

Exploring Social Vulnerability in a Changing Climate

Initial Lessons from Building Resilience in Los Angeles

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Susanne Moser, Juliette Hart & Phyllis Grifman

February 11, 2016 | Charleston, SC

Social Coast Forum

USC Sea Grant – The Urban Ocean Program



- Fund research
- Community outreach & education
- Technical assistance to local/regional government

10 Million by the Sea...

- Water Quality
- HABs
- Sea Level Rise & Coastal Impacts
- Coastal Management
- Maritime Affairs

This is L.A.



This is also L.A.



Social Vulnerability in the Coastal Zone

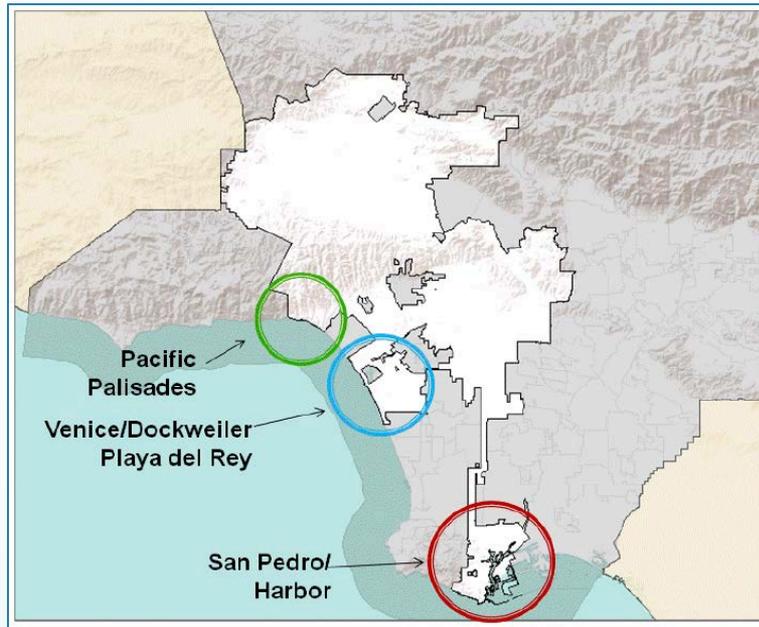
“Despite persistent beliefs that living on the coast is reserved for for the wealthy, there are large social disparities in coastal areas that vary regionally”

- National Climate Assessment, Chapter 25: Coastal Zone
Development & Ecosystems

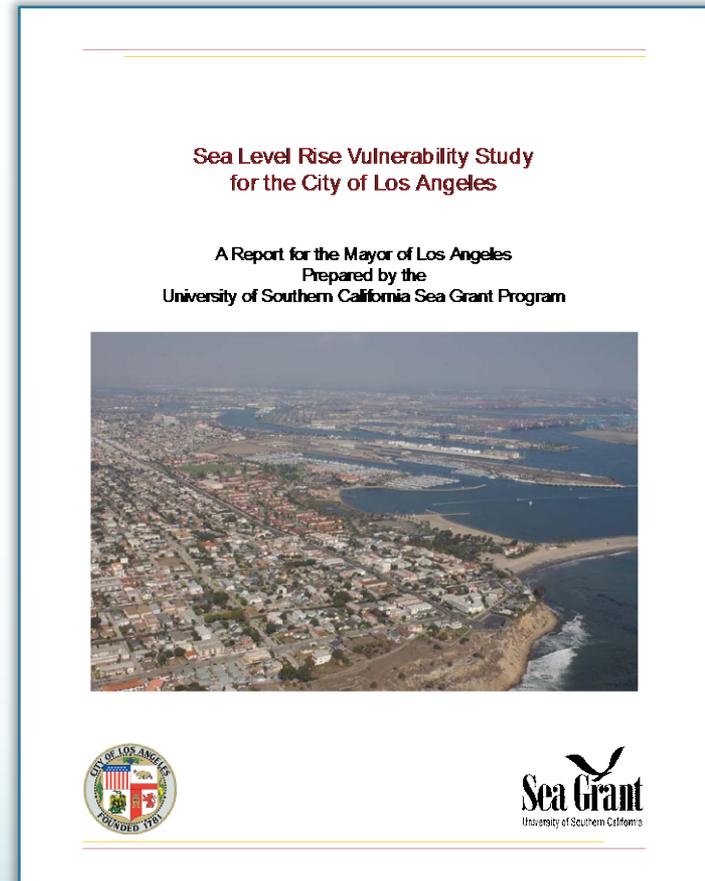
“In California, 18% of those exposed to high flood risk by 2100 also fall into more socially vulnerable categories”

- Pacific Institute, 2012

AdaptLA: SLR Vulnerability Assessment for the City of L.A.

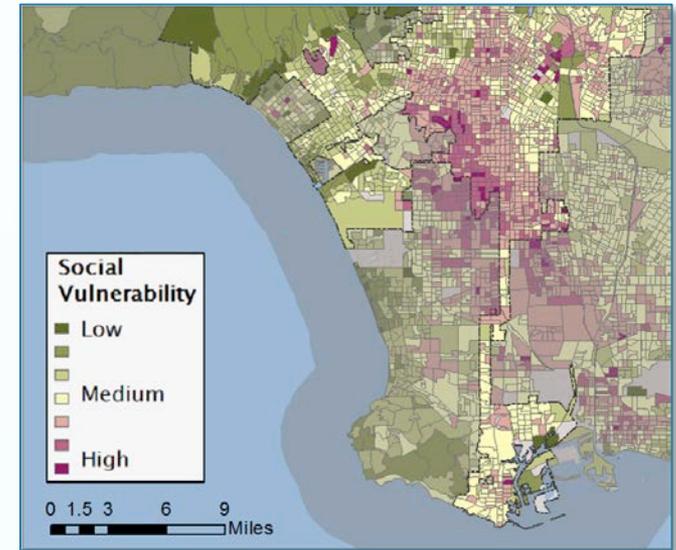


- Assessed physical, economic, social and ecological vulnerabilities



Social Vulnerability Assessment

- Led by Dr. Julie Ekstrom and Dr. Susanne Moser
- Examined suite of census data
 - Income
 - Poverty
 - Education
 - Physical/mental illnesses & disabilities
 - Race
 - Age
 - Housing type/age
- SoVI (Cutter et al.)
- Venice, low-lying San Pedro and Wilmington have the highest social vulnerability



Initial Recommendations & Strategies

- Document vulnerable populations – helps first responders
- Alternative forms of communications
 - In other languages
 - Don't require computer access
- Empower neighborhood councils, churches and community-based organizations



Reflecting on Initial Outcomes from LA project

- Initial reaction from stakeholders
- Terminology and mapping concerns
- Ultimately, the Social Vulnerability results received the most focus

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January 8, 2014 11:55 AM

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Report: Sea Level Rise to Affect Low-Lying Communities

The USC study says low-income areas like San Pedro and Wilmington would be affected.

Palos Verdes, CA

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By [NICOLE MOORADIAN](#) (Patch Staff) - January 8, 2014 2:23 am ET

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University of Southern California

Engaging Vulnerable Communities: Venice Beach

- Partners:
 - Heal the Bay
 - Venice Neighborhood Council
 - LA City Council District 11

- Discussed:
 - Risks associated with climate change
 - Ways communities can work together to adapt
 - Case studies & lessons learned
 - Community questions and discussion



Engaging Vulnerable Communities: Wilmington/Harbor Area

- Partners:
 - Communities for a Better Environment (CBE)
- Participants learned & discussed
 - Climate change & SLR science
 - Local impacts
 - CBE's community resilience project "CARE"
- Simultaneous interpretation and all materials available in English and Spanish



Regional AdaptLA

- Grant led by City of Santa Monica, but includes 11 coastal jurisdictions and L.A. County
- Shoreline change model for L.A. County Coast
- Capacity-Building & Stakeholder Engagement
 - Trainings/Workshops
 - Webinar series
 - Public outreach



CALIFORNIA
COASTAL
COMMISSION

Stakeholder Survey Results

83. The State of California has provided guidance on how to incorporate sea level rise in local coastal programs and local decision-making. In order to build capacity within your community to do this, which topic(s) for potential webinars or workshops would you be most likely to attend? Please rank the following options in order of preference with 1 being most preferred. (If you hover your mouse over each topic area, a text box will appear with more information to help you rank your selections).

#	Answer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total Responses
1	Climate Change Science 101	10	0	3	2	1	2	0	2	3	0	23
3	Social Vulnerability Assessment	0	7	4	1	2	3	1	1	4	0	23
4	Economic Vulnerability Assessment	3	3	5	4	4	1	2	1	0	0	23
5	Ecological Vulnerability Assessment	0	2	5	7	2	3	2	2	0	0	23
7	Adaptation Measures and Strategies	4	4	2	3	8	0	1	1	0	0	23
8	Scenario-Based Planning	0	2	0	3	3	7	4	3	1	0	23
9	Legal Risk Management Strategies	2	0	0	1	2	4	6	4	4	0	23
10	Others	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	23
11	Adaptation Planning Processes	2	5	2	1	1	0	3	2	7	0	23
12	Technical Modeling and Decision Support Tools	2	0	2	1	0	3	4	7	4	0	23
	Total	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	-

Source: USC Sea Grant. Pre-workshop series survey

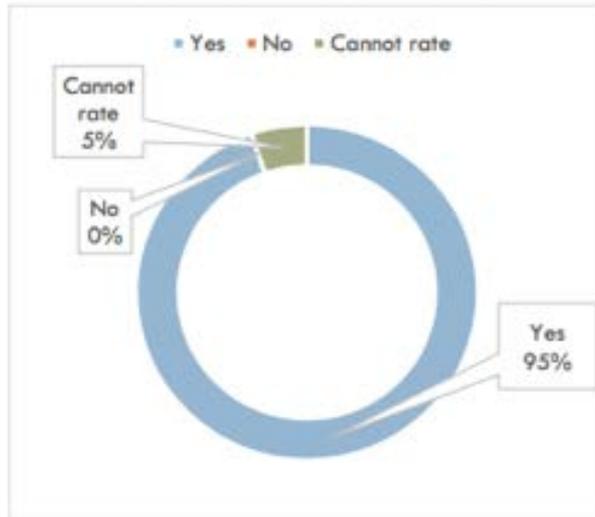
Social Vulnerability & Community Strengths Training

- Partners:
 - L.A. City Emergency Management
 - Susanne Moser Research & Consulting
- Lecture & exercises
 - How to use social vulnerability assessments
 - Identify which populations are most susceptible and why
 - Explore how community strengths/weaknesses can empower & engage public

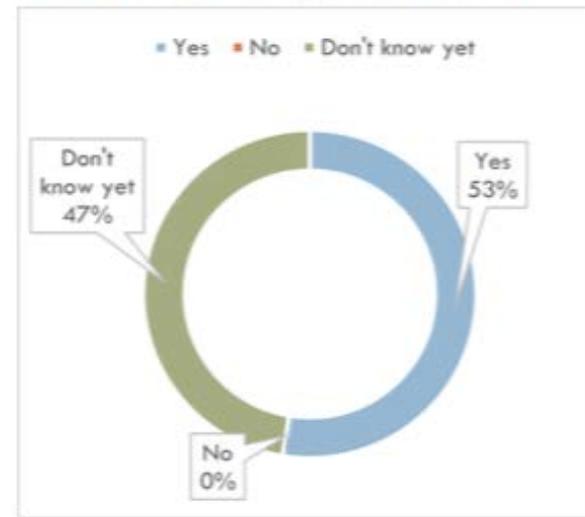


Post Workshop Survey

1. Has your understanding of social vulnerability increased as a result of this training?



2. If yes, do you feel you have enough basic skills to use this knowledge in your work?



Comments from participants:

“Need Examples!”

“More time for community engagement/process”

“More detail on programs in existence”

Stakeholder Engagement



Political Leaders
City Councils
Sustainability Depts
Wastewater Treatment
Emergency Managers
Private Industry
Consultants
Public Utilities
Public Works
Harbor Depts
Planning Depts
Park Managers

NGOs
Academia
Educators
State Agencies
Federal Agencies
MPOs, JPAs, COGs
Museums, Aquariums
Community Organizations
Professional Associations
Regional Organizations
Neighborhood Councils
Social Justice Organizations

Community Engagement

- Policy change requires making difficult choices
 - Important to engage entire community from grassroots to elected officials
 - Explore the many different ways to communicate
- Disconnect between electoral cycles and long-term planning
 - Continuity rests with well-informed stakeholders

What's Next?

Figure out how to do this in a community!



- Find local champions! “Grass Tops”
- Community Visioning
- Social vulnerability
- Resilience Workshops
- Community-based solutions and local projects

Thank you!

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