



**South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Study, Phase I**  
**Draft Integrated Feasibility Study and Environmental Impact Statement/Report**  
**January 14, 2015 Public Meeting**  
George Mayne Elementary School  
5030 N. 1st St., Alviso, San José

**Meeting Summary**

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**Background:** South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Study partners – the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Santa Clara Valley Water District, and the California State Coastal Conservancy – held a public meeting to provide information and take public comment on the South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Study Phase 1 Draft Integrated Feasibility Study and Environmental Impact Statement/Report.

**To view or download** the Draft Document:

- <http://www.valleywater.org/PublicReviewDocuments.aspx>
- <http://www.spn.usace.army.mil/Library/FreedomofInformationAct/FOIAHotTopics.aspx>
- Hard copies are available at the Alviso Library at 5050 N. First St., San Jose - [map link](#); the Milpitas Public Library at 160 N. Main St., Milpitas - [map link](#); or the Santa Clara Valley Water District at 5700 Almaden Expressway, San Jose - [map link](#).

**To provide input** on the Draft Document:

Send an e-mail to [ShorelineEnvironment@ArmyCorps.army.mil](mailto:ShorelineEnvironment@ArmyCorps.army.mil) or submit a letter to Bill DeJager, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1455 Market St., San Francisco, CA 94103.

**Deadline: 5 p.m. February 23, 2015\***

**To learn more**, visit the South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Study website at

<http://www.southbayshoreline.org/index.html> or

**Contact:**

- Caleb Conn, Army Corps, at [caleb.b.conn@ArmyCorps.army.mil](mailto:caleb.b.conn@ArmyCorps.army.mil) or (415) 503-6849
- Rachele Blank, SCVWD, at [rblank@valleywater.org](mailto:rblank@valleywater.org) or (408) 630-2632
- Brenda Buxton, State Coastal Conservancy, at [bbuxton@scc.ca.gov](mailto:bbuxton@scc.ca.gov) or (510) 286-0753

Para obtener información en español, por favor comuníquese con José Villarreal al (408) 630-2879.

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\* The deadline to comment has been [extended](#) from February 2 to **February 23**

### **Meeting Materials:**

At the meeting, the meeting agenda, a South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Study pamphlet, a comment sheet, and a timeline for the Alviso project were available. Additionally, meeting participants could view informational posters and copies of the Draft Integrated Feasibility Study and Environmental Impact Statement/Report.

### **Attachments:**

- Attachment 1 – List of Meeting Participants
- Attachment 2 – Public Input via Comment Sheets on the Shoreline Study Draft Integrated Feasibility Study and Environmental Impact Statement/Report.

### **Meeting Summary:**

#### ***1. Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review***

Melanie Richardson, Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD), welcomed participants and introduced staff working on the South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Study (Shoreline Study) as well as several elected officials, including SCVWD District 3 Director Richard Santos. Mr. Santos emphasized the need to avoid a future disaster like the levees failing against Hurricane Katrina. He said this meeting is an opportunity for the public to provide their feedback on the Draft Document and help develop a project that provides economic, social, and environmental benefits. Ariel Ambruster, facilitator with the Center for Collaborative Policy, reviewed the meeting's agenda.

#### ***2. Presentation and Q&A on Draft Integrated Feasibility Study and Environmental Impact Statement/Report***

Brenda Buxton, State Coastal Conservancy (SCC), presented the overarching goals of the Shoreline Study and an overview of the alternatives in the Draft Integrated Feasibility Study and Environmental Impact Statement/Report (Draft Document). She also introduced Rechelle Blank of SCVWD and Caleb Conn of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps), representing the other Shoreline Study partners, who helped answer questions.

### **Background**

The Shoreline Study and Draft Document are part of the larger goal of restoring San Francisco Bay wetlands to regain the multiple benefits that they used to provide (e.g., flood protection and wildlife habitat). The Shoreline Study aims to reduce tidal flood threats, restore and enhance tidal marsh and related habitat, and provide opportunities for recreational and public access along the Bay shoreline.

The Shoreline Study partners conducted an extensive technical analysis to identify and recommend flood risk management and ecosystem restoration projects along the Bay. Based on flood modeling and economic analyses, the Shoreline Study partners decided to divide the Bay shoreline into economic impact areas. They identified Alviso as the highest priority due to major subsidence and high flood risks.

Flooding is a major concern for Alviso residents, businesses, and critical infrastructure such as the San José-Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP), recently renamed the San José-Santa Clara Regional Wastewater Facility. The Coyote Creek and Guadalupe River projects helped reduce threats to Alviso from stream flooding. However, Alviso is still at risk from coastal/tidal flooding, especially as the sea level rises. The current levees around the salt ponds were never created to withstand tidal flooding, and therefore the Federal Emergency Management Agency designated the area as a flood hazard zone.

The acquisition of the Cargill salt ponds provided an opportunity for projects like the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project and the Shoreline Study to use a holistic and adaptive approach to address coastal flood risks to Alviso.

### **Overview of Draft Document Alternatives**

The project area includes Ponds A9-A15, owned by the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, and Pond A18, owned by the City of San José.

The alternatives include a No Action alternative as well as four different levee configurations and environmental restoration actions:

- **Alternative 1** – No Action
- **Alternative 2** – Build a 13.5-foot-high levee along the Alviso North and WPCP South alignments, restore Ponds A9-15 and Pond A18, and build a small buffer area (“bench”)
- **Alternative 3** – Similar to Alternative 2, but higher levee and larger buffer area: Build a 15.2-foot-high levee along the Alviso North and WPCP South alignments, restore Ponds A9-15 and Pond A18, and build a large transitional habitat (“ecotone”) with fill at a 30-to-1 slope
- **Alternative 4** – Build a 15.2-foot-high levee along the Alviso Railroad Spur and WPCP South alignments, restore Ponds A9-15 and Pond A18, and build a bench buffer
- **Alternative 5** – Build a 15.2-foot-high levee along the Alviso South and WPCP South alignments, restore Ponds A9-15 and Pond A18, and build a bench buffer

Both the 13.5-foot and 15.2-foot levees protect Alviso from the FEMA 100-year flood plain, but Alternative 3, the 15.2-foot-high levee, provides protection for a longer period.

The Army Corps designated Alternative 2 as the National Economic Development (NED) plan because it provides the highest benefits to cost ratio. However, local partners prefer to build levees that will not need enhancements in ten years. Therefore Alternative 3 is the Local Preferred Plan (LPP).

All alternatives include a swing gate where the levee crosses the railroad bridge, a tide gate at Artesian Slough to allow for Water Pollution Control Plant discharge, adaptive management, and connecting gaps in the Bay Trail.

Placing the levee in the Refuge's New Chicago Marsh area posed difficulties. Looking down at a map, a person might think that a levee built inland of New Chicago Marsh would provide more opportunities to restore it. However, the marsh is deeply subsided and would become a deep pond as waters flooded into it. By flooding this marsh, the area would lose nearly all the current endangered species habitat until new marsh evolves out in the ponds. Therefore, Shoreline Study partners decided to keep the marsh as it is and build the levee along its Bay edge.

The "ecotone" is essentially a large vegetated dirt slope on the bayside of the levee that provides upland refuge for marsh animals and a greater buffer against tidal flooding and sea level rise. However, the ecotone requires a lot of fill material, which greatly increases its construction costs.

The draft plan also incorporates changes to trails: trails will decrease in miles, but will have better connectivity. The loop trail around Ponds A9-15 will be interrupted when those ponds are opened to the Bay. However, the Draft Document proposes trail connections at Pond A8 and Coyote Creek to complete the Bay Trail and converting construction haul routes into trails. Additionally, the Draft Document proposes creating a paved inland trail for cyclists.

The total cost for the Locally Preferred Plan, including restoration and recreation plans for Refuge ponds, will be approximately \$141.29 million.

**Questions/Comments:**

Q: How will the proposed raised levee affect my view of the Calaveras hills from my home near Michigan and Spreckles?

A: It is hard to estimate the exact impact; Chapter 4.11 of the Draft Document contains several visual simulations, including a view of the proposed levee from Spreckles Ave. To offer some height relationships, the proposed levee will be 5 feet taller than the existing levee, and the existing Guadalupe and Coyote Creek levees are almost 1 foot taller than the proposed levee (16 feet compared to the proposed 15.2 feet).

Q: How will the width of the proposed levee change?

A: The width at the top (15-16 feet) will likely remain the same. The width of the base will be 100 feet.

**3. Shoreline Study Next Steps and Timeline**

Major Adam Czekanski of the Army Corps reviewed the next steps and general timeline for the Integrated Feasibility Study and Environmental Impact Statement/Report. He emphasized that the process over the next year involves significant coordination among the Shoreline Study partners, the public, resource agencies, and Army Corps headquarters.

Next Steps for the Document:

- The opportunity for the public to review and provide comments on the draft document will end ~~Feb. 2, 2015~~ Feb. 23, 2015.\*
- August 2015: Final document will be available.
- September 2015: the San Francisco District Army Corps will submit the final document to Army Corps headquarters.
- November to December 2015: the Army Corps Chief of Engineers signs off on the document and recommended to Congress.
- January 2016: The final report goes before Congress to consider authorizing the new construction project.

After Congress authorizes the project, Congress will need to appropriate federal funds for construction. Detailed construction-level designs would then be developed, with construction potentially beginning in 2017.

**Questions/Comments:**

Q: How many opportunities are there for the public to contribute their input on the document and the project?

A: This public meeting is one opportunity to provide comments on the Draft Document; you can submit written comments until ~~February 2~~ February 23. You will also have an opportunity to comment on the final document, which we expect will be released in August 2015 [the final document, however, will be final, and no further revisions will be made to the document after its release]. When funding becomes available to complete the project’s detailed designs, the Army Corps, SCVWD and the Conservancy will work with local agencies and the community. Once the final document goes to Congress for authorization, the Army Corps cannot lobby its position, but members of the public can engage their congressional representatives. During the entire process, the project partners can host as many informational meetings/workshops to discuss the project details as deemed necessary.

Q: What methods can the public use to comment on the document, and in what form will the responses be?

A: The public can submit their written comments on the Draft Document at this public meeting, and they have until 5 p.m. ~~February 2, 2015~~ February 23, 2015 to submit written comments by conventional mail or e-mail (no web-based submission is available). Formal responses to all submitted written comments on the Draft Document will be included in the final document.

Comment: Please directly engage the Santa Clara Unified School District during future public outreach regarding this project. School District members can help make sure students, parents, and the larger community know about these meetings. This project needs to engage the public more diligently. The February due date for comments is only a few weeks away, and several stakeholders (such as the School District) are likely unaware of the project.

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\* The deadline to comment has been [extended](#) from February 2 to **February 23**

Response: We did mail flyers to more than 3000 Alviso residents and businesses within the project limits, emailed approximately 1700 members who have participated in other collaborative meetings and the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project, and reached out to governmental agencies. We apologize for missing the School District, but will gladly add the contact information to our outreach list.

Q: I was recently appointed to the San José City Council for Alviso and Berryessa and am therefore unfamiliar with this project. Is the City of San José's professional administration actively involved in this project planning process?

A: Yes. SCVWD staff will also gladly work with you to bring you up to speed on this project.

Q: How can non-English speakers learn about this project?

A: The mailed flyers included wording in Spanish and provided instructions for obtaining translated material. Tonight's handouts also list the contact information for obtaining project information in Spanish.

Q: Will the PowerPoint presentation be available online?

A: Yes, at [www.southbayshoreline.org](http://www.southbayshoreline.org), and the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project website ([southbayrestoration.org](http://southbayrestoration.org)) will have a link to the Shoreline Study website.

Q: We are noticing the marshland water levels are higher now, and water has even encroached onto properties on State Street. Does this project address the water currently affecting the community?

A: Although the encroaching waters came from New Chicago Marsh, the source was from rainwater, not tidal flows. The Army Corps's Shoreline Study focuses on preventing tidal flooding. The several rain events in December led to rainwater from San José city areas flowing into New Chicago Marsh flooding Alviso properties. The US Fish and Wildlife Service is working with the City of San José to address this internal drainage problem, but this study we are talking about tonight only addresses water coming from the Bay.

Q: Are you working with the City of San José to improve the drainage system? Why was a pump removed? How are you going to help Alviso residents deal with the near term and immediate flood risks?

A: We are from the Santa Clara Valley Water District, and any pump removal actions were conducted by the City of San José. However, SCVWD works closely with the City of San José. The City just rolled out a potential plan to address the internal drainage issue by looking at a new pump configuration. The City set aside a \$9 million budget to address this issue. SCVWD and the City will be working closely with the community as the City develops the new pump configuration project. We will have to look at both internal and external drainage to solve Alviso's flooding problem. However, internal drainage issue is a separate topic than the purpose of this meeting. We want to focus on the tidal flooding issue at this meeting and provide comments to the Army Corps so that it can proceed forward with the Shoreline Study project. We can update you on the pump station plans in a separate conversation.

Q: If the area has been dry with little rain, why did the recent storms lead to flooding? We did not have this problem before with just a few storms causing so much flooding.

A: Several factors can contribute to this. One reason is that the ground dries up during droughts, causing the ground to be too hard to readily soak up all the water during large storm events. Instead, the water runs off the hard surface more quickly. If we received the rain more steadily, the ground would have been able to absorb all the water better.

Q: Will you be acquiring more land as a sanctuary for birds?

A: No, the Shoreline Study does not call for land acquisition. The Refuge already owns the land managed for shorebirds.

Comment: I am concerned how the smell may worsen once construction begins stirring up marsh material. The smell is already bad out here, and poorer air conditions may affect kids at the school near the project site.

#### ***4. Stakeholder Input, Questions, & Dialogue on Draft Plan and Environmental Impacts***

At this time, Shoreline Study partner representatives met with meeting participants individually at three stations, one on the proposed levee alignments, one on habitat restoration, and a third on recreation trails. Each station provided comment sheets, as well as project information through maps and/or posters. At each station, attendees could ask questions and provide comments on the Draft Document. A fourth station was convened to continue the conversation with residents concerned about the stormwater flooding issue and help them identify further resources and contacts.

Comments received at the station are shown in Attachment 2 below.

**Attachment 1:  
 South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Study, Phase I  
 Draft Integrated Feasibility Study and Environmental Impact Statement/Report  
 January 14, 2015 Public Meeting Attendance**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
D Alcorn	
Esther Alday	
Ariel Ambruster	CCP
Whitney Berry	City of San José
Winifred Bird	
Rechelle Blank	SCVWD
John Bourgeois	SCC
Allen Brown	
Leslie Bulbuk	
Max Busnardo	HT Harvey and Associates
Brenda Buxton	SCC
Norma Camacho	SCVWD
Caleb Conn	USACE
Craig Conner	USACE
Adam Czekanski	USACE
Joyce Donahoe	
Mike Donahoe	
Dawn Edwards	
Chris Elias	
Daniel Espinoza	
Joel Espinoza	
Mark Espinoza	
Rene Eyerly	City of San José
Gabrielle Feldman	
Vince Geronimo	AECOM
Stephanie Green	City of San José
Bob Gross	
David Halsing	URS
David Hernandez	
Stephanie Horii	CCP
Shani Kleinhaus	SCVAS
Matt Krupp	City of Palo Alto
Beverly Laine	
Tom Laine	
Matt Leddy	
Bea Leija	



Jenmen Lo	
Pat Mapelli	Cargill
Margie Matthews	
Eileen McLaughlin	CCCR
Dorsey Moor	
Stacy Moskal	USGS
James Munson	US EPA
Rajani Nair	City of San José
Roger Narsim	SCVWD
Ruben Orozco	
Craig Parada	
Gail Raabe	
Melanie Richardson	SCVWD
Richard Santos	SCVWD
Rolane Santos	
Tony Santos	
Brian Schmidt	
Clysta Seney	
Howard Shellhammer	Individual
Dylan Simon	City of San José
Charles Taylor	
Melody Tovar	City of Sunnyvale
George Trevino	
David Wang	PRFC
Raymond Wong	
Yves Zsutty	City of San José

## **Attachment 2**

### **Public Input via Comment Sheets on the Draft Integrated Feasibility Study and Environmental Impact Statement/Report**

- Concern – Older adults and children falling into land-ward side of levee – like case of older – at risk gentleman who fell in and drowned (you can google that) a few years ago. Also visual impact aesthetics should be better for residents. Really like the new trail to Dixon Landing Area.
  - Name/Organization: Bea Leija
  
- We endorse Alternative 3
  - Name/Organization: Tony Santos