



US Army Corps
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U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

SAN FRANCISCO WATERFRONT FLOOD

RESILIENCY STUDY

NEPA Early Scoping

Public Meetings Transcript



U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS SAN FRANCISCO WATERFRONT FLOOD RESILIENCY STUDY

EARLY NEPA SCOPING PUBLIC MEETING

September 16th at 6:00 PM to 8:30 PM (PDT)

September 17th at 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM (PDT)

450 Golden Gate Avenue, 4th Floor

San Francisco California 94102

Early scoping public meeting held virtually on a web conference and teleconference line in San Francisco, California. Hosted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, San Francisco District (USACE) and the Port of San Francisco

PRESENTERS:

JESSIE MIZIC, USACE, CO-LEAD PLANNER AND MEDIATOR

JESSICA LUDY, USACE, CO-LEAD PLANNER

ANNE BAKER, USACE, ENVIRONMENTAL LEAD

LINDY LOWE, PORT OF SAN FRANCISCO, RESILIENCE OFFICER



PROCEEDINGS



MS. JESSIE MIZIC: Good afternoon/evening, welcome to the San Francisco Waterfront Flood Resiliency Study National Environmental Policy Act's Early Scoping public meeting to gather comments and feedback on the study. My Name is Jessie Mizic and I will be facilitating today' meeting with the United States Army Corps of Engineers and the Port of San Francisco.

WELCOME! MEETING PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

- Introducing USACE & Port of SF Coastal Storm Risk Feasibility Study
- Complying with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
 - Solicitation for public input – scoping
- Explaining Corps Planning Process
 - Aligning study with other Port activities
- Staying informed and engaged



We're better with your voice

MS. JESSIE MIZIC: First before we begin, can everyone see the slides? If not, please respond in chat or on the phone. Thank you. The San Francisco Waterfront Flood Resiliency Study is a partnership with

USACE and the Port to address Coastal Storm risk and flood resiliency within the study area. Today we will introduce the presenters and their roles. Then we will discuss ground rule to honor everyone's time and ensure everyone has the opportunity to provide comments and feedback about this presentation and study. During the presentation, we will look at the study description and location. We will look at how this study and today's meeting is a required step in complying with the NEPA process including solicitation for public input. We will also discuss the planning process and alignment with other Port activities. Finally, we will end with information on how to stay informed and engaged as the study progresses.



PRESENTERS

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Jessie Mizic, USACE
Co-lead Planner



Jessica Ludy, USACE
Co-lead Planner



Anne Baker, USACE
Environmental Lead



Lindy Lowe, Port of San Francisco
Resilience Officer



Ruzel Ednalino, USACE
Cultural Resources Lead

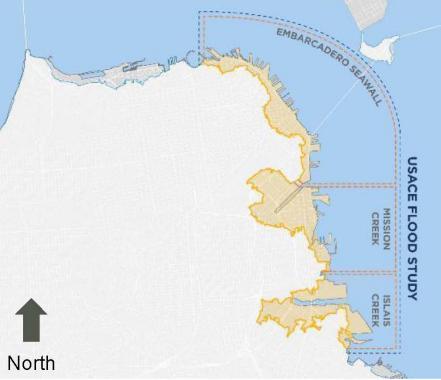
MS. JESSIE MIZIC: I would like to introduce our presenters for today's meeting, starting with myself Jessie Mizic with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. I am a co-lead planner for this study and a facilitator. Next, we have Jessica Ludy who is a co-lead planner with the Corps. Also with the Corps is Anne Baker, who is the study's environmental lead. Lindy Lowe is the resilience officer with the Port of San Francisco. Lastly with the Corps we have Ruzel Ednalino who is the cultural resources lead.

 **VIRTUAL MEETING PROCEDURES** 

- If you have any comments during the presentation, please type them into the chat box.
 - Chat Box can only be viewed by the facilitator
- If you wish to make a verbal comment or ask a question, please hold your question to the end of the presentation.
- During the open forum for public comments, please use the “hand raise” icon to request to speak. We will notify you when it is your turn.
- The meeting and all comments are being recorded.

MS. JESSIE MIZIC: If you have any comments during the presentation, we ask that you wait until after the presentation to voice them. There is a chat function in the WebEx meeting. To have your comments addressed please make sure to include your name and contact information so that we can make sure your comment is captured. With that, I would like to again thank you for taking the time to be here today and now Jessica Ludy with the Corps will kick off the presentation.

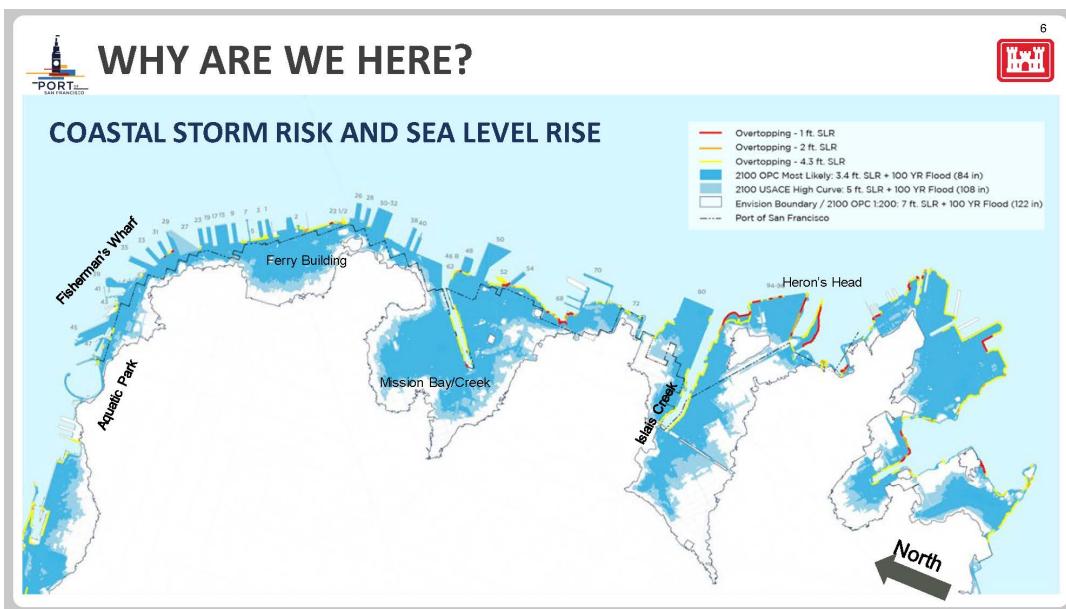
 **SF WATERFRONT FLOOD RESILIENCY STUDY** 



STUDY OVERVIEW & PROCESS

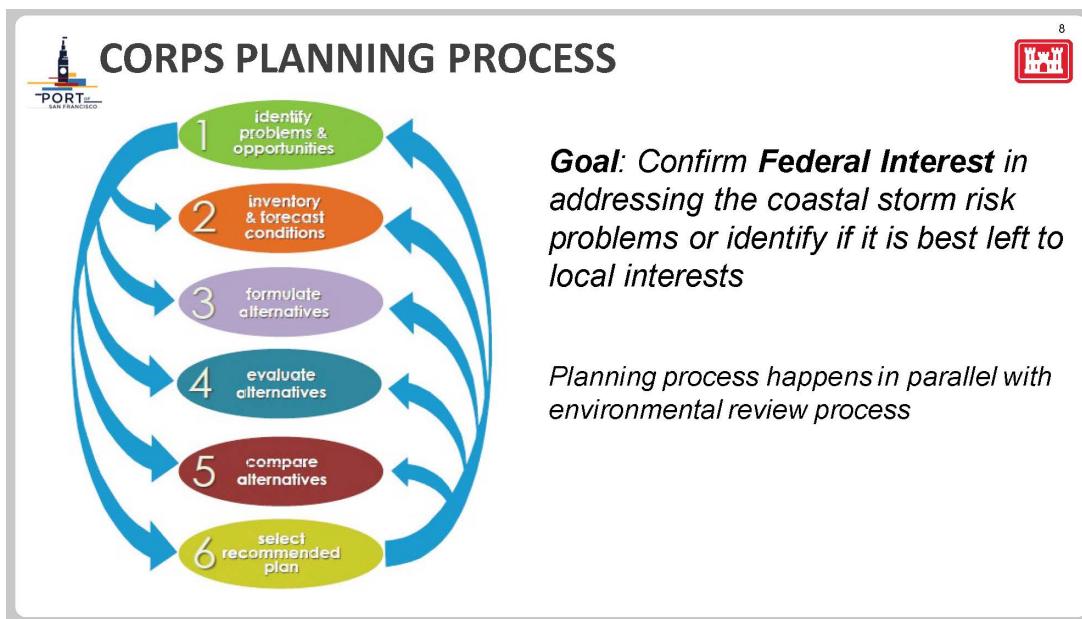
- Federal & local partnership between USACE and the Port of San Francisco
- ~3-5 years, 50/50 cost share
- Team evaluates coastal storm risk to study area, develops and assesses alternatives
- Team recommends a plan to Congress
- Design/construction of recommended plan cost shared 65% fed / 35% local

MS. JESSICA LUDY: Thank you Jessie. As part of the Waterfront Resilience Program, USACE is partnering with the Port of San Francisco for the San Francisco Waterfront Flood Resiliency Study. We share the cost of a study which is 50% paid by the Port and 50% paid by the Corps, we expect this study to take around 3 to 5 years. What we do together is evaluate flood risks to the study area over time; then we start to identify and better understand options to help us reduce that flood risk. Ultimately the study process and evaluations would culminate in a recommendation to congress of a preferred plan. If Congress approves and appropriate money for constructing the plan and projects, then the costs are covered 65% by the federal government and 35% by local governments. If the local partner, the Port of San Francisco, prefers a different plan then this is still an option. But the sponsor would need to pay any extra costs.



MS. JESSICA LUDY: Now to just give you all a sense of why we're here. What you're looking at is a map of the waterfront area. These blue areas show the potential for future flooding in the year 2100 if no action is taken. The different shades of blue represents what might occur with different sea level rise scenarios. What you see in the middle of the page is flooding extending fairly far inland in the Mission Creek and Mission Bay areas. To set the scene for the study problems, the areas that are in red, orange,

and yellow are the lowest sections of the waterfront. Therefore the first places that the shoreline is likely to overtop with water from a large storm or from very high tides. The study area shown on this slide is in all four colors. Going from Aquatic Park on the northern area of the study area on the left and Herons Head in the southern area on the right. This map is flipped sideways following the north arrow. The study area is represented through five major neighborhoods, shown as dotted lines along the bottom. The 4 reaches are shown as linear lines along the shoreline that the team is using to organize our assessment, which is further divided into 15 sub areas. This organization of the project helps us to better understand risks, characterize the areas, and think about our options.



MS. JESSICA LUDY: Now this diagram shows the Corps six step planning process, which involves identifying the problems, opportunities, objectives, and constraints, inventorying and forecasting conditions, formulating alternatives, then evaluating those alternatives, comparing those alternatives, and eventually selecting a recommended plan. With that in mind, how do we begin to address this challenge? Our goal is to confirm federal interest in addressing the coastal storm risk problems or identify if it is best left to local interests. There are three potential outcomes which involves

confirmation of federal interest. The first outcome would be no federal interest, meaning that Congress and the administration have determined the problem is best left to local interests. The second outcome is that problems and potential solutions are entirely consistent with the Corps missions, as assigned by Congress and Administrations priorities. The third outcome involves the problem having a federal interest, but solutions require implementation under multiple federal authorities and agencies, including the Corps. I'm going to hand the mic over to Anne Baker to discuss the reason why we're holding this meeting today.



NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

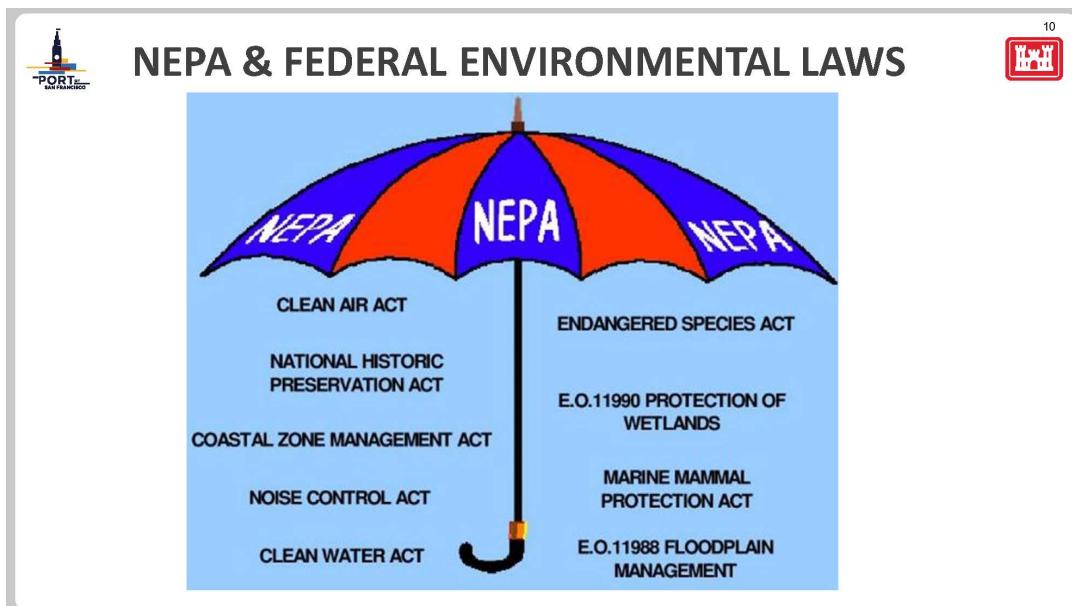




- What are the existing conditions in the area?
- What alternatives are under consideration?
- What are the impacts of the alternatives?
 - Environmental? Human? Cultural/Historical?
- What are the benefits of the alternatives?
 - Public Safety? Other environmental conditions?
- How do you minimize or compensate for impacts of the alternatives?
- How are you complying with Federal Environmental Laws?
- Public involvement & disclosure

MS. ANNE BAKER: Hi everyone. So, the reason we're here today is because of the National Environmental Policy Act, or what we call NEPA. NEPA is similar to CEQA, the California Environmental Quality Act, which you're probably a bit more familiar with. It requires Federal Agencies to assess the potential impacts of their projects on the environment and fully disclose those effects to the public. NEPA is also a process-oriented law and requires agencies to go through a structured process in order to fully comply with the law. This early scoping meeting is the beginning of that process. Should we determine that the potential alternatives being developed for this study were to have significant effects

on the environment, we would prepare an Environmental Impact Statement. Prior to initiating an EIS, we are required to conduct public scoping, in order to seek early input from the public on their priorities and concerns regarding this study. In this case, we have not made the determination yet that there would be significant effects on the environment because we really don't have defined alternatives yet. That's why we're calling this "early scoping". Because we're doing it regardless of what the eventual impacts will be, due to the fact that we're looking at a project right along the San Francisco Waterfront, and we all care a lot about this study area and we know how important it is to the community. We'll use the input gained from these meetings to help us establish the existing conditions in the study area, which is basically the baseline condition of the environmental resources in the area. We will then assess the alternatives and determine the potential effects that could occur from the action. Finally we would determine any necessary avoidance, minimization measures, or compensation required to mitigate for the environmental effects. Once this process is complete, we would come back to you all again with our draft NEPA document and request public comment on our proposal and the effects and mitigation measures disclosed in the NEPA document.



MS. ANNE BAKER: In addition, we sometimes refer to NEPA as an umbrella law, meaning that as a part of complying with NEPA, we also have to establish compliance with all of the other Federal environmental laws and regulations, like the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, and many others. Our path to compliance with those laws is always documented in our NEPA document, which would be either an Environmental Assessment or an Environmental Impact Statement. The alternative formulation and evaluation process required to comply with NEPA occurs hand in hand with the Corps Planning Process, which Jessica was just describing to you. Each step of the Corps Planning Process aligns and integrates with a portion of the legally defined process required to comply with NEPA.




PLANNING AND NEPA CROSSWALK

Planning steps	NEPA requirements
▪ Scope for Project	▪ Scope for NEPA
▪ Specify Problems & Opportunities, Objectives & Constraints	▪ Describe Purpose & Need consistent with project scope
▪ Inventory and Forecast Conditions (Future Without)	▪ Describe existing conditions, trends, No Action alternative
▪ Formulate alternative plans to address Objectives	▪ Include reasonable range of alternatives that address Purpose and Need
▪ Evaluate effects of alternative plans	▪ Evaluate alternatives' effects to resources
▪ Compare alternative plans	▪ Compare alternatives to No Action, ID the Environmental Alternative
▪ Select a Tentative Selected Plan	▪ Identify the Agency Preferred Plan
▪ Release for Public Review	▪ Release for Public Review

MS. ANNE BAKER: While alternatives are being formulated under the planning process, they are also being disclosed and evaluated under the NEPA process at the same time. This allows both of these processes to proceed together in a single integrated decision-making process. The final result of this integrated process will be a tentatively selected plan that takes into account the potential environmental effects and associated mitigation. We would then produce an integrated Planning

Report and NEPA Document which would be released jointly for public review. This release is currently scheduled to occur early in 2022.



STUDY PROBLEMS

Low-lying community assets are at risk of damage from coastal storms and extreme high tides

- Sea-level rise in SF Bay expected to increase frequency of coastal storm flooding along SF waterfront
- Access to critical infrastructure, emergency services, and evacuation could be limited or cut-off during storm flooding
- Century-old seawall has outlasted its design life and could fail due to age or earthquake





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MS. JESSICA LUDY: Now this problem list and the next series of slides will discuss the objectives and constraints that are based on input that the Port received from their larger ongoing efforts with the Port's Waterfront Resilience Program. Low-lying community assets are at risk of damage from coastal storms and extreme high tides. Sea-level rise in the San Francisco bay is expected to increase the frequency of coastal storm flooding along the waterfront. Access to critical infrastructure, emergency services, and evacuation could be limited or cut-off during storm flooding. The century-old seawall has also outlasted its design life and could fail due to age or an earthquake. Our study's objectives are to reduce economic damages from coastal storm risks to businesses, residents, and infrastructures. We also want to reduce risks to human health and safety from coastal storm impacts. Our last objective would improve the resiliency of the local economy to impacts from coastal storms.

 **STUDY CONSTRAINTS** 

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- Maintain, preserve **maritime facilities & function**; avoid impacts on Port infrastructure & operations
- Avoid actions that violate authority of the Port Commission to fulfill **public trust responsibilities** (Burton Act)
- Maintain required **public access and regional and citywide mobility corridors** such as the Embarcadero Roadway and the SF Bay Trail
- Maintain SF Bay **ecological function**

MS. JESSICA LUDY: The constraints we identified for this study involves maintaining and preserving maritime facilitates and function while avoiding impacts on the Port's infrastructure and operations. We would also like to avoid actions that violates authority of the Port commission to fulfill public trust responsibilities under the Burton Act. Our third constraint would be maintenance of required public access and regional and citywide mobility corridors such as the Embarcadero Roadway and the San Francisco Bay Trail. Lastly, maintenance of the San Francisco bay's ecological functions.

 **THIS STUDY IS PART OF THE WATERFRONT RESILIENCE PROGRAM** 

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 Waterfront Resilience Program

MS. JESSICA LUDY: This study is just one component of the Port's larger Waterfront Resilience Program, which is broader in scope and geographic area than what we're tackling. However, the two are related and complimentary. For example, the community outreach that the Port is leading for it is Waterfront Resilience Program will help the study team more clearly understand community risks, concerns, and preferences for the alternatives. I'm going to hand it over to Lindy Lowe from the Port of San Francisco so she can cover previous outreach that the Port has covered.

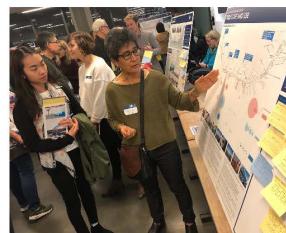

PORt OF SAN FRANCISCO OUTREACH INFORMS WATERFRONT RESILIENCE

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Agency collaboration

The Port continues to build close partnerships with city, regional, and federal agencies to ensure accuracy and innovation in the program.



Community and advisory engagement

Port led 100+ events waterfront-wide, including over 115 presentations to community members and advisory groups. The goal was to solicit community input, concerns, and preferences for defining a vision and solutions for waterfront resilience.

MS. LINDY LOWE: Thank you Jessica. The Port has been engaging stakeholders over the last two years on the work that we have been doing as part of the Waterfront Resilience Program, which includes the Flood Resiliency Study. This engagement has included our city department partners, agency partners with assets within the program area such as BART and other local, regional and federal agencies.

HOW PRIOR WATERFRONT RESILIENCE OUTREACH INFORMS THIS STUDY

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- 1 Community ideas on an **"inspiring an adaptable waterfront"** highlight key considerations for evaluating alternatives:
 - Do they connect us to the shoreline?
 - Is the waterfront accessible?
 - Do some measures preserve and promote jobs, housing, seniors & youth more than others?
- 2 Community feedback on **priority assets most loved by the community** help the study team:
 - Understand consequences of taking no action
 - Select projects that responsibly use tax dollars
 - Consider alternatives that preserve and protect community character
- 3 Community feedback on evaluation criteria affirmed the team should prioritize life safety and disaster response, and to **"put people first"**, with special attention to:
 - housing, disaster recovery facilities, utilities, and businesses
 - transportation assets and waterfront mobility

MS. LINDY LOWE: Additionally, we have been engaging with the public over the last two years as well, holding or participating in over 100 events across the entire waterfront, hosting a community meeting series in three locations- Embarcadero, Mission Creek and Islais Creek Bayview and providing presentations to Port and city advisory groups. This engagement has provided us with an understanding of community and stakeholder priorities as well as direct input and participation in the development of vision, principles, goals and objectives to guide the work within the Program and as well as for the flood resiliency study.

COMMUNITY INPUT WILL INFORM MEASURES AND ALTERNATIVES

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Measures are a plan or course of action to achieve a particular purpose

	Physical Measures
	Ecological Measures
	Earthquake-resilient Measures
	Emergency Response, Land Use

Alternatives are sets of measures intended to reduce coastal storm risk and respond to the problems and objectives in the study area

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MS. JESSICA LUDY: The community input that Lindy has described will better inform the measures and alternatives that the team will consider in reducing coastal storm risks. Measures are defined as a plan or course of action that achieves a particular purpose. We have four measures here that cover physical measures, ecological measures, earthquake-resilient measures, and emergency response or land use. Alternatives are sets of measures intended to reduce coastal storm risk and respond to the problems and objectives in the study area. When the team begins to consider options or measures, we are considering physical measures like seawalls, levees, raised bicycle pathways, or elevating certain buildings so they can withstand flooding and waves. We also consider ecological measures, to help maintain ecological functions while reducing costal storm risk; this might include nourishing beaches where possible, restoring tidal marsh to help reduce waves. We will make sure that measures can withstand earthquakes, and for example like improving the foundations while building a seawall or floodwall. And we also have emergency response measures we can take like safe evacuation zones, developing emergency actions plans for our critical infrastructure like water treatment or mass transit; and we can consider land use planning so that any new development is required to be safe or resilient to floods.



NEPA DOCUMENT – ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

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Human Environment

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Environmental Justice
- Hazardous Waste
- Land Use
- Noise
- Recreation
- Socioeconomics
- Transportation
- Utilities



MS. ANNE BAKER: The NEPA document will likely be focused primarily on potential effects to the human environment. Since the SF Waterfront is such an urban environment, we anticipate the majority of the potential impacts would be on the resources that really affect people. So this includes looking at things like the existing and future aesthetic condition of the area, sightlines from buildings and the Embarcadero. We'll take a look at the potential effects that result when there's construction going on nearby, like air quality effects that result from construction equipment and dust, construction noise, any temporary disruptions to utility services, etc. Additionally, we'll look at the recreation and transportation systems in the study area and how construction of alternatives could affect traffic, or temporary access to the shoreline. We'll look at whether any detours or road realignments might result from the alternatives.



NEPA ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS



Ecological Environment

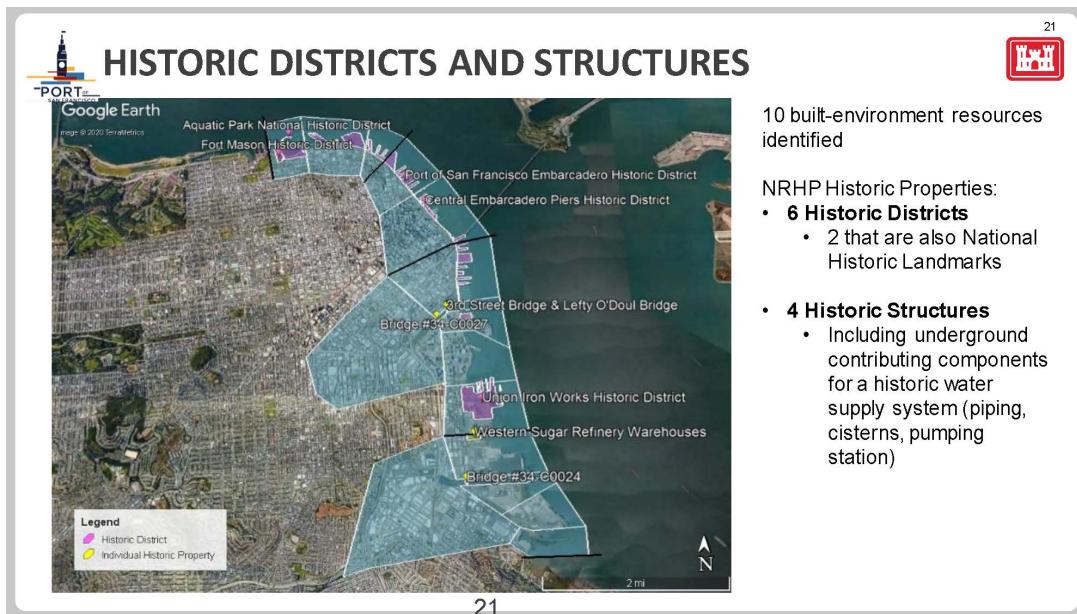
- Threatened and Endangered Species
- Vegetation
- Water Quality
- Wildlife



Heron's Head Park in southern San Francisco—a bit of wild in the city (photo by Cris Benton)

MS. ANNE BAKER: In addition to the human environmental conditions, we'll also study the ecological environment along the shoreline in the NEPA document. Since the shoreline itself is so urban, there really isn't a lot of existing "natural" habitat for terrestrial/land-based wildlife species or vegetation. However, the aquatic environment along the waterfront is extremely sensitive and in-water work along

the shoreline is a strong possibility for any project that could result from this study. So we expect this analysis to largely focus on aquatic or marine species and habitat, including water quality considerations in the Bay, Mission Creek, and Islais Creek. Now, I'm going to hand it over to Ruzel Ednalino so he can cover the cultural resources identified in our study area.



MR. RUZEL EDNALINO: Thank you Anne. Good afternoon/evening everyone, my name is Ruzel Ednalino and I'm an archaeologist for the Corps San Francisco District. Today, I'll be going over the cultural and historic resources throughout the study area. Now this map shows the entire study area with 10 historic properties that the team has identified early on. Historic properties are defined under the National Historic Preservation Act to be a district, site, building, structure, or even object that has achieved significance of the past in the last 50 years. Looking at the map we can see there are polygons in purple. This means that the resource is a historic district, which is an area or neighborhood that's listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Anything in yellow is an individual historic property which could be a building, object, structure, or site that's also listed or eligible for the National Register. Now currently research is ongoing to determine if there are any other cultural or historic resources for our team to address. The team does expect there to be more cultural and historic resources identified later in the

study. Overall for what we've identified, there are six historic districts in total with two districts also listed as national historic landmarks. These are located in Reach 1 in the northwest corner of our study area, where we have the Fort Mason Historic District and the Aquatic Park Historic District. These two districts are national historic landmark districts. There are four individual historic properties, which consists of three bridges and one building from a sugar refinery in Reaches 3 and 4. The team is also considering historic underground elements for a water supply system that's spread out across the study area.



ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

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- The study team is consulting with tribal bands identified by the Native American Heritage Commission
- Documented historical and prehistoric archaeological sites are located further landward where the historic shoreline once existed
- Deposits that underlie Reach 1 and 2 consists of landfill
- Alternatives formulated will guide the need for additional archaeological/tribal monitoring, subsurface testing, and any other planning efforts



Archeologist and construction crews diligently combing through dirt at a site along San Francisco's waterfront.
Photo from <https://abc7news.com/san-francisco-shoreline-killed-shoreline-had-over/527222/>

MR. RUZEL EDNALINO: Now that I've covered the built-environment resources in the study area I'll move on to the archaeological considerations. Currently the team is consulting with several Ohlone tribal bands identified by the Native American Heritage Commission. We've begun early consultations to determine if there are any significant sites to consider in the study area as well as a records search which is currently ongoing to identify past recorded sites. Our current assumption is that most deposits that surround the waterfront area consist of bayfill, and as such, there is a low likelihood to uncover a significant archaeological site the closer we are to the present shoreline. Depending on how the

alternatives are developed, the team will continue consulting with tribal bands, historic organizations, agencies, and the State Historic Preservation Officer to see if there are any risks to disturb archaeological sites and agree on how we can best avoid these sites or minimize impacts during construction. Now that's my brief summary on the initial cultural and historic resources the team has identified. I'm going to hand it back over to Jessie, thank you.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU




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Port presentations, collaboration, and seeking input from Agency partners and the Community for the Port's Waterfront Resilience Program (2018- 2020)

- Perspectives on study problems, objectives, and constraints of Coastal Storm Risk Feasibility Study
- Ideas for measures and alternatives
- Assets or resources that are particularly important or of concern
- Comments about the NEPA or Corps Planning processes

MS. JESSIE MIZIC: Thank you Ruzel. This concludes the presentation portion of our meeting. Now we will move into the public comment phase of the meeting. Before we do, I would like to say thank you to our presenters with a virtual round of applause. Thanks for all the hard work that you have done in putting this meeting together. This now is an opportunity to voice any comments or feedback that you all may have concerning this project. We are interested in hearing your thoughts on the perspectives on study problems, objectives, and constraints of the Coastal Storm Risk Feasibility Study. This also includes ideas for measures and alternatives, assets or resources that are particularly important or of concern to you all, and comments about the NEPA or Corps planning processes. Before we open the floor, we would like to remind the audience on how to provide comments. Please use the raise hand function or

provide comments in the chat box. All comments and feedback will be collected and used in the study process. I would like to leave this slide up as we move through the comment phase. This slide shows all the various ways and timelines for providing public comments. If you have any comments during the presentation, please type them in the chat box. The chat box can only be viewed by the facilitator. If you wish to make a verbal comment or ask a question, please hold your question until the end of the presentation. During the open forum for public comments, please use the “hand raise” icon to request to speak. We will notify you when it is your turn. The meeting and all comments are being recorded. Let's go ahead and get started. I will leave the floor open for a few more minutes.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

SAN FRANCISCO WATERFRONT FLOOD RESILIENCY STUDY


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Scoping comments due by October 21, 2020:
Relevant Chat Box comments provided today will be considered as written comments.

Or, **submit emails** to: SFWFRS@usace.army.mil
 Or, **send mail** to:
 Ms. Anne Baker
 450 Golden Gate Avenue, 4th Floor
 San Francisco, California 94102

Webpage for study information:
<https://www.spn.usace.army.mil/Missions/Projects-and-Programs/Projects-A-Z/San-Francisco-Waterfront-Storm-Damage-Reduction/>

Public Review of Draft Report and NEPA Document:

- 45 day public review and comment timeframe
- Includes public meeting and concurrent agency and other reviews

Contact the Port of San Francisco:
 Lindy Lowe
 Port Resilience Officer
 Port of San Francisco
lindy.lowe@sfport.com
sfportresilience.com

MS. JESSIE MIZIC: Again, if you would like to provide any comments, please use the instructions on this slide. This concludes our meeting tonight. Thank you to all of you who chose to be a part of this meeting. Your time is valuable and to take time out of your busy schedule really shows how much this project and the waterfront means to you. Taking time to engage with the study team is a critical part of collaboration and team building and is a required step in the NEPA process. The Corps requests that any written comments you have regarding the scope of the environmental analysis and alternatives that we

should consider during this study and for the NEPA analysis be provided by October 21st 2020. You can send scoping comments by email to SFWFRS@USACE.ARMY.MIL or send physical mail to Ms. Anne Baker at 450 Golden Gate Avenue, 4th Floor, San Francisco, California 94102. You may also contact the Port of San Francisco's Port Resilience Office Lindy Lowe, who can be reached by email at lindy.lowe@sfport.com. Thank you to our presenters and partners. If you would like more information, please feel free to reach out to the team through the methods posted on this slide. Thank you all once again for attending.