COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
February 19, 2026

BAY FARM ISLAND NEAR-TERM SEA LEVEL RISE ADAPTATION PROJECT PLANNING

Project No. 25-045-01
Project Manager: Mark Kalnins

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to $2,640,000 to the City of Alameda to conduct community engagement; to prepare plans, designs, environmental review documents, and permit applications; and to coordinate permitting for the Bay Farm Island Near-Term Sea Level Rise Adaptation Project**,** which consists of a levee, nature-based shoreline protection, and an updated pump station along the northern shoreline of Bay Farm Island, and interim drainage improvements including raising grades along Island Drive, in the City of Alameda.

LOCATION: Bay Farm Island, City of Alameda, Alameda County

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: Project Location Maps

Exhibit 2: Flood Insurance Rate Map Diagram (FEMA)

Exhibit 3: Project Concept Level Site Plan

Exhibit 4: Project Letters

Exhibit 5: Project Site Photos

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution and findings.

Resolution:

The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes a grant of an amount not to exceed two million six hundred forty thousand dollars ($2,640,000) to the City of Alameda (the "grantee") to conduct community engagement; to prepare plans, designs, environmental review documents and permit applications; and to coordinate permitting for Bay Farm Island Near-Term Sea Level Rise Adaptation Project which consists of a levee, nature-based shoreline protection, and an updated pump station along the northern shoreline of Bay Farm Island, and interim drainage improvements including raising grades along Island Drive, in the City of

Alameda. The term "project" refers to conducting community engagement; preparing plans, designs, environmental review documents, and permit applications; and coordinating permitting for the Bay Farm Island Near-Term Sea Level Rise Adaptation Project.

Prior to commencement of the project, the grantee shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy (Executive Officer) the following:

1. A detailed work program, schedule, and budget.
2. Names and qualifications of any contractors to be retained in carrying out the project.
3. A plan for acknowledgement of Conservancy funding and Proposition 68 as the source of that funding.

Findings:

Based on the accompanying staff recommendation and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with Chapter 3 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding the Climate Ready Program.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends the Conservancy authorize a grant of $2,640,000 to City of Alameda ("the City") to conduct community engagement; to prepare plans, designs, environmental review documents and permit applications; and to coordinate permitting for the Bay Farm Island Near-Term Sea Level Rise Adaptation Project, which consists of a levee, nature-based shoreline protection, and an updated pump station along the northern shoreline of Bay Farm Island (BFI), and interim drainage improvements including raising grades along Island Drive, in the City of Alameda (See Exhibit 1 for location). The term "project" refers to conducting community engagement; preparing plans, designs, environmental review documents, and permit applications; and coordinating permitting for the Bay Farm Island Near-Term Sea Level Rise Adaptation Project.

The current coastal flood risk for BFI is characterized and regulated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) via Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs). The FIRMs encompassing the proposed project area show a significant special flood hazard area throughout several parts of BFI (See Exhibit 2 for insurance rate maps). This area is hydrologically connected to the San Francisco Bay ("the Bay") and is lower in elevation than the 1% annual chance flood level (100-year flood). To remove BFI from the floodplain, this flood hazard area must be elevated above the designated water level or disconnected from the Bay by an engineered feature that is designed to address the elevation deficiencies as well as settlement, seismic risk, seepage and slope protection. The funding will advance the Bay Farm Island Near-Term Sea Level Rise Adaptation Project, which will significantly reduce coastal flood risk along the northern

shoreline of BFI, enabling the area to be removed from the FEMA floodplain, and will address an interim level of sea level rise, as discussed below.

Other flood-prone portions of BFI cannot be addressed at this time but will be adapted over time through coordinated planning with other agencies. Concurrent planning for flood risk management and sea level rise adaptation along Doolittle Drive (the "Doolittle Drive project") led by Caltrans and the Port of Oakland ("the Port") is not part of this project, but the City is coordinating with Caltrans and the Port to ensure that the two projects are complementary and eventually address a larger portion of BFI's flood-prone areas (Exhibit 1, Figure 2).

The project and the Doolittle Drive project are both near-term adaptation solutions being undertaken by the City and the Port, respectively, in consultation with Caltrans. As part of the Oakland Alameda Adaptation Committee (OAAC), the City of Alameda, City of Oakland, and the Port are working collaboratively to prepare Shoreline Adaptation Plans for the long-term planning to be consistent with the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission's Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan Guidelines, as required by Senate Bill 272. OOAC is a collaborative effort between the cities of Oakland and Alameda, the Port, Caltrans, East Bay Regional Park District, East Bay Municipal Utility District, community-based organizations (CBOs), Tribal partners and others.

This project consists of conducting planning activities for the Bay Farm Island Near-Term Sea Level Rise Adaptation Project along BFI's northern shoreline at elevation 14 feet, which will address current flood risk and provide 2 feet of sea level rise protection and another 2 feet of freeboard to cover uncertainties. In a future phase, the City anticipates completion of long-term adaptation projects that would build on the near-term projects and would protect to elevation 17 feet accounting for 5 feet of sea level rise. The project also consists of planning for an interim flood protection project element along Island Drive to disconnect Doolittle Drive flooding from the BFI Lagoon since the Doolittle Drive adaptation project is expected to be completed at a later time.

The project components include planning activities for (Exhibit 3, Project Concept Level Site Plan):

- A levee between the BFI Lagoon Outfall area and Veterans Court;
- A new consolidated, upgraded northern pump station and outfall of the Lagoon;
- Nature-based features along the entire northern shoreline from Seaview Park to the Doolittle Landfill;
- Public space improvements along the levee including an enhanced San Francisco Bay Trail, seating, scenic viewpoints including above outfall, water access, educational and multi-sensory signage and native vegetation; and
- Island Drive elevated grade between Robert Davey Jr. Drive and Clubhouse Road.

To date, the City has completed 30% design and conducted a comprehensive community engagement process in conjunction with earlier planning phases of the Bay Farm Island Near-Term Sea Level Rise Adaptation Project. This project will continue planning completed during these earlier phases and advance design from 30% to 60%, complete the California

Environmental Quality Act/National Environmental Protection Act (CEQA/NEPA) documentation, coordinate permitting, and conduct additional community engagement.

The project includes significant community and stakeholder engagement, which will build on previous outreach efforts and include one round of outreach as well as ongoing engagement throughout the two-year project duration. Key community engagement components include webpage updates, stakeholder surveys, distribution of project information, consultations with BFI homeowners associations and tribal partners, and in-person outreach involving walking tours/experiential events and tabling at events.

Site Description: The project area (Exhibit 1, Project Location) is located within the northwest portion of BFI, which is ringed by the San Francisco Bay, the San Leandro Channel and the Oakland International Airport. Proposed improvements are located along BFI's northern shoreline between Sea View Park and Bay Farm Island Bridge/Doolittle Landfill, and along Island Drive within the center of BFI, between Robert Davey Jr. Drive and Clubhouse Road. Photos showing current site conditions are provided in Exhibit 4. The topography of the project area is generally 20 feet below sea level and is relatively flat, a result of the filling of historic tidal marsh with dredged sediment to construct BFI's peninsula. The shoreline of BFI consists of a variety of erosion protection structures, including rock-protected embankments and vertical bulkheads and floodwalls, present at the Veteran's Court portion of the project area, and eroding earthen fill material along the northern shoreline portion of the project area. Low shoreline elevations at the northern lagoon pump station and Veterans Court within the project area are subject to coastal flooding. Island Drive transits the center of BFI, and includes road segments situated at lower elevations that are subject to stormwater and groundwater flooding.

Grant Applicant Qualifications: Currently, the City is managing 34 grants totaling over $12 million. The City has recently managed multiple projects totaling $7 million (Clement Avenue), $23 million (Central Avenue), and $13 million (Clement Avenue/Tilden Way). In 2024, former U.S. Congresswoman Barbara Lee presented the City's Clement Avenue project with a special congressional recognition.

As described above, the City has been leading and coordinating regional partners in OAAC, a multi-jurisdictional effort to address flood risks. This project is being planned in coordination with the OAAC and in tandem with long-term solutions that are being developed as part of the Alameda Shoreline Adaptation Plan.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA:

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria, last updated on September 23, 2021, in the following respects:

Selection Criteria

1. **Extent to which the project helps the Conservancy accomplish the objectives in the Strategic Plan.**

See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Strategic Plan" section below.

2. Project is a good investment of state resources.

The proposed project includes planning and design to address current flood risk and the increased coastal, stormwater, and groundwater flooding related to two feet of sea level rise projected over the coming decades. It includes both engineered and natural solutions to address flood risk, coastal erosion, and habitat degradation. Along with the coastal protection benefits, the project includes planning for open space and access improvements including gathering spaces, signage and education.

The proposed project will build from previous phases of the Bay Farm Island Near-Term Sea Level Rise Adaptation Project that have been completed since its inception in 2021. Phase 1 of the Bay Farm Island Near-Term Sea Level Rise Adaptation Project developed a design concept to 30 percent design and included a comprehensive community engagement process. Phase 1 was funded with FEMA community project funding. Phase 2 of the Bay Farm Island Near-Term Sea Level Rise Adaptation Project is in process and is initiating regulatory agency review and completing surveys and geotechnical studies to inform the next phase of design and environmental documentation, which is the purpose of the currently proposed grant authorization. Phase 2 is paid for by Alameda General Fund.

The project budget is reasonable and based upon projects with similar activities and complexity. Further, the project leverages non state resources including partnerships and City resources, plans for state-of-the science approaches to sea level rise adaptation, and includes significant engagement and outreach to regulatory agency and community partners.

3. Project includes a serious effort to engage tribes. Examples of tribal engagement include good faith, documented efforts to work with tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated to the project area.

Since 2021, the Confederated Villages of Lisjan Nation/Sogorea Te' Land Trust (Sogorea Te') has been an active participant in sea level rise adaptation efforts, including the interrelated OOAC BFI Adaptation Project, from Fall 2023 to February 2025. Sogorea Te' was one of the paid CBOs that led community engagement efforts. Furthermore, Sogorea Te' representatives spoke at an OAAC meeting on the history of Native American tribal activity in the area and they also produced a video that explains the island's history. In July 2024, the City conducted a tribal consultation process involving all the registered tribal representatives in the area, which totaled 27 tribal representatives. The City notified tribal representatives on the Native American Heritage Commission list of the opportunity for consultation and later consulted with Sogorea Te' and the Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe. The project team will continue to build relationships with local tribal partners, which could include tribal consultations, and compensating tribal partners for providing input on designs, particularly related to native plants and a shoreline walking tour.

4. Project benefits will be sustainable or resilient over the project lifespan.

The project consists of plans to reconfigure the levee and Bay Trail along BFI's northern shoreline at elevation 14 feet, which will provide 2 feet of sea level rise protection and another 2 feet of freeboard to cover uncertainties. The proposed project plans near-term adaptation strategies that will address erosion and coastal flooding risk through 2060. These strategies

include maintenance and monitoring of the levee, pump station, and marsh area, which is expected to consist of routine visual inspections, mechanical/electrical checks, data analysis, evaluations and repairs from erosion. Natural features proposed as part of the design would achieve project goals by limiting further erosion of the existing marsh edge along the site, building on natural analogues (coarse beaches, sediment retention features, rocky intertidal habitats) and successful restoration sites from elsewhere within the Bay. These features would be placed in front of the existing shoreline to create a more complex series of elevations, wave exposures, offshore slopes, surface runoff catchments, and wave shadows than exist currently. The added elevation from the berm of beaches placed in front of the existing erosive marsh edges would also act to buffer the effect of wind-waves during storm events, and to limit the flood elevation from combined high tides, storm surge, and wave run-up along the updated levees behind the shoreline edge.

The project site involves mostly coarse-grained beaches, which occur naturally in the Bay, provide habitat value, and can adapt to storm conditions to protect back-barrier habitats including marshes. The project team reached out to the Invasive Spartina Project (ISP) team in May of 2024 to get advice on how to avoid spreading invasive spartina or hybrids in the marshes and to better understand the current status of ISP treatment efforts nearby in San Leandro Bay. The team will continue to coordinate with the ISP team as the project advances.

The City has identified potential implementation funding and has a strategy for obtaining necessary approvals. Bay Farm Island Near-term Sea Level Rise Adaptation Project benefits would generally outweigh costs, as determined by a preliminary benefit costs analysis conducted by the City to secure FEMA grant funding, and the City believes that it would be justified because flood protection ranks as the highest community concern in the City of Alameda, which is expected to result in residents' willingness to help pay for project implementation in the future.

5. Project delivers multiple benefits and significant positive impact.

The project includes producing plans and designs that have community buy-in and include significant flood risk reduction, habitat enhancement, and public space improvement.

When implemented, the proposed plans will remove BFI from the FEMA floodplain while preserving and enhancing the shoreline public open space and public open space, which is an important public amenity that is heavily used by local bicyclists and pedestrians. Shoreline adaptation plans will include San Francisco Bay Trail improvements, increased ecological diversity, and additional social and educational spaces for the public's benefit. Through improving the ecology by protecting tidal marshes and adding beaches and rocky intertidal habitats, and adding seating areas, overlooks, and educational signage, the BFI shoreline can become a place of enhanced social, recreational and educational engagement.

6. Project planned with meaningful community engagement and broad community support.

In 2021, the City of Alameda co-created the OOAC, a coalition of shoreline communities and stakeholders working to accelerate sea level rise adaptation, protect and restore water quality, habitat and recreation and promote community resilience in the Oakland-Alameda subregion. OAAC includes a diverse set of stakeholders with varied viewpoints on the planning project

team as shown in the below organizational structure and support letters (See Exhibit 4 for Project Letters). The project's community and stakeholder engagement will build on existing outreach efforts and include one round of outreach as well as ongoing community engagement throughout the two-year project duration.

The OAAC coordination is managed by the OAAC Working Group, including a broad group of state, regional and city representatives, CBOs and advisors comprised of more than 60 regular meeting attendees spanning a diverse range of sectors. Four paid CBOs, Community Action for a Sustainable Alameda, Greenbelt Alliance, Hood Planning Group, and Sogorea Te' are leading the community engagement for this and other OAAC projects to ensure a strong link exists between community members and the plan, facilitating an inclusive and equitable process and results.

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy	**$2,640,000.00**
Project Total	**$2,640,000.00**

Conservancy funds are anticipated to come from FY 2018/19, FY 2020/21, and FY 2023/24 appropriations to the Conservancy from the "California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018" (Prop 68, Public Resources Code (PRC) Division 46, Chapters 1-13, Sections 80000-80173). In particular, Chapter 10 of Prop 68 allocates funds to the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program for projects to improve a community's ability to adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change; improve and protect coastal and rural economies, agricultural viability, wildlife corridors, or habitat; develop future recreational opportunities; or enhance drought tolerance, landscape resilience, and water retention (PRC sections 80130 and 80133(b)).

The project is within the San Francisco Bay Area Program and will be undertaken pursuant to the Climate Ready Program established in Chapter 3 of the Conservancy's enabling legislation at Division 21 of the Public Resources Code (PRC section 31113). The project purpose is to plan to address shoreline overtopping by floodwaters at Veterans Court and along the northern waterfront, including use of nature-based solutions for shoreline protection, to improve floodwater detention in the lagoon, to reduce nuisance flooding along Island Drive, and to engage with landowners and the community in the planning, design, and permitting phases of the project on Bay Farm Island in the City of Alameda, California.

The proposed project was selected through a competitive grant process under the Conservancy's "Proposition 68 Guidelines San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program - Climate Adaptation Funds" adopted August 22, 2019. The proposed project meets the evaluation criteria in the Proposition 68 Guidelines as described in detail in this section, the "Project Summary" section above, and in the "Consistency with Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria" section above.

Additionally, funds are anticipated to come from FY 2023-2024 appropriations to the Conservancy from Chapter 9 of Prop 68. Specifically, section 80120(c) allocates funds for

"protection of beaches, bays, wetlands, and coastal watershed resources" in accordance with Division 21 as described below. Under section 80002(l), the term "protection" includes actions necessary to prevent harm, actions to improve public access, and actions to allow the continued use and enjoyment of property and natural, cultural and historic resources. Funds allocated by Prop 68 may be expended for planning and design projects (Pub. Res. Code § 80006). The proposed project will design plans for a project that will protect coastal resources in accordance with section 80120(c).

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

Section 31113 of Chapter 3 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code authorizes the Conservancy to address the impacts and potential impacts of climate change on resources within the Conservancy's jurisdiction (Section 31113(a)). The recommended project will address resources within the Conservancy's jurisdiction because it will be undertaken within the Alameda County, one of the nine counties of the San Francisco Bay Area (Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code).

Section 31113(b) authorizes the Conservancy to award grants to nonprofit organizations and public agencies to undertake projects that include reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and addressing extreme weather events, sea level rise, flooding, and other coastal hazards that threaten coastal communities, infrastructure, and natural resources. Consistent with this section, the recommended project will plan to raise key shoreline locations along BFI's northern shoreline at elevation 14 feet, which provides 2 feet of sea level rise protection and another 2 feet of freeboard to cover uncertainties.

Section 31113(c) states that the Conservancy must prioritize grants for projects that maximize public benefits and have one of several purposes, including reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, preserving and enhancing natural lands, conserving biodiversity, and providing recreational opportunities. Consistent with this section, the recommended project incorporates community and stakeholder input into the 60% design and preliminary design report; addresses coastal erosion to protect the existing fringe marsh habitats; uses nature-based solutions to expand the existing marsh to create a more resilient, regenerative condition; improves stormwater conveyance through the drainage area; reduces groundwater-induced flooding due to higher elevations at Veterans Court and the replaced tide gate system; and, enhances the bay shoreline public open space and public access to the shoreline including the San Francisco Bay Trail, ecological diversity, public gathering spaces with seating, overlooks and educational signage.

Section 31113(d) states that the Conservancy shall prioritize projects that (A) use natural infrastructure, (B) provide multiple public benefits, and (C) give consideration to projects in a variety of ecosystems. Consistent with this section, the recommended project includes planning for the Bay Farm Island Near-Term Sea Level Rise Adaptation Project, which will create 4.8 acres of flood protection levee and public access open space, incorporate nature-based solutions for protecting the BFI northern shoreline, reduce flooding in 32 acre lagoon system comprising three bodies of water joined together by culverts under access roads, and provide designs and permitting for approximately 1 acre of new tidal marsh and 1 mile of San Francisco Bay Trail/Island Drive path.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S 2023-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN:

Consistent with **Goal 2.4, Build Trails,** the proposed project will provide planning, design and permitting to enhance the bay public access to the shoreline including 1 mile of San Francisco Bay Trail/Island Drive path.

Consistent with **Goal 2.5, Recreation Facilities & Amenities,** the proposed project will provide planning, design and permitting to enhance the bay shoreline open space including public gathering spaces with seating, overlooks and educational signage.

Consistent with **Goal 4.1, Sea Level Rise Adaptation Projects,** the proposed project will provide planning, design and permitting to increase the resiliency of the natural and built environments to the impacts of sea level rise by providing 2 feet of sea level rise protection and another 2 feet of freeboard to cover uncertainties, while addressing current flood risk.

CEQA COMPLIANCE:

The proposed project is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15262 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) because the project involves only feasibility or planning studies for possible future actions that have not yet been approved or funded, and it will include consideration of environmental factors. The project is also categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15306 of Title 14 of the CCR because the project involves basic data collection, research, experimental management, or resource evaluation activities that will not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource.

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