

Richardson's Bay

County: Marin

Risks: sea level rise, storm surge and tidal flooding, aging infrastructure, lack of affordable housing

Richardson's Bay is located in southern Marin County, extending from unincorporated northern Sausalito to the City of Mill Valley's shoreline to Shelter Bay. The area already floods due to a combination of rising tides and natural geography: steep upper hills draining to flat and sinking bay-filled lands. It includes Golden Gate Village in Marin City, Marin's only public housing for families with 297 units. The natural habitat includes areas of rich diversity from protected wetlands to deep and shallow waters, and a number of creeks that drain to the bay. Upper watershed lands include the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Pt. Reyes National Seashore and the Mount Tamalpais State Park lands. Communities include: unincorporated Marin County in northern Sausalito, Tamalpais Valley, Almonte and Homestead Valley; the City of Mill Valley; and the multi-ethnic, economically disadvantaged community of Marin City. Flooding in the area from the bay's rising tides, creeks and stormwater drainage led to Highway 101 in Marin City closing for several hours after storms in December 2014, cutting off the community from jobs and necessary income, vital health and social services for vulnerable seniors, and creating a heightened sense of isolation and vulnerability. The Manzanita Park and Ride, located under Highway 101 on State Route One (Shoreline Highway) regularly shuts down with high tides that flood the regional park-and-ride with several feet of water. Recent flooding threatened the southern access to all of Mill Valley and the communities of West Marin. Several vulnerable populations are impacted and in Marin, with limited opportunities for new or affordable housing, the most vulnerable residents need to be protected. Marin City's 2,500 residents compose a vibrant, multi-ethnic, economically disadvantaged community with historic roots dating back to relocation from the South to join the WWII shipbuilding effort. The Redwoods houses seniors in independent, assisted living and skilled nursing units on 10 acres of shoreline. Waldo Point Harbor consists of several hundred floating homes residents including the Gates Cooperative, home to low-income residents and families. The recently completed sea level rise vulnerability assessment for Marin's shoreline identifies further and even more imminent risks to this reach: emergency response and access to those in need; transportation vulnerabilities (highways, roads, and transit including bus lines, ferries, and bike/pedestrian pathways); lost tax revenues for school districts, Mill Valley, and Marin County; property losses for home and business owners; and perhaps, most importantly, the threatened devastation of interconnected communities along the shoreline that live with water, but that with sea level rise will need a comprehensive solution to address local and regional issues.