



Bay Area Regional Collaborative

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To: BARC Governing Board

From: Allison Brooks
BARC Executive Director

Subject: **Climate Change Technical Assistance Task Force**

Intent

This memo proposes the formation of an outcome-oriented, multi-stakeholder Bay Area Regional Collaborative Task Force that would provide critical input on the formation of a regional climate technical assistance program provided by the BARC member agencies. The Task Force would focus on serving all Bay Area cities and counties, making a commitment to help spread innovation from cities and counties at the leading edge to those still in the early stages of climate change and hazard mitigation and adaptation planning with the goal of forming a more resilient region. Throughout this effort, close attention and consideration would be given to the special needs and circumstances of the Bay Area's most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities who are often at the frontlines of climate change impacts. In fall 2015, the Bay Area Regional Collaborative Executive Director would convene the Task Force of 30-40 leaders for a one-year commitment to: 1) understand and diagram the climate change mitigation, adaptation and hazard mitigation planning and implementation efforts in the Bay Area, particularly as they relate to the potential role of the BARC member agencies; 2) identify gaps in regional climate change planning and implementation efforts and resources, and 3) develop recommendations for a cross-agency technical assistance program to increase regional resilience related to both climate change and hazard mitigation and adaptation over the next five years. This work would build from earlier assessment done by the JPC's Bay Area Climate and Energy Resiliency Project (BACERP), and other related work underway.

Background

The Bay Area is a complex region made up of 101 cities and 9 counties spanning diverse geographies and confronting a range of challenges related to climate change and hazard mitigation and climate adaptation. Additionally, the region has numerous transportation, flood management, utility and non-profit organizations that manage, own, and/or provide assets and services to the region's diverse communities. While this diversity serves to make our region dynamic, it also presents some challenges as we strive across jurisdictions to meet greenhouse gas reduction goals, while also preparing for the impacts of a changing climate. Some Bay Area jurisdictions are beginning to proactively address climate challenges, while other jurisdictions with more limited capacity have been unable to move forward on these issues.

Regional Role in Supporting Local Innovation and Capacity Building

Regardless of capacity, the fact remains that all Bay Area's jurisdictions are challenged by climate change mitigation and adaptation issues and many have expressed a desire for a coordinated regional approach to technical assistance and support that would increase the resilience of Bay Area communities and the region. The Bay Area's most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities – the ones that are already struggling to make ends meet as wealth disparities grown in our region – stand to face the greatest impacts from climate change. Therefore, there is a need to use a social justice lens in developing the most inclusive approaches to climate change planning and implementation. Additionally, across the region, there are examples of assessments and plans have been developed from the local-neighborhood perspective by community-based groups in vulnerable communities that can help inform city, county and region processes. Additionally, our cities and counties have assets and services like transportation and utility infrastructure, storm and wastewater systems and other regional scale infrastructure that require state and federal partnership and support, which the region can best access by working together.

While there are many cities and counties involved in efforts related to planning for climate change and natural hazards, there are also many Bay Area jurisdictions that opt out of these planning efforts due to a range of challenges that a regional technical assistance program can be designed to address. Examples of such efforts include Climate Action Plans (CAPs), Hazard Mitigation Plans, General Plan Safety Elements, and Climate Adaptation Plans. Some of these efforts are voluntary, while others are either required by federal or state law or required if jurisdictions wish to be eligible for funding opportunities or other incentives.

These types of climate change and hazard related efforts can be challenging to complete at a consistently high quality by even most high-capacity jurisdictions, but can be particularly onerous for smaller cities that often have one staff person designated to complete the assigned task, or in disadvantaged communities with limited resources. A recent analysis by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) discovered that approximately 60 out of the 101 jurisdictions in the Bay Area have completed Climate Action Plans (CAPs) of varying content, quality and actions to implement the plans, meaning a good portion of Bay Area jurisdictions have not. Due to the challenges related to capacity, data and information availability and technical support, climate and/or hazard mitigation planning efforts can become more of a rote exercise for jurisdictions, rather than an opportunity to engage community members and key stakeholders in important discussions about the risks and vulnerabilities and options they face related to climate change mitigation and adaptation. This is particularly true for disadvantaged communities who are often at the frontlines of climate impacts.

Role of Task Force

An important activity for the proposed BARC Climate Change Technical Assistance Task Force is to explore, diagram and recommend the needed tools, support and guidance that can best be deployed by the BARC member agencies, individually or collectively, to support the region's jurisdictions in climate change mitigation, hazard mitigation and climate adaptation planning and implementation. Additionally, the Task Force could learn and build from current technical assistance efforts by the BARC member agencies including the data support and technical assistance provided by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District to cities and counties in support of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) reduction, and the partnership between the

Association of Bay Area Governments Resilience Program (ABAG) and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission's Adapting to Rising Tides Program (BCDC's ART) to provide local jurisdictions support, assistance, data and information to develop hazard mitigation and climate adaptation plans. Much can be learned as well from BCDC's ART Program's vulnerability and adaptation planning efforts completed and underway in Bay Area counties.

Currently, there are limited and uncoordinated avenues through which jurisdictions can learn from each other, request assistance, describe their needs and issues and share best practices related to the different climate change mitigation, adaptation and hazard planning efforts. An important question to explore is how the regional agencies, working closely with city, county and other stakeholder partners, could help to overcome the very real capacity challenges that exist among jurisdictions, whether it is by providing reliable data, developing and disseminating templates, facilitating learning networks and information sharing in a systematic and highly useful way. At the same time, the Bay Area benefits by having cities and counties engaged in advanced and groundbreaking work related to climate and hazard mitigation and adaptation. These cities and counties are transitioning beyond planning and are in need of support to advance implementation strategies that will have broad resonance in the Bay Area and beyond. The diversity of our region therefore calls for a continuum of technical assistance that supports our early adopters and innovators, as well as those jurisdictions that are mid-course, or just getting started.

At the end of a thoughtfully designed process, an outcome of the BARC Climate Change Technical Assistance Task Force could be a clear articulation of the types of technical assistance that is needed, particularly assistance and support that could be provided by the regional agencies, to help our region become more resilient. The process could also help identify specific opportunities to engage leadership at the State level and/or Federal agencies in developing policy that supports our shared regional objectives related to climate adaptation and mitigation.

Proposed Initial Task Force Scope of Work

The Bay Area Regional Collaborative proposes to sponsor a 12-month task force that would launch in the fall of 2015) to understand and diagram the current state of affairs of climate change mitigation, adaptation and hazard mitigation planning and implementation in the Bay Area, particularly as they relate to the potential role of the BARC member agencies; 2) identify gaps in regional climate change planning and implementation efforts and resources, and 3) develop recommendations for a cross-agency technical assistance program to increase regional resilience related to climate change mitigation, hazard mitigation and climate adaptation over the next five years, with close attention on the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged communities.

The task force will be comprised of 30-40 participants representing the BARC agencies, as well as regional thought leaders and practitioners from the local government, non-profit and community-based groups, academic institutions, philanthropy, and the private sector with insight as to how to most effectively address local needs with state-of-the-practice tools, strategies and guidance. The task force composition will include policymakers as well as representatives working on the ground to plan for climate change. The BARC Executive Director will convene the task force monthly over the 12-month period with agency and consultant support to complete such tasks as those outlined below:

- Use the information collected through the efforts underway by BARC member agencies, the assessment completed by the JPC's Bay Area Climate and Energy Resilience Project (BACERP) and other activities to:
 - Map current and identify gaps in climate change mitigation, adaptation and hazard mitigation planning efforts such as CAP's, Hazard Mitigation, Climate Adaptation Plans, among others.
 - Identify climate planning resources and best practices available in the region and nationally, including model plans, studies, guidance, tools, processes and funding.
 - Identify programs and policies at the federal, state, regional, and local scale that could be leveraged by local governments in planning for climate change, and the ways in which the regional agencies can help local governments better leverage those resources.
 - Identify strategies that build capacity of local non-profit and community-based organizations and regional entities to play a critical role in advancing Bay Area climate resiliency at the local and regional scale.
- Determine shared cross-agency priorities that could be encouraged in jurisdictional climate planning initiatives through incentives and technical assistance.
- Develop recommendations for a cross-agency technical assistance program that depending on local needs and available resources could include:
 - Goals and priorities
 - Guidance and model templates
 - Presentations/trainings at existing regional forums
 - Mentor program to link those who have successfully completed this work with those who still need to conduct similar efforts.
 - Develop communication documents, presentations and talking points for council/commission briefings and broader public with the goal of developing more inclusive and resonant language and messages. Partner with organizations to translate and make communications documents more culturally relevant.
 - Identify and develop funding incentives
 - Explore usefulness and design of in-kind technical assistance
 - Pilots to demonstrate local and/or neighborhood-scale, sub-regional, regional and/or integrated planning approaches
 - A one-stop online repository to house information, tools and resources that help stakeholders advance local and regional practice in a more efficient manner, and that are inclusive and culturally competent.
 - Explore the unique characteristics of a support system for cities and counties moving from planning to implementation.
 - Identify next steps resulting from yearlong process.

The items outlined above reflect an ambitious agenda that will need to be further refined into a clear and achievable 12-month Scope of Work. While the effort is broad and scope, a focus would need to be on developing specific recommendations for improved climate technical assistance support that fall under the jurisdiction of the BARC member agencies. Ultimately, the goal of this effort is for the BARC member agencies to consider individually or collectively how best to advance specific recommendations that result from the Task Force.

Proposed Next Steps

If approved, steps to initiate this process would include:

- BARC Executive Director will develop budget and secure resources for consultant support for 12-month effort. There are three potential sources of financial support for this project: 1) Foundation support; 2) BARC resources in the approved budget to support BARC activities and BARC staffing; and, 3) in-kind, pro bono support by academic institutions.
- BARC Executive Director will work with BARC member agency staff to retain a consultant to support yearlong effort. The consultant will work with the Executive Director in designing each meeting agenda and objectives, synthesizing information and findings from each meeting and advancing the work month to month to deliver intended outcomes.
- Develop work plan and schedule with distinct milestones and outcomes that serves to inform and better coordinate, and potentially integrate, the climate change technical support activities of the BARC member agencies that are in place to serve cities, counties, special districts and other stakeholders. This work will acknowledge and build from the current activities of BARC member agencies related to climate change technical assistance, as well as best practices underway in Bay Area cities and counties and by other stakeholders in and out of the Bay Area.
- Identify and invite task force participants.
- Convene task force and review goals and outcomes to result from the process.
- Establish appropriate sub-committees to tackle key issues areas, such as specific approaches and strategies to support vulnerable and disadvantaged communities in climate change mitigation, adaptation and hazard mitigation planning and implementation.