

SAN FRANCISCO BAY RESTORATION AUTHORITY

Staff Recommendation
May 3, 2024

NORTH RICHMOND LIVING LEVEE AND COLLABORATIVE SHORELINE PLAN

Project No. RA-014
Project Manager: Liz Juvera

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$1,852,750 to West County Wastewater District to advance the North Richmond Living Levee and Collaborative Shoreline Adaptation Plan by developing 65% design drawings and draft environmental documents for a 0.65-mile section of living levee and 7 acres of tidal marsh restoration and by conducting studies and developing 30% design drawings and collaborative strategies for a living levee at two adjacent areas of shoreline in North Richmond, Contra Costa County.

LOCATION: North Richmond Shoreline marshlands (Castro Cove, Wildcat, San Pablo, and North Richmond Marshes), City of Richmond & unincorporated Contra Costa County; Measure AA Region: East Bay

MEASURE AA PROGRAM CATEGORY: Vital Fish, Bird and Wildlife Habitat Program; Integrated Flood Protection Program; Shoreline Public Access Program

EXHIBITS

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

Exhibit 2: [Project Designs and Photographs](#)

Exhibit 3: [Project Letters](#)

Exhibit 4: [Staff Recommendation for North Richmond Living Levee Preliminary Design \(May 8, 2020\)](#)

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 one million, eight hundred fifty-two thousand, seven hundred and fifty dollars (\$1,852,750) to West County Wastewater District to advance the North Richmond Living Levee and Collaborative Shoreline Adaptation Plan by developing 65% design drawings and draft

NORTH RICHMOND LIVING LEVEE AND COLLABORATIVE SHORELINE PLAN

environmental documents for a 0.65-mile section of living levee and 7 acres of adjacent wetland restoration and by conducting studies and developing 30% design drawings and collaborative strategies for a living levee at two adjacent areas of shoreline in North Richmond, Contra Costa 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 the grantee has entered into agreements with key landowning stakeholders to enable the grantee and its agents to access real property for data collection and technical study.

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).
3. The grantee is not required to enter into a project labor agreement per Resolution 22 because the proposed authorization is for planning work.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends that the Authority authorize disbursement of up to \$1,852,750 to West County Wastewater District (WCWD) to advance the North Richmond Living Levee and Collaborative Shoreline Adaptation Plan by developing 65% design drawings and draft environmental documents for a 0.65-mile section of living levee and 7 acres of tidal marsh restoration, and by conducting studies and developing 30% design drawings and collaborative strategies for a living levee at two adjacent areas of shoreline in North Richmond, Contra Costa County. The planning objectives are to restore and create transitional wetland and upland habitat, provide flood protection to critical infrastructure and neighboring disadvantaged communities, and improve public access to the North Richmond Shoreline in western Contra Costa County (Exhibit 1).

WCWD's wastewater treatment plant is at increased risk of flooding due to sea level rise, and WCWD seeks to pursue collaborative, multi-objective, nature-based solutions on and off its property in order to achieve greater habitat benefits and increased flood protection than would be expected from a traditional, unvegetated levee.

The proposed project will build on the work of the North Richmond Shoreline Living Levee Planning and Preliminary Design Project, funded by an Authority grant authorized in May 2020 and completed in January 2024, which yielded two major outcomes, shaped by community input. The first outcome was 30% design drawings for a living levee (a levee with transitional habitat on a shallow, ecologically diverse-slope), wetland restoration and trails amenity project along the approximately 0.65 mile length of marsh edge on parcels owned by WCWD, which is referred to

NORTH RICHMOND LIVING LEVEE AND COLLABORATIVE SHORELINE PLAN

as “Phase 1.” The second outcome was a concept design report illustrating approaches for multi-benefit sea level rise adaptation along a 5-mile stretch of North Richmond shoreline that includes the Phase 1 site. These two outcomes make up the North Richmond Living Levee and Collaborative Shoreline Adaptation Plan, which blended community vision for trails, public access and amenities, and nature-based adaptation features into a suite of multi-benefit sea level rise adaptation concepts along the 5-mile shoreline from Castro Cove to Dotson Marsh. (See Exhibit 2).

Supporting both these major outcomes was a highly participatory Community Co-Design process, in which WCWD, design consultants and engagement specialists worked with a dedicated Community Co-Design group of more than 20 North Richmond residents, who were compensated for their time to provide design input, create and administer a community survey, and start initial conversations about future workforce development for sea level rise adaptation features. In addition, the North Richmond Shoreline Working Group (the “Working Group”), which started meeting under the auspices of Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia in March of 2019, continued to convene property owners, public agencies, and nonprofits around potential sea level rise adaptation. (See Exhibit 4).

The proposed project consists of two components that will further the North Richmond Living Levee and Collaborative Shoreline Adaptation Plan. The first component is developing 65% designs for Phase 1, which is a living levee with upland transitional habitat, 7 acres of wetland restoration, and trails. The designs will have a level of detail sufficient to begin the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) processes. The first component also includes developing strategies for CEQA and NEPA compliance and preparing draft CEQA documentation for Phase 1. Throughout these steps, WCWD will continue to engage the North Richmond community.

The second component of the proposed project consists of planning for sea level rise adaptation via a living levee at two additional sites within the North Richmond shoreline that are referred to as Phase 1A (“North Cluster”) and 1B (“South Cluster”) (See Exhibit 2). These two sites are located on either side of the Phase 1 site; Phase 1A is 0.5 miles long and Phase 1B is 0.5 miles long. In carrying out this second component, WCWD will employ lessons learned through the development of the North Richmond Living Levee and Collaborative Shoreline Adaptation Plan. For Phase 1A and 1B, the project includes:

- Preparing 30% designs for a living levee;
- Developing collaborative strategies, which, for this project, means developing public-private partnerships for land protection, access, and management that are necessary to construct and maintain Phases 1A and 1B;
- Refining and collecting new data through surveys, biological reports, geotechnical, groundwater and confirmation of any potential ground toxicity considerations;
- Expanding community engagement goals and outcomes as identified in Phase 1.

For the entire proposed project, the improvements to be addressed include:

- Creating 7 acres of tidal marsh and 6.6 acres of transitional habitat zones in Phase 1;
- Creating almost 2 acres of stormwater retention ponds that capture runoff from WCWD parcels and adjacent parcels in the watershed to improve stormwater quality;

NORTH RICHMOND LIVING LEVEE AND COLLABORATIVE SHORELINE PLAN

- Constructing 0.65 – 5 miles of levee system on various publicly and privately-owned properties;
- Creating oyster reefs and/or eelgrass beds along closed solid waste landfill to protect against erosion and wave action;
- Constructing Bay Trail segments and improving existing segments on the levee; and
- Providing additional culturally relevant recreation amenities, which may include interpretive signage, benches, picnic tables, tribal beneficial uses, boat/kayak/canoe put ins, and bicycle racks.

For the entire proposed project, WCWD will use consultant services and ongoing engagement with the Working Group to develop both preliminary and secondary design options based on technical and ecological analyses. The proposed project tasks include:

- Production of technical studies for Phases 1A and 1B that include topographic mapping, geotechnical investigation, hydrologic modeling, and ecological/biological surveys;
- Production of preliminary (30%) designs and construction cost estimates for Phases 1A and 1B and a memo outlining an agreed upon implementation plan for North and South Clusters;
- Production of secondary (65%) designs and draft CEQA documents for Phase 1;
- Convene Stakeholder Working Group meetings to continue relationship-building;
- Consult with regulatory agencies (through review by the Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team or BRRIT) to avoid impacts where possible, and to inform project design and CEQA analyses for all options; and
- Conduct community engagement throughout the project, including meetings with groups and individuals, to better integrate community and Tribal needs into the planning process.

As a special district operating on the shoreline, WCWD is both qualified and motivated to continue leading this project. It serves approximately 34,000 residences and 2,450 commercial and industrial businesses with a total population of approximately 100,000 in the City of San Pablo, northern subdivisions of Richmond, and parts of unincorporated Contra Costa County. WCWD has successfully completed over \$50 million dollars of capital improvement projects at its wastewater treatment plant over the last several years. (See Exhibit 4 for additional detail.)

Previous planning efforts from 2017 to 2018 included significant community engagement. Subsequent water-related workshops raised community awareness of sea level rise and associated flood risks, as well as reinforcing the community desire for improved public access and recreational opportunities along the shoreline. Additionally, residents of the disadvantaged North Richmond community have consistently voiced a need for economic and career development. The planning process will seek to incorporate ways to address these needs and desires. Local non-profit environmental organizations with job training programs, Urban Tilth and The Watershed Project, are expected to participate in the planning process as stakeholders.

These planning efforts were continued through the previous Authority grant, with WCWD convening a project team that completed a 9-month series of community meetings and design workshops. The team also engaged with the Confederated Villages of Lisjan, sharing design approaches and receiving feedback. Team members also worked with tribal representatives to create history storytelling, both in the near term (videos and story books) and long term with interpretive signage.

NORTH RICHMOND LIVING LEVEE AND COLLABORATIVE SHORELINE PLAN

The Bay Trail runs through the project area with segments within the property boundaries of WCWD, Republic Services' closed landfill, along Richmond Parkway, and through the Point Pinole Regional Shoreline Park (Exhibit 1). The planning project is expected to use the existing Bay Trail berm (also known as the Wildcat Marsh Trail) within the WCWD property as the proposed alignment of the living levee for Phase 1, potentially increasing the elevation of the levee and improving trail conditions when it is restored atop the finished living levee. This approach would be used in other locations, as applicable. Specifically, the planning process will include closing a gap in the Bay Trail on the north side of the WCWD property, along the south side of San Pablo Creek. The Working Group will work with representatives of Trails for Richmond Action Committee (TRAC) to ensure incorporation of Bay Trail considerations in the planning process.

Site Description:

The North Richmond Shoreline's Baylands have undergone considerable fragmentation, though some components of its historical ecological landscape persist. Much of the Baylands were lost due to filling for development and construction of levees and berms for flood protection of development. Tidal marshes remain at the mouths of San Pablo and Wildcat Creeks, and a major tidal and seasonal wetland restoration project was completed at the Dotson Family Marsh, just south of Point Pinole. The largest eelgrass bed in the bay is located offshore between Point Molate and Point Pinole. Vernal pools remain in the adjacent uplands.

On former tidal marshes sits most of the Chevron refinery (filled Castro Cove), railyards, most of the West County Wastewater Treatment Plant, as well as portions of the North Richmond neighborhood. Atop former tidal mudflats sits the West Contra Costa Landfill and the Richmond Rod & Gun Club. Almost all the remaining Richmond northern shoreline was historically wet meadow. This includes the western half of Parchester Village, and most of North Richmond, the West County Wastewater plant, railroad, and industrial areas. The Richmond Parkway, a transportation corridor connecting I-80 to I-580, separates most of the residential land uses to the east from the shoreline and heavy industry to the west.

Wildcat, San Pablo, and Rheem Creeks still flow, though with significantly altered outlets, to San Francisco Bay. The lower reaches have been lined with constructed levees designed to protect homes and other property in the adjacent low-lying areas from flooding. Near the creeks, within the historical stream corridor and alluvial fan, there are multiple land uses, including North Richmond neighborhood homes, low density commercial land uses (warehouses, storage facilities, equipment rental yards, rail, and junk yards), and open space.

PROJECT FINANCING

San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority	\$1,852,750
West County Wastewater District	\$200,000
Project Total	\$2,052,750

WCWD is contributing \$200,000 to the project. WCWD's contribution will be used for project management tasks, public engagement and stakeholder negotiations, including: procurement of consultants and other service providers and development of a funding plan among stakeholders to advance final designs, permitting, implementation, and anticipated operations and maintenance of the proposed living levee. The WCWD Board has approved additional funding

NORTH RICHMOND LIVING LEVEE AND COLLABORATIVE SHORELINE PLAN

for advancing infrastructure asset protection in the face of sea level rise to be used in this next phase of planning. Also, due to a reconfiguration of the WCWD treatment facility (a modernization for the plant happening concurrently), the Phase 1 project can transition formerly diked ponds into tidal wetland, allowing for near term habitat improvements. No repayments or other revenue to the Authority are expected.

Construction of the North Richmond Living Levee (Phase 1) was authorized for up to \$45 million of federal funding as an environmental infrastructure project of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) under the 2022 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). The project team is in conversation with federal partners to seek a budget appropriation for the construction of Phase 1.

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

The proposed project is consistent with Section 66704.5(a), (b), and (e) of the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Act and is therefore eligible for grant funding from the Authority. Consistent with Section 66704.5(a), the project is located within the Authority's jurisdiction as it will address the Bay shoreline in Contra Costa County, and WCWD is an eligible grantee as a local public agency (special district) and an owner/operator of a 110-acre shoreline parcel in the San Francisco Bay area. Consistent with section 66704.5(b), the proposed planning project will determine the feasibility and alignment options for a living levee with the objectives to: 1) create shoreline transitional upland habitat, 2) provide sea level rise flood protection to critical infrastructure and neighboring disadvantaged communities, and 3) improve public access to the North Richmond Shoreline in west Contra Costa County. Consistent with section 66704.5(e), this is a proposed planning project, which is eligible for Authority funding.

CONSISTENCY WITH MEASURE AA PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES:

The proposed project is consistent with the programs and activities of Measure AA, as outlined below:

The project supports the *Vital Fish, Bird and Wildlife Habitat Program's* purpose to significantly improve wildlife habitat that will support and increase vital populations of fish, birds, and other wildlife in and around the Bay because it will produce plans for creating and restoring shoreline transitional upland habitat. Once implemented, the shoreline environment will have the potential to provide habitat for the threatened saltmarsh harvest mouse and the California Ridgway's rail.

The project supports the *Integrated Flood Protection Program's* purpose to use natural habitats to protect communities along the Bay's shoreline from the risks of severe coastal flooding caused by storms and high-water levels because it will design 0.65 (Phase 1) to 5 miles (full study area) of a living levee system that will both create transitional upland habitat and provide sea level rise flood protection to critical infrastructure and neighboring disadvantaged communities.

The project supports the *Shoreline Public Access Program's* purpose to enhance the quality of life of Bay Area residents through improved public access, as part of and compatible with wildlife habitat restoration projects in and around the Bay, because the proposed living levee will include a pedestrian/bicycle trail, where appropriate, to promote public accessibility and use.

There is an opportunity to close a 0.25-mile gap in the Bay Trail on WCWD property between Richmond Parkway and the junction of the Wildcat Marsh Trail and the Landfill Loop.

CONSISTENCY WITH MEASURE AA PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA:

Greatest positive impact. The Phase 1 Living Levee project stands to create a coastal flood protection levee that will provide sea-level rise resilience to the WCWD treatment plant and neighboring communities, restore natural habitats, improve stormwater quality and increase water reuse (See Project Summary). Phase 1 also includes enhanced Bay Trail bike and ped segments, boardwalks, and interpretive feature areas for education and enjoyment of North Richmond residents and regional visitors. Phase 1 can also support further implementation of nature-based sea level rise strategies as a model for other reaches of the North Richmond shoreline, and through monitoring and adaptive management of the project, generate workforce development that can lend to future community wealth-building. Phases 1A (North Cluster) and 1B (South Cluster) include other benefits including increasing resilience of a capped landfill to sea level rise, marsh migration, and wave action, as well as re-establishing hydrologic and habitat connection between San Pablo Creek and Wildcat Marsh.

Greatest long-term impact. Perhaps the greatest long-term impact of the project (particularly Phase 1A and 1B) is modeling a successful, inclusive multi-stakeholder approach spanning property-lines, political jurisdictions, and habitat typologies. This collaborative approach speaks to the real challenges of resilience planning around the San Francisco Bay shoreline which is a mix of public and private lands with various (past and existing) uses. Sea level rise will eventually compel shoreline landowners and operators to take action (individual, collaborative, or retreat). WCWD hopes to demonstrate that the collaborative approach offers the most comprehensive and cost-effective solution for sea level rise resilience and adaptation planning, which can be replicated throughout the region.

Additional important long-term impact will come from the future implementation of Phase 1 work, such as protecting wastewater services and transportation facilities from coastal flooding, and providing tangible long-term benefits by ensuring that disadvantaged communities in the adjacent areas can retain sewer services without interruption into the coming decades. The marsh migration capabilities of the Phase 1 work will also promote habitat health of the marsh and support the connected ecosystem benefits to adjacent habitats.

Leveraging resources and partnerships. WCWD has developed strong relationships with community members, tribal organizations, local organizations, and private and public agencies over the course of project planning and development of the 30% design, as indicated by the project letters (Exhibit 3). The Working Group will continue to collaborate to advance the project towards implementation. The effectiveness of this approach is already emerging, as evidenced by the WRDA authorization (see Project Financing section). As part of that process, WCWD will need to provide local matching funds. Continued Authority funding could play a crucial role in supporting that effort.

Economically disadvantaged communities. The flood protection benefits of Phase 1 will maintain WCWD operations in the face of sea level rise in the coming decades and ensure service to multiple economically disadvantaged communities in Richmond, San Pablo, and unincorporated Contra Costa County. The area of Phase 1B design includes nature-based sea

NORTH RICHMOND LIVING LEVEE AND COLLABORATIVE SHORELINE PLAN

level rise protection for a future coastal flooding pathway that is predicted to affect residences and businesses in the North Richmond neighborhood. The lessons learned and the capacity built in the implementation of Phase 1, by local agencies and community members alike, will be applied to the remaining shoreline areas to achieve comprehensive sea level rise resilience, continued ecosystem restoration and improved shoreline access for North Richmond, which ranked as the second most environmentally disadvantaged California census tract in 2021 (CalEnviroScreen 4.0 report, with a score of 91.84 out of 100.) In the FEMA National Risk Index, the North Richmond census tract is rated Very High, landing in the 96th percentile nationwide for risk overall. The project will also benefit North Richmond residents in increasing a collective understanding of sea level rise impacts, enhancing access to nature and improving the Bay Trail.

Benefits to economy. The North Richmond Shoreline is visually spectacular, with nearby Point Pinole Regional Park, Dotson Family Marsh, and the Bay Trail drawing visitors from all over. The proposed project will provide transitional upland habitat and improved public access, boosting tourism and its regional economic benefits. The projects proposed, in the future, will be large construction efforts, resulting in the creation of dozens of jobs for the duration of construction, and up to 10 longer-term jobs associated with post-construction planting, weed management, and post construction monitoring. Without the levee system's potential flood protection benefits, there are massive threats to the economy if neighborhoods and vital infrastructure (pump station, wastewater treatment, local streets and arterials) are damaged or interrupted.

Engage youth and young adults. Urban Tilth and the Watershed Project are two North Richmond non-profit organizations participating in the Working Group and supporting the Collaborative Shoreline Plan. Their existing network of youth programs can help focus the project on environmental education, building on their established stewardship and restoration apprenticeship programs for local young adults in the community. In addition, during the earlier Authority-funded community participation, the project team focused on having multiple generations involved in the co-design process and will continue those efforts if funded for these phases. Finally, the project team has previously and will continue to engage with the Verde School, the only public school in North Richmond. Situated on Wildcat Creek, several of the school's existing programs focus on environmental issues and education. This project can help support the efforts of those parents, teachers and students.

Monitoring, maintenance, and stewardship. At this current phase of design and planning, the project team is more focused on project development and environmental approval process. However, through the community participation process and collaboration with the Working Group, the intent is to bring forward the monitoring, adaptive management and stewardship aspects of the living infrastructure as a means of creating local jobs. Project partners like Urban Tilth and Watershed Project, who already run stewardship programs in the upper areas of the watershed, and county agencies who already support that work, will be continuing their process of establishing green jobs as part of the monitoring and long-term management approach to Phases 1, 1A, and 1B.

Coastal Conservancy's San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program. The proposed project is consistent with the SF Bay Area Conservancy Program's Criteria in that:

NORTH RICHMOND LIVING LEVEE AND COLLABORATIVE SHORELINE PLAN

- a. The project achieves several key objectives in the Conservancy's Strategic Plan through its expansion, restoration, and enhancement of coastal public accessways, biological diversity and natural habitats, community resilience, and resource protection, all promoting sustainable economic development.
- b. The project is a good investment of regional resources as it is feasible, reasonable, and has important leverage and support from both non-state resources and state and federal agencies. It advances statewide goals and is supported by several local and regional plans such as the *City of Richmond General Plan*, the *Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals Update*, the *San Francisco Bay Subtidal Habitat Goals Report*, the *Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan*, *Surviving the Storm*, the *San Francisco Bay Trail Plan* and the *Long-Term Management Strategy for the Placement of Dredged Material in the San Francisco Bay Region*.
- c. The project has and will continue to make serious effort to engage tribes through communicating and consulting with the Confederated Villages of Lisjan to incorporate tribal storytelling, interpretative signage, and ongoing traditional ecological knowledge as key to the development of the living levee.
- d. Project benefits will be sustainable or resilient over the project lifespan and are intended to support the North Richmond community and critical infrastructure in becoming resilient to climate change impacts including sea level rise.
- e. The project will deliver multiple benefits and significant positive impact by being multi-jurisdictional, including unincorporated Contra Costa County and the City of Richmond, with water quality, ecosystem service, and public access benefits to the wider region. The project will benefit one of the most underserved communities in California through workforce development, skill building, civic engagement, volunteer opportunities, all while increasing community resilience to climate impacts.
- f. The project will include meaningful community engagement and broad community support and will build on the community participatory design process with residents and tribal partners around sea-level rise adaptation in North Richmond that began in 2018. Project support comes from many community stakeholders and is well documented, with WCWD having held months of co-visioning process workshops and meetings during Phase 1 of the project. Community based organizations Urban Tilth and The Watershed Project have worked closely with project management for the duration of the project.

San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission's Coastal Management Program. The proposed project is consistent with policies of the BCDC Bay Plan in the following ways:

1. Fish, Other Aquatic Organisms and Wildlife, Policy 3: project will provide a diversity of habitats to enhance opportunities for a variety of native aquatic and terrestrial species.
2. Tidal Marshes and Mudflats, Policy 6: the design of Phase 1 includes 7 acres of tidal marsh restoration and will include the development of a monitoring program for the completed project.
3. Tidal Marshes and Tidal Mudflats, Policy 8: a minor amount of fill material will need to be authorized to create the ecotone slope, and no existing tidal wetlands will be filled for the habitat transition slope.
4. Public Access, Policy 4: the project will seek to avoid or minimize adverse effects on wildlife associated with the placement and upgrades of public access trails.

NORTH RICHMOND LIVING LEVEE AND COLLABORATIVE SHORELINE PLAN

5. Public Access, Policy 13: public access will be enhanced by easier pedestrian and cyclist connections in Phases 1, 1A and 1B.
6. Dredging, Policy 11: the living levee construction will require fill material to be placed along the upper margins of the existing marshlands. This material will need to satisfy the policy's requirements to be approved. WCWD anticipates the use of dredged materials from the Wildcat Creek Sediment Basin to support construction, which is stockpiled within a mile of the project area.

San Francisco Bay Joint Venture's Implementation Strategy. The Phase 1 component of the proposed project is consistent with the SFBJV's Implementation Strategy, particularly in supporting the SFBJV's goals related to habitat protection and restoration. As the SFBJV document indicates "estuarine habitat acreage goals remain the focus of our partnership." The planning for Phase 1 will support this focus by including designs for restoring 7 acres of tidal marsh and 6.6 acres of refugia transition habitat. In addition, the SFBJV's stated "need for connectivity of habitats to restore whole, functional, and intact ecosystems" is reflected in the design concepts for the second component of the project, which includes the goal of reconnecting San Pablo Creek to Wildcat Marsh, establishing a historic landscape pattern in support of fish and fowl species. The project team is in communication with SFBJV leaders to get the project on the Joint Venture project list. Early indications from those conversations are that the project will be eligible and listed.

CONSISTENCY WITH AUTHORITY'S INTERIM TRIBAL CONSULTATION

POLICY: During the earlier Authority funded planning work for the project, the project team engaged with the leaders from Confederated Villages of Lisjan, indigenous to Huchuin, what is now also called the 'East Bay', including Richmond and North Richmond. The project team has been working with them to arrive at a shared understanding of their role as cultural advisors on the project, to provide feedback and help develop interpretive material. The team has conducted shoreline site walks and interviews with tribal members. This process also led to developing designs for three art installations for the project, to honor sites of cultural concern within the concept study area. The narrative for these interpretive features was developed with leadership from Tribal members. As part of the Community Engagement Task for this proposed new scope of work, our project team will continue to engage with leaders from the Confederated Villages of Lisjan, to further incorporate their feedback on design, their perspective on traditional knowledge, and discuss what role the tribe may want to play in the long-term of the project.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

The proposed project is statutorily exempt from the requirement to prepare an environmental document under CEQA and categorically exempt from CEQA under 14 Cal. Code of Regulations Sections 15262 and 15306, as it only involves preparation of feasibility and planning studies for possible future actions that have not yet been approved, adopted or funded, and basic data collection, research and resource evaluation activities that will not result in serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. The planning studies will consider environmental factors. Staff will file a Notice of Exemption upon approval of the proposed project.