

JOINT PLATFORM PROGRESS REPORT #2

June 27, 2024

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Introduction

BCDC is pleased to present a second Bay Adapt Joint Platform Report to track the progress being made on the Joint Platform tasks. This report aims to summarize progress made and challenges encountered in moving the tasks in the [Joint Platform](#) forward. The Joint Platform, adopted in 2021, was collaboratively developed with regional leaders and the input of hundreds of stakeholders. It has been endorsed by 55 cities and counties, regional, state, and federal agencies, non-profit organizations, and more. Implementing the Joint Platform requires coordinated collective action to overcome the major challenges to adaptation in the Bay Area. **Sustained leadership, sufficient resources, distributed ownership of the various actions, and navigating complex organizational structures** are needed for successful execution and outcomes.

Check-In Interviews with ICG Members

The Bay Adapt backbone team conducted 30-minute interviews with ICG members in May. The purpose was to get updates on the status of projects and initiatives related to the [Joint Platform](#) tasks that ICG members are helping move forward. This input helps BCDC and ICG assess the progress made across the tasks and what roadblocks

(funding, governance, capacity, community awareness, etc) are getting in the way.
The bullets below are based on the interviews (and are not comprehensive).

Task 6.2: Establish a framework for funding plans and projects.

Task 6.2 was chosen as our 2024 work plan focus.

Progress

- Advocacy
 - Save the Bay, Greenbelt Alliance, and other organizations are advocating for the climate bond in a coalition.
- Coordination
 - Funding is being discussed in multiple settings this year, such as financial strategies at the Bay Planning Coalition's Spring Summit, State of the Estuary Conference, and BayCAN's upcoming meeting.
 - NOAA has been working closely with other agencies to learn about their funding practices. They want to share and learn more about funding opportunities so that they can use this information to share with applicants who did not get funding and suggest where else they may be able to go for funding.
 - Getting people on the same page and into collective action for funding is being recognized as a critical need.
 - MOU is finalized, outlining key roles for many regional and state agencies, and adopted by BCDC Commission in May.
- Prioritization of Funding
 - BARC's multi-agency MOU and BCDC's role in establishing a funding strategy are gaining traction as a major vehicle for establishing a process for prioritizing project funding throughout the Bay Area.
- Project Funding
 - A federally funded dredging program for eleven federal channels in the Bay is underway, with annual operations and maintenance funding. The program is emphasizing beneficial uses of sediment for SLR adaptation.
 - Federal Section 1122 funding allows federal entities to utilize innovative ways to use dredged material. Under this section, Resilient SF Bay was awarded a \$29M grant for a demonstration project to beneficially support mudflat and fringing marsh habitats with dredged material.

- Potential Funding Sources
 - WRDA should be updated this Fall through Congress, potentially authorizing a region-wide Army Corps study.
 - The Regional Dredge Material Management Plan is trying to find a way to lower costs for beneficial uses and use federal funding more effectively.

Challenges

- Determining Funding Needs
 - There is concern that the cost assessment of \$110B listed in Task 6.2 is low.
 - We need funding for wetlands restoration and gray infrastructure (levees behind wetlands).
 - Knowing where to begin is hard, and conversations have become redundant.
- Funding Constraints and Limits
 - There are concerns about budget cuts and a significant amount of general fund money being taken away from coastal resilience purposes.
 - State funding for many agencies, like Caltrans, is minimal for climate resilience projects.
 - The pace at which the funding needs to come in is a challenge.
 - There is a \$50M cap on Federal Section 1122 projects like the Resilient SF Bay Project
 - Normally, to complement federal or USACE funds, about 35% of the cost has to come from a non-federal entity.
 - There hasn't been another call for federal funds recently.
- Advocacy
 - The non-agency ICG partners play a critical role in advocating for more funding, especially at a time when many types of funding are decreasing, and there is concern that federal funding will be limited in the future.
 - We could use more core communication about what we're pursuing as a region and a more unified approach with consistent messaging from all stakeholders.
 - It's hard for CBOs and EJ advocates to get involved when there are not specific projects and plans to advocate for funding.
- Partnerships
 - The MOU is a great start, and many of the agency members expressed great enthusiasm for it. However, on the non-profit side, there was more

skepticism and concern that it would not change how agencies work together in the way that is needed. It's a good step, but more progress is still needed.

- There is a need for more strategic partnerships among agencies and with cities and counties to pursue grants and funding.

Other Tasks

Progress

- Advocacy
 - The Sierra Club Bay Alive campaign has been successfully advocating for the Bay's ecology as we address issues around flooding and other climate impacts.
 - Caltrans has a SLR Task Force.
- Nature-Based Solutions
 - San Francisco Estuary Partnership is a partner of the Regional Climate Science Consortium, which is being funded as a pilot by the State Coastal Conservancy. The Consortium is housed at SF State's Estuary and Ocean Science Center. Its intent is to collaboratively develop and demonstrate a convening hub for climate science problem-solving and regional guidance for San Francisco Bay, with a focus on advancing innovative nature-based shoreline solutions. The two-year pilot will focus on the science of two approaches for innovative nature-based shoreline adaptation solutions.
- Plans
 - A long-term vision for Route 37 with ecological enhancements around Novato Creek has been developed.
 - Caltrans is doing planning and feasibility studies to align with adaptation needs.
 - Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan guidelines first draft shared with Advisory Group.
- Projects
 - Three major projects along Santa Clara bayshore, using the latest science.

- BCDC is leading an effort called the Sediment for Wetland Adaptation Project, which will include a Roadmap (near complete), Policy Amendments, and a Funding Strategy (funded by US EPA and OPC).
- Collaboration
 - Project know-how and science are being shared among jurisdictions, including white papers being developed by CHARG.
 - One Shoreline's guidance on coordination
- Environmental Justice
 - Task 2.1: EJ advocates helped BCDC incorporate environmental justice language into policies.

Challenges

- Wetlands Restoration
 - Enormous logistical challenges and costs exist with trucking so much material to the bay.
- Regulatory Processes and Permitting
 - Task 7.2: Conflicts among agencies can get in the way of projects (like using dirt from BART extension tunneling for wetlands restoration) and add costs and years to projects.
 - Conflicting policies and regulations and jurisdiction overlap exist. There is a sense that BRRIT is not helping significantly.
 - Policies like no sediment for habitat restoration are designed for a different time.
 - Permitting can be very slow.
- Community Involvement
 - Bay Adapt is still not enough of a concept on the ground for deep involvement. There need to be more climate resilience projects for communities to support and get involved with.

Recommendations for ICG Meetings

- Grantmaking
 - It would be interesting to discuss simplifying grant-making processes and share examples from different agencies that have tried more unique ways to get money out the door.
 - Interest in grantmaking access and alignment.

- Tracking Progress
 - A few members expressed an interest in using these meetings to review the tracker, strategize ways to improve stalled items, identify actions that have lacked progress, and strategize solutions for increasing progress on these items. “We should discuss anything in the tracker that's bright red. Why are we not making progress on this red thing? If we are making progress, what can we learn from that item to move others forward?”
 - Some would like continued and deeper focus on the tasks with concrete plans and progress noted.
 - Caltrans could present what they're working on.
- Advocacy
 - Bart Broome of Valley Water has a wealth of knowledge to share on advocating in Sacramento.
- Funding
 - The Bay Planning Coalition could share funding strategies discussed at the Spring Summit.
 - A USACE headquarters representative could share funding pathways and success stories.

Potential ICG Subcommittees

- There was widespread sentiment that subcommittees would be a positive addition to the ICG, helping to move work forward on the funding framework for plans and projects.
- Possible Subcommittees
 - Legislation and Advocacy
 - Project Prioritization
 - Some members expressed that it seems like decisions on project prioritization happen in a vacuum and frequently with only regional agencies. There is a need to bring in others as well. It needs to be clarified what the best way to do this would be without diluting or overcomplicating this, but we need to overcome the unequal power dynamic.
 - Funding
 - Education and Outreach

ICG Member Updates

Luisa Valiela EPA has joined the ICG! Luisa is the San Francisco Bay Program Lead on the San Francisco Bay Delta Team at the US Environmental Protection Agency. She is the program lead for the San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund and serves on the Advisory Committee and Policy and Management Committee of the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority and the Board of Directors for the San Francisco Estuary Institute.

We welcome Luisa to the ICG and look forward to her sharing her expertise!

