

# SAN FRANCISCO BAY RESTORATION AUTHORITY

Staff Recommendation

September 11, 2026

## ALVISO & BELLE HAVEN SHORELINE HABITAT INITIATIVE

Project No. RA-053

Project Manager: Erica Johnson

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Authorization to disburse up to \$248,322 from the Authority's Community Grants Program to Climate Resilient Communities to undertake the Alviso & Belle Haven Shoreline Habitat Initiative Project, consisting of conducting community-based shoreline habitat enhancement, organizing capacity building workshops, and engaging participants in shoreline adaptation plans in Santa Clara County and San Mateo County.

**LOCATION:** Multiple locations near Alviso and Belle Haven, in Santa Clara County and San Mateo County; Measure AA Region: South Bay

**MEASURE AA PROGRAM CATEGORY:** Vital Fish, Bird and Wildlife Habitat Program; Shoreline Public Access Program.

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### **EXHIBITS**

Exhibit 1: [Project Location and Site Maps](#)

Exhibit 2: [Project Photographs](#)

Exhibit 3: [Project Letters](#)

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### **RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS**

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority adopt the following resolution and findings:

Resolution:

The San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority hereby authorizes the disbursement of an amount not to exceed two hundred forty-eight thousand three hundred twenty-two dollars (\$248,322) from the Authority's Community Grants Program to Climate Resilient Communities to undertake the Alviso & Belle Haven Shoreline Habitat Initiative Project, consisting of conducting community-based shoreline habitat enhancement, organizing capacity building workshops, and engaging participants in shoreline adaptation plans in Santa Clara County and San Mateo County. Prior to commencement of the project, the grantee shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Authority the following:

1. A detailed work program, schedule, and budget.
2. Names and qualifications of any contractors to be employed in carrying out the project.
3. A plan for acknowledgement of Authority funding.
4. Evidence that all permits and approvals required to implement the project have been obtained.
5. Evidence that the grantee has entered into agreements sufficient to enable the grantee to implement and operate the project.

**Findings:**

Based on the accompanying staff recommendation and attached exhibits, the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with The San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Act, Gov. Code Sections 66700-66706.
2. The proposed authorization is consistent with The San Francisco Bay Clean Water, Pollution Prevention and Habitat Restoration Measure (Measure AA).

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Staff recommends the Authority authorize disbursement of up to \$248,322 from the Authority's Community Grants Program to Climate Resilient Communities (CRC) to undertake the Alviso & Belle Haven Shoreline Habitat Initiative Project, consisting of conducting community-based shoreline habitat enhancement, organizing capacity building workshops, and engaging participants in shoreline adaptation plans in Santa Clara County and San Mateo County (the project) as shown in Exhibit 1.

CRC is a community-based organization that serves communities at the frontline of climate change impacts in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. The Alviso and Belle Haven neighborhoods in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties are communities that have long faced disproportionate impacts of shoreline industrialization, habitat degradation, and climate change impacts, such as flooding, extreme heat, and more. Each neighborhood has historically encountered barriers to organizing local climate adaptation efforts and accessing resources for community-driven projects. The project will enable the Alviso and Belle Haven communities to participate in hands-on shoreline habitat enhancement and learn about native shoreline plants, climate-focused capacity building, and shoreline adaptation planning. As part of the project, CRC will partner with each neighborhood's Climate Change Community Teams (CCCTs), launched in Alviso and Belle Haven in 2024 and 2020. Each of the CCCTs is comprised of a partnership with multiple local community organizations, local government, and non-profits. Alviso in Action and the Belle Haven Collective are the community organizations leading their neighborhood's respective CCCTs. The CCCTs enlist community members from each neighborhood to identify community needs for climate adaptation and turn them into action. The CCCTs identified a need for expanded stewardship opportunities and nature-based climate

adaptation trainings. The CCCTs leads, Alviso in Action and the Belle Haven Collective, will partner with CRC and a local non-profit called Grassroots Ecology, to engage approximately 65 individuals from the two neighborhoods in the project. CRC will provide stipends to the approximately 65 community participants. The project components are as follows:

- **Habitat Enhancement:** Habitat enhancement activities will occur at publicly-owned bayland habitat sites stewarded by Grassroots Ecology. These include the Alviso shoreline buffer area adjacent to the Regional Wastewater Facility in San Jose and Ravenswood Preserve upland transition zone area in Menlo Park. Activities will include education on healthy shoreline ecosystems, methods for local resilience to flooding caused by stormwater and sea level rise, complemented by hands-on activities, such as planting native species and removing invasive species. Grassroots Ecology will plan and lead 6 restoration workdays for participants (3 in Alviso, 3 at Ravenswood). CRC and Grassroots Ecology may also explore opportunities for additional stewardship days at Bedwell Bayfront Park, an open space for recreation and wildlife adjacent to the Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge.
- **Capacity Building Workshops:** CRC will organize 12 capacity building workshops aimed at deepening participants' understanding of local climate and habitat vulnerabilities, strengthening their engagement with local agencies and non-profits that implement multi-benefit adaptation projects, and familiarity with current shoreline restoration projects and adaptation plans that will impact their communities. CRC will facilitate these workshops and coordinate presentations with partners, such as OneShoreline (San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District), the San Francisco Estuary Institute, the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, Save The Bay, and the Invasive Spartina Project. The workshops will be held monthly in partnership with Alviso in Action and the Belle Haven Collective to provide workshop space and to connect CRC to participants.
- **Engagement in Shoreline Adaptation Planning:** CRC will facilitate community participation in regional shoreline adaptation planning processes, leveraging its relationships with local governments and agencies. CRC anticipates opportunities for participants to attend upcoming meetings related to Santa Clara County's Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan and San Mateo County's One Shoreline Plan and to learn about other projects seeking community engagement. This will help ensure that community perspectives inform shoreline adaptation decisions that directly affect both neighborhoods.

CRC will also provide community educational materials, childcare, refreshments, and translation services for community members participating in project-related workshops or stewardship events. CRC staff will gather participant feedback on the programming and topics covered through surveys, focus groups, and debrief discussions. Alviso in Action and the Belle Haven Collective will serve as ambassadors for community members to ensure two-way communication, transparency, and accountability throughout the project.

**Site Description:** Alviso sits at the southern edge of San Francisco Bay and is one of the region's most flood-prone communities, located roughly 13 feet below sea level. Historic marsh conversion, industrial activity, and aging stormwater infrastructure have led to fragmented

habitat, degraded shoreline conditions, and recurring neighborhood flooding that has affected its 2,250 residents during major storms. CalEnviroScreen 4.0 identifies Alviso as a high-pollution exposure area. Alviso is also an economically disadvantaged community according to the Authority's regional map.

- San Jose-Santa Clara Regional Wastewater Facility, shoreline buffer area – This area includes marsh-upland transition zone and upland habitat owned by the City of San Jose. Existing restoration and stewardship activities led by Grassroots Ecology include native plant installation, invasive removal, and ecological education. Alviso community members will participate in hands-on shoreline habitat restoration and stewardship training at this location.
- Alviso Park Community Garden – The garden contains cultivated plots and soils used for food production, and areas suitable for demonstration of habitat plantings. It serves as an accessible training site where CCCT members can learn about native plant installation, weed management, and climate-resilient landscape practices that support both wildlife and local food production.

Belle Haven is a neighborhood of about 4,000 residents that faces disproportionate environmental pressures from sea level rise, flooding, extreme heat, and proximity to industrial uses. Limited parks, tree canopy, and shoreline access heighten climate vulnerability. Although not officially designated as an economically disadvantaged community by the Authority's regional map, Belle Haven's economic vulnerability is masked by adjacent higher-income census tracts.

- Ravenswood Open Space Preserve – Managed by the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, Ravenswood includes restored tidal marsh, marsh-upland transition zone habitat, and a segment of the Bay Trail. Habitat enhancement activities encompass native plant installation and invasive removal in the transition zone, which is accessible via the Bay Trail. The site provides an ideal outdoor learning environment for Belle Haven community members to practice shoreline restoration techniques.
- Bedwell Bayfront Park – Owned by the City of Menlo Park and located adjacent to Don Edwards SF Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Bedwell Bayfront Park includes upland habitats, trails, and areas ideal for habitat enhancement. The project will explore collaborative opportunities for stewardship work at the park, enabling Belle Haven community members to gain additional stewardship experience and wildlife viewing.

**Grant Applicant Qualifications:** CRC is a community-based non-profit organization that serves East Palo Alto, North Fair Oaks, and Belle Haven with community based-climate adaptation assistance and has multiple programs that serve the project site. CRC has a proven record of managing grants and implementing complex projects. In 2020, CRC completed the Community Vulnerability Assessment—a San Mateo County and CalTrans-funded effort—where they coordinated with local agencies, technical consultants, and multiple community-based organizations to engage more than 100 residents in identifying climate risks and developing adaptation strategies. CRC also secured a State Coastal Conservancy award of \$836,400 for the East Palo Alto Rain Gardens Project, demonstrating its capacity to manage public funds, oversee multi-phase green-infrastructure planning, and conduct sustained community outreach. Additionally, CRC's Resilient Home Program has supported more than 200 homeowners since

2016 in accessing resources for solar, weatherization, and home energy upgrades—relationships that directly supported recruitment for the proposed project. CRC’s experience, community trust, and capacity make the organization well-qualified to successfully implement the project.

#### PROJECT FINANCING

|                                                |                  |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority</b> | <b>\$248,322</b> |
| <b>Project Total</b>                           | <b>\$248,322</b> |

The Authority will be the sole funder of the project, and the funds requested encompass the total amount required to implement the project.

#### CONSISTENCY WITH AUTHORITY’S ENABLING LEGISLATION, THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY RESTORATION AUTHORITY ACT:

The San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Act authorizes the Authority to award grants to public and private entities for eligible projects within its jurisdiction, consistent with Government Code Section 66704.5(a). CRC is an eligible nonprofit organization working in the Authority’s jurisdiction, and the proposed project activities will occur in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties within the San Francisco Bay area.

The project is an eligible project under Section 66704.5(b)(1) because it will restore, protect, and enhance natural shoreline habitat by engaging community members in hands-on stewardship activities at two bayland sites: the Alviso shoreline buffer area adjacent to the San Jose Regional Wastewater Facility and the Ravenswood Preserve tidal marsh.

The project is consistent with Section 66704.5(b)(3), because the project will increase public access through public stewardship of shoreline open spaces and planning future hands-on community engagement, such as through the Santa Clara County’s Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan and San Mateo County’s One Shoreline Plan.

The project is consistent with Section 66704.5(e), which allows grants to support all phases of planning, implementation, and maintenance of eligible projects. The proposed activities include planning and implementation through coordination of restoration workdays, capacity-building workshops, and evaluation through post-event surveys and focus groups.

#### CONSISTENCY WITH MEASURE AA PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES:

The project supports the *Vital Fish, Bird and Wildlife Habitat Program* by planting and protecting locally native species and removing invasive plants at the Alviso shoreline buffer area next to the Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant in San Jose and Ravenswood Preserve in Menlo Park. These restoration workdays will enhance the ecological value and resilience of tidal marsh transition zones, benefit a wide range of wildlife, and support long-term stewardship of previously restored habitat areas.

The project supports the *Shoreline Public Access Program* by providing community educational materials and resources that increase community members’ understanding of shoreline

adaptation, habitat enhancement, and nature-based solutions. Monthly capacity-building workshops will help connect communities with local projects that will impact their communities.

**CONSISTENCY WITH MEASURE AA PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA:**

1. **Greatest positive impact.** The project will generate positive ecological and social benefits by cultivating community-led stewardship at two ecologically significant shoreline sites. These activities contribute to landscape-scale benefits, such as improved transition zone habitat, increased native plant cover, and enhanced resilience of shoreline ecosystems to sea level rise. The project aligns regional priorities outlined in the Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals, Science Update 2015, which emphasizes the importance of restored transition zones and community-supported stewardship in building long-term marsh resilience.
2. **Greatest long-term impact.** The project strengthens community capacity to engage in long-term shoreline adaptation by building ecological knowledge and hands-on restoration skills among community members. The long-term outcome is a more engaged, empowered, and connected community that works collaboratively with public agencies and partner organizations to create healthier, more resilient local habitat. These skills and connections provide lasting benefits across multiple climate scenarios involving increased flooding, sediment variability, and sea level rise, ensuring both communities are better prepared for future conditions.
3. **Leveraging resources and partnerships.** The project expands on existing collaborations between CRC, Grassroots Ecology, and CCCT lead organizations—Alviso in Action and the Belle Haven Collective—and leverages prior investments in shoreline restoration by Grassroot Ecology and partners in Alviso and Menlo Park. CRC will also leverage relationships with agencies and non-profits involved in critical restoration and flood protection work in the region, and plans to reach out to and coordinate with each of the following: OneShoreline, San Francisco Estuary Institute, San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, Save The Bay, and the Invasive Spartina Project.
4. **Economically disadvantaged communities.** Alviso and Belle Haven are both climate-vulnerable neighborhoods with histories of underinvestment and environmental burdens. Alviso is located within the Authority's Economically Disadvantaged Community designation. The project directly benefits community members by providing stipends for participation, hands-on ecological training, and improved access to information about shoreline adaptation planning. The project will provide stipends, refreshments, childcare, and translation services for community members participating in project-related workshops or stewardship event—thereby ensuring equitable participation and reducing barriers for economically disadvantaged households to participate in the project
5. **Benefits to economy.** The project will support local employment and skill-building by providing stipends to approximately 65 community members so they may participate in restoration and climate adaptation activities that could provide future workforce opportunities. Shoreline stewardship efforts help protect nearby infrastructure by increasing resilience to flooding and extreme weather and provide pathways to environmental careers.

6. **Engage youth and young adults.** The CCCTs include multigenerational community members—youth to elders. The project will offer youth participants hands-on experience in habitat restoration and shoreline adaptation planning. These skills will help prepare youth for future roles in nature-based adaptation and habitat stewardship.
7. **Monitoring, maintenance, and stewardship.** CRC staff will gather and integrate feedback from participants through post-event surveys, debrief discussions, and focus groups. Grassroots Ecology will continue monitoring restoration sites under their broader stewardship programs, ensuring that project activities are sustained over time.
8. **Coastal Conservancy's San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program.** The project is consistent with the Conservancy Program criteria because it supports regional shoreline resilience goals, engages two jurisdictions (San Jose and Menlo Park), can be implemented quickly due to established community partnerships, and provides benefits—habitat enhancement, stewardship training, and nature-based adaptation—that would be lost if implementation were delayed. The project advances the Conservancy's strategic plan by advancing goal 1 prioritize equity by committing funding to systemically excluded communities, goal 3.2 to protect and restore the coast by enhancing habitats, and goal 4 to advance climate readiness by building community capacity to participate in local sea level rise adaptation project.
9. **San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission's Coastal Management Program.** The project meets the following priorities of the San Francisco Bay Plan:

Tidal Marsh and Tidal Mudflats Policy 3: Restores upland transition zone habitat.

Fish, Other Aquatic Organisms and Wildlife Policy 1: Restores tidal wetland habitats, particularly the wetland-upland transition zone with native plants that will benefit wildlife.

Environmental Justice and Social Equity Policy 3: Conduct culturally relevant stewardship activities and workshops led by community-based organizations who serve disadvantaged communities impacted by climate change.

Environmental Justice and Social Equity Policy 4: Conduct the project within two disadvantaged communities whose community members will participate in stewardship and collaborate with local governments and non-profits to learn about other engagement opportunities outside the project.

10. **San Francisco Bay Joint Venture's Implementation Strategy.**  
The project is consistent with the Joint Venture's focus on multi-benefit restoration, stewardship, and community engagement in shoreline habitats. By enhancing transition zone habitats and expanding community-based stewardship, the project supports Joint Venture priorities for habitat restoration and inclusive participation in Baylands resilience efforts.

**CONSISTENCY WITH AUTHORITY’S TRIBAL CONSULTATION POLICY:**

Consistent with the Authority’s Tribal Consultation Policy, as defined by Resolution 142, Authority staff reached out to tribes on the Native American Heritage Commission list by sending consultation letters on March 11, 2026. No tribes requested consultation.

**COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:**

The project is categorically exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR), Section 15304 (Minor Alterations to Land), which exempts minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation that do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes, including the replacement of existing conventional landscaping with water efficient or fire resistant landscaping. The project is consistent with this section because it includes habitat enhancement through plant identification, invasive species removal, native plantings, and community stewardship events without removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees.

The project is also categorically exempt from review under CEQA, pursuant to Title 14 of the CCR, Section 15306 (Information Collection), which exempts basic data collection, research, and resource evaluation activities that do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. The project is consistent with this section because it includes gathering participant feedback on the programming and topics covered through surveys, focus groups, and debrief discussions

The other elements of the project are not a “project,” as defined under Section 15378 (Project) of Title 14 of the CCR, because building relationships and building capacity does not have potential for resulting in either a direct physical change or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. Even if partnership and building capacity and informing the participants how to engage in public forums concerning local environment planning is deemed a “project” these elements are exempt from review under CEQA, pursuant to Title 14 of the CCR, Section 15061(b)(3) (Common Sense) which exempts projects that can be seen with certainty as having no possibility of having a significant effect on the environment. The project is consistent with this section because partnership and building capacity and informing the participants about public engagement opportunities can be seen with certainty as having no possibility of having a significant effect on the environment.

Upon approval of the project, Staff will file a Notice of Exemption.