

# State Route 37-Baylands Group Update

Jessica Davenport, Deputy Program Manager  
North Bay Watershed Association Board Meeting  
February 4, 2022



# State Route 37 Policy Committee

- Elected Officials from North Bay Counties
- Goal: Reconstruct SR 37 to withstand flooding while improving mobility and safety.



Photo courtesy of  
The Press Democrat

# State Route (SR) 37-Baylands Group

Formed in June 2017 in response to accelerated action by the  
SR 37 Policy Committee



Photo  
courtesy of  
Ducks  
Unlimited

DK

# The Fear: A Dam Across the North Bay?



The conservation community said “No!”





Marin  
Audubon

San Pablo  
Bay NWR

CDFW  
Napa  
Sonoma  
Marshes

Sonoma Land  
Trust

Coastal  
Conservancy

Vallejo

Novato

Google Earth

101

Image Landsat / Copernicus  
© 2017 Google

4 mi

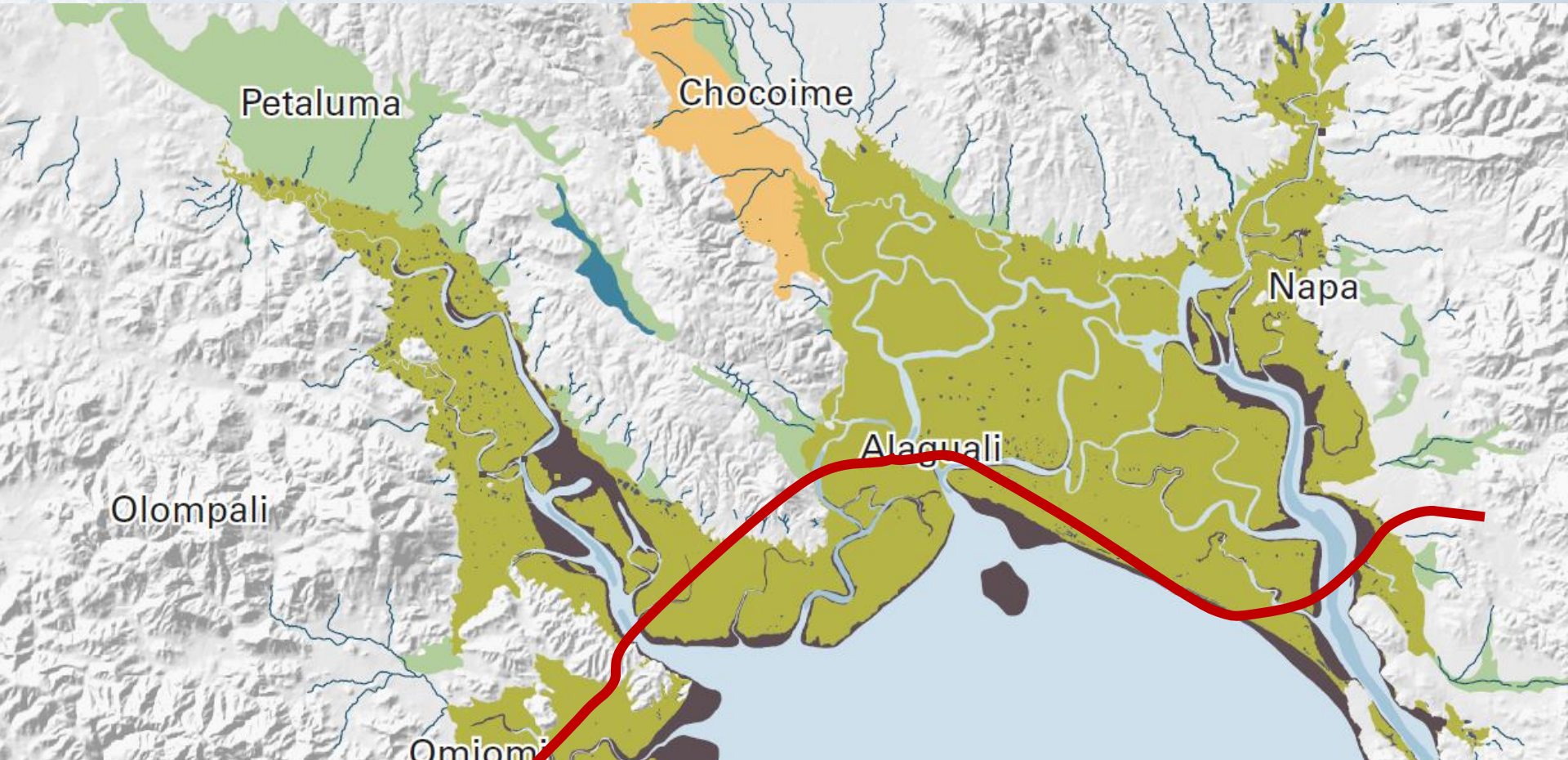


# Message: Integrate, Don't Mitigate

Integrate **infrastructure improvements** for SR 37 with existing and future **habitat** planning, conservation and restoration to ensure **healthy ecosystem function** and **resilience** to landscape scale change of the San Pablo Bay.



# Baylands Goals Report is the Blueprint



***Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals Report: Science Update, 2015:***

**“Elevate Highway 37... to allow the full passage of sediment, water and wildlife.”**





# SR 37-Baylands Group Goals

- Create and Promote Adoption of Our Guiding Principles
- Influence Transportation and Public Access Planning
- Develop an Ecological Landscape Vision



Photo courtesy of Sonoma Land Trust

# Guiding Principles

- **Integrate** improvements to SR 37 with habitat goals
- Improve **ecological connectivity** when reconstructing SR 37
- Develop design solutions **appropriate to the landscape** of the Baylands, considering historical ecology and sea level rise
- Planning should be **corridor-wide**, not in segments
- **SLR projections** should be based on the most recent OPC report
- Near-term solutions must protect wetland resources and **leave options open for future restoration**
- **Minimize financial impacts** to low-income commuters
- Include **multi-modal transportation** options and **recreation** opportunities

# Influencing Transportation Planning



## **SR 37** Transportation and Sea Level Rise Corridor Improvement Plan

- Plan was prepared for Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Caltrans and county transportation agencies, completed in Feb. 2018
- Includes SR 37-Baylands Group's Guiding Principles

# Evolution of the SR 37 Project/Program Purpose



## PROGRAM PURPOSE

DELIVER A CORRIDOR PROGRAM THAT RESULTS IN COMMUNITY BENEFITS FOR ALL



Sea Level Rise  
Adaptation

Improve resiliency of transportation infrastructure to sea level rise and flooding



Transportation

Improve traffic flow and peak travel times by relieving congestion and increasing person throughput



Equity

Enhance the quality of life for residents and build stronger local and regional economy for all



Ecology

Restore ecological and hydrologic flows to enhance productivity of wetlands and Baylands



Public Access

Provide accommodation for multimodal use and facilitate public access to natural resources

**RESILIENTSR37**

Source: State Route 37 Resilient Corridor Program, Metropolitan Transportation Commission-Led Team, November 8, 2018

# Evolution of the SR 37 Project/Program Purpose

## FINAL PEL PURPOSE STATEMENT

- Preserving a critical regional transportation corridor that is resilient to extreme events while integrating ecological resiliency which facilitates adaptation to sea level rise
- Providing reliable travel time and increasing average vehicle occupancy
- Providing safe mobility for bicyclists and pedestrians
- Maintaining and enhancing public access, including to recreational areas
- Providing equitable transit and multimodal transportation solutions that improve access for, and provides meaningful benefits to all users of SR 37, with special consideration of underserved communities

Source: State Route 37 Resilient Corridor Program, Planning and Environmental Linkages Study, Caltrans-Led Team, November 19, 2021

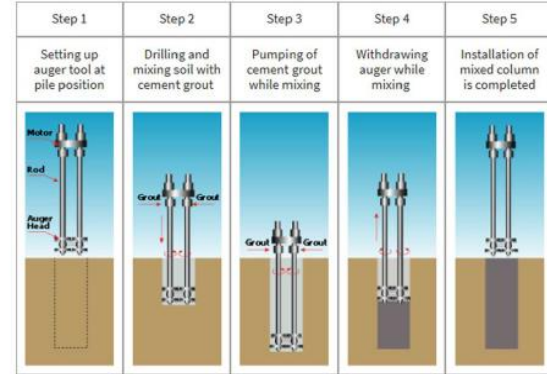
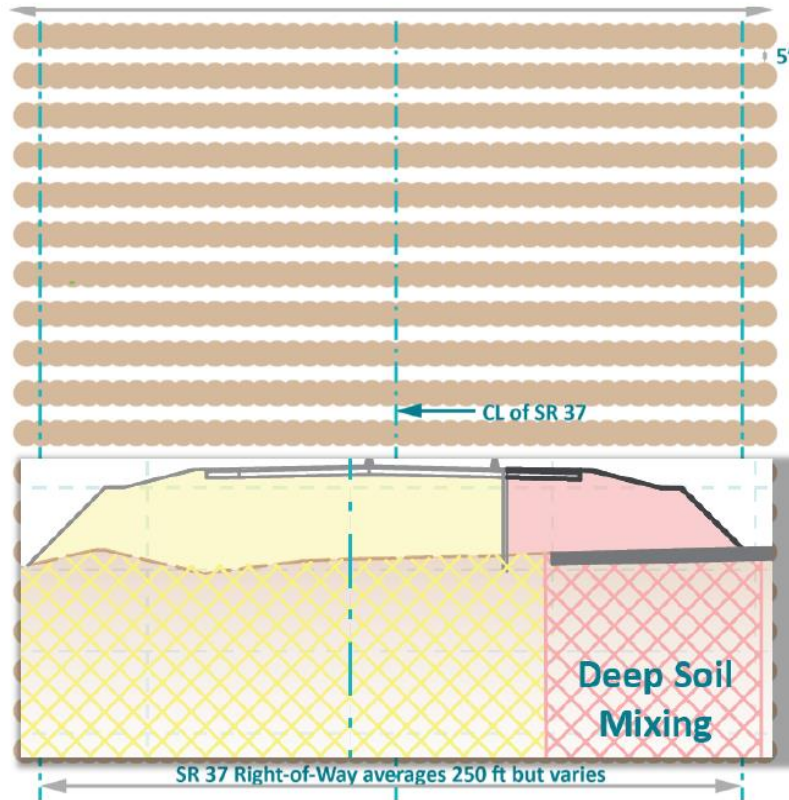
# MTC-Led Design Alternatives Assessments (DAAs): Consideration of Alternative Alignments



Source: Environmental Technical Working Group Meeting #4, SR 37 DAA for US 101 to SR 121, Funded by Caltrans Grant to Metropolitan Transportation Commission, September 2021

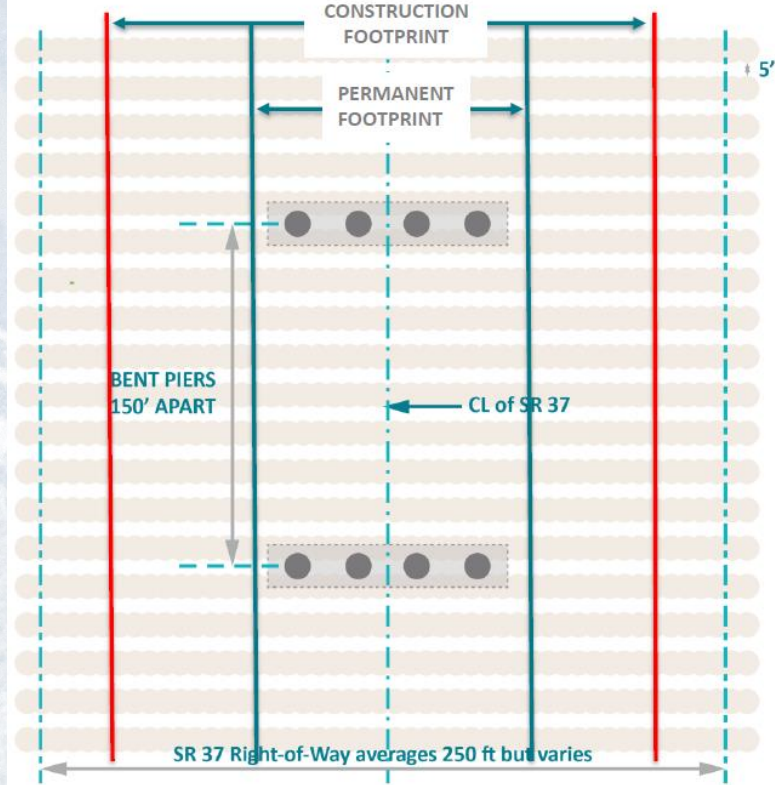
# Consideration of Alternative Types of Structures: Embankment

## EMBANKMENT: CONSTRUCTION AND PERMANENT FOOTPRINT



# Consideration of Alternative Types of Structures: Causeway

## CAUSEWAY: PERMANENT AND CONSTRUCTION FOOTPRINT



Source: Environmental Technical Working Group Meeting #4, SR 37 DAA for US 101 to SR 121, Funded by Caltrans Grant to Metropolitan Transportation Commission, September 2021



# Combinations of Causeway and Embankment on Various Alignments

## West Reach US 101 to SR 121

- On – SR 37 **Alternative A1A** - Hybrid
- On – SR 37 **Alternative A1B** - Causeway
- Over-Bay **Alternative A2**
- Bahia/Atherton **Alternative A3**
- Burdell/Hog Island **Alternative A4**

## Center Reach SR 121 to Mare Island

- On – SR 37 **Alternative B1A** - Hybrid
- On – SR 37 **Alternative B1B** - Causeway
- Over-Bay **Alternative B2**



Source: Environmental Technical Working Group Meeting #4, SR 37 DAA for US 101 to SR 121, Funded by Caltrans Grant to Metropolitan Transportation Commission, September 2021

# Identifying Environmentally Preferred Alternative

Natural Resources <i>(Total footprint Perm &amp; Construction Impacts)</i>	#	US 101 to SR 121 (West Reach)					SR 121 to Mare Island (Center Reach)		
		Alternative A1A On-SR 37 - Embankment	Alternative A1B On-SR 37 - Causeway	Alternative A2 Over-Bay	Alternative A3 Bahia/ Atherton	Alternative A4 Burdell/Hog Island	Alternative B1A On-SR 37 - Embankment	Alternative B1B On-SR 37 - Causeway	Alternative B2 Over-Bay
Wetlands/Waters	NR1	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Orange	Orange	Red
Special-status Species with Potential to Occur	NR2	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Red	Red	Red	Orange
Critical Habitat	NR3	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Red
Ecological Connectivity	NR4	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Red	Green	Green	Yellow
Water Crossings accommodate Future Tidal	NR5	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow
Future Tidal Habitat and Transition Zone Habitat	NR6	Orange	Green	Green	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Green	Green
Future Bird Habitat	NR7	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green
Future Ecological Connectivity	NR8	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Orange

Source: Environmental Technical Working Group Meeting #4, SR 37 DAA for US 101 to SR 121, Funded by Caltrans Grant to Metropolitan Transportation Commission, September 2021

# RESILIENT SR 37 PROGRAM — PHASED IMPLEMENTATION

CONCURRENT PROJECT DEVELOPMENT. DELIVER EARLY COMMUNITY BENEFITS.

*Environmental - Design - Construction*

- Flood Protection Project (US 101 — Lakeville Hwy)
- Congestion Relief Project (SR 121 — Mare Island)
- Early Ecological Enhancements
- Transit With Emerging Technology

## Early Benefits



Transition

- SR 37 Corridor SLR Adaptation Project (I-80 — US 101)
- Bike/Pedestrian/Public Access
- Transit With Tomorrow's Technology

## RESILIENTSR37



Today

2025

2040

2050

RESILIENTSR37

Source: State Route 37 Resilient Corridor Program,  
Metropolitan Transportation Commission, State of the Estuary  
Conference, October 22, 2019

# Caltrans-Led Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study

## What is PEL?

### LOOKS AT BIG PICTURE



- Examines broad area or corridor.
- Establishes long-term transportation vision.
- Sets the stage for focused, future projects.

# Caltrans-Led Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study: To Be Completed Mid-Late 2022

## **STEP 4: Develop and Evaluate Alternative Concepts**

Through an iterative process of laying out, evaluating, refining, and improving concepts, develop a set of recommendations for short- and long-term solutions.

### **Groups Involved**

Caltrans will draft preliminary PEL alternatives based on input received from various Working Groups. To the extent necessary, Caltrans will prepare conceptual design drawings for each alternative carried forward for more detailed evaluation.

### **STEP 4 Deliverables**

Caltrans will produce the following:

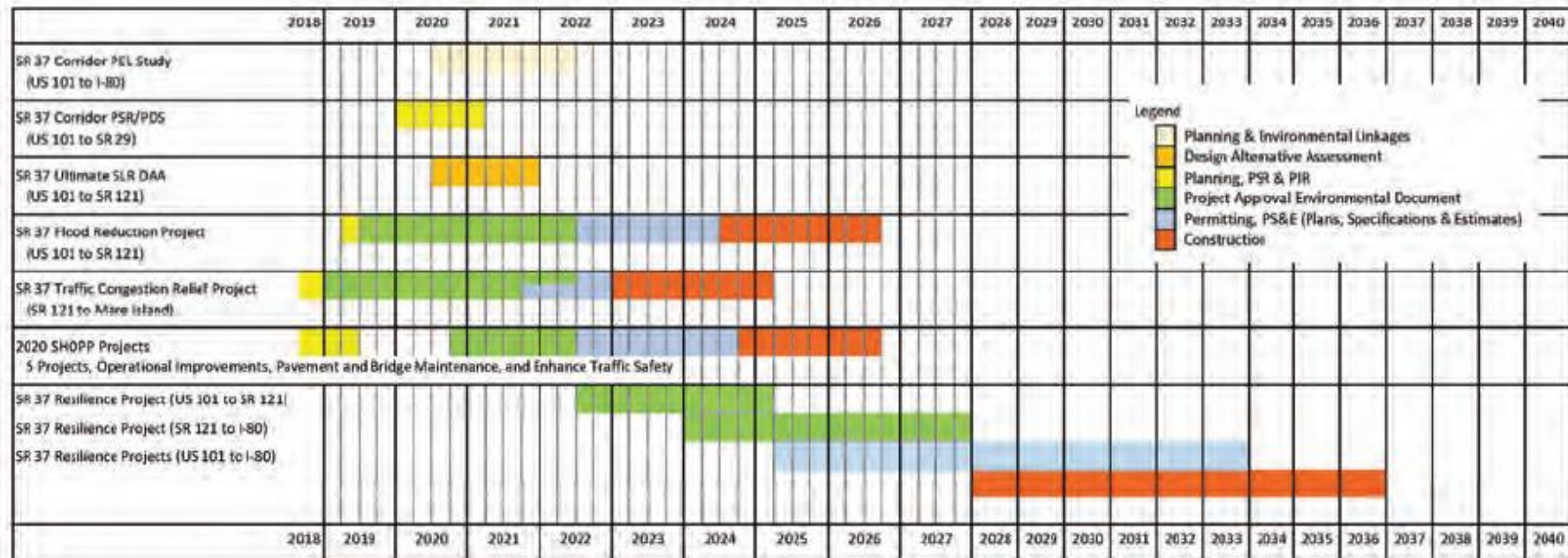
- Short- and Long-Term Alternatives
- Conceptual Design (Cross Sections) and ROW
- Evaluation Matrices
- Alternatives Development Technical Memorandum

# Caltrans PEL Proposed Alternative Alignments



# How will the SR 37 PEL incorporate existing data from ongoing projects?

PEL will inform current and future projects



SHOIPP: State Highway Operation & Protection Program  
 PSR: Project Study Report  
 PIR: Project Initiation Report

# A Conceptual Alternative



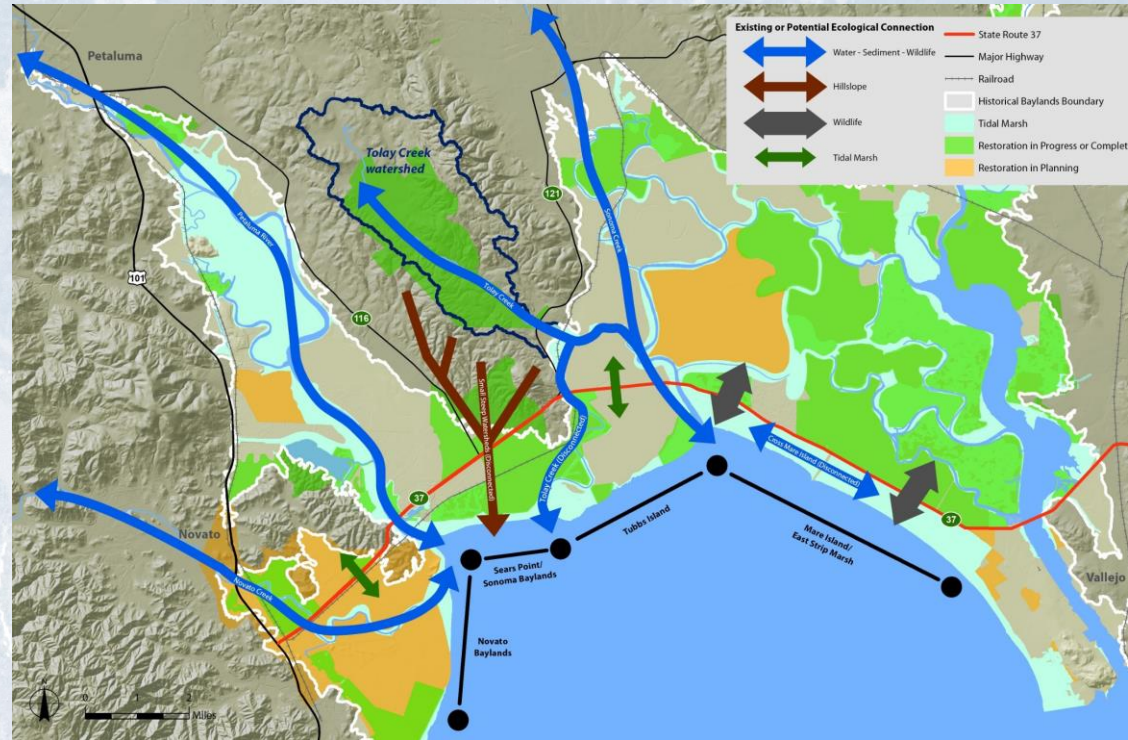
Raise approximately 5 miles of roadway elevated to 12 or 14 feet on embankment

Source: Caltrans Public Scoping Meeting for Flood Reduction Project on SR 37 from US 101 to SR 121, Nov. 17, 2021



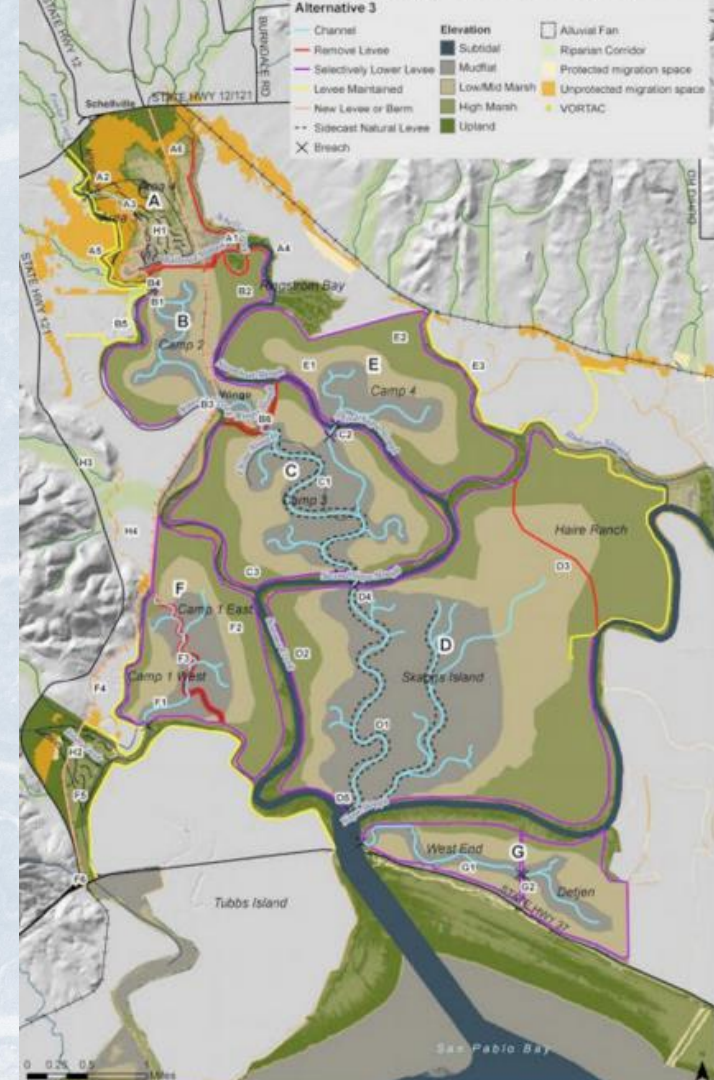
# Developing an Ecological Landscape Vision

- **Conceptual maps** created for Baylands Group White Paper in 2017
- **Sonoma Creek Baylands Strategy**, completed in May 2020
- **Petaluma River Baylands Strategy** now underway
- **Regional Conservation Investment Strategy** process (Feb. 2022-Fall 2023)



# Sonoma Creek Baylands Strategy

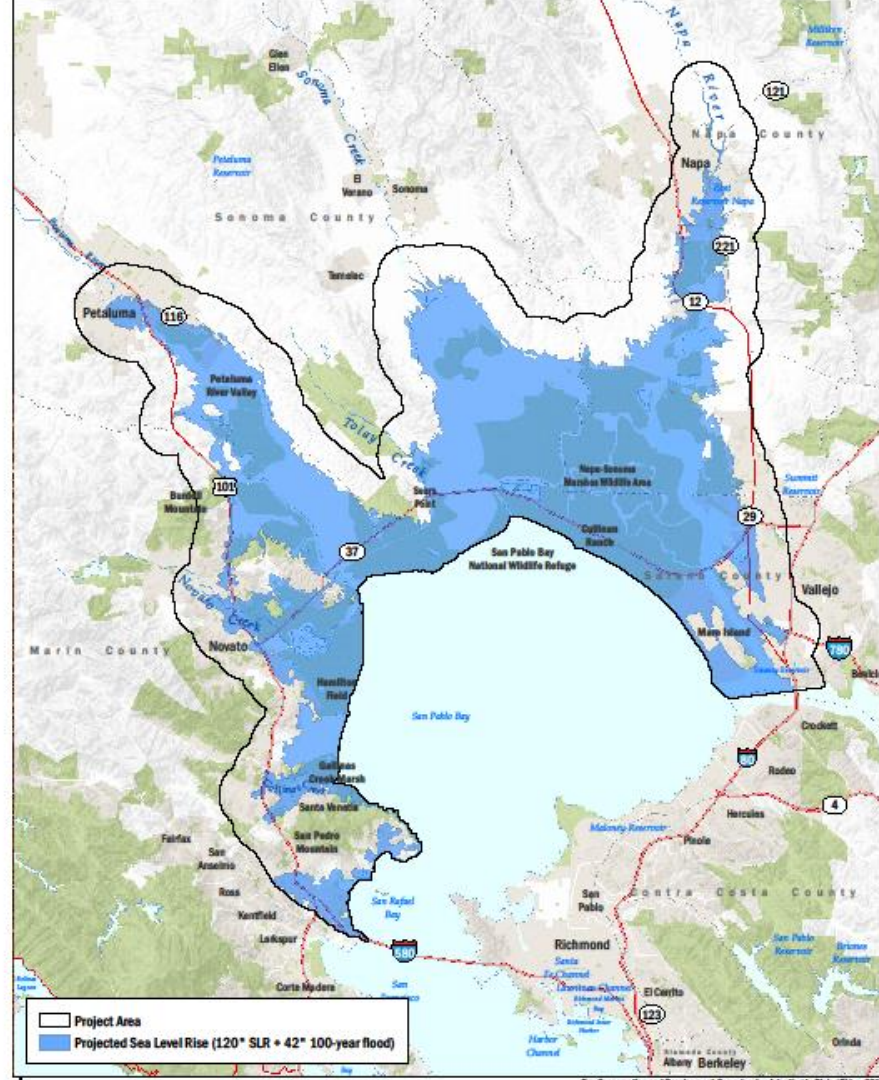
- Habitat Restoration
- Climate Resilience
- Public Access Guidelines
- Recommendations for SR 37 and SMART Rail Line



# North Baylands Regional Conservation Investment Strategy

## Goals:

- Develop a landscape-scale conservation vision, based on focal species and natural communities.
- Identify key conservation areas and strategies, consistent with California Department of Fish and Wildlife RCIS guidelines.
- Facilitate the implementation of conservation actions as compensatory and advanced mitigation for Resilient State Route 37 Corridor Program.



# Upcoming Opportunities

**Segment B Congestion Relief Project:** Comments on Draft EIR/EIS, released in Jan. 2022, are due Feb. 28, 2022.

**Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study:** Next Stakeholder Meeting Feb. 25, 2022. Next Public Meeting in Summer or Fall 2022 to release report.

**Advance Mitigation Opportunities:** Caltrans' Regional Advance Mitigation Needs Assessment draft to be released by Feb. 16, 2022, public meeting on Feb. 23, 2022. Projects may be able to receive Advance Mitigation Program funds, starting mid-2022.

**Regional Conservation Investment Strategy:** Led by Metropolitan Transportation Commission in partnership with SF Estuary Partnership, with environmental technical and policy support from Baylands Group members. Will include Stakeholder Meetings and Community Workshops, Feb. 2022 – June 2023.

**Thank You!**



Photo courtesy of Parks Unlimited