

NEWS

April 5, 2017

For Immediate Release

County of San Mateo Releases Draft Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment *Report identifies potential risks and opportunities in county, cities*

Redwood City— The County of San Mateo’s Office of Sustainability today publicly released its draft Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment, a tool to guide the county and its cities in policy and adaptation planning by identifying assets and communities of potential risk throughout the county.

The assessment is an effort of Sea Change SMC, the County’s sea level rise initiative administered through its Office of Sustainability. Using the best available sea level rise modeling and local data, the report provides an overview of how flooding and erosion from sea level rise could affect the county and its cities. The authors aim to increase awareness of the issue countywide and provide a foundation for planning and identifying projects that increase resilience and reduce risks.

“The first step in taking action regarding sea level rise is to understand the potential consequences of the issue on a very local level,” said Hilary Papendick, climate change and adaption manager in the Office of Sustainability. “Once the assessment is final, it provides us all the opportunity to make even greater strides toward workable solutions.”

San Mateo County is already vulnerable to flooding and storm-related erosion, both of which bring significant impacts to quality of life issues like transportation, housing and safety. The economic consequences of doing nothing alone are great — the assessed value of parcels exposed to near-term flooding exceed \$1 billion and parcels exposed to long-term flooding and erosion carry an estimated value of \$39.1 billion. Bay Area sea levels have risen 8 inches since the 1900s and science points to an additional 5 inches to 2 feet of rise in this region by 2050. Sea Change SMC, and the assessment it spearheaded, are a proactive approach to get in front of these concerns.

“This draft report is the culmination of significant work on the part of our Office of Sustainability staff who used the best modeling tools available to identify areas where sea level rise should be considered in future planning and building,” said Supervisor Dave Pine, who has led the County’s efforts to develop the vulnerability assessment and prepare for sea level rise. “San Mateo County is one of the most vulnerable areas in the U.S. to sea level rise with thousands of lives and billions of dollars of property at risk. This document represents a major step forward in addressing this risk.”

The County developed the assessment in collaboration with the California State Coastal Conservancy which provided funding through a Climate Ready grant. Other contributors include consulting firm Arcadis U.S., Inc. and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers which provided in-kind assistance.

Each city included in the assessment and others involved in the process have received a copy of the draft report for focused feedback to finalize the report. Papendick will also provide a brief presentation to the Board of Supervisors on the draft document at its April 11 meeting. The assessment will be finalized this summer after which public workshops are planned.

The draft is available on the Sea Change SMC website: <http://seachangesmc.com/current-efforts/vulnerability-assessment/>.

The public is invited to learn more about the draft assessment and next steps at two community meetings: Tuesday, April 25 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Burlingame Main Library, Lane Community Room, 501 Primrose Road, Burlingame; Saturday, April 29 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Ted Adcock Community Center, 535 Kelly Ave., Half Moon Bay. Please RSVP at <http://seachangesmc.com/events>

Comments on the draft assessment may also be submitted online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/smcseachange>

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