

RESILIENCE PLAYBOOK

Centering People and Equity First

Protecting Communities from Floods and Drought

Co-Existing with Wildfire

Equitably Addressing the Bay Area Housing Crisis

Harnessing the Power of Nature

Introducing the Resilience Playbook

Climate change is an opportunity to reimagine our relationship to the natural world and to each other.

Extreme weather events are increasing as are trends in precipitation and temperature changes. Climate change has presented an opportunity to reimagine our relationship to the natural world and to each other. As we plan for the impacts of climate change in the Bay Area, we must seek transformational change toward true long-term prosperity. This transformation will require confronting our shared history, and centering **environmental justice** in our decision-making practices.

We also know that not all of us are impacted by climate change in the same way. Climate change exacerbates the inequalities already present in our political, social, and economic systems. We need to work together to make sure our lands and communities are resilient to upcoming climate disasters in a way that encompasses the diverse needs of the Bay Area.

California is leading the way with significant efforts underway to reduce **greenhouse gas emissions** (GHGs) and prevent the worst-case scenarios of climate change and its impacts on people and the environment. At the same time, we are already experiencing the effects of climate change caused by past land-use policies, and even under the best-case scenarios of future emissions, we will continue to experience changes to our environment, communities, and way of life.



Greenbelt Alliance envisions a Bay Area that is healthy, thriving, resilient communities made up of lands and people that are safe during climate disasters and recover quickly from wildfire, floods, and drought, where everyone is living with nature in new and powerful ways for generations to come. Illustration created by artist Alfred Twu.

As climate hazards worsen due to climate change, the cost of these hazards is going to continue to increase. According to researchers from the University of California at Davis, in 2015 alone the drought cost California \$1.84 billion and resulted in the loss of over 10,000 jobs (Kerlin, 2015). The 2020 California wildfire season was the largest wildfire season in modern history and cost over \$12.079 billion in damages (Louie, 2021). The human cost is even more devastating. There were over 10,000 structures burned in the 2020 fires and 33 people lost their lives (Center for Disaster Philanthropy). By taking proactive steps now and integrating the impacts of a changing climate into local policy documents, cities across California can minimize future devastation by enabling communities and natural systems to withstand, respond, and adjust to extreme weather events caused by climate change.

This Playbook aims to provide the guidance to transform our existing systems through policy and planning recommendations, template language, and innovative example ordinances that local decision makers and community leaders can use to accelerate their adaptation to multiple climate risks. These policies will leverage natural and working lands as defense mechanisms to absorb floodwaters, sequester carbon, protect water supply, and provide buffers to wildfires. In tandem, we address critical issues of housing justice, a just transition away from fossil fuels towards green jobs, and environmental justice in order to ensure the outcomes of these policies prioritize the resilience of the most vulnerable communities.

ABOUT US:

THE GREENBELT ALLIANCE APPROACH

At Greenbelt Alliance, we envision a Bay Area of healthy, thriving, resilient communities made of lands and people that are safer during climate disasters and recover quickly from wildfire, floods, and **drought**. A place where everyone is living with nature in new and powerful ways for generations to come.

This understanding of resilience is influenced in part by our legacy of advocating for the protection of the Bay Area's natural and working lands during our **60-year history**. We know that with the appropriate policies and measures, our unique natural ecosystems can give us their full benefits, or **ecosystem services**, and ensure that our communities will be able to respond to current and future climate shocks and stressors.

We seek to harness the power of natural and working lands to not only advance climate change mitigation and adaptation but also embed **environmental justice** into our work to leave communities stronger than they were before and remediate historic harms. In developing a holistic approach to our challenges, we are employing solutions that seek to solve multiple issues at once:

1. **USE NATURAL AND WORKING LANDS THROUGH EQUITABLE NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS.**
Natural and working lands like wetlands, green spaces, forests, and farmland can provide numerous environmental, social, and economic benefits. As the impacts from climate change worsen, wildfire, flooding, drought, and extreme heat are compromising the land's ability to provide the ecological benefits we need, making it more challenging for the Bay Area to meet its climate goals and protect vulnerable communities.



Fortunately, if we act now with targeted policies and capacity building to establish, protect, and restore these natural assets, we can work to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and sequester carbon to help reduce the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and leverage natural buffers to wildfire, flooding, and sea level rise. And we can do it in a way that centers those who have been

traditionally excluded from reaping the innate benefits of nature.

2. **INCORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIZE VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES.**
As a result of decades of **redlining** and other discriminatory land-use practices, among other challenges, low-income communities and communities of color have experienced a combination of historic injustice, negligence, and political and economic disenfranchisement. Today, these Bay Area communities are struggling with a disproportionate pollution burden, worsening health outcomes, and socioeconomic issues like poverty and housing instability. All of which position these groups to be the most severely impacted by climate change.



These communities must be prioritized. Residents of **frontline communities** must be involved in research, planning, implementation, education, and decision-making about potential climate change impacts and about the development, funding, implementation, and evaluation of adaptation and resilience policies. Although it is not easy to do so, all climate policies should identify and reduce

frontline communities' vulnerabilities to climate change, with a focus on physical, economic, and quality-of-life factors.

3. **ADVOCATE FOR CLIMATE SMART (SUSTAINABLE, MIXED, AFFORDABLE, RESILIENT, TRANSIT-ORIENTED) HOUSING AS AN EQUITABLE CLIMATE STRATEGY.**

California is facing an extreme affordability crisis that is driven by the interrelated housing and climate crises. We are not building enough homes for any income level, which is driving up housing prices and forcing people to live far away from where they work or grew up. California is short over 3.5 million homes, according to a report by the **McKinsey Global Institute**, which forces more people to drive over 90 minutes to get to work.



To address our affordability, housing, and climate crises, we need to plan for and actually build more climate-smart housing in the appropriate places—near jobs and transit, in more temperate zones with lower risk of extreme heat, wildfire, and flooding.

Endorse the principles of the Resilience Playbook and urge policymakers to adopt them today!

COMMIT NOW

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How to Navigate the Playbook

Implementing Climate Policies

Taking Action

Policy Matrix

Toolkit

Glossary

Acknowledgments

The 5 Action Areas

- Centering People and Equity First
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Contact Us

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