


**EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
AGENDA STAFF REPORT**

DATE	December 6, 2024
TITLE	Recommendation to Support 2025 Park Advisory Committee Objectives
DIVISION	General Manager's Office
FROM	Erich Pfuehler, Chief of Government and Legislative Affairs Sabrina Landreth, General Manager
APPROVED	Sabrina Landreth, General Manager 

RECOMMENDATION

Support the General Manager's recommendation to the full Board of Directors to adopt the proposed 2025 Park Advisory Committee Objectives.

BACKGROUND

The Park Advisory Committee (PAC) is a 21-member community advisory group largely appointed by the East Bay Regional Park District (Park District) Board of Directors. Candidates are nominated by individual Board members and a variety of other public entities, such as the Mayors' Conference, Board of Supervisors, and Special District Chapters of Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.

The role of the PAC is to provide community perspectives and advice to staff and the Board on the issues, projects and policies of the Park District. Examples of policy items include grazing, dogs, horses and bikes in parks, the Park District budget, naming park facilities, parkland use plans, new concessionaires, and more.

In 2024, the PAC focused on six key objectives, including enhancing community engagement, deepening understanding of the Park District's biodiversity efforts, and providing guidance and oversight on active projects and funding mechanisms. The aim in advancing these objectives was to strengthen the PAC's insights into the Park District's priorities while promoting transparency and effective governance.

As part of the October 28, 2024 PAC meeting, members participated in an interactive exercise to help identify 2025 PAC Objectives. To guide the discussion, PAC members received information about the Park District Board's priorities. After the meeting, staff analyzed the feedback from PAC members to identify key themes and objectives, resulting in the proposed objectives for 2025. These draft objectives were presented to Park District General Manager Sabrina Landreth and the Executive Committee of the PAC. The General Manager recommended the PAC consider these objectives at the November 25, 2024 meeting. Approved by the PAC, the proposed objectives are now submitted to the Park District Board Executive Committee for consideration.

The proposed objectives for 2025 demonstrate a commitment by the PAC to support the Park District's mission to invest in environmental stewardship, equitable access and climate resilience. The proposed objectives include fostering inclusivity, enhancing educational opportunities and improving park infrastructure.

The proposed 2025 Park Advisory Committee Objectives are:

1. Help Ensure Community Perspectives are Included in the District Plan
2. Support Environmental and Cultural Education Opportunities and Park Accessibility for all East Bay Communities
3. Promote Environmental Stewardship and Consider Impacts on Ecosystems including Flora and Fauna across all Activities
4. Maintain a Strong Understanding of the Park District's Funding Programs, including Local Measures and Initiatives
5. Provide Community Perspectives and Advice on the Issues, Projects and Policies of the Park District

ANALYSIS

The 2025 objectives identified by the Park Advisory Committee (PAC) reflect several important trends and priorities, emphasizing community engagement, environmental stewardship and equitable access to park resources. A significant focus emerged on improving access to parks for diverse community groups, particularly marginalized populations, seniors and families with children. Initiatives such as expanding outreach to Title I schools and enhancing transportation options for individuals with varying needs illustrate a commitment to inclusivity. Members stressed the importance of creating a welcoming environment, as seen in proposals for affordable summer camps and increased infrastructure such as benches along trails.

Additionally, many PAC members highlighted the need for enhanced environmental education programs and habitat restoration initiatives. This includes promoting wildlife habitat restoration and integrating educational components into park experiences, which aim to raise awareness about local ecosystems and foster stewardship among future generations. The emphasis on restoring and preserving natural resources is in strong alignment with the Park District's mission to preserve a rich heritage of natural and cultural resources.

Climate change also emerged as a recurring theme in the PAC's discussions, with numerous objectives focusing on climate resilience and mitigation. Proposed initiatives include planting more trees to enhance urban canopies and improve carbon sequestration, as well as adapting park facilities to withstand climate impacts such as sea level rise and extreme weather events. This proactive approach demonstrates an understanding of the urgency surrounding climate-related issues and a commitment to integrating climate considerations into all aspects of park planning and management.

Equitable access remains a central priority for many PAC members, with multiple proposals aimed at ensuring all community members can utilize park resources. This includes plans for engagement with underrepresented groups, enhancing ADA compliance and establishing partnerships which promote inclusivity. The PAC's focus on equity aligns with broader societal movements and the goals of the District, to advocate for social justice and environmental equity.

Finally, many members identified the need for improved park infrastructure, including the development of visitor centers and modernized trails. There was also an emphasis on land acquisition to expand parklands and ensure facilities meet the growing population's needs. This proposed objective not only supports enhanced recreational opportunities, but also underscores the importance of habitat preservation in the face of urban development. Overall, the PAC's proposed objectives for 2025 reflect a comprehensive approach to enhancing community connections with nature, promoting sustainability

and ensuring equitable access to park resources, highlighting a collective commitment to addressing current challenges while preparing for future needs in the East Bay Regional Park District.

This input was used to identify the five proposed 2025 objectives for the PAC. The following paragraphs expand on each proposed objective:

1. Help Ensure Community Perspectives are Included in the District Plan: As representatives of the community, the PAC has a responsibility to share ideas and feedback on proposed designs and initiatives, guided by their experiences. The PAC shall provide community perspectives which will be included in the District Plan and support actions so that the Park District's work aligns with the diverse needs of East Bay residents.
2. Support Environmental and Cultural Education Opportunities and Park Accessibility for all East Bay Communities: Supporting environmental and cultural education opportunities is important for empowering East Bay communities to appreciate and care for their natural surroundings. In their work, the PAC will work to promote park accessibility and engagement with all communities, including under-resourced groups and those with varying abilities. By supporting the Park District in actively working with Indigenous communities and offering programs in multiple languages, the PAC can help create opportunities for more people to explore and develop a deeper understanding of their local environment.
3. Promote Environmental Stewardship and Consider Impacts on Ecosystems including Flora and Fauna across all Activities: As the Park District works to maintain and expand its park network, trails, educational and recreational programming, and accessibility for the public, it is vital to remember the District's overarching mission to be guided by an environmental ethic in all its activities. To preserve the natural landscapes that we see today, the PAC must work to incorporate a focus on stewardship and balance of ecological interests in its deliberations.
4. Maintain a Strong Understanding of the Park District' Funding Programs, including Local Measures and Initiatives: Maintaining a robust understanding of funding mechanisms is essential for the PAC to advocate effectively for resources which support park projects and initiatives. By staying informed about grants, local measures and funding opportunities, the PAC can help ensure transparency, accountability and fiscal health in supporting the work of the Park District.
5. Provide Community Perspectives and Advice on the Issues, Projects and Policies of the Park District: This objective is the core role of the PAC and the cornerstone of its ongoing work. This objective is key to ensuring the work of the Park District advances in a way which is equitable and responsive to community needs. By evaluating existing policies and recommending changes based on community feedback, the PAC can promote inclusivity and transparency within park governance. This commitment to informed policymaking will help to ensure the Park District effectively serves all members of the East Bay community.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

ATTACHMENTS

Proposed 2025 PAC Objectives Presentation