

**ASSOCIATION OF BAY AREA GOVERNMENTS
EXECUTIVE BOARD**

RESOLUTION NO. 7-2024

ABSTRACT

This resolution adopts reforms to the Priority Conservation Area planning framework, which sets a structure for the identification, nomination, and designation of PCA geographies in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area region.

Further discussion of this action is contained in the ABAG Executive Board Summary Sheet dated May 16, 2024.

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PRIORITY CONSERVATION AREA FRAMEWORK REFORMS

WHEREAS, the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) is the region's Council of Governments and regional land use planning agency for the San Francisco Bay Area pursuant to the Joint Exercise of Powers Act, California Government Code Section 6500 et seq.; and

WHEREAS, the Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs) planning framework recognizes the natural landscapes, unique microclimates, and varied park options are part of what makes the Bay Area a special place to live, and these natural features enable high levels of ecosystem biodiversity, a dynamic local food system, and a variety of recreation options; and

WHEREAS, the PCAs have been a program of ABAG since they were first introduced in 2007 and they have gone through only one minor revision in 2014; and

WHEREAS, the most recent round of PCAs were adopted through a process described in Resolution No. 02-19 and adopted in Resolution No 03-2020; and

WHEREAS, the PCA Refresh has worked since 2022 to develop a comprehensive set of reforms to ensure a more effective planning framework that incorporates topics of equity and climate resilience; and

WHEREAS, the PCA Refresh has received input from stakeholders through workshops, surveys, and office hours and revised a set of reforms first introduced in September 2023; and

WHEREAS, the refreshed PCA Framework will address past limitations of the existing Framework, enabling their use in future regional long-range plans, future technical assistance, and advocacy efforts.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Executive Board of the Association of Bay Area Governments hereby certifies that the foregoing recitals are true and correct and incorporated by this reference; and, be it further

**ASSOCIATION OF BAY AREA GOVERNMENTS
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RESOLUTION NO. 7-2024

RESOLVED, that the Executive Board of the Association of Bay Area Governments, as a decision making body, hereby adopts the Priority Conservation Area Refresh reforms, as identified in Attachment A to this Resolution, and as further described in the PCA Refresh Final Report dated May 7, 2024.

The foregoing was adopted by the ABAG Executive Board this 16th day of May, 2024.

Belia Ramos
President

Certification of Executive Board Approval

I, the undersigned, the appointed and qualified Clerk of the Board of the Association of Bay Area Governments (Association), do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the Executive Board at a duly called and noticed meeting held in San Francisco, California, and at other remote locations, on the 16th day of May, 2024.

Frederick Castro
Clerk of the Board

**ASSOCIATION OF BAY AREA GOVERNMENTS
EXECUTIVE BOARD**

RESOLUTION NO. 7-2024

**ATTACHMENT A
SUMMARY OF PROPOSED REFORMS TO THE PCA FRAMEWORK**

The Priority Conservation Area (PCA) Refresh Final Report identifies six key reforms recommended for the existing PCA Framework. A summary of these recommendations has been extracted from the overall report and is included below as a short synopsis of proposed action areas for the coming months:

1. **Refine the PCA definition to be clearer and reflect how they are used in practice.** The revised definition broadens PCAs from a protection-only framework to one that allows enhancement activities as well. This change removes any perceived conflict between PCAs within an existing community and growth geographies. It also ensures farm-to-market access, habitat restoration, or trail improvement enhancement projects continue to be covered by the PCA definition.
2. **Add climate adaptation as a new PCA type and incorporate equity into each PCA type.** Climate adaptation and equity were key policy priorities raised from the beginning of the process. They are directly incorporated into the PCA 2.0 Framework to complement biodiversity, which has existed since the first PCA Framework.
3. **Ensure PCAs have accurate and verified geographic boundaries.** Having accurate and adjoining PCA boundaries will enable their greater use in regional analysis and planning going forward.
4. **Ensure PCA type consistency with eligibility maps.** Eligibility maps for each PCA type were developed to ensure greater consistency within types across the region. In total, over 30 mapping datasets were used to create the five maps, one for each PCA type. An expansive approach was taken when developing the maps, providing sufficient structure to enable the use of PCAs for planning, technical assistance and funding, while also allowing for local flexibility. The eligibility maps are not intended to reduce the coverage of PCAs, but instead they are included to ensure regional cohesion.
5. **Incorporate Regionally Identified PCAs to complement local nominations.** Plan Bay Area 2050 broadened the Priority Development Area program to a set of growth geographies that include regionally-identified areas. Mirroring that approach, integrating Regionally-Identified PCAs will help ensure that regionally significant and regionally connective conservation opportunities are part of the Framework. Regionally-Identified PCAs are designed to complement Locally-Nominated PCAs with both sharing the same use and importance for planning, but Locally-Nominated PCAs remain a requirement for PCA grants.
6. **Elevate PCAs for new funding with the refreshed Framework.** While there is not a specific funding reform within the Framework, it is anticipated that the structured and consistent approach that leverages the best available data has the potential to improve competitiveness for federal, state, and other regional funds.