

BCDC's Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan Frequently Asked Questions

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1. What is the Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan?

The Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan (RSAP) is a region-wide plan for the San Francisco Bay shoreline that guides the creation of coordinated, locally planned sea level rise adaptation actions that work together to achieve a regional One Bay Vision. This includes BCDC's guidelines for how local governments must meet the requirements of SB 272, a new State mandate that requires all local governments along the shoreline to prepare a Subregional Shoreline Adaptation Plan by 2034. The RSAP includes:

- **One Bay Vision:** A unified vision for the future of shoreline adaptation, promoting a collective approach to tackling sea level rise.
- **Strategic Regional Priorities:** Identifies key areas and actions where local adaptation efforts will contribute to broader regional benefits.
- **Guidelines for Subregional Shoreline Adaptation Plans:** Provides detailed instructions for local governments to create their Subregional Shoreline Adaptation Plans (Subregional Plans), ensuring compliance with SB 272.

The RSAP will be updated approximately every five years to incorporate new research, evolving conditions, and ongoing policy developments.

2. What is SB 272?

In 2023, Governor Newsom signed SB 272: Sea Level Rise Adaptation and Planning (Laird, 2023), which the Commission supported. The law will ensure that local governments across the California coast and San Francisco Bay plan for adaptation to rising sea levels with the targeted assistance of the State. The law charges BCDC with developing planning guidelines by the end of 2024, to be used by Bay local governments. The guidelines must build on Bay Adapt's Guiding Principles and be developed in coordination with the California Coastal Commission (CCC), the Ocean Protection Council, and the California Sea Level Rise State and Regional Support Collaborative. It also gives the Commission approval authority over the proposed local government plans, which must be submitted to BCDC by January 1, 2034. The bill also includes an important carrot: projects and strategies contained within plans approved by BCDC or CCC will be prioritized for State funding. BCDC is on track to deliver the guidelines in 2024 through its Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan.

3. How does the Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan relate to BCDC's regulatory programs?

SB 272 does not change BCDC's current permitting authority for individual projects, and projects included in Subregional Shoreline Adaptation Plans are not automatically deemed consistent with BCDC's other current Bay Plan policies. Rather, the Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan will allow the Commission to use the Guidelines as its standard for approving local government's subregional plans.

Nonetheless, the RSAP and locally developed Subregional Shoreline Adaptation Plans can serve a useful advisory function by developing a broader context and adaptation framework for individual projects that will come before the Commission for a permit. Implementing SB 272 will be an ongoing process that requires both short- and long-term measures. The Commission's adoption of this first iteration of the RSAP as a Bay Plan Amendment is an important step toward that goal.

4. What is a "Subregional Shoreline Adaptation Plan"?

Subregional Shoreline Adaptation Plans (Subregional Plans) are locally created sea level rise adaptation plans along a subset of the San Francisco Bay shoreline. A Subregional Plan can be prepared by a county, city, or a combination of cities and counties within the broader Bay Area. Subregional Plans allow for focused but flexible planning that address local conditions and needs while ensuring coordination with neighboring areas and meeting regional goals.

5. Who is required to create a Subregional Plan?

All local governments within BCDC's jurisdiction must develop a Subregional Plan as required by California State law, SB 272.ⁱ "Local government" is defined as "any chartered or general law city, chartered or general law county, or any city and county."ⁱⁱ In an effort to provide the greatest flexibility to local jurisdictions, cities and counties may do their own plan. However, BCDC encourages multi-jurisdictional plans in any combination of city and county. For example, a county can lead a multi-jurisdictional plan that includes all the cities within that county. Or multiple neighboring cities can work together to create a multi-jurisdictional plan. Please note that entities such as special districts, regional or state agencies, utilities districts, parks districts, are not responsible for creating Subregional Plans. However, they may play a critical role as owners or managers of land and assets within a jurisdiction and are encouraged to participate, or even act as the lead facilitator, in a multi-jurisdictional plan. Regardless of the plan type, the entirety of the Bay shoreline must be covered by a plan, and all plans must demonstrate coordination with their neighbors.

6. What is the deadline for local governments to create a Subregional Plan?

SB 272 sets a deadline for Subregional Plans by January 2034. BCDC's goal is to work with cities, counties, and communities to develop plans well before that deadline to ensure the region is ready and prepared for the impacts ahead.

7. If a local jurisdiction has already completed an adaptation plan, do they need to create another one?

BCDC encourages local jurisdictions to utilize plans that have already been created and review them against the Subregional Shoreline Adaptation Plan Guidelines. Existing plans that meet the Guidelines should be described through the Plan Submittal Checklist. BCDC also includes information about the applicability of using previous vulnerability assessments in Subregional Plans.

8. Are Subregional Shoreline Adaptation Plans subject to CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act)? Who is the Lead Agency?

The appropriate level of environmental analysis required under CEQA (if any) is a determination that will need to be made by the local government, and may vary depending on the specific circumstances of each local government's plan development.

To explain further: SB 272 requires local governments to prepare sea level rise adaptation plans. Local governments currently comply with CEQA when they develop a variety of plans and have established processes to do so. Individual local governments that prepare the adaptation plans will determine whether and how they meet CEQA requirements and the appropriate level of CEQA review prior to submitting their plans to BCDC. Adopting a plan will be a local discretionary action, so BCDC anticipates that the local government in question would be the Lead Agency for environmental review to comply with CEQA, should the local government determine that such a review is required. That appropriate level of review will depend on several factors, such as whether the plan is considered a "project" under CEQA law, any previous CEQA review that has taken place, and whether the project may have a significant effect on the environment.

9. When will the RSAP be available for use?

The public comment period for the Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan (RSAP) will close October 18, 2024. Following this, BCDC will review and incorporate feedback from the public comment period into the RSAP. The updated RSAP will be presented to BCDC's Commission for potential adoption December 5, 2024. Once approved, the final version is anticipated to be available to the public by early 2025.

10. What funding is available to help local governments create Subregional Plans?

Funding is available for local governments to support the creation of Subregional Shoreline Adaptation Plans on a rolling basis. Visit the Ocean Protection Council's SB 1 Grant program to learn more: [SB 1 Funding - California Ocean Protection Council](#). Technical Assistance is also available to support local, regional, and tribal governments in preparing and submitting competitive applications to the SB 1 Grant Program. The TA Program aims to service and support successful funding proposals for eligible applicants, specifically:

- Environmental Justice Communities
- Federally Recognized Tribes or Tribal Partners
- Small and Rural Communities
- Communities with other locally specific barriers to sea level rise (SLR) adaptation planning.

11. How is the RSAP advancing the Bay Adapt Joint Platform?

The [Bay Adapt Joint Platform](#) is a consensus-based strategy comprised of 9 actions and 21 tasks that will protect people and the natural and built environment from rising sea levels. Rather than specifying individual projects, the Bay Adapt Joint Platform lays out regional strategies that focus on overcoming barriers and identifying factors for successful adaptation outcomes we want throughout the region. The RSAP is a critical component in advancing the Bay Adapt Joint Platform.

The RSAP implements several of the actions identified in the Joint Platform by creating detailed, localized plans for shoreline adaptation. It seeks to guide how different jurisdictions within the Bay Area can work together to plan and implement effective resilience strategies. By offering a comprehensive and coordinated approach to adaptation, the RSAP will not only guide local and regional efforts but also set an example for similar collaborative initiatives across California, highlighting the importance of multi-jurisdictional planning for climate resilience.

Learn more about the RSAP at www.BayAdapt.org.

12. How have Bay Area leaders, professionals, and community members been involved in developing the RSAP?

The development of the Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan (RSAP) has been developed through an extensive and equity-focused engagement process with a broad range of stakeholders. This includes:

- **[Local Electeds Regional Task Force](#)**: A diverse group of mayors, city council members and other officials from all 9 Bay Area counties to ensure regional coordination and alignment with local needs.
- **The Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan Advisory Group**: Offers expert advice and recommendations throughout the planning process.
- **Community and Interested Parties Engagement**: Involves partnerships with Community-Based Organizations and other stakeholders to incorporate diverse perspectives and ensure comprehensive planning. Public engagement has included 10 popup events throughout the Bay Area, an online survey, a public workshop, several focus groups, and 5 CBO co-led workshops.
- **[BCDC Commission](#)**: Provides overall oversight and approval of the RSAP.
- **[Rising Sea Level Commissioner Working Group](#)**: Focuses on specific issues related to sea level rise and adaptation strategies.

ⁱ California Public Resources Code, § 30985.2.

ⁱⁱ California Public Resources Code, § 30109.