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OneShoreline, San Bruno target flooding in Belle Air neighborhood

By Holly Rusch, Daily Journal staff
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Sea-level rise agency OneShoreline is partnering with the city of San Bruno to address flooding from the San Bruno Creek, particularly in the impacted Belle Air neighborhood.

OneShoreline, a government agency that works to address sea-level rise on the Peninsula, is responsible for two aging water pump stations in San Bruno, one along Walnut Street and another on Angus Avenue. It also operates the San Bruno Creek tide gate.



Currently, the agency has \$4.07 million total for rehabilitation and equipment replacement in the San Bruno Creek flood zone, however, the cost of building new pump stations would far exceed that total, OneShoreline CEO Len Materman said during a San Bruno City Council meeting May 26.

“We are dealing with very old infrastructure that’s hard and expensive to maintain, that was built in an era before climate change,” he said. “That’s very difficult to do on the budget OneShoreline has to work with.”

The agency is working on a variety of short-term projects to help mitigate flood risk, including clearing sediment from the creek and partnering with Caltrans to install a new valve at a detention basin owned by the transit agency that was determined to be a cause of flooding. The County/City Association of Governments is also pursuing funding for a project at the Belle Air Elementary School, Project Director Summer Bundy said.

In addition, OneShoreline has refurbished all four pumps at the Walnut pump station, Bundy said, and has implemented a pilot program on Seventh Avenue to provide households with up to \$1,500 for flood protection supplies.

Prior to that outreach in the neighborhood — which sits below creek level in some areas — residents largely felt left behind, fearful or angry, climate adaptation strategist Ari Simon said.

“It was really mostly on the spectrum from anger to apathy,” he said. “What OneShoreline and our partners have done over the past 2 1/2 years has made a remarkable difference.”

San Bruno Councilmember Marty Medina reiterated that OneShoreline’s presence in the city has helped neighbors feel that a plan is being put in place to protect them from the threat of flooding and material upgrades to the pump stations OneShoreline now runs has helped during storms.

“When you joined with Resilient San Bruno, there were a bunch of residents like, ‘Nothing’s going to change here, it floods, we’re stuck, the city doesn’t do anything,’” he said.

In total, OneShoreline has accumulated \$1.7 million for long-term resilience planning in the area, including robust community outreach and environmental review. The possibilities could include new strategies for tide gates, slough adaptation, refurbishment of city storm drains and upgrades to existing pump stations, Project Director Summer Bundy said.

As an agency with limited funding, a part of OneShoreline’s mission is to help its projects attract outside dollars. The San Bruno Creek resilience plan is designed to do just that, Materman said.

holly@smdailyjournal.com

(650) 344-5200 ext. 105



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