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Introducing OneShoreline's Draft Planning Guidance Policy to Protect and Enhance Bay Shoreline Areas of San Mateo County

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OneShoreline's Draft Planning Guidance Policy is available for public comment through May 19. Click [here](#) to view the document, learn more, and register for a public information and feedback session on May 9 at noon. You can also submit comments via email by May 19 to Planning@OneShoreline.org.

A Message from Our CEO

Over the course of the past few years, weather extremes in San Mateo County were extraordinary in terms of dramatic changes from drought to deluge and we saw repeated, substantial flooding. Meanwhile, the development and redevelopment of our cities and unincorporated areas goes on, guided by the general plans, specific plans, and zoning ordinances that reflect our values and priorities on issues like housing affordability and supply, economic vitality, transportation routes, safety, equity, and open space. While weather extremes have impacted these key aspects of our communities, until recently climate change has not materially affected the planning documents that guide them and local decision-making regarding where and how development should occur.

To enable new developments, particularly those along a creek or shoreline, to both function for their intended lifespan as our environment changes and contribute to the resilience of surrounding areas, OneShoreline is proud to introduce its **Planning Guidance Policy** – a voluntary resource for the twelve cities within San Mateo County and areas of the County itself that are directly impacted by the Bay.

While each city has different priorities and processes to shape its future, the transformative impacts of climate change, including extreme storms and rising sea level and groundwater, do not respect their jurisdictional boundaries. Thus, through this Planning Guidance Policy, as well as ongoing engagement with each city and project proponents, OneShoreline seeks to align the long-term protection and enhancement of our communities and serve as a model for other areas facing similar challenges. We believe our Planning Guidance Policy represents an important step forward to accomplishing that goal - please read it over and let us know your reactions to it by May 19.

Sincerely,

Len Materman
CEO



What is the Planning Guidance Policy?

OneShoreline's Planning Guidance Policy is intended to be a standardized, yet evolving, resource for cities and the County to account for anticipated increases in flooding, sea level rise, and shallow groundwater rise due to climate change in two key areas:

1. Planning documents (general and specific plans, zoning ordinances), and
2. Approvals of new private development projects in areas near the Bay subject to these foreseeable climate impacts.

This document is written for jurisdictions and everyone who wishes to weigh in on land use planning and development near the Bay shoreline of San Mateo County.

The intended audience of the Planning Guidance Policy is the County of San Mateo and the twelve cities within its boundaries that are directly impacted by sea level rise from the Bay, including Belmont, Brisbane, Burlingame, East Palo Alto, Foster City, Menlo Park, Millbrae, Redwood City, San Bruno, San Carlos, San Mateo, and South San Francisco. In addition, this document is designed to advance conversations regarding climate resilience in new development among regulatory agencies and organizations interested in housing, transportation, utilities, environmental protection, environmental justice, and other matters. The specific hazards and jurisdictional landscape along the County's Pacific coast are substantially different from the Bayside and thus planning guidance is also substantially different (a current resource on this topic is the California Coastal Commission's [guidance](#) on sea level rise planning).

This document is voluntary guidance, not mandatory regulations.

Jurisdictions along San Mateo County's Bay shoreline are highly encouraged to include Planning Guidance Policy provisions in key planning documents and processes.

This document is an actionable template, not a reference document only.

While accounting for future conditions does require a perspective shift, this document is designed to be as implementable as possible, with chapters of template text to insert into pre-existing processes and documents (Chapter II: General and Specific Plans, Chapter III: Zoning Amendments, Chapter IV: Project Review Checklist, and Chapter V: Standard Conditions of Approval).

This document is focused on new or substantial private development, not existing development or public infrastructure.

OneShoreline's current focus is to ensure new private developments are sited and designed to accommodate protection infrastructure. Complementary guidance on integrating climate risks into capital planning is anticipated in 2024.

This document is evolving, not static.

OneShoreline intends to periodically update this document as new climate science – including projections regarding storms, sea level rise, and groundwater rise – become available, and as lessons are learned from the implementation of this guidance by local jurisdictions.

2 Key Features of the Planning Guidance Policy

OneShoreline's Bay Protection Standard

OneShoreline's Bay Protection Standard, which equals the current FEMA Base Flood Elevation of San Francisco Bay at a specific location plus 6 feet, represents OneShoreline's desired post-settlement elevation at the top of new shoreline protection infrastructure.

Learn more on Page 3 of the draft Planning Guidance Policy.

Map of Future Conditions


OneShoreline has developed an interactive online [Map of Future Conditions](#) to accompany this guidance document, illustrating the Bay Protection Standard and the proposed boundaries of the Overlay Districts for sea level rise and groundwater rise recommended in Chapter III of the document.

Learn more on Page 12 of the draft Planning Guidance Policy.

Upcoming Events to Learn More

Join OneShoreline for two upcoming meetings to learn more about the Planning Guidance Policy and provide input on the draft document.





OneShoreline Board of Directors Meeting

Monday, April 24th, 4:00pm

This is a hybrid meeting that will be held in-person on the first floor of 1700 S. El Camino Real in San Mateo and by videoconference via Zoom.

OneShoreline will introduce the draft Planning Guidance Policy at its April 24th Board of Directors meeting. Please see OneShoreline's [Meetings and Agendas webpage](#) for information regarding meeting location in-person and over Zoom.

OneShoreline

Draft Planning Guidance Policy

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND FEEDBACK SESSION

Tuesday, May 9th
12:00pm - 1:00pm (Virtual Only)

For more details and to register, visit: Oneshoreline.org/planning-guidance

OneShoreline will host a remote Public Information and Feedback Session on Tuesday, May 9, from 12:00-1:00 PM to provide an overview of its draft Planning Guidance Policy and solicit comments. Please [register for the event here](#) to receive Zoom meeting information.

Contact Us

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