



**EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
AGENDA STAFF REPORT**

DATE	April 10, 2024
TITLE	Local Government Engagement Strategy
DIVISION	General Manager's Office
FROM	Erich Pfuehler, Chief of Government and Legislative Affairs
APPROVED	Sabrina Landreth, General Manager 

RECOMMENDATION

The General Manager recommends the Board Legislative Committee support the proposed 2024 – 2025 Local Government Engagement Strategy Pilot Program.

BACKGROUND

The East Bay Regional Park District (Park District) is located in the eastern San Francisco Bay Area. Across the region served by the Park District, there are a total of ninety-seven government agencies and organizations who share priorities, interests, and values with the Park District. This includes cities, counties, regional governments, special districts, as well as state and Federal agencies. Historically, the Park District has engaged with partner entities in a variety of ways including regular meetings, formal liaison committees, joint power authorities (JPA) and formal conferences. However, the approach has not been uniformed. There is opportunity to expand what is possible for local government engagement with elected officials for the benefit of the Park District’s service delivery. To address this gap in service, this report recommends advancing a 2024 – 2025 Local Government Engagement Strategy Pilot Program.

ANALYSIS

The Park District regularly engages with ninety-seven government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with jurisdiction in the East Bay. In summary, there are two Federal agencies, nine state agencies, nine regional governments, thirteen county governments, thirty-three cities, twenty-six special districts, two joint power authorities (one of which is with a city government) and four NGOs with which the Park District’s work requires consistent and coordinated communication to advance service delivery. To date, 16% of these entities participate in or have participated in a formal liaison committee with the Park District. Formal liaison committees, expanded on below, are defined as public meetings in which a quorum of elected officials is present. In contrast, 84% of the identified partner entities do not currently have formal liaison committee meetings. To maintain communication with the eight-one agencies and organizations who do not have liaison committee meetings, the Park District uses a variety of approaches including regular issue tracking and written engagement, structured meetings, and participation in annual conferences.

Issue Tracking and Written Engagement: To maintain an understanding of and participation in regional decision making, Park District staff provides issue tracking of regional government partners. These reports, known as Strategic Actions of Governmental Entities (SAGE) are presented at the Board Legislative Committee and in written form from the Planning Department. As items at the local,

regional, state, and Federal level arise which request written feedback and input from partners, the Park District General Manager facilitates a response within the requested window.

Structured Meetings: To connect on relevant items, the Park District organizes informal, structured meetings for the Board of Directors and General Manager to connect with local, regional, state, and Federal partners. These meetings are supported by the Government and Legislative Affairs team and include an agenda, briefing materials and encourage a collaborative approach to identifying shared solutions for the benefit of East Bay communities. Structured meetings allow for a time-sensitive and adaptable approach to engaging with local, regional, state, and Federal partners.

Annual Conferences: Specific to state and Federal partners, the Board of Directors and General Manager participate in two annual conferences hosted by the Park District. The State Advocacy Conference, which takes place in Sacramento, California, engages with the East Bay's state delegation, as well as state agencies on legislative objectives. The Federal Advocacy Conference, which takes place in Washington, D.C., engages the East Bay's Federal delegation and Federal agency partners. These conferences are coordinated by the Government and Legislative Affairs team in the General Manager's Office.

Formal Liaison Committees: Liaison committees are formal Brown Act public meetings which require advance posting of agenda items, packet materials, presentations by staff and minutes. Such meetings are time and staff intensive with limited adaptability. Additionally, with only 16% of East Bay partner agencies currently participating in formal liaison committees, expanding this program would be challenging without additional resources.

The Park District achieves success at the state and Federal level annually through coordinated conference events and regularly organized structured meetings. However, it has been identified there is room for growth at the local and regional level. Of the local, regional, and county agencies with jurisdiction in the East Bay, only a portion have regularly facilitated meetings. To address the identified need for consistent and coordinated engagement with all East Bay local elected officials, defined as local city, county, and special district agencies, it is recommended a 2024 – 2025 Local Government Engagement Strategy Pilot Program be advanced. Through this work, an increase in local and regional elected official engagement would be supported by the Government and Legislative Affairs team to provide for consistent and coordinated meeting facilitation between the Park District Board of Directors and local elected officials.

This pilot initiative would provide for coordinated engagement with local government elected officials. Such meetings will require participation from the Board of Directors and General Manager, or their designee, to guide discussions focused on key Park District priority issues. For these meetings to be successful, staff coordination of agendas, briefing materials, day-of meeting support and follow-up will be required.

Within the Local Government Engagement Strategy Pilot Program, the following agenda is recommended for 2024 - 2025 meetings with city and county elected officials:

1. Introductions and Welcome
2. East Bay Regional Park District 90th Anniversary
3. Second Century District Plan

The identified agenda topics give opportunity to engage with local partners on high priority issues for the Park District to gather regional information and insights which will be beneficial to the agency's work at large. Reports will be prepared in collaboration with Public Affairs and Acquisition, Stewardship and Development team members. This recommendation aims to establish a foundation for regular and productive interactions with local elected officials to advance key priorities for the benefit of the East

Bay communities. By advancing this work through a formalized pilot strategy, there is opportunity for review and refinement prior to finalizing a formal local government program within the Park District.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

ATTACHMENTS

Presentation.