

Sea Level Rise and Coastal Vulnerabilities North Coastal Workshop April 30, 2015

More than 30 residents, elected officials, and agency representatives attended a workshop hosted by the Encinitas City Council Subcommittee on Sea Level Rise and Coastal Vulnerabilities on April 30, 2015. Invited participants included representatives from Del Mar, Solana Beach, Carlsbad, Oceanside, SANDAG, California Coastal Commission, and the California State Parks Department. The purpose of the meeting was to share information and explore opportunities for mutually beneficial collaboration.

Each city/agency gave a brief overview of the activities currently underway related to sea level rise vulnerability assessment, climate impact evaluation, and mitigation and adaptation strategies. The key points from each entity are briefly listed in the attachment. All the participants agreed that regional dialog and coordination were essential. We also recognized that sea-level rise affects more than beaches – we have lagoons, rivers, and coastal infrastructure such as rail bridges that are all impacted by climate change. Response strategies are not limited to engineering, but include zoning and planning changes as well.

Among the common areas of interest that were discussed:

- Modeling – recognizing that the state of scientific research and modeling is constantly changing, cities and agencies are working to use the best available model(s), which may vary depending on the unique characteristics of each city, while also recognizing a desire for consistency in methodologies to be able to assess and act regionally. The Coastal Commission sea-level rise guidance document final version is expected to be released soon for final public comment and then adopted in August 2015. Their preferred approach involves scenario planning to consider a range of possible future conditions.
- Fish and Wildlife Agency climate adaptation funding – discussions are underway to reach out to Amber Pairis who has funded climate adaptation work in northern California and wants to support similar efforts in our region.
- Legal and economic issues – Del Mar has been in discussions with the Environmental Law Institute about development of a model (sample) ordinance for cities to consider in addressing sea level rise. Solana Beach is engaged in a study of the economic valuation of the beach, funded by a grant from the Coastal Commission. This is part of an assessment of how to mitigate the effects of sea walls, which lead to beach reduction. There are also legal issues related to shifting high tide lines and coastal properties.

There was consensus that we should pursue a number of next steps. Some are appropriate at the staff level; others may be done best by SANDAG as our regional planning agency; still others are appropriate for elected officials to take the lead. Specific suggestions include:

- Organizing a meeting with the Environmental Law Institute and interested city planning staff, city attorneys, and elected officials to consider planning and zoning impacts and a possible model ordinance.
- Creating a “clearinghouse” for sharing of science, datasets, RFPs, study results, newsletters, conferences, and other information. Initial discussion considered a dropbox or website. On further consideration, noting that this effort is most useful if someone is tasked to keep it up to date and provide some curator functions, the group might ask SANDAG to take on this task. The Encinitas representatives intend to propose that SANDAG take the lead to create this clearinghouse to support the Shoreline Preservation Working Group. Some of what the northern coastal cities need is also of

interest to other coastal cities in SANDAG, so perhaps the clearinghouse can have segments specifically for north and south areas as well as a common segment.

- Producing a periodic newsletter aimed at our residents to inform them of the latest scientific understanding and let them know about regional and local efforts to address climate change impacts. One idea is to invite each city and agency to provide one article for each edition. We need to be realistic about the time and effort to do this, and perhaps should aim for a quarterly publication. Encinitas volunteers to take the lead on this.
- Compilation of a “toolkit” of response strategies – recognizing that the vulnerability assessment is only a first step and the harder part is figuring out what to do to mitigate the vulnerabilities. This could be a subset of the clearinghouse described above.
- Develop a North County Regional Existing Conditions map identifying the major infrastructure and utilities in the coastal zone as a base layer in GIS that would be available to all North Coastal communities.

There was a suggestion that we should invite Camp Pendleton and County Supervisor Dave Roberts’ office to join future discussions.

Several public speakers mentioned additional resources that might be of interest to the group. These include:

Coastal Symposium on May 26-28 at the Bahia Hotel in San Diego
<http://www.coastalsymposium.org/coastalsymposium/index.php>

Early registration goes till May 8 (extended)

Sea Cliffs, Beaches, and Coastal Valleys of San Diego County, *Some Amazing Histories and Some Horrifying Implications*, by Gerald G. Kuhn and Francis P. Shepard

Coastal News Today, a daily email (free) and website <http://coastalnewstoday.com/>

Climate Shock: The Economic Consequences of a Hotter Planet by Gernot Wagner & Martin L. Weitzman

NEXT STEPS

Participants are invited to provide comments, corrections, and additions. In particular, if anyone wants to volunteer to take responsibility for any of the proposed actions, let us know. We could plan to meet in conjunction with the next SANDAG Shoreline Preservation Working Group scheduled for June.