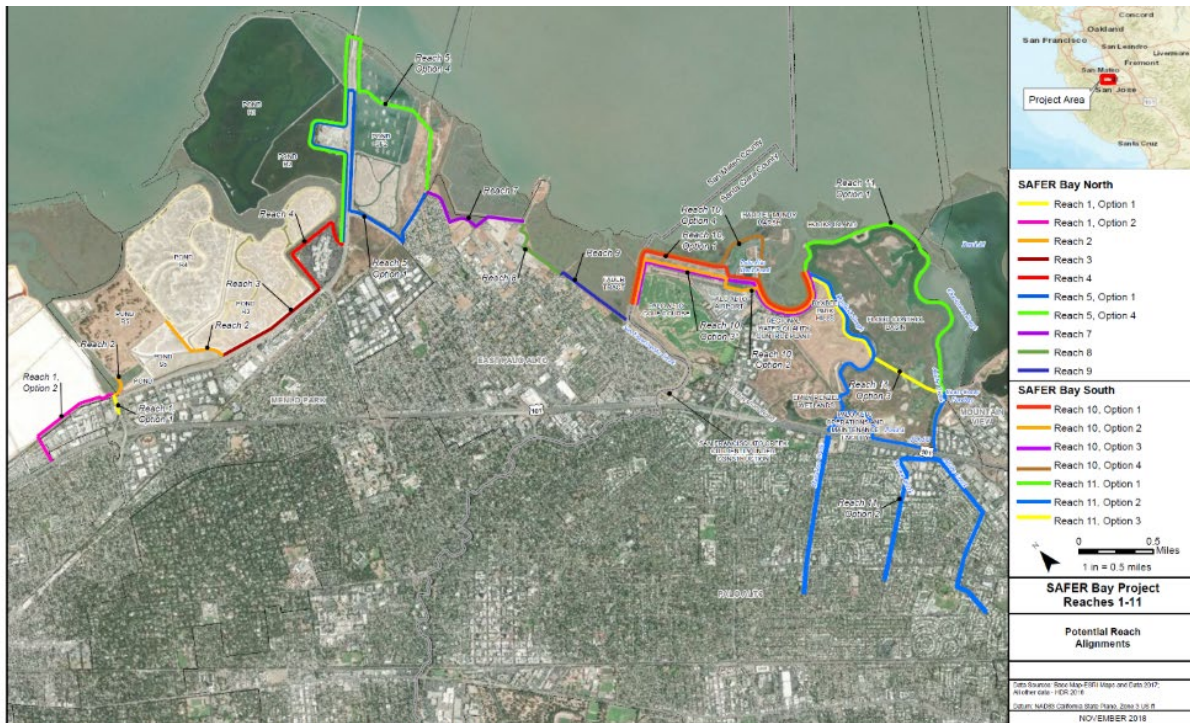


Menlo Park SAFER Bay Project Leveraging Partners

Partners involved in the Menlo Park SAFER Bay Project design are the City of Menlo Park as lead Subapplicant, San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority (SFCJPA) for technical expertise, and Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) and Facebook as funding partners.

The SAFER Bay Project is a regional project from the border of Redwood City to Mountain View, California covering more than 11 miles of Bay shoreline. The project has been divided into 11 reaches or segments as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: SAFER Bay Project Reaches



The SAFER Bay Project has been in development since 2011, with SFCJPA SAFER Bay feasibility study reports in 2016 and 2019 that included funding and other input from more than 15 regional partners. In early 2020, the *Dumbarton Bridge West Approach + Adjacent Communities Resilience Study Technical Report* was published. This report was co-developed by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), with input from many others, including City of Menlo Park, SFCJPA, City of East Palo Alto, Bay Conservation and Development Commission, Bay Area Regional Collaborative (BARC), the California State Coastal Conservancy, and PG&E. Using an enhanced vulnerability assessment, the 2020 study included alternatives development, analysis, and evaluation. The 2020 study and SAFER Bay feasibility

studies together form the basis of the Menlo Park SAFER Bay Project design. The project design has therefore included more than 15 local, regional, state, and federal partners since 2011.

All Menlo Park SAFER Bay Project partners were involved in exploring potential project costs and benefits and, ultimately, selecting a preferred project alternative. Subsequently, all partners participated in consultations with stakeholder agencies that may have future roles providing input during the design, permitting, and construction phases.

PG&E provided technical information on the substation operations and alternatives and data on community impacts to support the Benefit Cost Analysis and funding support for consultant preparation of subapplication materials, as well as extensive stakeholder and community engagement resources. The City of Menlo Park, as sub-applicant, took the lead on final preparation of sub-application materials and data entry for the FEMA GO program and supported the stakeholder outreach. On November 17, 2020, the Menlo Park City Council met to receive an update on the project application, publicly discuss the importance of completing all future levee segments to provide protection to the predominantly lower-income and minority residents of the Belle Haven neighborhood and authorize support for the project.

As the agency responsible for the SAFER Bay feasibility studies, the SFCJPA provided substantial technical expertise regarding the various SAFER Bay segments and has been active in bringing regional awareness to the project and establishing the framework for future discussions with regulatory and permitting agencies. PG&E, the City of Menlo Park, and SFCJPA shared responsibility for procuring letters of support for the project. To ensure all project components were aligned with partner goals and to incorporate review and comments through consultations and stakeholder and community engagement, the partners held weekly, collaborative meetings.

Partner contributions

The SFCJPA will coordinate technical aspects and project elements with its five member agencies. PG&E and Facebook are providing project local match funding, at \$10 million and \$7.8 million, respectively. They will also be critical partners in the design process as they are stakeholders in land adjacent to project segments and each have a keen interest in the immediate and future benefits the project will achieve. The City of Menlo Park and the SFCJPA, with community partners Nuestra Casa and Acterra Climate Resilient Communities, will continue public outreach. PG&E, the SFCJPA, and the City of Menlo Park are committed to working with the NOAA Office for Coastal Management to develop a case study on the project process, implementation, and success.

Other organizations consulted

The project team is a public/private partnership that held project consultations with many other entities throughout the development of the application for advice and assistance. This includes discussions with the Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) and the South Bay Salt Ponds Restoration Project (SBSRP) to make sure the greatest habitat benefits are achieved and to ensure

alignment with regional restoration goals. Partners consulted MTC and Caltrans to discuss how to leverage findings from the *Dumbarton Bridge West Approach + Adjacent Communities Resilience Study Technical Report* (2020). We are also coordinating with local landowners and private developers.

The larger SAFER Bay Project is being implemented in reaches as scope and funding allow. In addition, some reaches, such as Reach 5 at the Dumbarton Bridge and Highway 84 corridor, are more complicated and are being addressed at a sub-reach level. SAFER Bay East Palo Alto is in the design and permitting stage and already includes SAFER Bay Menlo Park at a programmatic level in environmental documents. SAFER Bay Palo Alto evaluations are being incorporated into the South Bay Shoreline Project (SBSP) with local funding from a Santa Clara County parcel tax, with \$17.5 million already committed and more funding available in the future, as well as \$57 million from a State Measure AA Bond grant awarded in 2019.

We consulted with BCDC, which had led a San Francisco Bay regional sea level rise vulnerability assessment. This report, *Adapting to Rising Tides* (2020), identified the SAFER Bay Project area as a regional “hotspot” containing multiple assets with high consequences from flooding related to impacts to communities, infrastructure, and habitats.

Collaboration and leveraging of other programs

The SAFER Bay Project concept arose more than nine years ago as a result of input by local residents. Stakeholder and community engagement have been the cornerstone of the development of the project scope and design. Such engagement has provided opportunities for a range of stakeholders and local community to coordinate with the project team, to discuss ways in which the project area is vulnerable to sea level rise and flooding, to understand how this vulnerability affects the community and various assets, and to provide input on the development of adaptation strategies. Please see **Community Engagement** for more details regarding collaboration with the surrounding jurisdictions.

The project will leverage the current funding from a CalOES FEMA HMGP grant (DR-4344) awarded to the City of East Palo Alto for \$17.2 million, with the City of East Palo Alto providing \$5.5 million in local match funding. The SFCJPA also has a design and permitting grant from the California Department of Water Resources Agreement No. 4600009954 for approximately \$1 million for this project. Including the funding for MTC/Caltrans, we are investing more than \$25 million in state, federal, and local funding for design and construction of substantial reaches of the SAFER Bay Project.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s (USFWS) National Wildlife Refuge Program is a direct partner as landowner of former salt ponds R1 and R2 that will be restored to tidal marsh as natural flood protection with an ecotone levee. The South Bay Salt Pond (SBSP) Restoration Project is a collaborative partner in this effort, jointly managed by the USFWS, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the California State Coastal Conservancy. When our project is complete, the SBSP

Restoration Project will restore more than 550 acres of former industrial salt ponds to a rich mosaic of tidal wetlands and other habitats, while maintaining or improving current levels of flood protection and providing increased and improved public access facilities.

The project area for the SBSP directly overlaps with the SAFER Bay project along with the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge), also a SAFER Bay Project partner. The SBSP Restoration Project and the Refuge Program coordinate closely with partners of this project to ensure the federal programs are effectively leveraged for the project. Interactions between existing utility and transportation infrastructure projects are very common along the edges of San Francisco Bay. Often, the necessary improvements to these existing facilities involve adding flood protection features and concurrent restoration or habitat enhancements to achieve multiple benefits while minimizing adverse impacts and reducing costs, risks, and regulatory difficulties.

The Menlo Park SAFER Bay Project also consulted with and gained support from the NOAA Office for Coastal Management (OCM). A goal of OCM is to identify opportunities to support partnerships between coastal managers and infrastructure agencies and to ensure that resources, case studies, and lessons learned from projects are shared broadly. The Menlo Park SAFER Bay Project is a perfect example of this partnership and the SFCJPA, City of Menlo Park, and PG&E are committed to working together with OCM on a case study to ensure the lessons learned will be broadly shared.

The City of Menlo Park is partnering with PG&E and Facebook to provide the required non-federal cost share. PG&E and Facebook are contributing funds in the amount of \$10 million and \$7.8 million, respectively. As the project is requesting \$50 million in federal funds, the combined \$17.8 million in non-federal funds represents a 26.25 percent cost share. Please see Technical Question 7: Increased Non-Fed Cost Share.

The Menlo Park SAFER Bay Project partners are working together to implement a project that will have a transformative and positive impact to community resilience and that will protect the critical infrastructure that serves the community. Each partner brings crucial expertise and resources that, when combined, will enable the implementation of a regionally important, multi-jurisdictional effort. This collaborative project enables greater flood protection and greater impact; partners provide non-federal cost share, thereby increasing the geographic area, communities, and critical infrastructure that is protected while also attaining greater environmental benefits. Additionally, this project has support from multiple local, regional, state, and federal entities, as evidenced by the project partnerships and letters of support. This strong collaboration and support will help the project transcend traditional boundaries and catalyze broader efforts.

Future partnership potential

The successful completion of the Menlo Park SAFER Bay Project will serve as a demonstration of the significant progress that can be achieved when public and private interests pool resources to collectively pursue a unified vision. This project brings public entities and coastal managers together with partners in utility and transportation agencies to advance the use of nature-based solutions for

critical infrastructure resilience. With the completion of these substantial reaches of tidal flood protection and sea level rise resiliency via natural flood protection, the final SAFER Bay Project alignments will be ripe for additional grant funding to close the remaining gaps at Reach 1 and Reach 2, as well as Reach 5 and Reach 7.

Partnership is the foundation of this project; the entire SAFER Bay alignment cannot reasonably be funded and constructed by any single entity. The partners expect that the successful completion of the Menlo Park SAFER Bay Project will excite interest from other potential public and private funding partners who will understand the substantial benefits of completing the entire SAFER Bay alignment and recognize that the SAFER Bay Project is no longer a preliminary concept, but instead a tangible reality.