



STAFF REPORT – CITY COUNCIL MEETING

March 28, 2023

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: David Loya, Director of Community Development

PREPARER: David Loya, Director of Community Development

DATE: March 20, 2023

TITLE: **Consider a Panel Discussion on Sea Level Rise.**

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Council open the panel discussion on sea level rise to inform long-range planning decisions, including the General Plan, Local Coastal Program, and other planning efforts that may require consideration of the impact of sea level rise future hazards.

INTRODUCTION:

The City has been working on coastal planning issues for nearly a decade. The City commissioned two vulnerability assessments in 2018. And the Planning Commission and staff have been reviewing the Local Coastal Program update draft since 2019. The Commission and Council held a study session in August of 2022, at which time the Council asked the Commission to identify issues they needed to resolve before making a recommendation on the Gateway Area Plan (Plan). Sea level rise was one topic the Commission voted to address prior to making a recommendation on the Plan. Since sea level has impacts outside of the boundaries of the Plan area, this study session was designed to address impacts throughout the City. This meeting is primarily an opportunity for the Commission and Council to obtain information they feel is necessary to make long-range planning decisions.

DISCUSSION:

There has been considerable effort put into sea level rise planning over the last decade. The following table provides a list of recent resources. These will be useful to decision makers balancing the potential impacts of sea level rise against the need for current and future community needs, including housing and economic development.

SLR RESOURCE	DESCRIPTION
CITY'S SLR VULNERABILITY STUDIES 2018	City of Arcata sea level rise vulnerability studies conducted by Northern Hydrology and Trinity Associates. This work outlined the modeled water elevations and hazards associated for various sea level elevations. These reports informed the Local Coastal Element sea level rise chapter.

[LCP UPDATE 2023/24](#)

Local coastal element and engagement on the Local Coastal Program update.

[WWTP VULNERABILITY ANALYSIS 2022](#)

Wastewater treatment plant (Plant) vulnerability analysis developed for the City’s Coastal Development Permit for the Plant. The analysis was accepted by the Coastal Commission and the Coastal Development Permit for Phase 1 of the Plant project was approved.

[NOAA MAPPER](#)

Easy to use data visualization tool that shows the “bathtub model” inundation for up to 10 feet of sea level rise. Zoom into Arcata and use the slider tool on the left to observe maximum inundation footprint if nothing is done to prevent tidal inundation.

[FAQ](#)

Arcata Gateway Area Plan FAQ, which has some information on sea level rise.

[WWTP SLR CONDITION](#)

This is the condition of approval for the Plant project that the Coastal Commission applied to the Phase 1 project approval. This work is being coordinated between the State Waterboard, the Coastal Commission, and the City.

The Council may consider following the meeting outline provided in the attached summary of the panel discussion (Attachment A). The format allows for brief presentations by the federal, state, and local sea level rise experts; a panel discussion with prepared questions; then Council and Commission questions to panelists; followed by any closing statements.

Public comment on this item will occur under Agenda Item II.

ATTACHMENTS:

A. Meeting Outline 2023.03.28 (DOCX)