A Rising Bay, Wet Shorelines, and Increasing Expectations: Challenges and Risks to the Bay Area Maritime and Industrial Economy

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Bay Planning Coalition
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San Francisco Bay Today
Not Every Day, of Course...
Pretty Much Every Day

The waterfront is for everyone.

Events: www.waterfrontaction.org
A Favorite Tourist Attraction

FROM
J.J. ABRAMS
A & E EXECUTIVE PRODUCER OF LOST
ELIZABETH SARNOFF

ALCATRAZ

"Wish You Could Join Us"

COMING THIS FALL
FOX
Natural Infrastructure
The Importance of San Francisco Bay

- Bay Area GDP 19th largest
- Tourism -- incomparable recreational and scenic resource!
- Bay Area geography attracts workers to Bay Area
- Port of Oakland 5th busiest
- 42% of CA refinery capacity within BCDC jurisdiction

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- Largest West Coast estuary
- Pacific Flyway
- Habitat for more than 500 species
Who Saved the Bay?

Kay Kerr
Esther Gulick
Sylvia McLaughlin

1961: Founded “Save San Francisco Bay Association”
-- $1 membership from thousands of Bay Area residents
BCDC Made Permanent

1969: McAteer-Petris Act amended to make BCDC permanent and to approve San Francisco Bay Plan (signed by Governor Ronald Reagan)
The Challenge

• 9 Counties
• 41 Cities
• Scores of special districts
• Over 150 public agencies with some kind of authority
• How to escape the “Tragedy of the Commons?”
BCDC – Regional Jurisdiction

A State Agency with Regional Regulatory and Planning Jurisdiction

- Work with local governments, private sector, NGOs knowing that primary land use planning authority is held by local governments

- ... Conservation and Development

BCDC jurisdiction:

- All projects or major activities inside the Bay waters or within 100’ feet of Bay shoreline require a permit from BCDC --- in addition to permit from local land use authorities
2100: 55” of Rising Sea Level
What’s at Risk?
Rising Sea Level: “Slow Moving Emergency”

• 8” of Rising Sea Level in Past Century

• At Risk:
  o 535 square kilometers of Bay shoreline and 250,000 people
  o $62 billion of shoreline development (plus transportation infrastructure)

• Big Question #1:
  o How to create and implement a *Bay-wide shoreline resilience strategy* to protect people, conserve environment, and preserve assets, and enhance quality of life?

• Big Question #2:
  o How does BCDC, as a State agency, *collaborate with local cities, counties, and special districts* that have land use authority, and private sector institutions and NGOs?
Port of Redwood City Wharf (Expandable)
Phoenix Commons Senior Housing (Adaptable)
Proposed Treasure Island Project
BCDC: Working Group on Rising Sea Level

• “What can we do?”
• “What should we do – given reasonable priorities and unforeseen consequences?”
  o Collaboration: “Adapting to Rising Tides” only game in town
  o Communication: nobody knows how to talk about this
  o Private sector readiness: few (at most) are ready
  o Public infrastructure: Transportation, flood control, etc.
  o Equity: how do we get to a pareto-efficient solution?
• “How do we fund it?”
BCDC: Working Group on Rising Sea Level

- *Finance, Valuation, and Risk:*
  - Lenders and insurance companies will not lead the way
  - Continued development in vulnerable areas – how to protect shareholders, much less residents, and how to link resilient property with non-resilient property?
  - How can BCDC collaborate with local land use agencies, private sector, NGOs, etc. to promote appropriate land use policies?
  - How can infrastructure – natural and concrete – be valued and funded?
    - Enhanced Infrastructure Finance Districts?
    - SFBRA?
BCDC: Working Group on Bay Fill Policies

- Should BCDC laws and policies be changed in light of rising sea level?
  - How flexible is McAteer-Petris?
  - How can/should Commission interpret policies and use past practices?
  - Are policies consistent with, or can they frustrate, efforts to make Bay Area more resilient?
  - How to reconcile BCDC laws and policies with those of other agencies to promote adaptation and beneficial reuse of dredged materials?
  - NOAA project/Advisory Group
Re-Envisioning the Bay

- BCDC as “Bay Expander” – but, oh, how life is changing!
  - USACE vision from 1959...
- “Fill the Bay to save the Bay?”
  - Promote and adopt both nature-based adaptation strategies and non-natural new infrastructure
  - Create new vision of Bay protection that promotes appropriate development and appropriate ways to adapt to changing circumstances – not everything is green or gray
- But how?
The Work Plan

• REGIONAL Shoreline Resilience Program

  o Define “sustainable” in Sustainable Communities Strategy (“Plan Bay Area”)

  o Use transportation infrastructure w/MTC as nexus to implement Adapting to Rising Tides Bay-wide

  o Promote local and regional initiatives that integrate w/Bay-wide needs (SFEI, Baylands Habitat Goals, Bay Model 2.0, ARC/Kresge, local flood control projects, San Mateo County, Marin County, etc.)

  o Coalitions to promote state/federal initiatives and funding
The Work Plan

- Use “Total Water Level”
- Commissioner Working Groups
- Communication and Advocacy
  - Explain and promote BCDC’s role
  - Seek answers to finance/valuation/risk questions and encourage long-term adaptation planning
  - Advocate on behalf of underserved communities
  - Promote integration of nature-based solutions where possible and appropriate
  - Do not foreclose options for future generations
Questions and Comments Always Welcome!

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