

# Countywide Water Coordination Committee

## MINUTES MEETING OF OCTOBER 19, 2018

Vice Chair Yarbrough-Gauthier called the meeting to order at 7:38 am at the San Mateo City Hall. Chair Pine joined the meeting directly and chaired the meeting.

Attendance sheet is attached.

### **1. Public Comments on items not on the agenda.**

None.

### **2. Approval of minutes from the Sept 21, 2018 meeting.**

*Motion: Member Papan moved to approve the Sept 21, 2018 minutes as presented; Seconded by Member Yarbrough-Gauthier; Motion carried unanimously.*

### **3. Receive update on the progress of Staff Advisory Team (SAT) and provide input on draft agency “Supposal.”**

Chair Patterson and Executive Team Member Porter of the Staff Advisory Team (SAT) provided an overview of the draft “Supposal” for a new agency. The Supposal identifies the existing Flood Control District in San Mateo County as one feasible option for creating a new flood and shoreline protection agency. Several benefits were identified for using the existing Flood Control District as the mechanism to establish a new entity, including the ease of establishment, given the Flood Control District is already formed, and the fact that the entity already has countywide implementation and revenue generating authority. A modified Flood Control District would also have significant crossover between the flood and shoreline protection goals of the new entity and the existing flood control objectives of the current agency, though these objectives, authorities and responsibilities would need to be broadened under a new agency. Furthermore, the new entity would be poised to continue the “building block projects” currently being managed by the County’s Flood Resilience Program, which is due to sunset in June 2019. These are long-term, large-scale and collaborative projects that will require significant management and funding support in the future. An additional benefit of operating the new agency under a modified Flood Control District is that the reserve revenue of the Flood Control District’s subzones could be used to seed fund the new agency’s staffing needs in the initial years. A primary early task of the new agency would, however, be to pursue a tractable long-term funding mechanism to fund staff, and overhead, as well as project design, permitting, construction and maintenance. Finally, broadening the existing Flood Control Agency to embody regional sea level rise, flooding and stormwater issues linked with climate change would potentially better signal to local agencies that this entity will be focused on planning for the realities of a not too distant future, while also taking an incremental approach, and not developing a new unwieldy “climate change organization.”

Committee members engaged in a discussion around key aspects of the Supposal to support near-term outreach to cities and long-term success for the new agency, including:

- Issues of trust and governance under a new Board of Directors for the agency – need to ensure the C/CAG member agencies have a voice at the table, but also avoid issues of quorum and governance of individual projects that may not involve every jurisdiction directly. It was recommended that the C/CAG Water Coordination Committee make recommendations for the new Board (five to seven members) based on geographic representation and level of commitment and expertise, and that there be an application and voting process at the level of the C/CAG Board of Directors.
- Members agreed the “core services” agency would quickly require more than what the County can commit in the first three years of operation, and that a primary task needs to be seeking a reliable funding source early.
- Involving more agencies early on would bring down the cost per agency of supporting core services. This may include inviting external partners like SFO to engage with project-specific MOUs to support additional project build-out as well create more convincing optics with respect to state and federal funds. Additional and significant outreach funding would be required to support a funding initiative.
- The countywide stormwater program could be conceivably enveloped within the new agency; however, this would be a decision on behalf of C/CAG. It was recommended to begin a less complex level of operation, and evaluate program modifications such as this at a later time. It was noted that the existing Flood Control District’s taxing authority currently funds a portion of the countywide stormwater program.
- Sea level rise efforts currently done by the County Office of Sustainability would remain under that group, since the long-term planning goals of that work are better suited there and different from the project-level implementation needed via this agency.
- Discussions about the staffing transition between the current Flood Control District and the new agency are needed. As drafted in the initial staffing plan of the Supposal, only two existing positions within the County’s Flood Resilience Program, however, would carry over directly to the new agency since the Flood Control District roles and responsibilities are currently shared across County Public Works staff. It was agreed the new director of the agency should have oversight of the hiring process for the initial staff.
- Examples from the San Francisquito Creek JPA demonstrate the need for projects to run funding packages with various federal, state, regional and local stakeholders, but also that a new source of local revenue is needed to secure matching funds for grant-funded projects.
- It was recognized that the smaller coastal cities have fewer resources but will likely face the greatest challenges with large-scale infrastructure projects, and that these projects may not directly involve multiple jurisdictions but would benefit all.
- One suggestion for allocating costs would be to have a tiered costing design, where directly benefiting agencies pay at a higher level than indirectly benefiting agencies, perhaps assessed on an annual basis.
- It was recognized that an Enhanced Infrastructure Finance District may be a more convenient/cost-effective long-term funding approach, because there would be less of a burden with establishing the district and it would leverage the growth of existing parcel tax money rather than proposing a new tax.
- Chair Pine recommended a new name for the proposed agency: Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency Agency, emphasizing the need for a forward-looking name including “sea level rise” and honing in on the concept of “resiliency” rather than “protection,” again emphasizing a proactive approach to climate change.

**4. Review and approve alternate date for the Water Coordination Committee meeting scheduled for November 16, 2018, due to holiday schedule.**

Committee members agreed to move the November Water Coordination Committee from November 16, 2018 to November 30, 2018 to accommodate the holiday schedule.

**Member comments and announcements (information item).**

None.

**7. Adjournment.**

Meeting was adjourned at 8:50 AM. Next meeting is scheduled for November 30, 2018.