

Oakland Alameda Adaptation Committee (OAAC) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Updated: October 2024

● Project Overview / General information

- **Question:** What is OAAC Adapt? How does it relate to other adaptation efforts around the Bay?
 - **Answer:** OAAC Adapt is a coalition of shoreline communities, agencies and stakeholders working to coordinate the Oakland Alameda sub-region flood and adaptation projects to protect and restore water quality, habitat, recreation and community resilience. The team includes representation from the cities of Alameda and Oakland, the Port of Oakland, Caltrans, East Bay Regional Park District, Alameda County Flood Control District, SF Bay Water Board, community organizations, and consultants across many disciplines, including urban design, policy, planning, and engineering. Since water does not respect jurisdictional boundaries, OAAC partners are working together to collaborate on consensus-driven projects to expedite future grant funding and project success.
- **Question:** What are the current OAAC Adapt projects?
 - **Answer:**
 - The Subregional Adaptation Plan is a long-term plan that details preliminary strategies and pathways for shoreline communities to take as the climate and shorelines change over time. The Plan is funded by the San Francisco Estuary Partnership (SFEP) and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). Project webpage: www.alamedaca.gov/AdaptationLongTermPlan
 - The Oakland Alameda Estuary Project is a near-term sea level rise adaptation design concept, which is funded by Caltrans, to address increased coastal, stormwater, and groundwater flooding for up to two feet of sea level rise over the coming decades. Project webpage: www.alamedaca.gov/AdaptationEstuary
 - The Bay Farm Island Adaptation Project is a near-term sea level rise adaptation project to address two feet of sea level rise over the coming decades along Bay Farm Island's northern shoreline and is funded by the Congressional Community Program through FEMA. Project webpage: www.alamedaca.gov/AdaptationBayFarmIsland
- **Question:** How can I get involved? When's your next event?
 - **Answer:** Sign up for our mailing list to make sure you hear about upcoming events and volunteer opportunities.

- **Question:** Can you give a presentation to my youth/religious/club group?
 - **Answer:** Yes, we would love to share this information with your community. Reach out to us to talk.
- **Question:** How has OAAC reached out to community members about OAAC Projects?
 - **Answer:** Between September 2023 and September 2024, the OAAC project partners - including the paid Community Partners - engaged community members as follows:
 - Facilitated 9 monthly committee meetings for both the Bay Farm Island and Estuary projects;
 - Participated in 15 events with tabling and information materials;
 - Held 7 steering committee meetings and 4 full OAAC meetings;
 - Conducted 30 focus group meetings;
 - Lead 2 rounds of workshops in May and August 2024; and
 - Participated in 3 city council meetings regarding the OAAC projects.
- **Risks / Hazards / Existing Conditions**
 - **Question:** What risks and hazards are being considered in the plans?
 - **Answer:** The projects are primarily concerned with flooding from sea level rise; however, we also are considering groundwater intrusion and stormwater flooding. Our water systems are all connected and combined flooding is predicted to intensify overtime, which means that we will need to adapt inland areas of our communities as well as our shorelines.
 - **Question:** Why do we need to plan for sea level rise now?
 - **Answer:** Sea levels have already risen by about one foot over the past century and are expected to rise three feet or more by the end of the century. In certain parts of our shoreline where the land is very low, we are already at risk of coastal flooding. While we haven't seen significant damage from coastal flooding in our community yet, we want to avoid damages in the near future. Community engagement, planning, design, and environmental review also take time. We want to ensure that we get as much feedback as possible so that sea level rise adaptation serves the needs of the community and provides benefits in addition to flood protection such as improved bay access. To complete all that work, we need to start the process now!
 - **Question:** How can I find out if my house (or place of worship, business or school, etc.) is at risk from future flooding?
 - **Answer:** The [Adapting to Rising Tides Flood Explorer](#) is a great tool for understanding what areas will flood in the absence of shoreline adaptation. Keep in mind that this tool only shows flooding from coastal water that will overtop the shoreline and cause flooding in the future. It does not show inland flooding from

rainstorms, which can happen today. For equity priority communities, it is important to acknowledge injustices and collective loss, to consider who is expected to suffer and who could lose out with flooding and to address today's equity issues and community priorities.

- **Question:** Where does your sea level rise data come from?
 - **Answer:** OAAC Adapt Projects follow State of California Sea Level Rise Guidance 2024. The report is available [here](#). A statewide average of 0.8 feet of sea level rise is projected in the next 30 years. By 2100, statewide sea levels are expected to rise between 1.6 ft and 3.1 ft (Intermediate-Low to Intermediate Scenarios). Higher amounts of sea level rise may be possible, depending on whether progress to mitigate climate change on a global scale has been achieved. Our sea level rise adaptation planning also takes into account extreme tides and storms, which can increase coastal and inland flooding.
- **Question:** Are OAAC Adapt Projects coordinated with regional planning efforts?
 - **Answer:** OAAC Adapt follows the guiding principles of the Bay Development and Planning Commission's (BCDC) framework for regional adaptation - [Bay Adapt](#). As part of this effort, BCDC is currently developing new guidance for subregional planning efforts. OAAC Adapt projects will coordinate with this guidance as much as feasible at this stage of work. Additional analysis may be required in future phases outside our current scope.
- **Question:** How will sea level rise adaptation projects be funded?
 - **Answer:** According to a BCDC study, the Bay Area needs \$110 billion to address sea level rise by 2050; however, we only have \$5.5 billion in committed existing revenue. There is a significant need for federal funding and new revenue sources, which is why OAAC is moving forward expeditiously to capture the greatest amount of federal grant revenues.

- **Adaptation Strategies – Design + Planning**

- **Question:** How will sea level rise adaptation change the waterfront?
 - **Answer:** Adaptation requires that we raise the elevation of parts of our shoreline to achieve a consistent level of flood protection. It can take many forms – from elevating the land near the shoreline, seawalls, levees, or flood walls. In some cases, adaptation will include additional improvements, such as new habitat plantings and waterfront paths. In other cases, we may only need a low wall to protect against flooding.
- **Question:** I live near the shoreline. Will I need to move?
 - **Answer:** Over the coming decades, our community will experience increased flooding from stormwater, groundwater, and sea level rise. Private homeowners may need to make improvements to their properties to manage localized flooding. Future

generations will need to determine whether to adapt and remain in place or move away from shoreline flood risk zones. Our long-range subregional plan will describe a range of future adaptation pathways.

- **Question:** What is an ‘adaptation pathways’ approach?
 - **Answer:** An adaptation pathway is a decision-making strategy that is made up of a sequence of manageable steps or decision-points over time. Adaptation pathways can help us plan under uncertainty. We want to make decisions that benefit people and ecosystems today while maintaining or expanding adaptation options for future decision-makers and future generations. Adaptation pathways allow us to make **incremental adaptation** decisions and actions over time
 - Developing a **long-term plan** that considers the **higher end projections** of what is **plausible** in the future
 - Identifying **near-term actions** that address both **existing risks** and likely **projections of the future**
 - Identifying **triggers** or **thresholds** for **additional actions** over time
- **Question:** How long will the proposed shoreline adaptation measures protect our communities?
 - **Answer:** Proposed levees and seawalls would raise the shoreline to elevation 14 (per vertical datum NAVD88) to provide a consistent level of protection from 2 feet of sea level rise, high tides, extreme tides resulting from large storms, and additional freeboard to account for uncertainties. Based on current estimates, this elevation will provide protection from coastal flooding until about 2080, a timeline that also matches the 35-to-50-year infrastructural lifespan of shoreline construction. We also are exploring scenarios for additional adaptation in the future. The future adaptability of near-term projects is an important consideration in our decision making. Longer-term projects would protect us to elevation 17 or 5 feet of sea level rise and would build upon near-term projects using a pathways approach to sea level rise adaptation.
- **Question:** How will sea level rise adaptation impact bay habitat?
 - **Answer:** Of the more than 5,000 acres of tidal marsh that used to exist within the Subregion, less than 100 acres remain. Planning for sea level rise presents an opportunity for ecological and other community co-benefits as an integral part of our adaptation approach. The Oakland Alameda Adaptation Committee is engaging with experts to integrate nature-based features and hybrid green-gray adaptation solutions, wherever feasible, such as oyster beds, eelgrass, marsh edges and beaches.
- **Question:** What are the different adaptation measures?
 - **Answer:** Different adaptation measures — such as levees and seawalls — can be used in combination along the shoreline, based on the level of protection required,

the amount of space available, adjacent land and water uses, and providing co-benefits of an improved public realm or shoreline and intertidal habitat. The photos show examples of different adaptation measures.

- **Question:** What are the next steps for the OAAC Projects?
 - **Answer:** In 2025, the OAAC project partners will be finalizing the concept designs for both the Estuary and Bay Farm Island projects with requests for City Council approval in January. The Subregional Adaptation Plan is expected to be finalized in the fall of 2025. The OAAC project partners are in the process of seeking additional funds for environmental documentation, design and construction of the Estuary and Bay Farm Island projects. For the Estuary project, OAAC has requested this project be included in the upcoming Water Resources Development Act. For the Bay Farm Island project, OAAC submitted a \$56 million Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant to FEMA, which has recommended it for further review.