



**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** March 3, 2023

**TO:** Governing Board  
San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority

**FROM:** Jessica Martini-Lamb, Chair, Advisory Committee  
Jessica Davenport, Deputy Program Manager  
Catie Thow, Sea Grant Fellow

**SUBJECT:** Development of an Equity Framework for the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority

Staff are committed to working collaboratively with the Advisory Committee (AC) to advance the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority’s (Authority) equity and justice goals. The development of an Equity Framework for the Authority is the next step in an ongoing process to improve equity in the Authority’s projects and programs.

The Recommendations to Advance Equity for Grants and Programs in 2022 approved by the AC at its May 20, 2022, meeting included the recommendation to develop “a long-term framework...that includes values, guidelines, actions, best practices, and indicators or metrics to evaluate progress and effectiveness.” This framework may include concepts within existing documents such as the Coastal Conservancy’s Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Guidelines and the 2019 Greenlining Institute Guidebook.

Staff has been working with the AC’s Equity Ad Hoc Subcommittee (Subcommittee) to design the process for developing the Equity Framework, with the goal of seeking Governing Board approval for the framework by 2024. With input from the Subcommittee, staff will determine whether a consultant will be needed to assist with the process. The Advisory Committee voted unanimously to approve this memo and its recommendations at its meeting on February 10, 2023. The AC recommends that the Governing Board direct staff and the AC to proceed with development of the Equity Framework, as presented in this memo.

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<sup>1</sup> Mohnot, Sona, J. Bishop, and A. Sanchez, Making Equity Real in Climate Adaptation and Community Resilience Policies and Programs: A Guidebook, The Greenlining Institute, Oakland August 2019.

<sup>1</sup> The Authority defines an EDC as a census tract with a median household income less than 80% of the area median income. Within this set of low-income communities, the Authority further defines high

## Background

In July 2020, the Authority passed Resolution 70, accepting the recommendations developed by the AC to guide its implementation of Measure AA in a manner that benefits economically disadvantaged communities (EDCs). These recommendations are often referred to as “the equity recommendations.” The equity recommendations were accepted by the Governing Board, and staff have been implementing them for almost three years. Staff provided the second yearly update on actions taken to implement the equity recommendations to the Governing Board on October 14, 2022, after receiving input on the update from the AC.

Staff has organized our implementation efforts into the following areas:

- **Creating a Separate Application Track for Small Community Groups.** The Authority has completed two years of the Community Grants Program, which specifically funds community-based organizations in economically disadvantaged communities (EDCs) on a rolling basis. Through this program, staff provide technical assistance with navigating the grant application and project development processes.
- **Lowering Barriers to Accessing Funds.** The Authority has also been working on removing barriers through revised funding policies. This has included encouraging applicants in competitive grant round to include adequate funding in their budgets for paid community participation, internships, and workforce development for residents of EDCs; increasing the overhead rate limit from 15% to 20% of a total grant award; advancing funds to grantees that do not have the resources to cover project costs up front; and expanding the types of activities covered by the Advisory Committee’s stipend policy.
- **Building Partnerships.** Staff hosted several virtual networking sessions by region in 2021 and 2022 to reach more community-based organizations and connect them with restoration-focused organizations to discuss partnerships. These sessions also were meant to help introduce different organizations and agencies to the Authority. The Authority has also done targeted outreach to recruit new Advisory Committee members who represent the diverse communities in the Bay Area and who are focused on advancing equity. The Authority has also created a community-based organization spreadsheet and given Advisory Committee members the opportunity to review and add other organizations and updated contact information to existing entries.

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priority EDCs as groups that are historically underrepresented in environmental policymaking and/or projects; most economically and environmentally impacted by heavy industrial activity and development; most vulnerable to climate change impacts, due to lack of resources required for community resilience; and severely burdened by housing costs, increasing the risk of displacement.

- **Updating Grant Materials and Processes.** In July of 2020, the Authority released a thoroughly revised Request for Proposals (RFP) and Grant Application, and a new Pre-

Application, for the fourth round of Measure AA's grant program. The Authority also amended the grant application scoring criteria to emphasize community engagement and benefits. Since then, the grant materials have followed a similar template, with minor updates and formatting changes.

Staff will continue to implement these recommendations, and the development of an Equity Framework will further guide the staff, board, and committees' efforts to advance equity at the Authority in the long term. In determining our equity metrics, staff will avoid creating burdensome reporting requirements for our community-based grantees, while still tracking relevant metrics.

### **Coordination with Other Relevant Processes**

During the development of the Equity Framework, staff and the AC will need to coordinate with two other ongoing processes: the development of Tribal engagement recommendations and alignment of Authority performance measures with the Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program. Staff will also coordinate with other regional diversity efforts such as the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission's (BCDC) Environmental Justice and Social Equity Bay Plan.

**Tribal Engagement Recommendations.** Tribal engagement recommendations are expected to focus in the following areas:

**Set aside funds for Tribes** – For example, the Authority will need to consider whether to expand the Community Grants Program to include Tribes, create a dedicated grant program for Tribes, or some other approach. The Authority can also encourage more applicants and grantees participating in the competitive grant round to collaborate with Tribes on projects and include them as subcontractors.

**Support capacity building for Tribes** – Resources for building capacity may include providing grant funds that allow for capacity building, compensation for Tribal members' time when participating in consultations on projects, and technical support to develop eligible projects.

**Build capacity of the Authority to engage with Tribes** – The Authority may designate a staff member whose job is to serve as a liaison with Tribes and educate other Authority staff on how to respectfully engage with and serve Tribes in a culturally competent manner. We also may reach out to intertribal councils who have paid staff that specialize in helping agencies build and maintain meaningful relationships with Tribes.

**Promote culturally relevant restoration work** – The Authority will consider ways to incentivize restoration-focused agencies and organizations funded by Measure AA to partner with Tribes, such as amending the application scoring criteria to emphasize the value of partnerships with Tribes. The Authority may also host networking sessions for Tribes and other organizations, at which Tribes can highlight examples of successful partnerships that brought Tribal management practices to public lands and land trust-owned properties.

The Authority intends to develop a process and recommendations that engage all of the region's Tribes and intertribal councils regardless of federal or state recognition. The Authority will explore the issue of intersectionality among issues affecting Tribes and other people of color,

including the question of equitable funding for Black community members with native ancestry. Staff recognizes there are many expressions of indigeneity across intersectional identities. Currently, staff aims to address the inequities specifically experienced by Native American Tribes whose ancestors were the original stewards of lands in the Authority's jurisdiction. For the time being, the Community Grants program is intended to serve multiple demographics for those in underserved communities by lowering barriers for funding of shoreline restoration projects.

Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program Indicator Alignment. Alignment of Authority performance measures with San Francisco Bay Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program (WRMP) indicators is being funded by an Authority grant to the San Francisco Estuary Institute. The project team has identified the following key questions:

- How do we tell the story of the Restoration Authority?
- What performance metrics are priority?
- How can we align with related programs to amplify the message and tell our story to a broader audience?

The WRMP team has formed a People and Wetlands Workgroup that intends to answer the question, “How do we measure and support equitable access to the Estuary and its resources?” They will consider using the 2019 State of the Estuary Report’s Emerging Indicator focused on park area per person in urban locations. They will also help with the development of future indicators.

The ideas generated through these two efforts, development of Tribal engagement recommendations and alignment with WRMP indicators, will need to be integrated into the Equity Framework.

### **Proposed Process**

The development of the Equity Framework is expected to build on the principles in the existing equity recommendations. The goal is to put those principles into a framework that extends the full length of the Measure AA timeframe and includes additional performance measures. An outline of the Equity Framework is included as Attachment 1. In addition to building on the existing equity recommendations, the Subcommittee recommends that the Framework include five-year work plans, which will include desired outcomes, strategies to achieve the outcomes, and performance measures that can be used to evaluate progress on an annual basis. As described above, the Equity Framework will incorporate Tribal engagement recommendations and performance measures developed by the WRMP People and Wetlands Workgroup.

We expect that the Authority may need to hire a consultant to help with gathering input from representatives of economically disadvantaged communities, since they may feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts with a neutral third party and through a process that can guarantee their anonymity, if desired. In addition, a consultant may be helpful to assist coordinating alignment with regional efforts such as the WRMP People and Wetlands Workgroup, San Francisco Estuary Partnership’s Disadvantaged Community and Tribal Involvement Program and BCDC’s Environmental Justice Advisors program.

We may also want to have AC and Governing Board workshops, similar to the Conservancy’s workshops for the JEDI Guidelines. This would enable small group discussions to generate feedback as alternative to collecting comments through the more formal board meeting format.

2023 Governing Board tours will include site visits to projects in EDCs that Authority grants have supported. These tours could provide staff the opportunity to conduct place-based community outreach for the Equity Framework and allow AC members to serve as a bridge between some of these communities and the Board.

### **Tentative Timeline for Development of an Equity Framework**

Our tentative timeline outlines next steps in the process and future opportunities to comment on the Equity Framework. However, it is subject to change.

#### **Develop the Process**

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| November 2022    | Staff meet with the Subcommittee to gather input on process for development of Equity Framework.   |
| Fall-Winter 2023 | Staff review existing guidelines and begin drafting process for developing the Equity Framework with input from Subcommittee.  |
| February 2023    | Staff and Subcommittee Chair present Equity Framework process memo to AC.  |
| March 2023       | Staff and AC Chair propose process for developing the Equity Framework to the Governing Board. Proposal may potentially include funding for a consultant in the 2023-2024 fiscal year. |

#### **Develop the Framework**

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| Summer 2023 | <p>Staff gather community input and coordinate with other organizations working on diversity efforts throughout the Bay specifically utilizing previously developed community-based organization (CBO) lists and databases, such as BCDC’s Community Vulnerability and CBO Directory Map.</p> <p>Staff meet with the Subcommittee to review input and develop desired equity outcomes.</p> <p>Staff and the Subcommittee incorporate ideas from staff’s concurrent effort to develop Tribal engagement recommendations, the WRMP People and Wetlands Workgroup’s development of indicators of equitable access to the estuary and its resources, and other San Francisco Bay-related environmental justice processes and groups.</p> |
| Fall 2023   | <p>Staff incorporate community input and regional efforts into a draft framework and develop appropriate measures of success based on input.</p> <p>Subcommittee review the draft framework and make recommendations.</p>  |

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| Winter 2023-2024 | Staff and Subcommittee Chair present Draft Equity Framework to AC for feedback.                   |
| Spring 2024      | Staff and AC Chair present Draft Equity Framework to Governing Board for feedback.                |
| Fall 2024        | Staff and Subcommittee Chair present Equity Framework to AC to request recommendation of support. |
| Fall 2024        | Staff and AC Chair present proposed Equity Framework to Governing Board for adoption.             |

**Recommendation**

The AC recommends that the Governing Board direct staff to continue working with the AC and its Subcommittee on the development of the Authority’s Equity Framework, as described in this memo.