

San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Advisory Committee  
**Report of the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Recommendations to Benefit Economically  
Disadvantaged Communities**

December 13, 2019

(Revised based on decision of Advisory Committee Meeting of October 11, 2019)

Dr. Ana M. Alvarez on behalf of the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Economically Disadvantaged Communities  
with staff support provided by Jessica Davenport, Deputy Program Manager, San Francisco Bay  
Restoration Authority

This memo presents work of the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Economically Disadvantaged Communities (EDCs) under the Advisory Committee (AC) of the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority (Authority). The Ad Hoc Subcommittee on EDCs has identified a set of recommendations, as described in this memo, for the consideration by the Advisory Committee to provide to the Governing Board. Twenty-four recommendations are presented in order of priority under categories of Near-Term (12 total), Short-Term (10 total), and Long-Term (2 total), which were developed through the review of several documents and practices including an Authority-commissioned equity-focused community-based assessment (CBA Report) entitled *Establishing an Equity and Community Engagement Program that Benefits Economically Disadvantaged Communities*. The CBA Report was distributed to AC members in digital format in advance of the October 11, 2019 AC meeting. The timing of implementation of these recommendations may be modified by Authority staff based on their capacity. However, the Ad Hoc Subcommittee has expressed a need for swift implementation as soon as the Governing Board approves, in order to demonstrate commitment to benefiting EDCs through action. It is acknowledged that some recommendations will be easier to accomplish than others, and progress towards having a more equitable process will be made incrementally each year.

## Subcommittee Members

Dr. Ana M. Alvarez (Lead)  
Deputy General Manager, East Bay Regional  
Park District

Myla Ablog  
Sole Proprietor, Environmental Consultant

Letitia Grenier  
Resilient Landscapes Program Director, San  
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Zahra Kelly  
Director of Public Advocacy, Nature in the City

Shin-Roei Lee  
Board Director, Chinese American  
Environmental Professional Association

David Lewis  
Executive Director, Save the Bay

Sally Lieber  
President Cardea, Center for Women

Mike Mielke  
Vice President, Silico Valley Leadership Group

Anne Morkill  
SF Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex Manager,  
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Marina Psaros  
Principal, Corovai

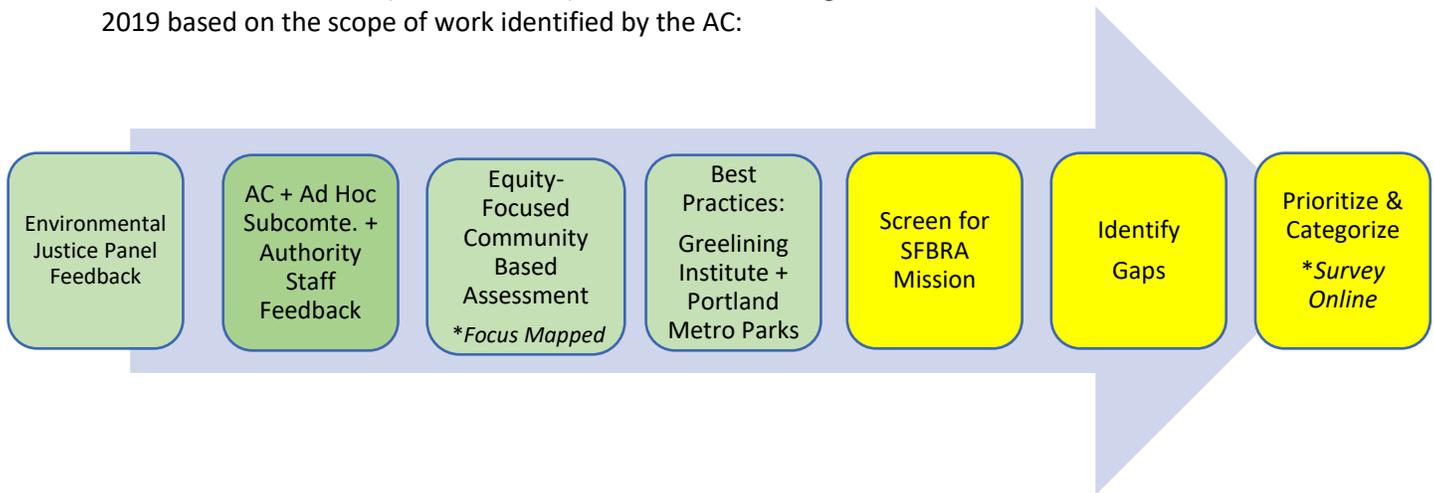
Ana Maria Ruiz  
General Manager, Midpeninsula Regional Open  
Space District

Diane Williams  
Health Educator, Planting Justice

Luisa Valiela  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

## Scope & Method

The Advisory Committee defined the scope of work as prioritizing projects that benefit EDCs. The Ad Hoc Subcommittee on EDCs (Subcommittee) took on the following tasks from October 2018 to October 1, 2019 based on the scope of work identified by the AC:



- Reviewed the feedback and recommended actions presented by the Environmental Justice Panel and follow-up document prepared by Authority staff with input from AC members.
- Met to develop near-term recommendations on most pressing needs (i.e., for the upcoming third grant round) and define the Subcommittee’s role of screening the consultant’s ideas prior to presenting them to the AC.
- Reviewed a draft of the CBA Report.
- Met to review best practices from others, including the Greenlining Institute, Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN), and Portland Metro Parks; hear a presentation by the equity consultant on the CBA Report and discuss the findings; and rank the CBA recommendations based on feasibility and impact through a mapping exercise.
- Met for a working session to screen recommendations for consistency with the Authority’s mission, identify gaps, and solicit priorities.
- Conducted an online survey to better understand priorities, identify gaps, and categorize recommendations with respect to timing (near-term, short-term and long-term).
- Reviewed, coalesced, and prioritized ideas to develop recommendations herein.

## Background and Timeline

The overarching goal of the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on EDC is to develop recommendations on what steps the Authority should take to achieve Measure AA’s goal of prioritizing projects that benefit economically disadvantaged communities. Work to date has included:

- **June 2018 – Environmental Justice (EJ) Panel** - Three EJ experts, including members of community-based organizations (Phoenix Armenta, Anthony Khalil, and Douglas Mundo), provided insights and suggestions regarding how the Measure AA grant program can better engage with and serve EDCs at the June 29, 2018 AC meeting.
- **August 2018—EJ Panel Follow-Up Document.** Authority staff prepared a follow-up document to the Environmental Justice Panel with input from AC members.
- **September 2018 – Equity Performance Measure.** The Recommendations from the Advisory Committee to the Governing Board on Performance Measures and Annual Report Format, presented at the Sept. 21, 2018 Governing Board meeting, included the performance metric “Percentage of projects providing benefits to economically disadvantaged communities”.

- **October 2018 – Formation of the Subcommittee.** Authority staff presented a Proposal to Develop a Community Engagement Program for the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority. Rather than endorse the proposal, the AC decided to form a Community Engagement / EDC Ad Hoc Subcommittee. This occurred at the October 5, 2018 AC meeting.
- **February 2019 – Hiring of Equity Consultant.** The Authority allocated \$25,000 to hire an Equity Consultant to establish both immediate recommendations for the next round of grant applications and long-term recommendations for the grant program. The consultant was tasked to:
  - Identify recommendations, opportunities and challenges associated with the Authority's overall approach for integrating racial and environmental justice into its operations over the life of Measure AA;
  - Identify gaps in the Measure AA grant program related to serving and engaging economically disadvantaged, or frontline communities; and
  - Recommend approaches, strategies and actions for addressing those gaps
- **February 15, 2019 – Ad Hoc Subcommittee Meeting #1.** The Subcommittee met to develop near-term recommendations on most pressing needs (i.e., for the upcoming third grant round) and define the Subcommittee's role of screening the consultant's ideas prior to presenting them to the AC.
- **March 2019– Brainstorming on Near-Term Recommendations.** Equity consultant, Nahal Ghoghaie Ipakchi, led a brainstorming session conducted by the to identify potential recommendations for benefiting EDCs that could potentially be incorporated in the Authority's third grant round.
  - **June 2019 – Staff Update on Grant Round 3.** At the June 28, 2019 Advisory Committee meeting, Authority staff noted that they had made a recommendation to the Governing Board to modify Round 3 solicitation by extending the application due date for Round 3 to give applicants more time, as suggested by equity experts, and adding a reference to tips for meaningful community engagement.
- **August 27, 2019 – Draft CBA Report Provided to the Ad Hoc Subcommittee.**
- **August 30, 2019–Ad Hoc Subcommittee Meeting #2.** The Subcommittee reviewed best practices from others, including the Greenlining Institute, Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN), and Portland Metro Parks; heard a presentation by the equity consultant on the CBA Report and discussed the findings; and ranked the CBA recommendations based on feasibility and impact through a mapping exercise.
- **September 19, 2019–Ad Hoc Subcommittee Meeting #3.** The Subcommittee met for a working session to screen recommendations for consistency with the Authority's mission, identify gaps, and solicit priorities.
- **September 25, 2019 – Online Survey.** Subcommittee members completed a survey help prioritize and categorize the recommendations that are summarized in this report as well as identify gaps.

## Recommendations

The CBA Report identified 17 recommendations organized into five thematic areas. Most of these recommendations also include several tasks to support implementation. A survey of EDC Ad Hoc Subcommittee members along with meeting discussions were used to categorize and prioritize the CBA Report recommendations and identify additional recommendations. The priority recommendations are organized below based on an implementation timeline. If the recommendations are from the CBA Report the number of the recommendation is noted in parentheses; if the recommendation was from the Ad Hoc Subcommittee outside of the CBA Report the recommendation is noted as '(Cmte)'.

### Near-Term Actions– 6 to 12 Months

#### **1.1 Adopt Guiding Principles of Building Trust and Fostering Partnerships. (Revised)**

*Build trust* with community-based organizations and economically disadvantaged communities.

- Any grantee receiving funding from Measure AA should be responsible for trust and community building.
- Trust building should be prioritized over capacity building, which may be better accomplished by project applicants.

*Foster partnerships* between community-based organizations and local government and/or project implementing entities.

#### **1.2 Request a Letter of Inquiry** prior to submitting grant application.

The Authority will allow prospective applicants for grant funding the opportunity to submit a letter of inquiry to determine if the proposed project is ready for funding and would make a strong application. If a project is not determined to have the basis for a strong application, the Authority will have the opportunity to provide feedback and guidance on how the project could become a better candidate for funding.

#### **1.3 Conduct community outreach workshops** for prospective applicants.

Offer community workshops for community-based organizations to inquire about application process and implementation expectations (intended outcomes).

#### **1.4 Amend scoring criteria** to show stronger nexus/relationships with EDCs.

Incorporate social and racial justice principles into required criteria.

Add specific scoring criteria for applicants to demonstrate that proposed projects have local community support and/or to demonstrate engagement with EDCs.

Community workshops to be explicitly required in the grant application to demonstrate engagement with communities and support for proposed project.

Going beyond applicants demonstrating their projects are adjacent to EDCs.

#### **1.5 Visit economically disadvantaged communities** residing along the bay shoreline with the Governing Board, Advisory Committee, and Authority staff to better understand issues and potential opportunities.

#### **1.6 Examine the feasibility to extend compensation to community members and leaders** for their participation and contribution.

**1.7 Create a document with a basic template of what's expected of applicants** with examples of what a competitive proposal looks like and how to implement the scoring criteria in order to help clarify eligibility requirements.

**1.8 Create an application checklist** for the applicants with a roadmap/blueprint of what they need to have ready in order to fulfill the grant criteria written in plain and accessible language.

**1.9 Simplify language and phrasing in Measure AA communications materials.** Phrasing and language of Measure AA can discourage smaller agencies and organizations from applying. The language needs to be concise and more inclusive.

**1.10 Enter all funded and potential EDC projects into EcoAtlas** as a project hub. Once these projects can be visualized, it will be easier to see if and how these projects can be consolidated or integrated with other bigger projects to achieve a higher level of benefits on a watershed scale.

### Short-Term – 1-2 Years

**2.1 Seek more diverse and accurate representation** on the Authority's Advisory Committee, Citizen Oversight Committee and on the Governing Board (15).

**2.2 More directly involve community participants in the grant process** including guidance, development, implementation and scoring (15.1).

**2.3 Develop a second, separate application track for small community groups.** Community groups should not have to compete against much more established organizations and larger agencies with the capacity and resources required to apply under the current process (9).

**2.4 Prioritize building capacity of partners and applicants from historically underrepresented groups by offering technical assistance to support first-time applicants** with navigating the process and eliminating barriers (11).

**2.5 Leverage capacity by identifying community-based groups** with the administrative capabilities to partner with smaller and/or grass roots organizations to apply for and manage a government restoration grants (Cmte).

**2.6 Provide project planning assistance** to help local groups identify appropriate projects and habitat restoration goals (Cmte)

**2.7 Require or encourage project applicants to engage communities** with a focus on disadvantaged communities during or prior to the design process (14.1).

**2.8 Recognize community-based expertise** and confidence in genuinely community-led processes (14.2).

**2.9 Reevaluate budgets** to allow the true cost of community engagement (14.4).

**2.10 Identify and work with community leaders who have already created a trusting relationship with the people in the community (4.3)**

Long-Term – 3-5 Years

**3.1 Establish a communications strategy** that fosters relevance through better understanding needs and priorities of underrepresented community groups (3).

**3.2 Seek ways for the Authority funds to support work the community is already doing** or interested in doing. Meet with communities to identify how Measure AA funding can go to support their current and planned work (Cmte).

Other Potential Recommendations

Other recommendations from the CBA report may be added or further evaluated, if desired by the Advisory Committee, but are not included in this initial set of recommendations. Also, while not identified as a top priority and presented in the above lists, the following CBA Report recommendations were of interest to some of the Ad Hoc Subcommittee members and can be further considered for inclusion by the Advisory Committee.

- Require partnerships with locally-based community groups and organizations to carry out education and outreach efforts (4).
- Reduce administrative burdens and reporting requirements wherever possible (7).
- Establish a communications strategy that fosters relevance through better understanding needs and priorities of underrepresented community groups (3)

CBA Recommendations Potentially Beyond Authority’s Scope, Require Further Consideration, or Were Not Prioritized

The following recommendations were not prioritized by any of the Ad Hoc Subcommittee members as they require further examination and could be further considered by the Advisory Committee:

- Promote intersectional engagement and emphasize projects that cut across disciplinary silos (6).
- Hire communications and outreach staff with above average cultural competency and sensitivity towards low-income communities of color (2).
- Hold committee meetings throughout the subregions of the Bay Area to promote inclusivity and diversity of perspectives (16).
- Cultivate partnership development skills for agency staff to foster long-term relationships with community and build trust. (10)

The following recommendations were thought by some to potentially be beyond the Authority’s Scope/Mission (depending on implementation) and may need further evaluation by Authority staff:

- Establish a network or database that serves as a hub to facilitate connections between funding opportunities and grassroots organizations. A system that would encourage collaboration and integration with other regional efforts is needed. (8)

- Cultivate partnership development skills for agency staff to foster long-term relationships with community and build trust. (10)
- Include funding for education and trainings for community advocacy and governance. (12)
- Organize and execute a robust community education campaign. (13)
- Reach beyond diversity for leadership roles by striving for truly inclusive staffing through the executive levels. (17)