



# Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Program Technical Advisory Council Resilience Metrics Work Group Meeting

## Meeting Minutes

October 20, 2021 | Zoom Video Conference | 1:00 – 2:30 PM

### Item 1 | Welcome and Roll Call

Present: Jacob Alvarez, Nathan Bengsston, Karalee Browne, Malinda Dumisani (Alternate for Shereen D'Souza), Laura Engeman, David Loya, Jonathan Parfrey, Sydney Chamberlain (Alternate for Michelle Passero), Linda Helland (Alternate for Mark Starr), Melissa Higbee (Alternate for Brian Strong), John Wentworth

Absent: Christina Curry, Grant Davis, Jana Ganion, Jason Greenspan, Amanda Hansen, Nuin-Tara Key, Dan McDonald, Sona Mohnot, Darwin Moosavi, Andrea Ouse, Gloria Walton, Wilma Wooten

### Item 2 | Approval of Draft Meeting Minutes

#### DISCUSSION

Juliette Finzi Hart tabled the discussion and action for approval of the draft work group 7/21/2021 meeting minutes for review at a future Council meeting.

### Item 3 | Landscape Resilience Framework Presentation

Dr. Letitia Grenier provided an overview of the San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI) [Landscape Resilience Framework](#) and framed the resilience metrics discussion around system function.

#### DISCUSSION

Juliette Finzi Hart: As we're thinking about our resilience metrics, we are trying to understand all the metrics that will show that built, natural, and social systems are functioning as they should.

Jonathan Parfrey: Has SFEI looked into creating resilience hubs for people who live in the Delta or along the San Francisco Bay as part of an integrated approach to resilience for natural systems and people, as well as carbon sequestration? There is funding for state conservancies from the latest budget, \$60 million, to do resilience planning and implementation work – are you contemplating similar services?

Dr. Letitia Grenier: There's a lot of alignment between natural and human systems. Resilience hubs work would come through our role in Bay Adapt as a science advisor to the larger partnership effort. Our Urban Nature Lab group supports urban residents through nature-based interventions to improve human health and well-being. We partner with design firms that are doing things like resilience hubs, but our role tends to be nature focused. There's a lot of overlap and alignment between the different goals and metrics. Nature-based interventions, including resilience hubs, have potential to hit multiple goals and metrics.

Sydney Chamberlain: How do you craft robust metrics under uncertain futures in the Delta, when those uncertainties can lead to political and sociocultural impacts? How do you fold those considerations in?

Dr. Letitia Grenier: Rather than look at different envelopes of future climate conditions, we try to create a metric that is resilient in any of the scenarios. Rather than creating the absolute minimum, we think about supporting more robust solutions. However, we need to adjust our process to do more targeted outreach and receive everybody's metrics. We don't have tribal or farmworker metrics. We hear from landowners and sport fisherman, but not subsistence fishers. If we get those missing metrics, we can compare them across the board, and achieve more equity in the metrics we're looking at.

Jacob Alvarez: Thank you for your work to support underwater ecosystems. A lot of natural systems have been disrupted, and the experiential knowledge of seeing the changes over a long length of time is important. I'm also interested in the water system and metrics related to that. Were there any unanticipated beneficial findings?

Dr. Letitia Grenier: On the sociocultural piece, there's a lack of place based-ness due to the transient populations in the area; people don't know much about the ecological facets of the place. We need to ask local tribes for their traditional ecological knowledge to get better outcomes, and ask local communities what they want to connect them to their local landscapes. In terms of surprises, we're familiar with nature restoration related surprises, which are many and mostly not good, such as invasive species. Ecosystems are very resilient. We've cornered freshwater ecosystems into such small spaces, so of course we're not getting a lot of returns. Even giving a little back to the ecosystem yields a lot more benefits than we anticipated.

Laura Engeman: Some of the challenges of creating resilience metrics challenges are timeline and expectations given the climate impacts, and the landscape transition capacity. A big question in any of this work is public vs. private land stewardship. There needs to be an emphasis in resilience metrics toward public management of lands, such as collaboratively managed or publicly managed resources. Otherwise we land in an urbanized squeeze where there's not enough space to restore ecosystems. This relates to reconnecting people to the land. On the coast, wealthy people often have the most say, but lots of other people benefit from the coastal resources or have ancestral ties, and we need to have their buy in and stewardship involved.

Shana Rapoport: Has SFEI attempted to develop metrics for resources important to tribes? If so, have tribes participated in/been supportive of these efforts?

Dr. Letitia Grenier: The way we've tried to deal with expanding the reach beyond the wealthier voices and/or just the landowners, is to frame the message that anyone who has a stake in the landscape - who lives, works, and plays in the Delta - should have a say. Then it's a matter of identifying those voices, then identifying the values and functions that matter to them, and then creating metrics to represent their voice in the process. So many tribes have moved away from the coast and wetland and their ancestral lands. The presentation that I've shared today has brought in a few Delta tribes. The idea of holistic functions and ecosystems ties into the way that tribes think about natural resources. We're still trying to build relationships and trust with tribes, as well as fund that work. We just finished a project with the Ramaytush Ohlone Tribe from San Mateo County, where we collaborated on an Exploratorium presentation called Hidden Nature San Francisco. How the State will engage communities, and involve everyone and not just the usual white-led, well funded organizations or communities, is a huge question.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

None received.

#### Item 4 | State Adaptation Strategy and Resilience Metrics

Juliette Finzi Hart reviewed discussion outcomes from previous work group meetings, the structure of the [2021 Draft California Climate Adaptation Strategy](#) and feedback process for resilience metrics, and opened the floor for discussion.

#### DISCUSSION

Laura Engeman: Some metrics are narrow, while others are broad. Are you thinking about how to make the broad metrics more specific?

Juliette Finzi Hart: The phrasing and specifics of the metrics originated from a wide variety of state agency documents with different scopes and levels. Is that a roadblock to measuring success?

Laura Engeman: It's similar to the first version of the state adaptation plan, which was broad and nebulous, so you may hear feedback on that in your outreach.

Jonathan Parfrey: In some of these strategies, there are metrics that may not be achievable; there's a tension between the goal, and the current resources that are available to achieve it during the identified time frame. Local governments don't have the capacity to apply for grants, implement projects, and prepare for climate impacts. Will elected officials be pleased with a plan that forever sees us falling short of our goals?

Juliette Finzi Hart: If we have a comprehensive suite of metrics, we could theoretically do a scenario analysis and identify the best pathway for achieving resilient functions.

Karalee Browne: The new Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) numbers are also out, and may fall short of the goals too. I think local governments are looking for guidance on where to go and how to start, while still trying to revitalize their downtowns. Local governments have a number of audacious goals and unfunded mandates with little idea how to achieve them. Providing targets and metrics is a good way to help local governments think through these problems. No government is the same, so flexibility and understanding that no local government is the same is important in both state level goals, as well as how we're asking locals to contribute to the state goals and create their own.

Juliette Finzi Hart: This relates to the idea of consistency and flexibility we heard early on: have some guardrails towards a particular direction, but allow folks to take their own approach. The idea is that the Strategy does provide those guardrails. This broader resilience metrics work is where we can think about how a local government can fit in and what their metrics might look like.

Melissa Higbee: On the theory of change slides, it seems like there's a missing middle, or "how," in the theory of how we get from point A to B. Community capacity building leads to resilience for all – but how? Maybe that metric should read "Communities are able to advocate for needs and their priorities are better reflected in policy, and therefore that leads to more resilience for all". In the disaster recovery goal, for some people returning to cities and towns after a disaster is just not appropriate in the short term when people may find better outcomes elsewhere. Consider "people who experience disasters are able to achieve housing, jobs, and retain quality of life" rather than a place-based metric. Or, if place based, maybe it's that "cities are able to restore local housing and jobs according to local plans and priorities." That goal may not be appropriate for all communities, and the strategy should consider a people-centric or health-driven perspective in disaster recovery.

Juliette Finzi Hart: To clarify on the first part, the "hows" are meant to be the actions in the Strategy draft. The theory is that if we take a particular approach we will achieve a particular result. That's helpful framing for the Strategy. The comments you were seeing are what we heard in conversations prior to this, but not specific actions or goals in the strategy.

Nathan Bengsston: The SFEI presentation helpfully demonstrated the relationship between physical processes and functions. I agree with Melissa about the need for that middle "how" which is important for what's next.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

Kathleen Ave: Did the strategy development work contain any analysis of the private sector contributions needed to achieve the goals that are identified? My concern is

that this is portrayed as a government-only endeavor, which is damaging to perpetuate to our goals. We can't do it alone as governments.

Juliette Finzi Hart: The sixth priority is about leveraging public-private partnerships. This Strategy draft outlines the state's strategy and actions, but it will require a whole-of-California approach beyond just government. We welcome your feedback on whether those priorities are reflected.

#### **Item 5 | General Public Comment**

None received.

#### **Item 6 | Closing, Future Agenda Items, and Meeting Adjourned**

Juliette Finzi Hart: Next meeting is November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Please take a look at the Draft California Climate Adaptation Strategy!