

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

San Rafael Canal Sea Level Rise Working Group Raises Urgent Concerns About Flooding in the Canal Neighborhood

San Rafael, CA (January 7th 2026) The San Rafael Canal Sea Level Rise Working Group, a resident-led group representing community members living in the Canal neighborhood, is raising urgent concerns about ongoing and increasing flooding impacts affecting residents, housing, critical infrastructure and access routes in the Canal area.

Recent rainfall, storm surge, and king tides revealed Marin County's vulnerability to widespread flooding and foreshadowed future climate impacts. But the Canal neighborhood is especially at risk. The Canal, built on former marshland and located at or below current high tide levels, is already experiencing frequent flooding events during high tides, king tides, and storms. Residents report recurring flooding of streets, sidewalks, parking areas, and open spaces, as well as persistent moisture and humidity in and around residential buildings. These conditions threaten housing quality, public health, emergency access, and overall community well-being.

"Flooding is not a future problem for the Canal, it is happening now," said members of the Sea Level Rise Working Group. "Families are dealing with flooded streets, blocked access, and unsafe living conditions. We need action that protects people today while planning for long-term solutions."

The Sea Level Rise Working Group is part of the Lifting Leaders program at the Multicultural Center of Marin, and is composed of Canal residents who are committed to sharing information, advocating for community priorities, and participating in local planning related to sea-level-rise adaptation. The group emphasizes that flooding disproportionately impacts renters, immigrants, seniors, youth, and low-income households, many of whom have historically been excluded from planning processes.

The Working Group is calling for:

- Immediate, low-cost actions to reduce flood risk, including maintenance and upgrades to drainage and pump systems, improved stormwater management, and emergency preparedness measures.
- Clear, transparent communication with residents, including bilingual information and accessible updates on flooding risks and planning efforts.
- Long-term adaptation planning that centers climate justice, prevents displacement, and ensures safe and affordable housing for residents who may be affected.
- Ongoing community participation in decisions made by the City of San Rafael, Marin County, and regional partners.

The group also stresses the importance of integrating community knowledge with technical studies and urges decision-makers to move faster in advancing short-term protections such as shoreline protection, raised roads, and nature-based solutions while long-term adaptation options are evaluated and funded.

"The Canal must remain a priority in San Rafael's climate resilience planning," the group added. "Residents are ready to be partners in solutions that protect our homes, our health, and our future."

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