

Adapting to Rising Tides



CONTRA COSTA ADAPTING TO RISING TIDES PROJECT WORKING GROUP MEETING #6 Thursday, June 9, 2016

MEETING NOTES

A brief presentation was made on the expected outcomes of the Contra Costa ART project Plan step and to describe the components of an Adaptation Response. Following the presentation, the adaptation responses for nine (9) asset categories were reviewed by working group members in a facilitated open house setting. The nine asset categories were:

- People
- Single and Multi-family Housing
- Industrial Land Uses
- Brownfields
- Stormwater
- Natural Areas
- Regional Parks
- Roadways
- Flood Control Channels

During the open house working group members provided input on the vulnerabilities, actions, implementation processes, leads and partners for individual actions. After the open house a group discussion and debrief was held. Comments during the group discussion included:

- Open house is collaborative and efficient, can focus on what sectors are of interest.
- Would be helpful to make note of which vulnerabilities and actions in different asset categories overlap and are similar, come up with a way to cross-reference, one action may address multiple vulnerabilities.
- If ever taking this on the road to the public it would need simplified information, would be helpful to integrate maps next to policies and shorten information.
- It would be good to frame adaptation actions as not just providing protection against flooding but through the other benefits they also provide.
- Education and engagement of all types of decision makers: community, elected officials, business leaders, is important in order to create and maintain motivation to take action.

Following the open house the working group divided into three subgroups to discuss the project's resilience goals to determine if changes were necessary in light of the project's assessment findings. The key themes discussed by the small groups include suggested changes to the resilience goals as well as general issues regarding the four sustainability frames.

Overarching Comments

- “Project Resilience Goals” makes it sound like there are other non-stated goals. Consider saying just Project Goals or just Resilience Goals
- The resilience goals focus on how to make the current system more resilient ... should also incorporate focus on how to make a more resilient system.
- This has a focus on adaptation/resilience, but should call out the connection between mitigation and resilience/adaptation. Should specify somewhere the need and opportunity to include importance of mitigation/transition to low-carbon economy in addition to building resilience

Governance Goal

- Consider changing “capacity” to a word(s) that reflect having the authority, priority, resources, direction or tenet of operation. Capacity indicates having the information, coordination and training to achieve.
- Consider adding a resilience goal that reflects the assessment findings that regulatory processes need to be changed/aligned/coordinated.
- Capacity to understand that climate change fits into many different types of planning, important to ensure that decisions are cohesive and not made in a silo
- Education and engagement of decision makers, more guidance needed surrounding specific measures and agreements, must be open to change and adaptable
- Resilience should be a priority in the hierarchy of decision making
- Broaden who is involved in the decision making to include members from the community.
- Include the idea of engagement/inclusion of stakeholders to help them help themselves, rather than one-off improvement of their capacity to improve resilience.
- This goal is important since addressing is a first step to help to address all other goals.

Society and Equity Goals

- First goal, consider changing “have what they rely on” to “know what they need and have options to obtain” or just “have safe and healthy housing...”
 - Add “affordable” to safe and healthy housing.
 - Add recreation to the list of what communities need.
 - Change “communities” to “neighborhoods” to reflect the scale at which people live within their communities.
- In the second goal change “those who live” to “all who live”.
- Important to engage community decision making, especially when making funding strategies as they have different impacts on community services
- Important to make information accessible for individuals in the community so that they understand risks, prioritize who is most vulnerable
- Difficulties in translating not only language, but also concepts.
- The first goal has the perspective of working from the outside in, rather than building capacity from the inside ... [words like “ensure”, “build” connote unequal relationship

between actors rather than inclusionary/collaborative sense of working together as co-equals]

- Include the recognition that certain communities will need more resources.

Economy Goals

- Should highlight the importance of Contra Costa energy sector – the refining industry is important to rest of the region and state – which positions Contra Costa to be a leader in transitioning to a distributed low-carbon economy.
- Remove the footnote, it is confusing.

Environment Goals

- Use a more assertive word than “enhance” in order to showcase benefits of certain actions and projects that provide more than flood protection.
- Change to “protect the environment” rather than “environmental value.”
- Delete “and ensuring safe water supplies” and consider adding to what communities need, water quality adequately captures what environmental protection provides.
- Change “cleaning up contaminated lands” to “safely address” since many sites are not cleaned up, rather they are protected in place.
- Add “and appropriate” after “wherever possible” in the second environment goal.
- Add “and restoring” to “preserving habitat”
- In new, innovative types of projects highlight the importance of monitoring and sharing information, need monitoring built in to the plan and a mechanism for sharing results.