

2025-2026 Legislative Program

Board Meeting | December 17, 2024

Government and Legislative Affairs Overview

Engagement with Authorities:

- **Federal Level:** Collaboration with Federal representatives to secure funding, legislation and influence national policies affecting the Park District.
- **State Level:** Engage with state legislators and agencies to advocate for legislation, implementing policy and state-level funding.
- **Local Level:** Regular meetings with city council members and county supervisors to discuss community interests and park issues.

Maintaining Relationships:

- **Strategic Meetings:** Organize and participate in meetings with elected officials and agency partners.
- **Site Visits and Events:** Facilitate site visits to showcase park projects and achievements and participate in events to foster relationships and gather support.
- **Park Advisory Committee:** Coordinate a 21-member public advisory group whose role is to provide community perspectives on Park District items.

Research and Analysis:

- **Conduct Research:** Gather and analyze data to support advocacy positions and provide fact-based rationale for funding requests.
- **Surveys:** Collect feedback from the community and stakeholders to inform policy recommendations and advocacy strategies.



East Bay Regional Park District 2025-2026 Legislative Program

Goals and Objectives of the East Bay Regional Park District



2024 Legislative Program Highlights

Local Level:

- Supported local workforce development with partnership site visits to Civicorps.
- Coordinated a successful site visit for the Tidewater project to emphasize equitable park access.
- Advocated for expanded active transportation and maintenance funding through regional transportation discussions.

State Level:

- Sought funding for projects including the Richmond Bay Trail Expansion and Oyster Bay Public Access Project.
- Supported the extension of the CEQA Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects and secured Climate Bond categories for environmental programs.
- Advanced AB 2091 (Grayson D-Concord) Existing Trails for Nature Access through the legislature.

Federal Level:

- Worked to improve FEMA disaster recovery processes and advocated for national service programs and wildfire mitigation legislation.
- Advanced Congressional Direct Funding of \$2 million for Tidewater at Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline (Senator Butler and Representative Lee) and \$1.5 million for Richmond Bay Trail Expansion Project (Representative Garamendi).
- Facilitated language to advance the land transfer at Judge John Sutter Regional Shoreline from the Army to the Park District in the National Defense Authorization Act.

East Bay Regional Park District | Advocacy Goals

The Park District's identified advocacy goals are as follows:

- **Climate - Friendly Transportation:** To expand accessible active and public transportation to and within East Bay parks and trails.
- **Equitable Park Access:** To ensure equitable access to parks so all East Bay communities can enjoy the physical and psychological benefits of nature.
- **Ecosystem Stewardship:** To support ecosystem health through restoration, acquisition and habitat enhancement, and improved efficiencies in regulatory approvals.
- **Extreme Weather Preparedness:** To address sea level rise, lake health and other climate-related challenges with nature-based infrastructure and proactive mitigation strategies.
- **Green Jobs:** To guide the development of career pathways for all in the parks, recreation, outdoor and environmental fields.
- **Welcoming Visitor Use Facilities:** To ensure all visitors feel welcomed to East Bay parks and trails by providing facilities which are safe, accessible, inclusive and sustainable.
- **Wildfire Resilience:** To minimize the risk of catastrophic wildfire in the East Bay by using proactive, ecologically sound vegetation management strategies.

In alignment with the Park District's Mission, overarching principles of the Legislative Program include equitable service delivery, advancing climate resiliency adaptation and mitigation, guiding work with an environmental ethic, supporting inclusive interpretation and educational opportunities, increasing conservation through land acquisition, and ensuring the fiscal health of the Park District.

Advocacy goals are supported by regularly updated objectives, which will be presented on the following slides.

2025-2026 Legislative Program

Proposed 2025-2026 Legislative Program Objectives

Climate-Friendly Transportation

Proposed 2025-2026 Legislative Program Objectives:

- **Local:** Strengthen relationships with local elected officials to advocate for expanded active and public transportation to East Bay parks and engage on tax measures funding active transportation infrastructure improvements.
 - **Example:** Collaborate with the City of Richmond on the Wilson Point San Francisco Bay Trail gap closure project.
- **State:** Collaborate with Caltrans and state legislators to secure additional funding for enhanced park transportation infrastructure, including active transportation routes and public transit connections.
 - **Example:** Develop and submit a formal budget request to increase funding for the California Active Transportation Program to support park transportation infrastructure improvements.
- **Federal:** Advocate for inclusion of East Bay parks in national transportation funding initiatives, like Federal Transition Administration (FTA) grants for improving access to outdoor recreation, and support legislation which promotes Federal investment in green transportation projects for parks and trails.
 - **Example:** Engage with Federal legislators to advocate for the inclusion of East Bay parks in national transportation funding initiatives.

Equitable Park Access

Proposed 2025-2026 Legislative Program Objectives:

- **Local:** Engage with local elected officials to promote initiatives which improve equitable park access for under resourced communities and explore ways local tax measures can be leveraged to fund park improvements and accessibility projects in these areas.
 - **Example:** Track local funding measures and initiatives to explore opportunities to increase funding for park improvements and access projects.
- **State:** In alignment with *Outdoors for All*, seek state funding to improve park access and infrastructure in under resourced areas, support legislation which expands equitable park access, and work with California State Parks and Parks California on the Outdoor Equity Grants Program for consistent park programming funding.
 - **Example:** Collaborate with California State Parks and Parks California to explore opportunities to improve the implementation of the Outdoor Equity Grants Program.
- **Federal:** Support funding for Federal grant programs advancing Justice40 to improve parks in under invested in areas, and advocate for national policies which promote equitable access to green spaces.
 - **Example:** Explore opportunities to engage on the revised definition of Justice40 to reflect unique and specific barriers to access present in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Ecosystem Stewardship

Proposed 2025-2026 Legislative Program Objectives:

- **Local:** Work with local and regional agencies and organizations to simplify regulatory approvals for habitat restoration and land acquisition projects.
 - **Example:** Track and review redundancies in local and regional regulatory processes to identify areas where green tape can be addressed at a staff, regulatory, or policy level.
- **State:** Advocate for state legislation to simplify the regulatory process for habitat restoration and land acquisition while maintaining environmental protection. Advance legislation to clarify the role of a Public Resources Code (PRC) 5500 independent special park district.
 - **Example:** Sponsor legislation to clarify the role and purpose of PRC 5500 agencies.
- **Federal:** Support Federal initiatives to efficiently advance regulatory approval for conservation projects. Advocate for increased funding for habitat restoration and enhancement programs.
 - **Example:** Engage with Federal agencies and congressional representatives to advocate for streamlined regulatory approvals for conservation projects through legislation and regulatory review.

Extreme Weather Preparedness

Proposed 2025-2026 Legislative Program Objectives:

- **Local:** Advocate with local and regional agencies to advance policies which address extreme weather including, but not limited to sea level rise, water quality and watershed health.
 - **Example:** Organize a stakeholder discussion on pathways to improve lake health in the East Bay.
- **State:** Explore opportunities to advance state funding and legislative support for comprehensive climate adaptation plans which include nature-based infrastructure to address extreme weather, sea level rise and lake health.
 - **Example:** Explore funding mechanisms to support future capital projects to improve lake health including at Lake Chabot, Lake Anza, Lake Del Valle, Lake Temescal, and others in the East Bay.
- **Federal:** Advance Federal support through agencies like FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers for sea level rise adaptation projects, and support legislation which funds research and implementation of nature-based solutions for coastal resilience and erosion control, as well as creeks, lakes and streams.
 - **Example:** Engage with FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers to advocate for increased Federal support and funding for sea level rise adaptation projects, including nature-based solutions for coastal resilience and watershed health.

Green Jobs

Proposed 2025-2026 Legislative Program Objectives:

- **Local:** Build upon relationships with local elected officials and workforce development organizations, like Civicorps, to develop and promote green job training programs for parks and environmental careers, and champion local policies which support green job creation and career pathways.
 - **Example:** Host an elected office staff site visit to highlight local workforce development organizations for elected offices.
- **State:** Advocate stable funding for state-level programs, like California Conservation Corps, which support green job training and career pathways in parks and environmental fields.
 - **Example:** Advocate for funding to support the creation of permanent housing facilities for the California Conservation Corps in the East Bay.
- **Federal:** Support Federal policies and funding from the U.S. Department of Labor to develop and enhance green job training programs, like AmeriCorps, and advocate for including parks and environmental careers in national workforce development initiatives.
 - **Example:** Advocate for AmeriCorps by engaging with the U.S. Department of Labor and participating in public comment periods for relevant funding opportunities.

Welcoming Visitor Use Facilities

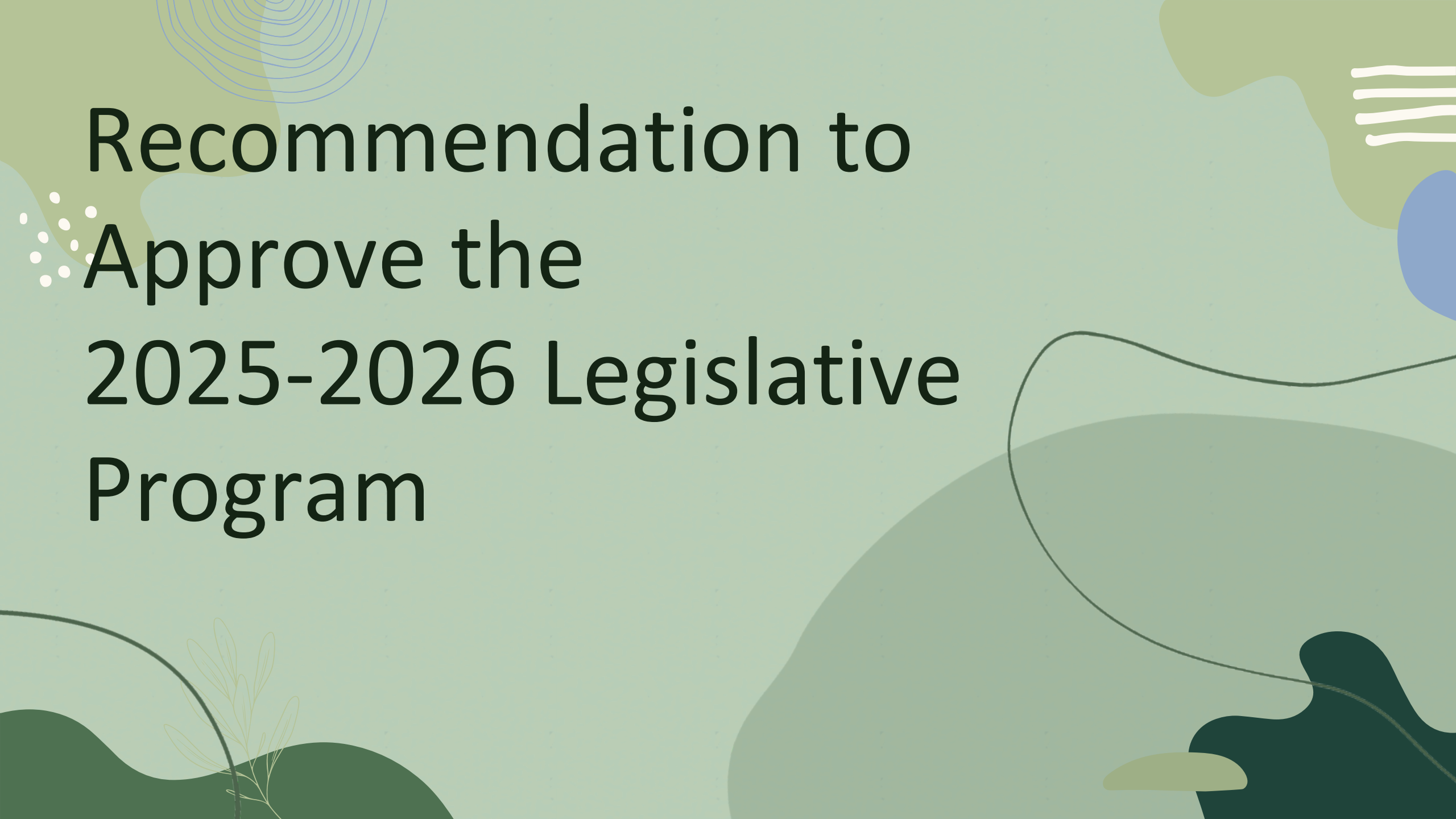
Proposed 2025-2026 Legislative Program Objectives:

- **Local:** Through the Local Government Engagement Strategy (LGES), partner with local elected officials to explore how the Park District can enhance the accessibility, inclusivity and sustainability of visitor facilities in East Bay parks.
 - Example: Continue advancing meetings across the East Bay as part of the LGES.
- **State:** Advocate for state funding and policy support to advance the Park District's prioritized capital projects.
 - Example: Leveraging the capital project prioritization process, create informational flyers to highlight Park District capital projects to build support for future direct funding.
- **Federal:** Engage with Federal elected officials and agencies to ensure funding is maintained for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and support legislation which promotes best practices for inclusive and sustainable visitor facilities.
 - **Example:** Advocate for an increase in annual funding to the LWCF in support of Park District facilities.

Wildfire Resilience

Proposed 2025-2026 Legislative Program Objectives:

- **Local:** Collaborate on local initiatives to improve wildfire resilience and support funding measures for wildfire management, including vegetation management and community preparedness programs and share the best practices of the Park District.
 - **Example:** Host an elected office staff site visit to bring awareness to the Park District's regional wildfire mitigation efforts.
- **State:** Advocate for state legislation and funding for wildfire resilience projects, including grants for vegetation management to enhance safe, healthy forests and grasslands.
 - **Example:** Advocate for state funding to advance wildfire resilience projects, including grants for vegetation management and community preparedness programs.
- **Federal:** Support Federal policies and funding opportunities, such as those from the U.S. Forest Service, aimed at biomass utilization. Advocate for national legislation which prioritizes investment in ecological fire management and resilience strategies.
 - **Example:** Explore funding opportunities to support biomass utilization projects in the East Bay.



Recommendation to Approve the 2025-2026 Legislative Program

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