

**Re-Wild Park:
A Proposal for the Northwest Territories**
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The Northwest Territories, Alameda Point



Photo credit: [Alameda Point Info](#).

Vision

- Alameda designates the Northwest Territories, the ~200 acre northernmost portion of Alameda Point, as “Re-Wild Park.”
- Re-Wild Park would be a public recreational center with a focus on climate adaptation that would offer significant protection to the island’s West End.
- The land will be “re-wilded” as a wetland, and planted with salt-tolerant natives and other species like eel grass,¹ salal, Madrone, Pacific Yew, Wax Myrtle, and other native species² that attract and support local wildlife.
- The restoration of wetlands in an area that is expected to be inundated from sea level rise due to climate change will help with flood control and storm surges.
- The project will provide habitat for native, threatened, and endangered species.

¹ According to the San Francisco Bay SubTidal Habitat Goals Report, Appendix 8-1: Eelgrass Conservation and Restoration in San Francisco Bay: Opportunities and Constraints, the area at the tip of the former Alameda Naval Air Station “may be suitable for eelgrass, and preliminary evaluation is recommended” - see the full report at <http://www.sfbaysubtidal.org/PDFS/Appendix8-1%20Eelgrass.pdf>.

² Washington State University. “Spotlight on Shoreline Planting.” March 2010.

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- The project would be developed in consultation with tribes that have original territorial claim to the area, including in pursuit of Goal H2 of the original 1996 Reuse Plan, which notes that redevelopment should “explore the feasibility of creating an outdoor site for cultural celebrations, ceremonies, and exhibitions.”
- The project will create different types of recreational opportunities than those currently available on the island, including hiking, walking, camping, bird-watching, education, etc.
- Re-Wild Park will attract Alamedans, Bay Area residents, and tourists from around the world, and will attract international attention for its sustainability, similar to the High Line Park in New York City.
- Like with Central Park, “Re-Wild Park” would become a model for other jurisdictions looking to return developed areas to their “natural” state, while doing so in awareness and support of climate smart, resilient and adaptable strategies.

Background

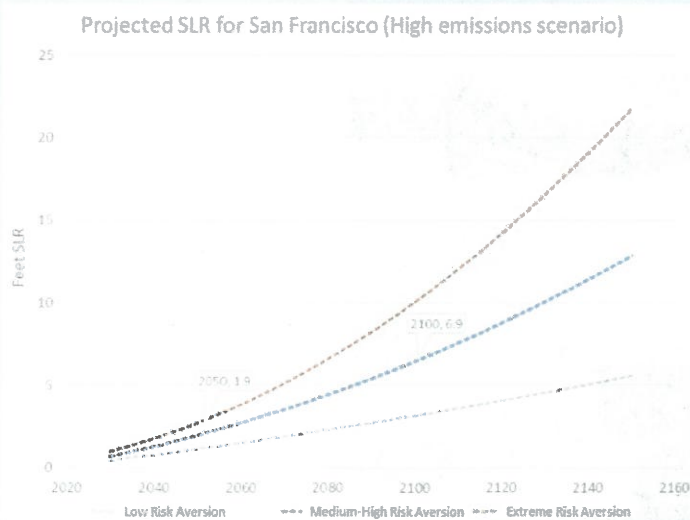
- The Northwest Territories is a ~200 acre area on Alameda Point, the site of the former Alameda Naval Base, on the northernmost part of the property.
- Historically (ca. 1800), this area was either shallow bay, or tidal (mud) flat (see Figure 1).
- Based on current projections and guidance from the State according to the State of California Sea-Level Rise Guidance (2018), for a “Medium-High Risk Aversion” level we should assume 6.9 feet of sea level rise by 2100 (in 80 years) and around 2 feet by 2050 (in 30 years) (see Figure 2). At these values for sea-level rise, possible outcomes for Alameda Point range from moderate levee overtopping and some flooding (see Figure 3), to complete submersion of the entire base including overtopping of existing levees (see Figure 4). These estimates do not include consideration of water table rise.
- The original 1996 Community Reuse Plan for Alameda Point envisions that the Northwest Territories be devoted to “recreation and public spaces,” including a shoreline park, bay trail, and recreational uses, and a system of flood retention ponds and lagoons. The document also notes that the majority of the Northwest Territories is under the Public Trust Doctrine, which states that public trust lands must be used for statewide public benefit, including “habitat and open space preservation.”
- Conveyance of Alameda Point from the Navy to the City was predicated on the City conforming reuse and redevelopment to the 1996 General Plan and Community Reuse Plan.
- The 2014 Master Infrastructure Plan notes that “there are opportunities within the [Alameda Point] Project Site for future tidal wetlands to be created as sea levels rise. These areas are along the western shore of the Seaplane Lagoon and within the Northwest Territories.” (Pg. 22-23)
- According to the City of Alameda’s 2019 Climate Action and Resiliency Plan, the Northwest Territories is one of the first areas that will be inundated as a result of sea level rise in the coming decades. Historically, this part of Alameda was a tidal marsh, before being filled in and developed for military use starting in the 1920s.
- Currently under the jurisdiction of the City and the Alameda Recreation and Parks Department (ARPD) and Alameda Recreation and Parks Commission (Commission),

ARPD is in negotiations with East Bay Regional Parks Department (EBRPD) on an agreement that would see EBRPD take responsibility for managing the development of a part on the site. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) being finalized with EBRPD should reflect the Commission's guidance regarding the use(s) of this land.



Figure 1. Map of historical bay lands circa 1800.

SLR projections



Source: State of California Sea-Level Rise Guidance (2018)

Figure 2. State of California Sea Level Rise Guidance (2018).

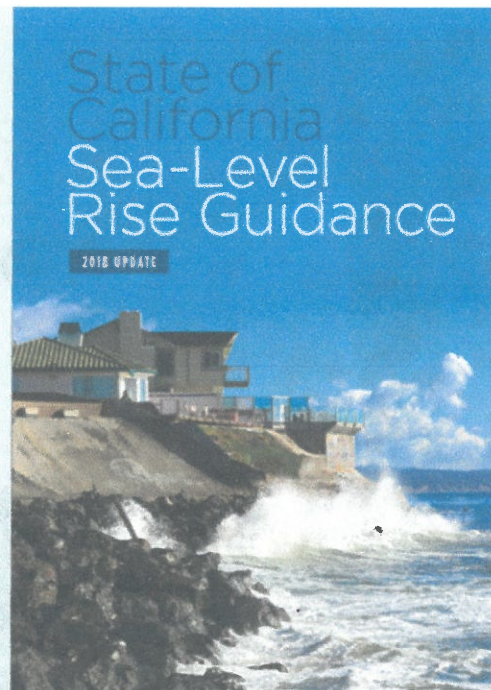




Figure 3. Inundation of Alameda Point at 2' Sea Level Rise (not including consideration of water table rise).

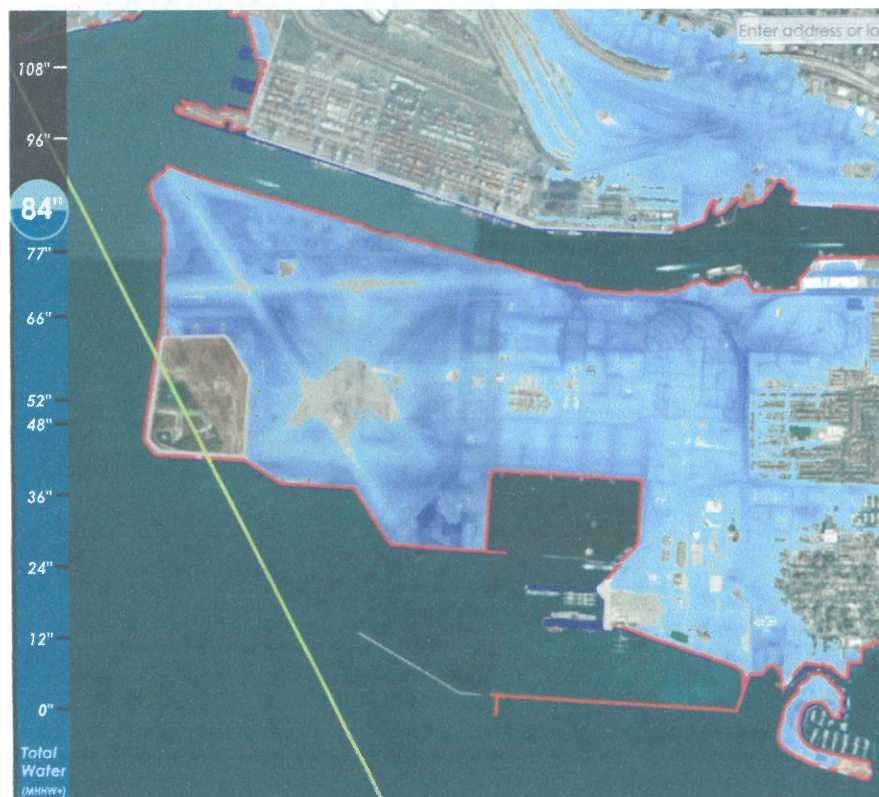


Figure 4. Sea Level Rise at Alameda Point at 7' Sea Level Rise (not including water table rise).

Benefits

Environmental

- Wetlands restoration would provide climate adaption benefits and improve Alameda's resilience to sea level rise and storm surges.
- Planting and protecting native plant species could create a repository of biodiversity, making these plants more resilient to climate change and natural disasters.
- These native plants would also provide habitat for native, threatened and endangered species, including the Least Tern which currently nests at Alameda Point.
- Would be a significant attractor for birds, as well as butterflies and other pollinators.
- The ponds and lagoons would serve as a "moat" and environmental filtration system to create a buffer between human uses and the Bay.

Public

- Would provide a different recreational experience than what is currently available in Alameda.
- To ensure access to views of the SF skyline, viewing platforms could be built at tree canopy level, creating a tourist attraction.
- Would provide living classroom for local schools, community colleges and universities about both native species and climate change.
- Winding hiking trails to provide outdoor recreation, exercise opportunities in Alameda that support the health and wellness of our citizens.
- Could include camping/tent camping and outdoor/forest school facilities.
- Could integrate "natural" art and sculpture.
- Could also integrate opportunities for wildlife rescue facilities, like Lindsay Wildlife Center.

Equity

- Alameda would have an opportunity to develop Re-Wild Park in partnership with local tribes that have original territorial claim to the area, including in pursuit of Goal H2 of the original 1996 Reuse Plan, which notes that redevelopment should "explore the feasibility of creating an outdoor site for cultural celebrations, ceremonies, and exhibitions."
- Would make "wilderness" and wildlife more accessible to local communities, including low-income and disadvantaged communities on the West End of Alameda, in nearby West Oakland, etc.

Potential Funding

- EBRPD already has some funding earmarked for developing Northwest Territories
- Multiple opportunities for applying for state funding for Re-Wild Park, including from the California Coastal Conservancy and Measure AA (through the SF Bay Restoration Authority), which the City can apply for
- Additional funding could be unlocked if the park has a climate/adaptation/re-wild benefit (e.g. Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund)

Summary

- Designating the Northwest Territories, as “Re-Wild Park” is consistent with previous plans for Alameda Point.
- It reflects our updated knowledge about climate impacts in the time since the original 1996 (and 2010/14 updates) plans were written, and addresses sea level rise and other climate impacts, improving Alameda’s resilience.
- “Re-Wild Park” would present a number of environmental, public, and equity benefits to the community.
- The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) being finalized between Alameda and EBPRD should include Re-Wild Park.

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