Climate Ready initiative on coordinated approaches to county-wide climate resiliency. The City also continues to strongly urge that the coastsides receive equal representation and support from OneShoreline in its work moving forward.

The Half Moon Bay City Council reviewed and approved the responses at a public meeting on October 19, 2021.

Responses to Findings

Finding F1. Sea level rise will seriously damage critical San Mateo County infrastructure and assets unless the County and its cities and towns prepare now.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

Finding F2. Sea level rise infrastructure projects can take more than a decade to plan, fund and build.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

Finding F3. Complex federal and state regulations and procedures delay and increase the costs of already expensive sea level rise mitigation projects. They need to be revised.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

Finding F4. Delaying sea level rise projects will increase costs.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

Finding F5. To remain effective, OneShoreline needs steady, long-term, operational funding.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

Finding F6. Coordination between neighboring jurisdictions is important to reduce costs and improve the effectiveness of a SLR project.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

Finding F7. Competing budget priorities among the entities in a sea level rise project make the projects difficult to fund and manage, leading to risk of delays and missed deadlines.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

Finding F8. Numerous hazardous material sites in the County must be protected from sea level rise flooding.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

Finding F9. Storm surge and sea level rise threaten the County's wastewater treatment plants affecting everyone in the County – even inland County residents.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

Finding F10. OneShoreline is uniquely positioned to augment San Mateo County's ability to combat sea level rise by its planning, funding, permitting expertise, and guidance.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

Finding F11. Destruction of low-cost housing on the Bay and coast by flooding and erosion due to sea level rise will further increase inequities in communities such as Belle Haven (Menlo Park), East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and Pacifica.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

Finding F12. OneShoreline effectively collaborates with the Office of Sustainability and others on public engagement campaigns to educate individuals on how sea level rise will affect San Mateo County.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

Finding F13. A loan program to provide cities and towns funds for the required preliminary engineering necessary to obtain partial state or federal funding for SLR projects would be beneficial.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

Responses to Recommendations

Recommendation R1: At a public meeting, each city and town council, or board of supervisors should take at least one concrete action toward establishing a continuing funding source for OneShoreline, identify that action in response to this report, and potentially adopt a resolution expressing support for a parcel tax or property tax by June 30, 2022.

Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. Although the City has made contributions of \$25,000 each of the past two years, the City will need to understand the future funding needs for OneShoreline before considering any action toward establishing a continuing funding source. Once that information is known, the City can analyze what options are available for establishing a continuing funding source. City staff will prepare an item for City Council consideration and action after receiving information on the future funding needs for OneShoreline and options for the City to support.

Recommendation R2: A coordinated lobbying strategy with participation by the County, by San Mateo County cities and towns, by OneShoreline, and by other interested Bay Area cities and counties for federal and state regulatory simplification by January 31, 2022.

Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The City is willing and available to participate in a coordinate lobbying strategy for federal and state regulatory simplification. The timeframe of the coordination will depend on the availability of the participating parties, but City staff can be available to start participating in the coordination by January 31, 2022.

Recommendation R4: The County Board of Supervisors and each city and town council, should ensure that their general plans regarding SLR protection include transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous material sites by March 31, 2022.

Response: This recommendation has been substantially implemented. The City's recently updated and certified LCLUP contains policies for protecting critical facilities from environmental hazards including sea level rise. "Critical facilities" is defined to include public utilities including water tanks, municipal wells, and major sewer and water service mains and pumps; communications infrastructure; the Sewer Authority Mid-Coastside Wastewater Treatment Plant; Highways 1 and 92; emergency preparedness and response facilities including the Emergency Operations Center and fire station; schools; and hospitals. These policies are all found in Chapter 7: Environmental Hazards of the LCLUP, which will be incorporated by reference into the City's Safety Element, which is in the process of being updated and will further address hazardous material sites.

This response was approved by the Half Moon Bay City Council at its regular meeting on October 19, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Ruddock

Debbie Ruddock

Vice Mayor, City of Half Moon Bay

cc: grandjury@sanmateocourt.org



October 26, 2021

The Honorable Judge Amarra A. Lee
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Jenarda Dubois
San Mateo County Superior Court
400 County Center; 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063

RE: Civil Grand Jury Report: “San Mateo County: California’s Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise”

Dear Honorable Judge Lee:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the above-referenced Grand Jury Report filed on August 11, 2021. The City Council of the City of Menlo Park (City) voted at its public meeting on October 26, 2021 to authorize this response to the report.

Response to Grand Jury Findings

F1. Sea level rise will seriously damage critical San Mateo County infrastructure and assets unless the County and its cities and towns prepare now.

City response: *The City of Menlo Park agrees that infrastructure and assets within San Mateo County are at risk due to sea level rise. Planning for sea level rise and resilience to climate change will be less costly by taking steps to plan for and address these conditions today. The City adopted its 2030 Climate Action Plan in 2020 with the goal of achieving zero emissions by 2030 through six key actions, one of which (CAP-6) is to protect the community from sea level rise and flooding.¹*

F2. Sea level rise infrastructure projects can take more than a decade to plan, fund and build.

City Response: *The City of Menlo Park agrees that many infrastructure projects, including sea level rise, flood protection, and erosion control projects, can take years, and often times more than a decade to plan, fund, and construct, due to complexities with land rights, funding, and permitting.*

¹ City of Menlo Park, 2030 Climate Action Plan: <https://www.menlopark.org/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/12230>

F3. Complex federal and state regulations and procedures delay and increase the costs of already expensive sea level rise mitigation projects. They need to be revised.

City Response: *The City of Menlo Park agrees in part with this finding. Federal and state regulations and procedures are complex, and sometimes in conflict with each other, requiring project sponsors to work collaboratively with multiple agencies with sometimes opposing primary goals. However, federal and state partners are also critical technical experts helping to solve complex sea level rise and coastal protection projects, and balance competing interests given unique habitat and ecological considerations in different areas. In addition, these agencies often provide critical funding for such projects. The City agrees that development of a simplified regulatory structure that addresses these existing conflicts in a more systematic way, instead of project-by-project, would be beneficial to advancing more projects and completing them more timely and at a lower cost.*

F4. Delaying sea level rise projects will increase costs.

City Response: *The City of Menlo Park agrees that delaying projects will result in higher costs. Costs typically escalate each year due to increase costs for materials, labor, and inflationary adjustments.*

F5. To remain effective, OneShoreline needs steady, long-term, operational funding.

City Response: *The City of Menlo Park agrees with this finding. All organizations with a long-term mission need a plan for long-term funding to be most effective. At the time of its creation in 2019, OneShoreline's mission was to: "consolidate the work of the SMC Flood Control District and Flood Resiliency Program and initiate new countywide efforts to address sea level rise, flooding, coastal erosion, and large-scale stormwater infrastructure improvements through integrated regional planning, project implementation, and long-term maintenance." This is a long-term mission, for which long-term funding is needed.*

F6. Coordination between neighboring jurisdictions is important to reduce costs and improve the effectiveness of a SLR project.

City Response: *The City agrees that collaboration between neighboring jurisdictions is essential to planning and constructing effective sea level rise projects. The City has demonstrated collaboration with partner agencies and neighboring jurisdictions as a member of the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority and participation in the Bayfront Canal and Atherton Channel Flood Protection and Ecosystem Restoration Project. OneShoreline is leading construction on the Bayfront Canal project.*

F7. Competing budget priorities among the entities in a sea level rise project make the projects difficult to fund and manage, lead to risk of delays and missed deadlines.

City Response: *The City of Menlo Park agrees in part with this finding. While it is true that sea level rise projects would compete with all other operational and capital*

funding needs, this is true of all infrastructure projects. Similarly, most large infrastructure projects require compilation of funding from many different federal, state, local and private contributions, and while, a challenge, it is not unique to sea level rise projects.

F8. Numerous hazardous material sites in the County must be protected from sea level rise flooding.

City Response: *The City of Menlo Park agrees with this finding. As part of the ongoing updates to the City's general plan housing and safety elements, there are four hazardous waste sites that are at risk from the current FEMA 100-year tide and approximately six feet of sea level rise.²*

F9. Storm surge and sea level rise threaten the County's wastewater treatment plants affecting everyone in the County – even inland County residents.

City Response: *The City of Menlo Park agrees with this finding related to the wastewater treatment facilities that are located in areas that are at risk of sea level rise and serve "inland" residents outside the area directly threatened by sea level rise. The 2018 Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment found that seven of the nine wastewater treatment plants in San Mateo County are at risk of sea level rise and storm surge resulting from the FEMA 100-year tide and approximately six feet of sea level rise. While no wastewater treatment facilities are currently at risk in Menlo Park, West Bay Sanitary Sewer District has an existing pump station, a flow equalization and resource recovery facility, and a recycled water facility currently in design.³*

F10. OneShoreline is uniquely positioned to augment San Mateo County's ability to combat sea level rise by its planning, funding, permitting expertise, and guidance.

City Response: *The City of Menlo Park agrees with this finding. By repurposing the San Mateo County Flood Control District and Flood Resiliency Program, OneShoreline is best positioned to leverage resources and partnerships across jurisdictional boundaries to address the challenges of sea level rise.*

F11. Destruction of low-cost housing on the Bay and coast by flooding and erosion due to sea level rise will further increase inequities in communities such as Belle Haven (Menlo Park), East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and Pacifica.

City Response: *The City of Menlo Park agrees in part with this finding. The City agrees that the impacts of sea level rise could impact the Belle Haven neighborhood of Menlo Park, East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and Pacifica, and exacerbate inequities experienced by residents in these neighborhoods. However, these impacts are not limited to the destruction of housing, but also include the resulting displacement and*

² City of Menlo Park Housing, Safety and Environmental Justice Element Updates (2021), slide 45: <https://www.menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/29537/20210826-Housing-Element-Update-Community-Meeting-Presentation-English>

³ West Bay Sanitary Sewer District, Recycled Water information: <https://westbaysanitary.org/services/recycled-water/>

economic, social, and emotional impacts and financial instability that could result from sea level rise and increased or more frequent flooding risk.

F12. OneShoreline effectively collaborates with the Office of Sustainability and others on public engagement campaigns to education individuals on how sea level rise will affect San Mateo County.

City Response: *The City of Menlo Park agrees in part with this finding. The City cannot comment on the collaboration between OneShoreline and the County's Office of Sustainability, and defers to the Office of Sustainability as the agency most qualified to respond to this finding. The City agrees that OneShoreline collaborates with its partners related to sea level rise. As two examples:*

- *OneShoreline is leading construction of the Bayfront Canal and Atherton Channel Flood Protection and Ecosystem Restoration Project, in which Menlo Park is a partner.*
- *OneShoreline led a series of workshops/public forums in collaboration with the League of Women Voters and other partners in 2021 to educate residents on climate change risks, resiliency and various efforts underway to address these issues. Menlo Park staff participated in one of these forums, and the City helped advertise the workshops through our communication channels.*

F13. A loan program to provide cities and towns funds for the required preliminary engineering necessary to obtain partial state or federal funding for SLR projects would be beneficial.

City Response: *The City of Menlo Park agrees in part with this finding. A source of funding to assist municipalities with the planning and design of sea level rise projects would be helpful. However, the structure of such a program, and whether a loan program is most effective, should be determined after more detailed analysis and evaluation. For example, the state of California currently offers low-interest loans for water infrastructure projects; this is generally effective for projects that can be financed up-front through the state assistance program and funded by rate payers over time. In the case of sea level rise projects, since no longer term funding currently exists, a loan program may not be as effective to finance up-front costs.*

Response to Grand Jury Recommendations

R1. At a public meeting, each city and town council, or board of supervisors should take at least one concrete action towards establishing a continuing funding source for OneShoreline, identify that action in response to this report, and potentially adopt a resolution expressing support for a parcel tax or property tax by June 30, 2022.

City Response: *On May 7, 2019, the City Council adopted resolution 6497 to commit to provide three years of funding for OneShoreline (then known as the San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency Agency).⁴ This commitment was based*

⁴ <https://www.menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/21427/G6-20190507-SLR-Agency-CC>

on the mission of OneShoreline to address sea level rise, large stormwater projects, and erosion issues; one of the key first steps was to be development of a flood and sea level rise investment plan. While the City recognizes the need for a long-term funding strategy for OneShoreline, it would like to see the investment plan prior to committing support for or a timeline for a parcel tax or property tax.

R2. A coordinated lobbying strategy with participation by the County, by San Mateo County cities and towns, by OneShoreline, and by other interested Bay Area cities and counties for federal and state regulatory simplification by January 31, 2022.

City Response: *The City is willing to participate in the implementation of this recommendation as noted. The City is engaging, along with the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority, in discussions about streamlining permitting through the San Francisco Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team (BRRIT), and this would be a natural extension of this work for streamlining and creating more consistency across existing regulatory requirements.*

R3. OneShoreline consider establishing and administering a low interest revolving loan fund to enable jurisdictions to prepare the initial engineering and planning necessary to obtain federal and state funding for SLR projects, establishing such program by December 31, 2021.

City Response: *The grand jury requested OneShoreline respond to this recommendation. No City response is required.*

R4. The County Board of Supervisors and each city and town council, should ensure that their general plans regarding SLR protection include transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities and hazardous material sites by March 31, 2022.

City Response: *The City's general plan (last adopted in 2016) includes several policies regarding sea level rise:*

- *Program LU-7.F: Adaptation Plan. Work with emergency service providers to develop an adaptation plan, including funding mechanisms, to help prepare the community for potential adverse impacts related to climate change, such as sea level rise, extreme weather events, wildfire, and threats to ecosystem and species health.*
- *Program LU-7.G: SAFER Bay Process. Coordinate with the SAFER Bay process to ensure that the Menlo Park community's objectives for sea level rise/flood protection, ecosystem enhancement, and recreational trails are adequately taken into account.*
- *Program LU-7.H: Sea Level Rise. Establish requirements based on State Sea Level Rise Policy Guidance for development projects of a certain minimum scale potentially affected by sea level rise to ensure protection of occupants and property from flooding and other potential effects.*

The conceptual plans for sea level rise protection in SAFER Bay would result in protection of transportation, utilities, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous

material sites within Menlo Park. The City is currently working with the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority and other partners to secure funding to implement SAFER Bay.

In addition, the City is currently updating its Local Hazard Mitigation Plan as part of a countywide effort, the San Mateo County Multijurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Plan is currently undergoing review by the California Office of Emergency Services and FEMA, and is anticipated to be reviewed and approved by the City Council by the end of 2021. Furthermore, the City is currently updating its Housing, Safety, and Environmental Justice Elements and anticipates sea level rise will be further addressed through those updates. These changes are anticipated to be completed by the end of 2022.⁵

If you have further questions, please contact Nikki Nagaya, Public Works Director at nhnagaya@menlopark.org or at 650-330-6780.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

52C1D491348F4A3...
Drew Combs
Mayor

⁵ City of Menlo Park, Housing Element project timeline: <https://menlopark.org/1838/Project-timeline>



City of Millbrae

621 Magnolia Avenue, Millbrae, CA 94030

ANN SCHNEIDER
Mayor

ANNE OLIVA
Vice Mayor

GINA PAPAN
Councilmember

ANDERS FUNG
Councilmember

REUBEN D. HOLOBER
Councilmember

November 4, 2021

Honorable Amarra A. Lee
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Jenarda Dubois
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 8th Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

RE: City of Millbrae’s Response to Grand Jury Report: “San Mateo County: California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise.”

Dear Honorable Judge Lee,

Please accept this as the City of Millbrae’s formal response to the Grand Jury Report: "San Mateo County: California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise" (Grand Jury Report), pursuant to the instructions in your August 11, 2021 letter.

The City of Millbrae (City) has reviewed the Grand Jury Report and offers the following responses to the findings and to recommendations R1, R2, and R4 on behalf of the City Council, City Manager and the Mayor:

Responses to Findings

F1: Sea level rise will seriously damage critical San Mateo County infrastructure and assets unless the County and its cities and towns prepare now.

Response to F1: The City *agrees* with this finding.

F2: Sea level rise infrastructure projects can take more than a decade to plan, fund and build.

Response to F2: The City *agrees* with this finding.

F3: Complex federal and state regulations and procedures delay and increase the costs of already expensive sea level rise mitigation projects. They need to be revised.

Response to F3: The City *agrees* with this finding.

F4: Delaying sea level rise projects will increase costs.

City Council/City Manager/City Clerk (650) 259-2334	Building Division/Permits (650) 259-2330	Community Development (650) 259-2341	Finance (650) 259-2350
Fire (650) 558-7600	Police (650) 259-2300	Public Works/Engineering (650) 259-2339	Recreation (650) 259-2360

Response to F4: The City *agrees* with this finding.

F5: To remain effective, OneShoreline needs steady, long-term, operational funding.

Response to F5: The City *agrees* with this finding.

F6: Coordination between neighboring jurisdictions is important to reduce costs and improve the effectiveness of a SLR project.

Response to F6: The City *agrees* with this finding.

F7: Competing budget priorities among the entities in a sea level rise project make the projects difficult to fund and manage, leading to risk of delays and missed deadlines.

Response to F7: The City *partially agrees* with this finding. The City is not familiar with budgeting/funding situations of other entities, and therefore, declines to comment on the ability of others to prioritize, fund, and manage projects. Additionally, a funding and management framework has been established between the City and OneShoreline that allows OneShoreline to take the lead in managing projects and identifying funding, which facilitates implementation. However, the City does agree that competing budget priorities within the City make it difficult to identify funding in support of these projects. Managing competing funding needs is common and is not unique to sea level rise projects.

F8: Numerous hazardous material sites in the County must be protected from sea level rise flooding.

Response to F8: The City *agrees* with this finding.

F9: Storm surge and sea level rise threaten the County's wastewater treatment plants affecting everyone in the County - even inland County residents.

Response to F9: The City *agrees* with this finding.

F10. OneShoreline is uniquely positioned to augment San Mateo County's ability to combat sea level rise by its planning, funding, permitting expertise, and guidance.

Response to F10: The City *agrees* with this finding.

F11. Destruction of low-cost housing on the Bay and coast by flooding and erosion due to sea level rise will further increase inequities in communities such as Belle Haven (Menlo Park), East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and Pacifica.

Response to F11: The City *partially agrees* with this finding. The City is not responsible for housing in these jurisdictions and is not aware of all of the possible implications to low-cost housing, but it seems likely that these areas would be negatively impacted.

F12. OneShoreline effectively collaborates with the Office of Sustainability and others on public engagement campaigns to educate individuals on how sea level rise will affect San Mateo County.

Response to F12: The City *partially agrees* with this finding. OneShoreline does great work collaborating with the City and surrounding communities. However, the City is not familiar with their efforts in collaborating Office of Sustainability, and therefore is not in the position to comment on this effort.

F13. A loan program to provide cities and towns funds for the required preliminary engineering necessary to obtain partial state or federal funding for SLR projects would be beneficial.

Response to F13: The City *partially agrees* with this finding. Additional funding will facilitate preliminary engineering, and ultimately, implementation. However, the structure of such funding requires further strategy, investigation, and analysis.

Responses to Recommendations R1, R2, and R4

R1. At a public meeting, each city and town council, or board of supervisors should take at least one concrete action toward establishing a continuing funding source for OneShoreline, identify that action in response to this report, and potentially adopt a resolution expressing support for a parcel tax or property tax by June 30, 2022.

Response to R1:

The recommendation has been *partially implemented*. On March 26, 2019, the City Council adopted a resolution endorsing the proposal for the formation of the San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District (OneShoreline) and agreed to provide \$40,000 per year for three years to help fund sea level rise adaptation and mitigation efforts. It is our understanding the current funding is sufficient to extend OneShoreline's operation for an additional 2 years. It is also our understanding that the County is considering a County-wide ballot measure to provide long-term funding for OneShoreline. If such a funding measure is placed on the ballot, the City Council will consider a resolution endorsing the measure.

R2. A coordinated lobbying strategy with participation by the County, by San Mateo County cities and towns, by OneShoreline, and by other interested Bay Area cities and counties for federal and state regulatory simplification by January 31, 2022.

Response to R2: The recommendation has *not yet been implemented*. It is our understanding that OneShoreline intends to continue working with the County on a lobbying strategy and will take the lead in coordinating with federal and state regulators. When needed or requested, the City Council will consider adopting a resolution, providing or supporting a letter of endorsement.

R4. The County Board of Supervisors and each city and town council, should ensure that their general plans regarding SLR protection include transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous material sites by March 31, 2022.

Response to R4:

The recommendation has *not yet been implemented* but will be implemented in the future. The current General Plan update is incorporating the mid-level scenario (consistent with the San Mateo County resiliency plan) of Sea Level Rise corresponding to 3.3-feet above the 1% chance event base flood

October 26, 2021

RE: City of Millbrae's Response to Grand Jury Report: "San Mateo County: California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise"

Page 4

elevation. This produces a Sea Level Rise floodplain elevation of 13.3-feet NAVD88. The City and OneShoreline will work together to ensure that the General Plan takes into account future conditions associated with SLR prior to completion of the document's update in November 2022

The City appreciates the opportunity to share its comments on the Grand Jury Report. The City would also like to bring to your attention the following items of concerns that were not addressed in the Grand Jury Report for your consideration:

1. Equity in the funding across communities to ensure small, less represented cities receive a fair share of funding to address SLR issues.
2. All housing is at risk through the San Mateo County.
3. Backbone infrastructure and the capacity of the backbone infrastructure, which we feel must be addressed with sea level rise.

Sincerely,



Ann Schneider
Mayor

Cc: City Council
City Manager
City Attorney



September 29, 2021

The Honorable Judge Amarra A. Lee
Presiding Judge
San Mateo County Superior Court
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063

Dear Judge Lee:

The Board of Directors of the San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District (also known as OneShoreline) has approved the following response to the San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury Report titled “San Mateo County: California’s Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise” released on August 11, 2021 (“Report”). The capacity and activities of OneShoreline are the focus of the Report, and, as requested by the Civil Grand Jury, this response indicates whether OneShoreline agrees with, or disagrees with (in whole or in part, with explanation), each of the Report’s thirteen Findings and responds to Report Recommendations R2 and R3.

OneShoreline Response to Each Finding

F1. Sea level rise will seriously damage critical San Mateo County infrastructure and assets unless the County and its cities and towns prepare now.

OneShoreline: OneShoreline **agrees** with this finding. San Mateo County is the most vulnerable county in California to the first three feet of sea level rise (SLR) with respect to population, including underrepresented population, number of homes, property value, and number of contaminated sites. Building resilience to future climate conditions will be easier and less costly by planning for it today.

F2. Sea level rise infrastructure projects can take more than a decade to plan, fund and build.

OneShoreline: OneShoreline **agrees** with this finding. However, it doesn’t have to be this way. Beyond local leadership and a sound technical plan, the three fundamental needs to build large SLR projects are land rights, funding, and environmental regulatory permits. Frequently, the last two of these can take years to acquire. OneShoreline is working to address these, as discussed below in our responses to Findings 3, 10, and 13, and Recommendations 2 and 3.

F3. Complex federal and state regulations and procedures delay and increase the costs of already expensive sea level rise mitigation projects. They need to be revised.

OneShoreline: OneShoreline **agrees** with this finding. Federal and State agencies can provide critical funding for these projects and fulfill an important role in ensuring that large projects do not harm the environment. However, the permitting and funding regimes of these agencies were largely developed decades ago and are not well suited to address a transformative and dynamic challenge like climate change. OneShoreline has and will continue to support efforts to ensure that the laws and guidelines used by Federal and State agencies recognize -- and take into account in the permitting process -- the multiple public benefits of climate resilience projects, including the benefit of establishing habitats that can thrive in future climate-driven conditions.

F4. Delaying sea level rise projects will increase costs.

OneShoreline: OneShoreline **agrees** with this finding. Studies have shown that the costs of reactive, emergency repairs or retrofitting developed lands far exceed the costs of proactive planning and construction focused on future conditions. Working with local municipalities and agencies, OneShoreline is well-positioned to support long-term land use policies, arrange private development partnerships, and plan and build projects across jurisdictions that align and connect protection against sea level rise, creek flooding, coastal erosion, and stormwater, as well as enhance trails and the environment.

F5. To remain effective, OneShoreline needs steady, long-term, operational funding.

OneShoreline: OneShoreline **agrees** with this finding. Without a long-term, stable source of funds for its operations, OneShoreline cannot meet its objective to make all of San Mateo County resilient to the climate change impacts listed in the response to F4. For this reason, OneShoreline is exploring the possibility of asking voters throughout the county to support a measure aimed at securing funding for operations and projects associated with climate resilience.

F6. Coordination between neighboring jurisdictions is important to reduce costs and improve the effectiveness of a SLR project.

OneShoreline: OneShoreline **agrees** with this finding. Meeting the transformative challenge of sea level rise in this county requires a holistic approach across jurisdictions. OneShoreline was created as a countywide agency to leverage partnerships to build long-term regional solutions that cannot be realized on a city-by-city basis. For example, emerging OneShoreline projects are:

- Aligning disparate efforts of the cities of Burlingame and Millbrae, and San Francisco International Airport, into a project that connects their Bay shoreline in order to protect people, property, and infrastructure against the current FEMA 100-year tide plus six feet of sea level rise (which is equal to ten feet above today's high tide), fill gaps in the Bay Trail and provide environmental improvements where possible; and
- Apply these objectives to a new project for the protection of Redwood Shores, which includes the cities of Redwood City, San Carlos, and Belmont, the County's San Carlos Airport, Silicon Valley Clean Water, and other major assets.

F7. Competing budget priorities among the entities in a sea level rise project make the projects difficult to fund and manage, leading to risk of delays and missed deadlines.

OneShoreline: OneShoreline **partially agrees** with this finding. Funding projects from many local government entities and external sources is more complicated and time-consuming than funding projects from a single source. However, all government functions, including projects to protect against sea level rise, must compete with other budget priorities, and OneShoreline does not see this issue as unique to these projects or even as the primary obstacle to achieving our objectives.

F8. Numerous hazardous material sites in the County must be protected from sea level rise flooding.

OneShoreline: OneShoreline **agrees** with this finding. The County's 2018 Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment found that nearly half of all hazardous material sites in the County (183 sites, including four Superfund sites) are at risk from the current FEMA 100-year tide and approximately six feet of sea level rise. Furthermore, to improve our understanding of the vulnerability of hazardous sites to elevated groundwater due to SLR, the San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI) is studying where sea level rise will impact groundwater, and then how this impact may cause contaminants to be mobilized. OneShoreline will cross-reference these areas of concern with our project sites to synchronize adaptation strategies where possible.

F9. Storm surge and sea level rise threaten the County’s wastewater treatment plants affecting everyone in the County – even inland County residents.

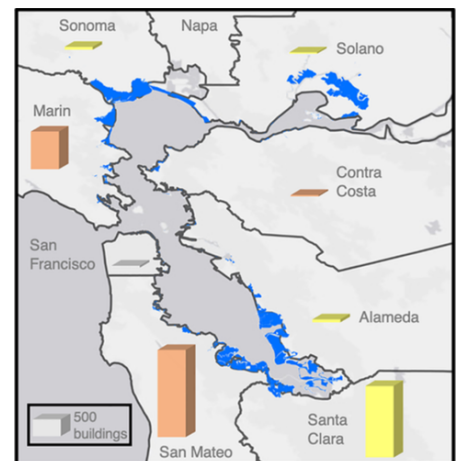
OneShoreline: OneShoreline *agrees* with this finding. The 2018 Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment found that seven of the nine wastewater treatment plants in this County will be substantially impacted by the current FEMA 100-year storm plus approximately six feet of sea level rise. This issue is not unique to San Mateo County; a NBC Bay Area investigative [report](#) earlier this year found that 30 out of 39 treatment plants in the San Francisco Bay Area are at risk from climate-driven flooding. OneShoreline is seeking to synchronize its projects with the need to protect wastewater facilities and enable these facilities to contribute towards our resilience to another major climate impact—extreme drought.

F10. OneShoreline is uniquely positioned to augment San Mateo County’s ability to combat sea level rise by its planning, funding, permitting expertise, and guidance.

OneShoreline: OneShoreline *agrees* with this finding. As the countywide agency established to focus on this issue and leverage resources and partnerships across jurisdictional boundaries, OneShoreline plays a key role in bringing together key stakeholders to establish common objectives and assumptions; utilize public and private land rights to meet project goals; and share technical information, environmental mitigations, and project costs.

F11. Destruction of low-cost housing on the Bay and coast by flooding and erosion due to sea level rise will further increase inequities in communities such as Belle Haven (Menlo Park), East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and Pacifica.

OneShoreline: OneShoreline *agrees* with this finding. A study by Stanford University researchers [published](#) in July 2021 found that flooding in San Mateo County – more than any other Bay Area county – disproportionately impacts communities most at risk of financial instability. Researchers found that the household median income in the County’s floodplain is about \$30,000 lower than the County median. This is illustrated in the figure to the right, where the size of the bar indicates the number of residential buildings flooded during a 100-year tide and the color of the bars associated with each county indicate whether the median household income in the flooded zone is above (yellow) or below (orange) a county’s median household income.



F12. OneShoreline effectively collaborates with the Office of Sustainability and others on public engagement campaigns to educate individuals on how sea level rise will affect San Mateo County.

OneShoreline: OneShoreline *agrees* with this finding. OneShoreline communicates regularly with the County’s Office of Sustainability (OOS) on areas where our efforts can complement one another, and OOS has augmented OneShoreline’s outreach efforts as OneShoreline builds its capacity. OneShoreline also works with cities, other special districts, the County Office of Education, and the League of Women Voters (LWV) chapters to educate individuals on the risks facing this county and approaches to building resilience. This has included a year-long series of public forums co-hosted by OneShoreline and the LWV on climate issues related to water and wildfire throughout the county.

F13. A loan program to provide cities and towns funds for the required preliminary engineering necessary to obtain partial state or federal funding for SLR projects would be beneficial.

OneShoreline: OneShoreline *partially agrees* with this finding. A source of funding to assist municipalities with the planning and design activities necessary to obtain state and/or federal funding for SLR projects would be beneficial. However, the structure of such funding (i.e., whether it would/could take the form of a loan program) requires further investigation and analysis.

OneShoreline Response to Recommendations 2 and 3

R2. A coordinated lobbying strategy with participation by the County, by San Mateo County cities and towns, by OneShoreline, and by other interested Bay Area cities and counties for federal and state regulatory simplification by January 31, 2022.

OneShoreline: The recommendation has been partially implemented, and implementation will be ongoing beyond January 31, 2022. OneShoreline has worked with San Mateo County and its lobbyists in California, as well as coalitions of water-related agencies, on many issues, including simplifying the process to permit climate resilience projects. As discussed in the response above to F3, today's climate crisis has highlighted the need to simplify environmental regulatory requirements for restoration and climate resilience projects. There has been progress on this issue at the State level, including through the just-passed Senate Bill 155, which allows certain habitat restoration projects to be exempt from CEQA. OneShoreline is currently following how the State plans to implement this measure if signed by the Governor and whether this exemption would apply to its projects.

R3. OneShoreline consider establishing and administering a low interest revolving loan fund to enable jurisdictions to prepare the initial engineering and planning necessary to obtain federal and state funding for SLR projects, establishing such program by December 31, 2021.

OneShoreline: As indicated above in response to F13, this specific recommendation requires further investigation and analysis. Moreover, until OneShoreline has secured its own steady, long-term, operational funding (*see* F4, above), it will not be in a position to establish and administer a program to fund the initial engineering and planning needs of other jurisdictions in the County. Thus, any such program, regardless of the ultimate funding vehicle, will not be established by December 31, 2021. However, in the meantime, OneShoreline will continue to explore ways to assist and partner with local jurisdictions to improve our collective resilience to the water-related impacts of climate change.

On behalf of the OneShoreline Board, thank you for taking on the complex and urgent long-term task of addressing sea level rise and other flood risks in San Mateo County. Please contact OneShoreline CEO Len Materman at len@oneshoreline.org if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



Dave Pine
Chair, Board of Directors

cc: OneShoreline Board members
San Mateo County Manager
City Managers within San Mateo County



Scenic Pacifica
Incorporated Nov. 22, 1957

CITY OF PACIFICA

540 Crespi Drive • Pacifica, California 94044

www.cityofpacifica.org

MAYOR
Sue Beckmeyer

MAYOR PRO TEM
Mary Bier

COUNCIL
Mike O'Neill
Sue Vaterlaus
Tygarjas Bigstycck

October 11, 2021

Hon. Amarra A. Lee
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Jenarda Dubois
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Subject: City of Pacifica's response to "Grand Jury Report: 'San Mateo County: California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise'"

Dear Judge Lee:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the above-referenced Grand Jury report filed on August 11, 2021. Pursuant to Penal Code § 933(c), the City of Pacifica's ("City") response to the findings and recommendations contained in the report are provided below. Additionally, the City would like to clarify that the Pacifica General Plan documents referenced in the report, most notably in Appendix B, seem to relate to the draft update of the Pacifica General Plan and Local Coastal Land Use Plan ("LCLUP"), and its supporting documents. The City Council has adopted the policies in the LCLUP and the City is now in the certification process with the Coastal Commission. The draft General Plan update is scheduled for adoption hearing in early 2022. Additionally, the City continues to strongly urge that the coast side receive equal representation and support from the San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District ("OneShoreline") in its work moving forward.

The Pacifica City Council, including the Mayor, reviewed and approved the responses at a public meeting on October 11, 2021.

Responses to Grand Jury Findings:

F1. Sea level rise will seriously damage critical San Mateo County infrastructure and assets unless the County and its cities and towns prepare now.

Response to F1. The respondent agrees with the finding.

F2. Sea level rise infrastructure projects can take more than a decade to plan, fund and build.

Response to F2. The respondent agrees with the finding.

F3. Complex federal and state regulations and procedures delay and increase the costs of already expensive sea level rise mitigation projects. They need to be revised.

Response to F3. The respondent agrees with the finding.

Subject: City of Pacifica’s response to “Grand Jury Report: ‘San Mateo County: California’s Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise’”

October 11, 2021

F4. Delaying sea level rise projects will increase costs.

Response to F4. The respondent agrees with the finding.

F5. To remain effective, OneShoreline needs steady, long-term, operational funding.

Response to F5. The respondent agrees with the finding.

F6. Coordination between neighboring jurisdictions is important to reduce costs and improve the effectiveness of a SLR project.

Response to F6. The respondent agrees with the finding.

F7. Competing budget priorities among the entities in a sea level rise project make the projects difficult to fund and manage, leading to risk of delays and missed deadlines.

Response to F7. The respondent agrees with the finding.

F8. Numerous hazardous material sites in the County must be protected from sea level rise flooding.

Response to F8. The respondent agrees with the finding.

F9. Storm surge and sea level rise threaten the County’s wastewater treatment plants affecting everyone in the County – even inland County residents.

Response to F9. The respondent agrees with the finding.

F10. OneShoreline is uniquely positioned to augment San Mateo County’s ability to combat sea level rise by its planning, funding, permitting expertise, and guidance.

Response to F10. The respondent agrees with the finding.

F11. Destruction of low-cost housing on the Bay and coast by flooding and erosion due to sea level rise will further increase inequities in communities such as Belle Haven (Menlo Park), East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and Pacifica.

Response to F11. The respondent agrees with the finding.

F12. OneShoreline effectively collaborates with the Office of Sustainability and others on public engagement campaigns to educate individuals on how sea level rise will affect San Mateo County.

Response to F12. The respondent agrees with the finding.

F13. A loan program to provide cities and towns funds for the required preliminary engineering necessary to obtain partial state or federal funding for SLR projects would be beneficial.

Response to F13. The respondent agrees with the finding.

Responses to Grand Jury Recommendations:

R1. At a public meeting, each city and town council, or board of supervisors should take at least one concrete action toward establishing a continuing funding source for OneShoreline, identify that action in response to this report, and potentially adopt a resolution expressing support for a parcel tax or property tax by June 30, 2022.

Subject: City of Pacifica's response to "Grand Jury Report: 'San Mateo County: California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise'"

October 11, 2021

Response to R1. The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The City will need to understand the future funding needs for OneShoreline before considering any action toward establishing a continuing funding source. Once that information is known, the City can analyze what options are available for establishing a continuing funding source. City staff will prepare an item for City Council consideration and action after receiving information on the future funding needs for OneShoreline and options for the City to support.

R2. A coordinated lobbying strategy with participation by the County, by San Mateo County cities and towns, by OneShoreline, and by other interested Bay Area cities and counties for federal and state regulatory simplification by January 31, 2022.

Response to R2. The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The City is willing and available to participate in a coordinate lobbying strategy for federal and state regulatory simplification. The timeframe of the coordination will depend on the availability of the participating parties, but City staff can be available to start participating in the coordination by January 31, 2022.

R4. The County Board of Supervisors and each city and town council, should ensure that their general plans regarding SLR protection include transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous material sites by March 31, 2022.

Response to R4. The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The City is currently working to update its current 1980 General Plan. The General Plan will include coastal hazards policies that will consider transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous material sites in relation to sea level rise impacts. The City is scheduled to adopt the General Plan update by March 31, 2022. Additionally, the City Council has approved the LCLUP update for certification, which includes parallel coastal hazards policies. The City is currently working with the California Coastal Commission to certify the LCLUP update.

Sincerely,



KEVIN WOODHOUSE
City Manager

cc: Pacifica City Council

Mayor Diane Howard
Vice Mayor Giselle Hale

Council Members
Alicia C. Aguirre
Lissette Espinoza-Garnica
Jeff Gee
Diana Reddy
Michael A. Smith



1017 MIDDLEFIELD ROAD
Redwood City, California 94063
Telephone (650) 780-7220
www.redwoodcity.org

November 8, 2021

The Honorable Amarra Lee
Grand Jury Judge Northern Court
1050 Mission Road
South San Francisco, CA 94080

Re: San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury Report titled "San Mateo County: California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise" - Released on August 11, 2021

Dear Judge Lee,

The City of Redwood City (City) received the San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury Report titled "San Mateo County: California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise" released on August 11, 2021. The report instructed the City to respond to thirteen findings and to respond to Recommendations R1, R2 and R4. Pursuant to Penal Code Section §933(c), the following response to the Grand Jury Report was reviewed and approved by the City Council at its meeting on November 8, 2021:

Findings

F1. Sea level rise will seriously damage critical San Mateo County infrastructure and assets unless the County and its cities and towns prepare now.

Response: Agree

F2. Sea level rise infrastructure projects can take more than a decade to plan, fund and build.

Response: Agree

F3. Complex federal and state regulations and procedures delay and increase the costs of already expensive sea level rise mitigation projects. They need to be revised.

Response: Agree

F4. Delaying sea level rise projects will increase costs.

Response: Agree

F5. To remain effective, OneShoreline needs steady, long-term, operational funding.

Response: Agree

F6. Coordination between neighboring jurisdictions is important to reduce costs and improve the effectiveness of a SLR project.

Response: Agree

F7. Competing budget priorities among the entities in a sea level rise project make the projects difficult to fund and manage, leading to risk of delays and missed deadlines.

Response: Agree

F8. Numerous hazardous material sites in the County must be protected from sea level rise flooding.

Response: Agree

F9. Storm surge and sea level rise threaten the County's wastewater treatment plants affecting everyone in the County – even inland County residents.

Response: Agree

F10. OneShoreline is uniquely positioned to augment San Mateo County's ability to combat sea level rise by its planning, funding, permitting expertise, and guidance.

Response: Agree

F11. Destruction of low-cost housing on the Bay and coast by flooding and erosion due to sea level rise will further increase inequities in communities such as Belle Haven (Menlo Park), East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and Pacifica.

Response: Agree

F12. OneShoreline effectively collaborates with the Office of Sustainability and others on public engagement campaigns to educate individuals on how sea level rise will affect San Mateo County.

Response: Agree

F13. A loan program to provide cities and towns funds for the required preliminary engineering necessary to obtain partial state or federal funding for SLR projects would be beneficial.

Response: Partially Agree

A source of funding to assist municipalities with preliminary activities necessary to obtain state and/or federal funding for SLR projects would be beneficial. However, whether such funding should take the form of a loan program requires further investigation and analysis. Establishing a new loan program may divert from the current resources and efforts of OneShoreline to act as the single agency representing all entities within San Mateo County in order to improve opportunities to receive and utilize federal, state and other funding resources, including grants.

Recommendations

R1. At a public meeting, each city and town council, or board of supervisors should take at least one concrete action toward establishing a continuing funding source for OneShoreline, identify that action in

response to this report, and potentially adopt a resolution expressing support for a parcel tax or property tax by June 30, 2022.

Response: The recommendation requires further analysis. OneShoreline is still establishing policies, objectives, and procedures related to how it will address flooding and sea level rise and also prioritize and select projects within the County. OneShoreline should coordinate with the municipalities in the County as it establishes such policies, objectives, and procedures. At the conclusion of this process, Redwood City can conduct the required analysis to assess the appropriate level of support for OneShoreline.

R2. A coordinated lobbying strategy with participation by the County, by San Mateo County cities and towns, by OneShoreline, and by other interested Bay Area cities and counties for federal and state regulatory simplification by January 31, 2022.

Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented. However, the City is willing and available to discuss a coordinated lobbying strategy for federal and state regulatory simplification.

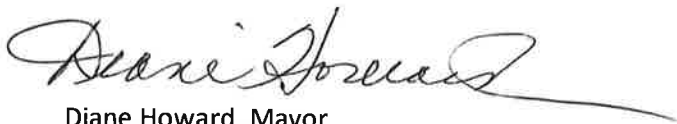
R4. The County Board of Supervisors and each city and town council, should ensure that their general plans regarding SLR protection include transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous material sites by March 31, 2022.

Response: The recommendation requires further analysis. Redwood City's General Plan has many programs and policies that address sea level rise and note the importance of transportation and utility infrastructure planning. The City remains ready to take additional measures in coordination with State and County agencies. If and when there is a joint strategy and specific criteria to address sea level rise, the City will consider such criteria for incorporation in the General Plan or other planning documents and City standards.

Redwood City continues to be a leader in addressing sea level rise and flooding issues through such active projects as the under-construction Bayfront Canal improvements, Redwood Shores future levee planning, and through exploring additional protections for Bair Island and the East of US-101 area. The City Council will also be holding a Climate Action study session on November 8, 2021 to discuss a comprehensive overview of the City's sustainability efforts.

On behalf of the City Council of the City of Redwood City (City), I would like to thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the above referenced Grand Jury Report.

Sincerely,



Diane Howard, Mayor
City of Redwood City

Cc: City Council, Redwood City
Melissa Stevenson Diaz, City Manager
Mark Muenzer, Community Development and Transportation Director



Jovan D. Grogan
City Manager

November 9, 2021

Honorable Amarra A. Lee
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Jenarda Dubois
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Sent via electronic mail to: grandjury@sanmateocourt.org

Re: Grand Jury Report: "San Mateo County: California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise"

Dear Judge Lee:

The City of San Bruno ("City") has approved the following response to the San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury Report titled, "San Mateo County: California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise" dated August 11, 2021 ("Report"). This letter serves as the City's response to the findings and recommendations found therein. The San Bruno City Council approved this response at the November 9, 2021, City Council Meeting.

FINDINGS

- F1.** *Sea level rise will seriously damage critical San Mateo County infrastructure and assets unless the County and its cities and towns prepare now.*
- F2.** *Sea level rise infrastructure projects can take more than a decade to plan, fund and build.*
- F3.** *Complex federal and state regulations and procedures delayed and increase the costs of already expensive sea level rise mitigation projects.*
- F4.** *Delaying sea level rise projects will increase costs.*
- F5.** *To remain effective, OneShoreline needs steady, long-term, operational funding.*
- F6.** *Coordination between neighboring jurisdictions is important to reduce costs and improve the effectiveness of a SLR project.*

- F7.** *Completing budget priorities among the entities in a sea level rise project make the projects difficult to fund and manage, leading to risk of delays and missed deadlines.*
- F8.** *Numerous hazardous material sites in the County must be protected from sea level rise flooding.*
- F9.** *Storm surge and sea level rise threaten the County's wastewater treatment plants affecting everyone in the County – even inland County residents.*
- F10.** *OneShoreline is uniquely positioned to augment San Mateo County's ability to combat sea level rise by its planning, funding, permitting expertise, and guidance.*
- F11.** *Destruction of low-cost housing on the Bay and coast by flooding and erosion due to sea level rise will further increase inequities in communities such as Belle Haven (Menlo Park), East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and Pacifica.*
- F12.** *OneShoreline effectively collaborates with the Office of Sustainability and others on public engagement campaigns to educated individuals on how sea level rise will affect San Mateo County.*
- F13.** *A loan program to provide cities and towns funds for the required preliminary engineering necessary to obtain partial state or federal funding for SLR projects would be beneficial.*

Findings F1-F13: The City of San Bruno has not conducted its own independent research on these matters, but based on review of the Civil Grand Jury Report, the City agrees with these findings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1.** *At a public meeting, each city and town council, or board of supervisors should take at least one concrete action toward establishing a continuing funding source for OneShoreline, identify that action in response to this report, and potentially adopt a resolution expressing support for a parcel tax or property tax by June 30, 2022.*

Response

The City of San Bruno remains committed to mitigating sea level rise and the harmful effects of climate change. The City recognizes that capital improvement projects relating to sea level rise are very expensive and that grant funding is sparse and competitive. This recommendation requires further analysis and study in consultation and coordination with OneShoreline's current efforts. The timeframe for implementation is dependent on ongoing discussions with OneShoreline.

- R2.** *A coordinated lobbying strategy with participation by the County, by San Mateo County cities and towns, by OneShoreline, and by other interested Bay Area cities and counties for federal and state regulatory simplification by January 31, 2022.*

Response

This recommendation has been partially implemented in coordination with OneShoreline and other agencies, and implementation will be ongoing beyond January 31, 2022. The strategy to support this recommendation can be strengthened through the efforts of establishing a continuing operational funding source for OneShoreline.

- R4.** *The County Board of Supervisors and each city and town council, should ensure that their general plans regarding SLR protection include transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous material sites by March 31, 2022.*

Response

The City of San Bruno last updated the General Plan in 2009. The City is planning a comprehensive General Plan update to the General Plan to begin in fiscal year 2022-23. As part of the comprehensive update, the City will update the Safety Element to include goals, policies, and programs to address climate change, including the effects of sea level rise in San Bruno.

On behalf of the City of San Bruno City Council, thank you for taking on the complex and urgent long-term task of addressing sea level rise and other flood risks in San Mateo County. Please contact me at jgrogan@sanbruno.ca.gov for additional assistance.

Sincerely,



Jovan D. Grogan
City Manager

Cc: City of San Bruno City Council
Marc Zafferano, City Attorney
Melissa Thurman, City Clerk
Hae Won Ritchie, Interim Public Works Director/City Engineer



October 26, 2021

Honorable Amarra A. Lee
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Jenarda Dubois
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

RE: Grand Jury Report: "San Mateo County: California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise."

Dear Judge Lee:

The City of San Carlos is replying to a request by the court to respond to the Grand Jury Report "San Mateo County: California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise". Below are our responses to the Findings and Recommendations that were approved by the San Carlos City Council on October 25, 2021.

FINDINGS:

- Finding 1.** The City agrees with this Finding.
- Finding 2.** The City agrees with this Finding.
- Finding 3.** The City agrees with this Finding.
- Finding 4.** The City agrees with this Finding.
- Finding 5.** The City agrees with this Finding.
- Finding 6.** The City agrees with this Finding.
- Finding 7.** The City agrees with this Finding.
- Finding 8.** The City agrees with this Finding.
- Finding 9.** The City agrees with this Finding.
- Finding 10.** The City agrees with this Finding.
- Finding 11.** The City agrees with this Finding.
- Finding 12.** The City agrees with this Finding.
- Finding 13.** The City agrees with this Finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendation 1. At a public meeting, each city and town council, or board of supervisors should take at least one concrete action toward establishing a continuing funding source for OneShoreline, identify that action in response to this report, and potentially adopt a resolution expressing support for a parcel tax or property tax by June 30, 2022.

Response. At a public meeting the San Carlos City Council will discuss funding sources for OneShoreline, which will include possibly adopting a resolution expressing support for a parcel tax or property tax that would establish a continuing funding source for OneShoreline by June 30, 2022.

Recommendation 2. A coordinated lobbying strategy with participation by the County, by San Mateo County cities and towns, by OneShoreline, and by other interested Bay Area cities and counties, for federal and state regulatory simplification by January 31, 2022.

Response. The City of San Carlos will participate in a regionally-coordinated lobbying strategy for federal and state regulatory simplification by January 31, 2022.

Recommendation 3. OneShoreline consider establishing and administering a low interest revolving loan fund to enable jurisdictions to prepare the initial engineering and planning necessary to obtain federal and state funding for SLR projects, establishing such program by December 31, 2021.

Response. No response required.

Recommendation 4. The County Board of Supervisors and each city and town council, should ensure that their general plans regarding SLR protection include transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous material sites by March 31, 2022.

Response. The San Carlos City Council adopted a new Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Plan ("CMAP") on September 27, 2021 that serves as the community's strategic plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to changing climate conditions. The CMAP includes a vulnerability assessment that analyzes the impacts of climate hazards, such as sea level rise, on populations and community assets including utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous material sites. The CMAP also identifies adaptation strategies to build resilience to climate hazards.

The CMAP is an update to the City's 2009 Climate Action Plan included in the Environmental Management Element of the 2030 General Plan. The climate adaptation components contained within the CMAP will also be referenced in an update to the City's Safety Element currently on pace to be adopted by the fall of 2022.

Sincerely,



Jeff Maltbie, City Manager



CITY OF SAN MATEO
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

330 W. 20th Avenue
San Mateo, CA 94403-1338
www.cityofsanmateo.org
(650) 522-7040

November 2, 2021

Honorable Amarra A. Lee
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Jenarda Dubois
Hall of Justice
400 County Center
2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury Report: "San Mateo County: California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise."

Dear Judge Lee:

The Council of the City of San Mateo (City) voted at its public meeting on November 1, 2021, to authorize this response to the San Mateo County (SMC) Civil Grand Jury Report: "San Mateo County: California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise," released on August 11, 2021.

Responses to Findings

F1. Sea level rise will seriously damage critical San Mateo County infrastructure and assets unless the County and its cities and towns prepare now.

Response: The City agrees that sea level rise will damage critical infrastructure and assets in SMC. The *State of California Sea-Level Rise Guidance 2018 Update* prepared by the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) issued probabilistic projections ranging between 0.9 and 2.7 ft of sea level rise by 2050 and between 2.5 and 10.2 ft. by the end of the century for San Francisco Bay. The City agrees that the threat is countywide and that residents, commuters, and tourists all depend on critical public infrastructure that is vulnerable to sea level rise. While the City has a three-mile levee system, this infrastructure will require improvements for it to continue to protect residents, property owners, and critical assets (e.g., transportation systems, storm water and wastewater facilities, fire stations, medical facilities, utilities, landfills, and schools). As flood protection systems are interconnected, the City's infrastructure will only provide adequate protection if upgraded following a coordinated approach with neighboring agencies. Due to their complexity and cost, sea level rise projects will require planning, permitting, and funding that will take decades. OneShoreline must therefore work with cities and towns to develop a plan that will protect SMC and the City now.

F2. Sea level rise infrastructure projects can take more than a decade to plan, fund and build.

Response: The City agrees that due to their large scale and cost, sea level rise infrastructure projects will take decade(s) to plan, fund, and build. In 2001, for example, the City began taking steps to work with

residents affected by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) special flood hazard area designation. After more than two decades of planning and working with multiple regulatory stakeholders, the City was able to create an assessment district to fund the necessary flood protection improvements. After obtaining permits from seven agencies (California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Regional Water Quality Control Board, United States Army Corps of Engineers, State Historic Preservation Office, National Marine Fisheries Services, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission) and coordinating with FEMA, the City is now in construction of the North Shoreview Levee and Pump Station Improvement Project. This effort consists of levee improvements and pump station upgrades that will provide adequate flood protection to the North Shoreview residents and will result in the removal of the affected properties from the flood zone.

Sea level rise projects are larger in scale and cost and require coordination with multiple stakeholders, regulatory agencies, and neighboring jurisdictions. With the complex regulatory framework and lack of adequate funding, these projects will take decades of effort. The City's residents will remain vulnerable if projects cannot be funded and completed in shorter timeframes.

F3. Complex federal and state regulations and procedures delay and increase the costs of already expensive sea level rise mitigation projects. They need to be revised.

Response: The City agrees that federal and state regulations and procedures are complex, requiring years of coordination to obtain clearance and permitting, often delaying project schedules and increasing costs. The regulatory framework needs reform. As noted above, the City's North Shoreview Levee and Pump Station Improvement Project required permits from seven agencies and coordination with FEMA. This effort took years of planning, added significant costs, all while the City worked on obtaining property easements and developed a financial strategy to secure project funding.

To provide between 0.9 and 2.7 ft of sea level rise protection by 2050 and 2.5 to 10.2 ft. by the end of the century as projected by OPC, flood mitigation projects will have to be expansive. These projects will not only have to assess the impacts of severe weather, wet weather flooding, permanent inundation, but also the effects of groundwater rise. With the existing complex federal and state regulatory framework, these projects will take additional years to permit, extending project timelines and adding costs if there is no reform to the regulatory processes.

F4. Delaying sea level rise projects will increase costs.

Response: The City agrees that capital infrastructure project costs increase with time. Due to their scale, sea level rise projects will be complex, and delays will ultimately result in increased costs. There are also the costs associated with no action. In 2019, the California Legislative Analyst Office (LAO) published *Preparing for Rising Seas* which highlighted the cost of no or delayed actions. Planning and investing in efforts to mitigate the impacts of sea level rise have a higher benefit-to-cost ratio compared to the costs associated with disaster relief. LAO referenced a FEMA sponsored study which "found that for every \$1 the federal government invested in various types of pre-disaster mitigation activities in recent years, it avoided public and private losses totaling \$6." Planning for pre-disaster mitigations through a coordinated and strategic approach will likely result in lower costs and more effective protection.

F5. To remain effective, OneShoreline needs steady, long-term, operational funding.

Response: The City agrees that all agencies, including OneShoreline, require steady, long-term, operational funding to remain effective. The City relies primarily on General Fund revenues for the operation of its stormwater systems and implementation of flood control capital projects. The lack of a steady stream has been challenging as regulatory requirements and capital needs continue to increase. For the North Shoreview Levee and Pump Station Improvement Project, the City relied on the development of an assessment district to fund the effort. Earlier this year, the City completed a stormwater funding analysis and is assessing the feasibility of establishing a stormwater utility to fund the operating and capital needs. Governed by Proposition 218, the stormwater fee will require voter approval. Given the increasing funding needs of stormwater management and sea level rise protection, the City believes that coordination on capital improvement projects and funding efforts between OneShoreline and the cities and towns is required to develop an effective strategy for SMC residents.

F6. Coordination between neighboring jurisdictions is important to reduce costs and improve the effectiveness of a SLR project.

Response: The City agrees that coordination between neighboring jurisdictions is important to reduce costs and improve the effectiveness of SLR projects. As SMC began developing the *2018 Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment* report, representatives from cities and towns were invited to participate in Technical and Policy Advisory Committees, which facilitated input on the project. This type of stakeholder engagement was effective and recommended for OneShoreline. Other agencies, such as the City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County, follow a similar structure, with monthly meetings with advisory groups that facilitate and support coordination and collaboration between the jurisdictions. Sea level rise protection will be highly dependent on a coordinated approach due to the interconnectedness of levee networks. A framework that facilitates coordination will result in a more effective strategy to mitigate the impacts of sea level rise.

F7. Competing budget priorities among the entities in a sea level rise project make the projects difficult to fund and manage, leading to risk of delays and missed deadlines.

Response: The City agrees that competing budget priorities make sea level rise projects difficult to manage, which can lead to delays. Because sea level rise projects do not have access to a dedicated source of funding, they rely on general funds, grants, loans, and are likely to require the development of assessment districts. Developing a financial strategy and building public support take time. Cities and towns must prioritize projects and balance infrastructure improvements with general fund sources, which alone cannot meet all needs. Due to the setting of priorities and the high cost and complexity of sea level rise projects, these take longer to plan and fund.

F8. Numerous hazardous material sites in the County must be protected from sea level rise flooding.

Response: The City agrees that hazardous material sites in SMC, such as landfills, contaminated sites, and areas with stored chemicals, must be protected from sea level rise flooding. The City has a closed landfill and an active wastewater treatment plant that are protected by a levee system and are located in the 500-year floodplain as designated by FEMA. Located on Detroit Drive, the wastewater treatment plant is currently undergoing an upgrade and expansion. While the new facility will be protected by the levee system, the City incorporated a secondary means of protection for the new structures. These will be built with an entry floor elevation designed to provide protection from the 100-year base flood and 3.4 ft. of sea level rise. The 3.4 feet value reflects the high end of the "Likely Range"/ High Emission scenario for year 2100 per OPC's projections.

The City's three-mile levee infrastructure will need to be maintained and improved for it to continue to protect hazardous material sites, residents, property owners, and critical assets (e.g., transportation systems, storm water and wastewater facilities, fire stations, medical facilities, utilities, landfills, and schools). As flood protection systems are interconnected, the City's infrastructure will only provide adequate protection if upgraded following a coordinated approach with neighboring agencies.

F9. Storm surge and sea level rise threaten the County's wastewater treatment plants affecting everyone in the County – even inland County residents.

Response: The City agrees that storm surges and sea level rise threaten SMC's wastewater treatment plants, affecting many communities including inland residents. The City's wastewater treatment plant service area includes the City, Foster City, Crystal Springs County Sanitation District, and portions of the Town of Hillsborough, City of Belmont, and unincorporated areas of SMC. Approximately 150,000 are served by the facility, including thousands of inland residents. If the wastewater treatment plant is not adequately protected, it would have an impact on all the 150,000 residents that it serves.

F10. OneShoreline is uniquely positioned to augment San Mateo County's ability to combat sea level rise by its planning, funding, permitting expertise, and guidance.

Response: The City agrees and supported the formation of OneShoreline to position it to augment SMC's ability to address the impacts of sea level rise. In 2018, the City was part of a Staff Advisory Team (SAT) organized by the City/County Association of Government's Countywide Water Coordination Committee. The SAT was tasked with developing a proposal to form a Countywide agency that would increase coordination amongst the jurisdictions, avoid the duplication of efforts, and create a unified voice to position SMC and its cities to obtain state and federal funding for sea level rise projects. The SAT completed an intensive six-month engagement and collaboration phase, resulting in the development of the proposal for the formation of the Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency Agency / OneShoreline. We believe that OneShoreline is positioned to meet its mission.

F11. Destruction of low-cost housing on the Bay and coast by flooding and erosion due to sea level rise will further increase inequities in communities such as Belle Haven (Menlo Park), East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and Pacifica.

Response: The City agrees that the destruction of low-cost housing on the Bay and coast by sea level rise will further increase inequities in communities such as Belle Haven (Menlo Park), East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and Pacifica.

F12. OneShoreline effectively collaborates with the Office of Sustainability and others on public engagement campaigns to educate individuals on how sea level rise will affect San Mateo County.

Response: The City cannot agree or disagree on whether OneShoreline, Office of Sustainability, or others have had effective public engagement campaigns.

F13. A loan program to provide cities and town funds for the required preliminary engineering necessary to obtain partial state and federal funding for SLR projects would be beneficial.

Response: The City partially agrees with this finding. While a loan program for sea level rise projects would be beneficial, the structure of such program requires further analysis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. At a public meeting, each city and town council, or board of supervisors should take at least one concrete action toward establishing a continuing funding source for OneShoreline, identify that action in response to this report, and potentially adopt a resolution expressing support for a parcel tax or property tax by June 30, 2022.

Response: This recommendation requires further analysis. The City endorsed the formation of the Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency Agency / OneShoreline on April 1, 2019 and committed to providing \$55,000 a year in funding for the first three years. OneShoreline's mission is to address sea level rise, flooding, coastal erosion, and large-scale stormwater improvements through integrated regional planning, design, permitting, project implementation, and long-term operations and maintenance. When created, OneShoreline was tasked to develop an Integrated Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency Investment Plan for the Bayshore and the Coastside to address short-term (2050) and long-term (2100) SLR, flooding, and coastal erosion. It is critical for this effort to be addressed so projects can be prioritized and financing options assessed. The City may consider taking an action to support future funding for OneShoreline upon coordination and review of the agency's plan.

R2. A coordinated lobbying strategy with participation by the County, by San Mateo County cities and towns, by OneShoreline, and by other interested Bay Area cities and counties for federal and state regulatory simplification by January 31, 2022.

Response: The City agrees with this recommendation and is willing to participate in a coordinated lobbying strategy with the County, other cities and town, and OneShoreline.

R4. The County Board of Supervisors and each city and town council, should ensure that their general plans regarding SLR protection include transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous material sites by March 31, 2022.

Response: The recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future. Appropriate goals, policies and programs that address sea level rise protection as it pertains to transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous material sites will be incorporated into the City's Updated General Plan, which is anticipated for adoption by the end of 2023. The Updated General Plan will include timeframes, as appropriate, for implementation.

Sincerely,



Eric Rodriguez
Mayor
650-522-7522 ext. 6266

REFERENCES

Ocean Protection Council. 2018. *State of California Sea-Level Rise Guidance, 2018 Update*.

San Mateo County. 2018. *San Mateo County's Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment*.

California Legislative Analyst Office. 2019. *Preparing for Rising Seas*.



CITY COUNCIL 2021

MARK ADDIEGO, MAYOR
MARK NAGALES, VICE MAYOR (DIST. 2)
JAMES COLEMAN, MEMBER (DIST. 4)
EDDIE FLORES, MEMBER
FLOR NICOLAS, MEMBER

MIKE FUTRELL, CITY MANAGER

October 13, 2021

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

Honorable Amarra A. Lee
c/o: Jenarda Dubois
SMC Superior Court
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063

Dear Judge Lee:

The City of South San Francisco (“City”) has approved the following response to the San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury Report titled “San Mateo County: California’s Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise” released on August 11, 2021 (“Report”). The capacity and activities of OneShoreline are the focus of the Report, and, as requested by the Civil Grand Jury, this response indicates whether the City agrees with, or disagrees with (in whole or in part, with explanation), each of the Report’s thirteen Findings and responds to Report Recommendations R1, R2, and R4.

City of South San Francisco Response to Each Finding

F1. Sea level rise will seriously damage critical San Mateo County infrastructure and assets unless the County and its cities and towns prepare now.

Response: The City of South San Francisco *agrees* with this finding. San Mateo County is the most vulnerable county in California to the first three feet of sea level rise (SLR) with respect to population, including underrepresented population, number of homes, property value, and number of contaminated sites. Building resilience to future climate conditions will be easier and less costly by planning for it today.

F2. Sea level rise infrastructure projects can take more than a decade to plan, fund and build.

Response: The City of South San Francisco *agrees* with this finding. However, it doesn’t have to be this way. Beyond local leadership and a sound technical plan, the three fundamental needs to build large SLR projects are land rights, funding, and environmental regulatory permits. Frequently, the last two of these can take years to acquire.

F3. Complex federal and state regulations and procedures delay and increase the costs of already expensive sea level rise mitigation projects. They need to be revised.

Response: The City of South San Francisco *agrees* with this finding. Federal and State agencies can provide critical funding for these projects and fulfill an important role in ensuring that large projects do not harm the environment. However, the permitting and funding regimes of these agencies were largely developed decades ago and are not well suited to address a transformative and dynamic challenge like climate change. The regulatory review process is intended to mitigate the negative impacts of a new project while the anticipated climate change projects are protection mitigations. The City of South San Francisco is currently in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) on a shoreline feasibility study to address Sea Level Rise.

- F4. Delaying sea level rise projects will increase costs.
- Response: The City of South San Francisco *agrees* with this finding. Studies have shown that the costs of reactive, emergency repairs or retrofitting developed lands far exceed the costs of proactive planning and construction focused on future conditions.
- F5. To remain effective, OneShoreline needs steady, long-term, operational funding.
- Response: The City of South San Francisco *agrees* with this finding. Without a long-term, stable source of funds for its operations, OneShoreline cannot meet its objective to make all of San Mateo County resilient to the climate change impacts listed in the response to F4.
- F6. Coordination between neighboring jurisdictions is important to reduce costs and improve the effectiveness of a SLR project.
- Response: The City of South San Francisco *agrees* with this finding. Meeting the transformative challenge of sea level rise in this county requires a holistic approach across jurisdictions. OneShoreline was created as a countywide agency to leverage partnerships to build long-term regional solutions that cannot be realized on a city-by-city basis. OneShoreline should also coordinate the required ongoing operational and maintenance costs associated with multi-jurisdictional projects.
- F7. Competing budget priorities among the entities in a sea level rise project make the projects difficult to fund and manage, leading to risk of delays and missed deadlines.
- Response: The City of South San Francisco *partially agrees* with this finding. Funding projects from many local government entities and external sources is more complicated and time-consuming than funding projects from a single source. However, all government functions, including projects to protect against sea level rise, must compete with other budget priorities, and this issue is not unique to these projects or even as the primary obstacle to achieving our objectives.
- F8. Numerous hazardous material sites in the County must be protected from sea level rise flooding.
- Response: The City of South San Francisco *agrees* with this finding. The County's 2018 Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment found that nearly half of all hazardous material sites in the County (183 sites, including four Superfund sites) are at risk from the current FEMA 100-year tide and approximately six feet of sea level rise. Furthermore, to improve our understanding of the vulnerability of hazardous sites to elevated groundwater due to SLR, the San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI) is studying where sea level rise will impact groundwater, and then how this impact may cause contaminants to be mobilized.

F9. Storm surge and sea level rise threaten the County’s wastewater treatment plants affecting everyone in the County – even inland County residents.

Response: The City of South San Francisco *agrees* with this finding. The 2018 Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment found that seven of the nine wastewater treatment plants in this County will be substantially impacted by the current FEMA 100-year storm plus approximately six feet of sea level rise. This issue is not unique to San Mateo County; a NBC Bay Area investigative report earlier this year found that 30 out of 39 treatment plants in the San Francisco Bay Area are at risk from climate-driven flooding.

The City of South San Francisco’s Wastewater Quality Control Plant located adjacent to San Francisco Bay on Colma Creek, provides secondary wastewater treatment for the cities of South San Francisco, San Bruno, and Colma. It also provides the dechlorination treatment of chlorinated effluent for the cities of Burlingame, Millbrae, and the San Francisco International Airport prior to discharging the treated wastewater into San Francisco Bay. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers developed Project Management Plan (PMP) to determine the best approach to mitigating against sea level rise and flooding to protect this critical infrastructure.

F10. OneShoreline is uniquely positioned to augment San Mateo County’s ability to combat sea level rise by its planning, funding, permitting expertise, and guidance.

Response: The City of South San Francisco *agrees* with this finding. As the countywide agency established to focus on this issue and leverage resources and partnerships across jurisdictional boundaries, OneShoreline plays a key role in bringing together key stakeholders to establish common objectives and assumptions; utilize public and private land rights to meet project goals; and share technical information, environmental mitigations, and project costs.

F11. Destruction of low-cost housing on the Bay and coast by flooding and erosion due to sea level rise will further increase inequities in communities such as Belle Haven (Menlo Park), East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and Pacifica.

Response: The City of South San Francisco agrees with this finding. A study by Stanford University researchers published in July 2021 found that flooding in San Mateo County – more than any other Bay Area county – disproportionately impacts communities most at risk of financial instability.

F12. OneShoreline effectively collaborates with the Office of Sustainability and others on public engagement campaigns to educate individuals on how sea level rise will affect San Mateo County.

Response: The City of South San Francisco *agrees* with this finding. OneShoreline communicates regularly with the County’s Office of Sustainability (OOS) on areas where our efforts can complement one another, and OOS has augmented OneShoreline’s outreach efforts as OneShoreline builds its capacity. OneShoreline also works with cities, other special districts, the County Office of Education, and the League of Women Voters (LWV) chapters to educate individuals on the risks facing this county and approaches to building resilience. This has included a year-long series of public forums co-hosted by OneShoreline and the LWV on climate issues related to water and wildfire throughout the county.

F13. A loan program to provide cities and towns funds for the required preliminary engineering necessary to obtain partial state or federal funding for SLR projects would be beneficial.

Response: The City of South San Francisco *agrees* with this finding. A source of funding to assist municipalities with the planning and design activities necessary to obtain state and/or federal funding for SLR projects would be beneficial.

South San Francisco Response to Recommendations 2, 3, and 4

R1. At a public meeting, each city and town council, or board of supervisors should take at least one concrete action toward establishing a continuing funding source for OneShoreline, identify that action in response to this report, and potentially adopt a resolution expressing support for a parcel tax or property tax by June 30, 2022.

Response: The City of South San Francisco remains committed to mitigating sea level rise and the harmful effects of climate change. The City recognizes that capital improvement projects relating to sea level rise are very expensive and that grant funding is sparse and competitive. This recommendation requires further analysis and study in consultation and coordination with OneShoreline's current efforts. The timeframe for implementation is dependent on ongoing discussions with OneShoreline.

R2. A coordinated lobbying strategy with participation by the County, by San Mateo County cities and towns, by OneShoreline, and by other interested Bay Area cities and counties for federal and state regulatory simplification by January 31, 2022.

Response: The recommendation has been partially implemented, and implementation will be ongoing beyond January 31, 2022. OneShoreline has worked with San Mateo County and its lobbyists in California, as well as coalitions of water-related agencies, on many issues, including simplifying the process to permit climate resilience projects. As discussed in the response above to F3, today's climate crisis has highlighted the need to simplify environmental regulatory requirements for restoration and climate resilience projects. There has been progress on this issue at the State level, including through the just-passed Senate Bill 155, which allows certain habitat restoration projects to be exempt from CEQA.

Additionally, the City currently utilizes legislative advocacy firms at the state and federal levels to advance the city's priorities, including policy changes to Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) and coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to ensure that local governments and agencies can work with federal agencies on Sea Level Rise. The City updates OneShoreline on these legislative efforts and seeks their technical expertise regarding feasibility studies.

R4. The County Board of Supervisors and each city and town council should ensure that their general plans regarding SLR protection include transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous material sites by March 31, 2022.

Response: The City of South San Francisco began work on a comprehensive General Plan Update in the Spring of 2019 and anticipates a Public Review draft of the document being published in late 2021/early 2022, followed closely by a coordinated Zoning Ordinance Update, Climate Action Plan Update, and related environmental review. The draft

Honorable Judge Lee

October 13, 2021

Page 5

General Plan elements include goals and policies related to Seal Level Rise protection of transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous material sites. The City anticipates adopting the comprehensive General Plan Update by the Summer of 2022.

On behalf of the City of South San Francisco City Council, thank you for taking on the complex and urgent long-term task of addressing sea level rise and other flood risks in San Mateo County. Please contact me at mike.futrell@ssf.net for additional assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Futrell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mike" and last name "Futrell" clearly distinguishable.

Mike Futrell

City Manager, City of South San Francisco

Cc: City of South San Francisco City Council
Len Materman, OneShoreline, Executive
Director Mike Callagy, County of San Mateo,
County Manager



TOWN OF ATHERTON

CITY COUNCIL
80 FAIR OAKS LANE
ATHERTON, CALIFORNIA 94027
(650) 752-0500
TOWN@CI.ATHERTON.CA.US

October 25, 2021

Hon. Amarra A. Lee
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Jenarda Dubois
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Subject: Response to 2020-2021 Grand Jury 8/11/21 report "San Mateo County: California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise"

Dear Judge Lee,

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the findings of the Grand Jury. This letter serves as the Town of Atherton response to the findings and recommendations found therein. Please note this report was approved by the Atherton City Council at its October 20, 2021, Council meeting.

FINDINGS

F1. Sea level rise will seriously damage critical San Mateo County infrastructure and assets unless the County and its cities and towns prepare now.

Town Response to F1:

The Town has not conducted its own independent research on this matter, but based on review of the studies quoted in the Grand Jury Report et al., the Town agrees with this finding.

F2. Sea level rise infrastructure projects can take more than a decade to plan, fund and build.

Town Response to F2:

The Town has not conducted its own independent research on this matter, but based on review of the Grand Jury Report the Town agrees with this finding.

F3. Complex federal and state regulations and procedures delay and increase the costs of already expensive sea level rise mitigation projects. They need to be revised.

Town Response to F3:

Based on its own experience with state and federal regulatory agencies on non-sea level rise projects, the Town agrees with this finding.

F4. Delaying sea level rise projects will increase costs.

Town Response to F4:

Based on its own experience with delayed non-sea level capital improvement projects, the Town agrees with this finding.

F5. To remain effective, OneShoreline needs steady, long-term, operational funding.

Town Response to F5:

The Town agrees with this finding.

F6. Coordination between neighboring jurisdictions is important to reduce costs and improve the effectiveness of a SLR project.

Town Response to F6:

In the case of a SLR project that is physically located in one or more neighboring jurisdictions and/or has benefits to one or more jurisdictions, the Town agrees with this finding.

F7. Competing budget priorities among the entities in a sea level rise project make the projects difficult to fund and manage, leading to risk of delays and missed deadlines.

Town Response to F7:

Based on its own experience with competing budget priorities for non-sea level projects and programs, the Town agrees with this finding.

F8. Numerous hazardous material sites in the County must be protected from sea level rise flooding.

Town Response to F8:

The Town has not conducted its own independent research on this matter, but based on review of the Grand Jury Report the Town agrees with this finding.

F9. Storm surge and sea level rise threaten the County's wastewater treatment plants affecting everyone in the County – even inland County residents.

Town Response to F9:

The Town has not conducted its own independent research on this matter, but based on review of the Grand Jury Report the Town agrees with this finding. The Town also agrees as it relates to the identified threats to treatment plants treating the County's wastewater.

F10. OneShoreline is uniquely positioned to augment San Mateo County's ability to combat sea level rise by its planning, funding, permitting expertise, and guidance.

Town Response to F10:

The Town endorsed the establishment of the San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency Agency in its Resolution No.19-19, wherein we specifically noted the need for an entity with the attributes identified in the

finding. With OneShoreline still in its nascent stage, we agree with the finding that it is uniquely positioned and remain supportive that it will eventually develop and demonstrate the identified attributes.

F11. Destruction of low-cost housing on the Bay and coast by flooding and erosion due to sea level rise will further increase inequities in communities such as Belle Haven (Menlo Park), East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and Pacifica.

Town Response to F11:

The Town has not conducted its own independent research on this matter, but based on review of the Grand Jury Report we agree with this finding.

F12. OneShoreline effectively collaborates with the Office of Sustainability and others on public engagement campaigns to educate individuals on how sea level rise will affect San Mateo County.

Town Response to F12:

As the Town is not party to communications between the Office of Sustainability (OSS) and OneShoreline, nor are we aware of what parties are identified as “others” in the finding, we neither agree nor disagree, and defer to OSS as the most qualified respondent to this finding.

F13. A loan program to provide cities and towns funds for the required preliminary engineering necessary to obtain partial state or federal funding for SLR projects would be beneficial.

Town Response to F13:

The Town agrees with this finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. At a public meeting, each city and town council, or board of supervisors should take at least one concrete action toward establishing a continuing funding source for OneShoreline, identify that action in response to this report, and potentially adopt a resolution expressing support for a parcel tax or property tax by June 30, 2022.

Town Response to R1:

The Town has committed to provide three years of funding (\$25,000 for 3-years) for the agency now known as OneShoreline, with that commitment based on the agency’s advocates representing that a first priority action would be the development of a Flood & Sea Level Rise Investment Plan (Plan). As addressed in the Town’s Resolution of support (Reso No. 19-19), in addition to mitigating sea level rise, we anticipated the agency would also develop projects to address erosion, stormwater infrastructure projects, and water quality requirements imposed by the Regional Water Quality Control Board. The Town will be able to provide a summary of how the recommendation would be considered after we have received and reviewed a Plan that incorporates all project types envisioned during the initial request for support to the formation of the agency.

R2. A coordinated lobbying strategy with participation by the County, by San Mateo County cities and towns, by OneShoreline, and by other interested Bay Area cities and counties for federal and state regulatory simplification by January 31, 2022.

Town Response to R2:

The Town is willing to participate in the implementation of this recommendation, provided that some as yet to be identified entity develops a scope and time frame for said implementation.

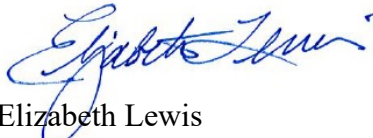
R4. The County Board of Supervisors and each city and town council, should ensure that their general plans regarding SLR protection include transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous material sites by March 31, 2022.

Town Response to R4:

Although Town infrastructure may not be directly impacted by SLR, the Town is presently updating its Local Hazard Mitigation Plan as part of a countywide effort, the San Mateo County Multijurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan – 2021 Update (Plan). The Plan was scheduled to be released to the California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on 8/31/21. Assuming a favorable review can be obtained from CalOES and FEMA within 3 months, the final document will be presented to Atherton City Council for adoption in December 2021.

Please call me at 650.752.0500 if there are any questions regarding this matter.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Lewis".

Elizabeth Lewis
Mayor, Town of Atherton

Cc: Grand Jury website (sent via email to grandjury@sanmateocourt.org)
George Rodericks, City Manager
Anthony Suber, City Clerk



TOWN OF COLMA

1198 El Camino Real • Colma, California • 94014-3212
Tel 650.997.8300 • Fax 650.997.8308

October 13, 2021

Honorable Amarra A. Lee
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Jenarda Dubois
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 8th Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Grand Jury Report: "San Mateo County: California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise."

Dear Judge Lee;

The City Council received the August 11, 2021 San Mateo Civil Grand Jury report titled, "San Mateo County: California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise."

The Town of Colma was requested to submit comments regarding the findings and recommendations no later than November 11, 2021.

The City Council of the Town of Colma has reviewed the recommendations in the Grand Jury Report that affect the Town and approved the responses at its public meeting on October 13, 2021.

Findings:

The Town agrees with findings F1, F2, F3, F4, F6, F7, F8, F9, F11, and F13.

F5. To remain effective, OneShoreline needs steady, long-term operational funding.

Response:

To the extent that we are aware, the Town agrees with this finding.

F10. OneShoreline is uniquely positioned to augment San Mateo County's ability to combat sea level rise by its planning, funding, permitting expertise, and guidance.

Response:

To the extent that we are aware, the Town agrees with this finding.

F12: OneShoreline effectively collaborates with the Office of Sustainability and others on public engagement campaigns to educate individuals on how sea level rise will affect San Mateo County.

Response:

To the extent that we are aware, the Town agrees with this finding.

Diana Colvin, Mayor
Helen Fisicaro, Vice Mayor
Raquel P. Gonzalez, Council Member • Joanne F. del Rosario, Council Member • John Irish Goodwin, Council Member • Brian Dossey, City Manager

Recommendations:

R1. At a public meeting, each city and town council, or board of supervisors should take at least one concrete action toward establishing a continuing funding source for OneShoreline, identify that action in response to this report, and potentially adopt a resolution expressing support for a parcel tax or property tax by June 30, 2022.

Response:

The recommendation requires further analysis, the Town of Colma would like to invite the San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District to a future City Council meeting to hear the District's ideas for future funding and what the District's proposed plan is for a parcel or property tax initiative. Upon hearing the presentation from the San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District the Town will then consider action for funding or support of a property or parcel tax at a future City Council meeting.

R2. A coordinated lobbying strategy with participation by the County, by San Mateo County cities and towns, by OneShoreline, and by other interested Bay Area cities and counties for federal and state regulatory simplification by January 31, 2022.

Response:

The recommendation requires further analysis, the Town of Colma would like to invite the San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District to a future City Council meeting to hear the District's plans for a coordinated lobbying strategy. Upon hearing the presentation from the San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District the Town will then consider participating in a coordinated lobbying strategy.

R4. The County Board of Supervisors and each city and town council, should ensure that their general plans regarding SLR protection include transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous material sites by March 31, 2022.

Response:

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented by the end of February 2022. The Town of Colma is in the process of updating its General Plan and the City Council is scheduled to hear, consider and adopt the General Plan update in early 2022.

The Town appreciates the efforts of the Grand Jury. Please contact City Manager Brian Dossey should you require any additional information. He can be reached at (650) 997-8318 or by email: brian.dossey@colma.ca.gov.

Sincerely,


Diana Colvin
Mayor



TOWN OF HILLSBOROUGH
California

November 8, 2021

Honorable Amara A. Lee
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Jenarda Dubois
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Grand Jury Report “San Mateo County: California’s Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise”

Honorable Judge Lee:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the above referenced Grand Jury Report issued on August 11, 2021. The Town of Hillsborough’s responses to both the findings and recommendations are listed below.

FINDINGS:

F1. Sea level rise will seriously damage critical San Mateo County infrastructure and assets unless the County and its cities and towns prepare now.

Response: The Town has not conducted its own independent research on this matter, but based on review of the Grand Jury Report, the Town agrees with this finding.

F2. Sea level rise infrastructure projects can take more than a decade to plan, fund and build.

Response: The Town has not conducted its own independent research on this matter, but based on review of the Grand Jury Report, and the significant number of stakeholders involved, the Town agrees with this finding.

F3. Complex federal and state regulations and procedures delay and increase the costs of already expensive sea level rise mitigation projects. They need to be revised.

Response: The Town agrees with this finding.

F4. Delaying sea level rise projects will increase costs.

Response: The Town agrees with this finding.

F5. To remain effective, OneShoreline needs steady, long-term, operational funding.

Response: The Town agrees with this finding. In April 2019, the Hillsborough City Council approved a \$25,000 annual contribution to OneShoreline for three (3) years based on population calculations.

- F6. Coordination between neighboring jurisdictions is important to reduce costs and improve the effectiveness of a SLR project.

Response: The Town agrees with this finding in cases where the project is located in, and/or benefits, one or more neighboring jurisdictions.

- F7. Competing budget priorities among the entities in a sea level rise project make the projects difficult to fund and manage, leading to risk of delays and missed deadlines.

Response: Based on its own experience with competing budget priorities for non-sea level projects and programs, the Town agrees with this finding. OneShoreline explained during presentations to the City Council in March and April 2019 that they would be responsible for coordinating and prioritizing budgets and competing projects.

- F8. Numerous hazardous material sites in the County must be protected from sea level rise flooding.

Response: The Town has not conducted its own independent research on this matter, but based on review of the Grand Jury Report, the Town agrees with this finding. Instances where private property owners are mitigating hazardous material on private property should also be discussed and considered.

- F9. Storm surge and sea level rise threaten the County's wastewater treatment plants affecting everyone in the County – even inland County residents.

Response: The Town agrees with this finding. It is the Town's understanding that the San Mateo Wastewater Treatment Plant that is currently under construction is designed with SLR protections and considerations in place.

- F10. OneShoreline is uniquely positioned to augment San Mateo County's ability to combat sea level rise by its planning, funding, permitting expertise, and guidance.

Response: The Town agrees with this finding. The Town adopted a resolution supporting the establishment of San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency Agency in April 2019, recognizing the Agency's ability "to address current and future sea level rise, flooding, coastal erosion, and storm water vulnerabilities through integrated regional planning, design, permitting, and project implementation and maintenance" (Town of Hillsborough Resolution 19-23).

- F11. Destruction of low-cost housing on the Bay and coast by flooding and erosion due to sea level rise will further increase inequities in communities such as Belle Haven (Menlo Park), East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and Pacifica.

Response: The Town has not conducted its own independent research on this matter, but based on review of the Grand Jury Report, the Town agrees with this finding.

- F12. OneShoreline effectively collaborates with the Office of Sustainability and others on public engagement campaigns to educate individuals on how sea level rise will affect San Mateo County.

Response: The Town does not have the necessary information or involvement in the collaboration efforts between OneShoreline, Office of Sustainability and other unidentified entities to properly respond to this finding.

- F13. A loan program to provide cities and towns funds for the required preliminary engineering necessary to obtain partial state or federal funding for SLR projects would be beneficial.

Response: The Town partially agrees with this finding. The Town believes that a loan program should be compared and weighed against other programs, grants and funding opportunities available and the ability of OneShoreline to leverage funding for all.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- R1. At a public meeting, each city and town council, or board of supervisors should take at least one concrete action toward establishing a continuing funding source for OneShoreline, identify that action in response to this report, and potentially adopt a resolution expressing support for a parcel tax or property tax by June 30, 2022.

Response: In April 2019, the Hillsborough City Council approved a \$25,000 annual contribution to OneShoreline for three (3) years with an indication from the agency that a priority action would be to develop a Flood & Sea Level Rise Investment Plan (Plan) (Town of Hillsborough Resolution 19-23). In addition to mitigating SLR, it was anticipated that the agency would also develop projects to address erosion, stormwater infrastructure projects, and water quality requirements imposed by the Regional Water Quality Control Board. The Town will be able to provide a summary of how the recommendation would be considered after receiving and reviewing a Plan that incorporates all project types envisioned during the initial request for support to the formation of the agency.

- R2. A coordinated lobbying strategy with participation by the County, by San Mateo County cities and towns, by OneShoreline, and by other interested Bay Area cities and counties for federal and state regulatory simplification by January 31, 2022.

Response: The Town is willing to participate in the implementation of this recommendation upon review of a scope of work and strategic plan from OneShoreline or another entity.

- R4. The County Board of Supervisors and each city and town council, should ensure that their general plans regarding SLR protection include transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous material sites by March 31, 2022.

Response: The Town of Hillsborough, due to its location, topography and elevation, is not directly impacted by SLR. Presently, the Town is participating in the 2021 Update of the San Mateo County Multijurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. Assuming a favorable review can be obtained from CalOES and FEMA, the final document will be presented at the December 2021 City Council meeting for adoption approval.

This response to the Grand Jury was approved by the Town of Hillsborough City Council at a public meeting on November 8, 2021.

Respectfully,



Alvin L. Royse
Mayor, Town of Hillsborough



TOWN of PORTOLA VALLEY

Town Hall: 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, CA 94028 - Tel: (650) 851-1700 Fax: (650) 851-4677

November 10, 2021

Hon. Amarra A. Lee
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Jenarda Dubois
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 8th Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063

Honorable Judge Lee,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury report entitled “Sea Level Rise: California’s Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise”

Below are the Town’s responses to the report’s findings and recommendations.

Findings

F1. Sea level rise will seriously damage critical San Mateo County infrastructure and assets unless the County and its cities and towns prepare now.

Response: The Town agrees with this finding.

F2. Sea level rise infrastructure projects can take more than a decade to plan, fund and build.

Response: The Town agrees with this finding.

F3. Complex federal and state regulations and procedures delay and increase the costs of already expensive sea level rise mitigation projects. They need to be revised.

Response: The Town agrees with this finding.

F4. Delaying sea level rise projects will increase costs.

Response: The Town agrees with this finding.

F5. To remain effective, OneShoreline needs steady, long-term, operational funding.

Response: The Town agrees with this finding.

F6. Coordination between neighboring jurisdictions is important to reduce costs and improve the effectiveness of a SLR project.

Response: The Town agrees with this finding.

F7. Competing budget priorities among the entities in a sea level rise project make the projects difficult to fund and manage, leading to risk of delays and missed deadlines.

Response: The Town partially agrees with this finding. Such funding prioritization challenges are common in many issue areas.

F8. Numerous hazardous material sites in the County must be protected from sea level rise flooding.

Response: The Town agrees with this finding.

F9. Storm surge and sea level rise threaten the County's wastewater treatment plants affecting everyone in the County – even inland County residents.

Response: The Town agrees with this finding.

F10. OneShoreline is uniquely positioned to augment San Mateo County's ability to combat sea level rise by its planning, funding, permitting expertise, and guidance.

Response: The Town agrees with this finding.

F11. Destruction of low-cost housing on the Bay and coast by flooding and erosion due to sea level rise will further increase inequities in communities such as Belle Haven (Menlo Park), East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and Pacifica.

Response: The Town agrees with this finding.

F12. OneShoreline effectively collaborates with the Office of Sustainability and others on public engagement campaigns to educate individuals on how sea level rise will affect San Mateo County.

Response: The Town agrees with this finding.

F13. A loan program to provide cities and towns funds for the required preliminary engineering necessary to obtain partial state or federal funding for SLR projects would be beneficial.

Response: The Town agrees with this finding.

Recommendations¹

R1. At a public meeting, each city and town council, or board of supervisors should take at least one concrete action toward establishing a continuing funding source for OneShoreline, identify that action in response to this report, and potentially adopt a resolution expressing support for a parcel tax or property tax by June 30, 2022.

Response: This recommendation has been implemented by the Town, starting at their budget meetings in June 2019.

R2. A coordinated lobbying strategy with participation by the County, by San Mateo County cities and towns, by OneShoreline, and by other interested Bay Area cities and counties for federal and state regulatory simplification by January 31, 2022.

Response: This recommendation has been partially implemented, and is expected to continue beyond January 31, 2022. Lobbying efforts by OneShoreline have already successfully worked on efforts to simplifying permitting for climate resiliency projects. Additional lobbying efforts will continue to take place; OneShoreline is the lead agency on this coordination, and the Town will participate in future lobbying efforts.

R4. The County Board of Supervisors and each city and town council, should ensure that their general plans regarding SLR protection include transportation and utility infrastructure

Response: This recommendation has not been implemented. The Town of Portola Valley does not manage transportation or utility infrastructure along a shoreline, and the Town is nestled in the Santa Cruz foothills.

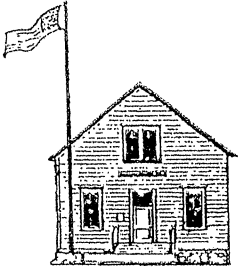
Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this Grand Jury report.



Maryann Moise Derwin
Mayor, Town of Portola Valley

cc: Members of the Town Council
OneShoreline

¹ Portola Valley, like other San Mateo County municipalities, was not required by the Grand Jury to respond to Recommendation R3.



The Town of
Woodside

October 13, 2021

Hon. Amarra A. Lee
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Jenarda Dubois
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Dear Judge Lee:

The Woodside Town Council has had an opportunity to review the 2021 Grand Jury report entitled "*San Mateo County: California's Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise*." The Council after reviewing the report and allowing for public comment at its Town Council meeting on October 12, 2021 offers the following responses:

P.O. Box 620005
2955 Woodside Road
Woodside CA 94062

Responses to Findings

Finding F1. Sea level rise will seriously damage critical San Mateo County infrastructure and assets unless the County and its cities and towns prepare now.

Response: The Town agrees with the finding.

Finding F2. Sea level rise infrastructure projects can take more than a decade to plan, fund and build.

Response: The Town agrees with the finding.

Finding F3. Complex federal and state regulations and procedures delay and increase the costs of already expensive sea level rise mitigation projects. They need to be revised.

Response: The Town agrees with the finding.

Finding F4. Delaying sea level rise projects will increase costs.

Response: The Town agrees with the finding.

650-851-6790
Fax: 650-851-2195
townhall@woodsidetown.org

Finding F5. To remain effective, OneShoreline needs steady, long-term, operational funding.

Response: The Town agrees with the finding.

Finding F6. Coordination between neighboring jurisdictions is important to reduce costs and improve the effectiveness of a SLR project.

Response: The Town agrees with the finding.

Finding F7. Competing budget priorities among the entities in a sea level rise project make the projects difficult to fund and manage, leading to risk of delays and missed deadlines.

Response: The Town agrees with the finding.

Finding F8. Numerous hazardous material sites in the County must be protected from sea level rise flooding.

Response: The Town agrees with the finding.

Finding F9. Storm surge and sea level rise threaten the County's wastewater treatment plants affecting everyone in the County – even inland County residents.

Response: The Town agrees with the finding.

Finding F10. OneShoreline is uniquely positioned to augment San Mateo County's ability to combat sea level rise by its planning, funding, permitting expertise, and guidance.

Response: The Town agrees with the finding.

Finding F11. Destruction of low-cost housing on the Bay and coast by flooding and erosion due to sea level rise will further increase inequities in communities such as Belle Haven (Menlo Park), East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and Pacifica.

Response: The Town agrees with the finding.

Finding F12. OneShoreline effectively collaborates with the Office of Sustainability and others on public engagement campaigns to educate individuals on how sea level rise will affect San Mateo County.

Response: The Town lacks the information necessary to agree or disagree with the finding.

Finding F13. A loan program to provide cities and towns funds for the required preliminary engineering necessary to obtain partial state or federal funding for SLR projects would be beneficial.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

Response to Recommendations

R1. At a public meeting, each city and town council, or board of supervisors should take at least one concrete action toward establishing a continuing funding source for OneShoreline, identify that action in response to this report, and potentially adopt a resolution expressing support for a parcel tax or property tax by June 30, 2022.

Response: The Town will not implement this recommendation because it is not reasonable. It is not incumbent on any city or town to ensure continuing funding sources for independent government agencies. Furthermore, the recommendation asks the Town Council, prior to any public deliberation or receiving any comment from the public, to take a position on an as-yet unspecified tax proposal.

R2. A coordinated lobbying strategy with participation by the County, by San Mateo County cities and towns, by OneShoreline, and by other interested Bay Area cities and counties for federal and state regulatory simplification by January 31, 2022.

Response: The Town will support and participate in a coordinated lobbying effort to simplify federal and state regulations.

R4. The County Board of Supervisors and each city and town council, should ensure that their general plans regarding SLR protection include transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public safety facilities, and hazardous material sites by March 31, 2022.

Response: The Town will not implement this recommendation because it is not warranted. There are no transportation and utility infrastructure, schools, public

Honorable Amarra A. Lee
October 13, 2021
Page 4

safety facilities, or hazardous material sites that are within the Planning Area of the General Plan and threatened by SLR.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brian Dombkowski". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and "D".

Brian Dombkowski
Mayor, Town of Woodside

Cc: grandjury@sanmateocourt.org