

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

DATE	November 25, 2024
TITLE	Approval of 2025 PAC Objectives
DIVISION	General Manager's Office
FROM	Erich Pfuehler, Chief of Government and Legislative Affairs Sabrina Landreth, General Manager

APPROVED

RECOMMENDATION

The General Manager recommends the Park Advisory Committee provide a favorable recommendation to the Board of Directors for 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. Upon approval by the PAC, the proposed objectives will be submitted to the Park District Board of Directors for adoption.

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. Ensure Community Perspectives are Included in the District Plan
2. Support Environmental Education Opportunities and Park Accessibility for all East Bay Communities
3. Promote Environmental Stewardship and Consider Impacts on Wildlife 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. Ensure Community Perspectives are Included in the District Plan: Incorporating community perspectives into the District Plan is essential for fostering a sense of ownership and ensuring park initiatives align with the diverse needs of East Bay residents. Engaging the community in project and program proposals is crucial for ensuring the services of East Bay parks meet local needs, ultimately leading to higher user satisfaction, and successful project and program outcomes. As representatives of the community, the PAC can share ideas and feedback on proposed designs and initiatives, guided by their experiences. This engagement can be achieved through community forums, surveys and partnerships with local organizations. Additionally, this engagement will help amplify voices and ensure everyone has an opportunity to engage in the future of their parks.
2. Support Environmental Education Opportunities and Park Accessibility for all East Bay Communities: Supporting environmental education opportunities is important for empowering East Bay communities to appreciate and care for their natural surroundings. By fostering awareness of local ecosystems and instilling a sense of stewardship, the PAC can contribute to the sustainability of these resources, particularly in response to climate change. The PAC's perspective and advice on efforts to actively engage marginalized populations and those with varying abilities can assist the Park District in addressing barriers to access and promoting equitable use of park resources. This engagement includes exploring collaborations with schools, community centers and environmental organizations. By embracing this work, the PAC can foster the community's understanding of their local environment and encourage responsible interaction with nature.
3. Promote Environmental Stewardship and Consider Impacts on Wildlife across all Activities: The District's impact on the environment, wildlife and plant life is considered in all planning actions and development initiatives. In accordance, PAC members should prioritize this consideration across their deliberations. This objective connects to the overarching mission of the Park District, to be guided by an environmental ethic in all its activities. PAC members expressed healthy interest in centering more of their conversations on environmental considerations. By incorporating a focus on stewardship, the PAC can help the Park District balance ecological interests with equitable access to nature.
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