

Newark

12 out of 48

In the coming decades Newark will experience sea level rise, groundwater rise, and extreme storms that will affect industrial, commercial, and residential areas. The communities most vulnerable to sea level rise and shallow groundwater rise are located near or on the west side of the railroad tracks that bisect the city. Along the shoreline are a mix of salt ponds and wetlands that provide protection from sea level rise, act as critical habitat, enhance water quality, and provide recreation areas for residents.

Given that residential areas and areas planned for development in Newark will be impacted by groundwater rise and sea level rise in the coming century<sup>1</sup>, Newark should establish flood-resilient development standards and utilize nature-based shoreline resilience solutions. To address stormwater flooding, Newark’s [Green Stormwater Infrastructure \(GSI\) Plan](#) identifies GSI projects, such as green streets projects, that mitigate localized flooding and provide greening benefits. We see an opportunity for Newark to incorporate future storm projections and equity considerations into its prioritization for flood resilience projects.

## Newark Area 4 Housing Development

Newark has a key opportunity to enhance its sea level rise resilience by preserving and restoring wetlands in Area 4 rather than moving forward with [a planned housing development](#) which would build single-family homes on sensitive habitat. As a [sensitive ecological area](#) that will be inundated [at 3.3 feet of sea level rise](#), Area 4 is not a smart place to build housing. Instead, Newark should focus new development in high density, mixed use, and transit accessible neighborhoods. Area 4 was removed from the Housing Element’s sites inventory, so developing it isn’t required to meet Newark’s Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) requirements.

## Key Policy & Planning Opportunities

We recommend that Newark focus on these key opportunities to advance flood resilience:

- 1. Restore and protect wetlands:** Promote nature-based solutions, protect critical habitat, and increase Newark’s sea level rise resiliency by preserving and restoring the City’s wetlands. Rezone all wetland areas, including potential buffer zones, as Conservation-Open Space. Prioritize transferring wetlands to the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge to ensure no future development can be built.
- 2. Overlay Zones:** Create sea level rise and groundwater rise overlay zones that establish building standards (such as minimum lowest floor elevations, setbacks, and flood-resilient building materials) to ensure new developments are resilient to future flood risk.

The next page breaks down Newark’s sea level rise and flood resilience score and offers additional policy and planning recommendations.

**How Scoring Works:** We identified 48 policies that local governments should implement to defend against sea level rise, groundwater rise, and inland flooding. The scores represent how many policies in each category the city has implemented. Partial points may be awarded if a city has implemented a component of a policy but not the full policy.

<sup>1</sup> According to the Ocean Protection Council’s 2024 Sea Level Rise Guidance, sea levels in the Bay can rise by 1.1 ft by 2050 and 6.2 ft by 2100 under a high risk scenario.

<b>General Flood Resilience Score</b>		<b>4.5 out of 9</b>
<b>Highlights</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Newark hired a consultant to create a regional Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Strategy.	
<b>Next Steps</b>	<p>LOW HANGING FRUIT</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Create a process (such as <a href="#">a sea level rise and green infrastructure checklist</a> ) to evaluate all Capital Improvement Plan projects for opportunities to maximize flood resilience and nature-based green infrastructure. <p>LARGER LIFT</p> <input type="checkbox"/> As part of the Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment, model the compounded flood risk posed by the interaction between sea level rise, groundwater rise, and stormwater.	
<b>Groundwater Rise Resilience Score</b>		<b>0 out of 3</b>
<b>Next Steps</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Conduct a groundwater rise assessment that identifies the risk posed by buoyancy, seepage, infiltration, liquefaction, corrosion, and potential contamination mobilization.	
<b>Sea Level Rise Resilience Score</b>		<b>0.5 out of 4</b>
<b>Next Steps</b>	<p>LOW HANGING FRUIT</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that all sea level rise planning is consistent with the Ocean Protection Council Sea Level Rise Guidance's high-risk projection (1.1 ft by 2050 and 6.2 ft by 2100). <p>LARGER LIFT</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Protect and restore all existing wetlands in the City's jurisdiction by zoning them as conservation open space for upland tidal marsh migration, flood protection, habitat restoration, public access, and recreation.	
<b>Sea Level Rise &amp; Groundwater Rise Multi-hazard Resilience Score</b>		<b>1 out of 16</b>
<b>Next Steps</b>	<p>LOW HANGING FRUIT</p> <input type="checkbox"/> As part of the SLR Vulnerability Assessment, identify contaminated sites at risk of contaminant mobilization due to sea level rise and groundwater rise. <p>LARGER LIFT</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Use existing sea level rise data to establish Shallow Groundwater Rise and Sea Level Rise Overlay Districts and related policies to protect against flooding.	
<b>Green Infrastructure &amp; Stormwater Resilience</b>		<b>4 out of 10</b>
<b>Highlights</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The GSI Plan identifies opportunities to include GSI in existing development plans, including green streets, and prioritizes GSI projects that provide multiple benefits such as safety, trash reduction, and community enhancement.	
<b>Next Steps</b>	<p>LOW HANGING FRUIT</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Identify communities experiencing heightened flood risk, urban heat, air pollution, and lack of green space to identify priority areas for multi-benefit urban greening projects. <p>LARGER LIFT</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Update the Storm Drain Master Plan to ensure the storm drain system can accommodate future storm conditions.	
<b>Accountability &amp; Transparency</b>		<b>2 out of 6</b>
<b>Highlights</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adaptation strategies are assigned a lead department or agency and lead staff to oversee the project. Additionally, each adaptation strategy is assigned cost estimates and identifies appropriate funding sources.	
<b>Next Steps</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Prioritize adaptation strategies based on an established set of criteria including equity and time-sensitivity. Utilize an equity analysis framework that identifies high-need communities and their priorities.	