



City Manager Lorie Tinfow contributes a monthly column to the *Pacifica Tribune* to connect with local residents and keep Pacificans informed on issues that are of current interest in the City of Pacifica. Below is the submission for the August 3, 2016 edition of the *Pacifica Tribune*, which focuses on the topic of Sea Level Rise.

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### City of Pacifica to Chart a Course Toward Sea Level Rise Policy

At the Council's goal-setting meeting in July, Council members grappled with setting priorities among a myriad of wide-ranging projects and initiatives. Having completed four of the priorities on their work plan for 2015-16, they considered what to add and how to prioritize the new group.

Coming in as priority number four, was a new initiative: developing a policy related to sea level rise.

The recent winter storms have raised our awareness of the impacts of sea level rise and climate change. Powerful waves resulting from severe storm conditions and king tides created significant damage that threatens City infrastructure. Since the effects of sea level rise and climate change are projected to continue and worsen, now is the time to determine how the City will proceed in terms of not just repairing the immediate damage but looking ahead and creating a policy direction for the next 30, 50, 100 years.

In simple terms, there appears to be two policy options—"managed retreat" (also referred to as strategic retreat or managed realignment) and something referred to as "asset protection".

**Managed Retreat** involves breaching an existing coastal defense, such as a sea wall or an embankment, and allowing the land behind to be flooded by the incoming tide, thus setting back the line of actively maintained coastline.

Alternatively, **Asset Protection** means taking steps to protect infrastructure such as streets, trails, utility lines, and other facilities, against the wave action and rising sea level. The City and County of San Francisco have taken this approach related to the Oceanside Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Approximately 40% of Pacifica's coastline has development adjacent to it, mostly clustered in the Manor, West Sharp Park and Rockaway districts. The City infrastructure immediately at risk include the streets of Esplanade Avenue, Beach Boulevard, Rockaway Beach Avenue, and Palmetto Avenue, the utilities below them, and the pump station near the Pacifica Pier. Private property is also at risk including homes, apartments, and businesses especially our hotels.

To begin to understand the issues, the City commissioned a study by internationally respected engineering firm Moffat & Nichol of the coastal hazard risks related to City property at 2212 Beach Boulevard where we have plans for a hotel, restaurant and new library. The study concluded that as long as the City maintains the sea wall along Beach Boulevard, the hazards through at least 2100 are likely to be minimal. (A copy of the study is available on the City website.)

Each direction—managed retreat and asset protection—has significant impacts and significant costs. We have applied for grants to help cover repairs to our damaged areas and have started discussions with the US Army Corps of Engineers and our State and Federal elected officials toward understanding funding opportunities for longer term options.

The City Council recognizes the importance of determining the best direction for the City and we are preparing for a public study session, likely later this month, to start this crucial discussion of Pacifica's future. To receive notices about this and other meetings, please email [ConnectwithPacifica@ci.pacifica.ca.us](mailto:ConnectwithPacifica@ci.pacifica.ca.us).

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