

EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT

MEMORANDUM

March 3, 2011

To: Board of Directors

From: Robert E. Doyle, General Manager  
Dave Collins, Assistant General Manager, Finance/Mgt. Services

Subject: March 8 and 23, 2010 Board of Directors Workshops

Attached please find information supporting the March 8 and 23, 2011 Board Workshops.

The format of the workshops is similar to that of prior years – providing an opportunity for Board Members to put forward their issues of interest and seeking Board consensus on top priorities for focus discussion. Disposition of issues may include referral to future workshops, committees or Board meetings, to staff for further development, or discussion at this Workshop, time permitting.

This meeting is being held in a workshop format to encourage Board members to comment on and discuss the topics; however, per the requirements of the Brown Act, no formal actions will be taken at this meeting. Any items requiring formal Board action will be referred to subsequent regular Board Meetings for consideration.

These March 8 and 23 workshops are the first of five workshops planned for 2011. These initial workshops provide the Board a broad opportunity to identify issues of importance, to request information and review such matters with staff, and to discuss options and alternatives to achieving the District's goals. Background information on budget strategy, redistricting, and the Master Plan update process is included in this packet for the Board's consideration.

Future workshops will provide detailed summary information on the District's capital funding, acquisition, development, maintenance and resource projects and similar topics. The Board's discussion of these matters will help update the District's priorities and guide the preparation of the 2012 District Budget.

**Supporting Materials and Attachments:**

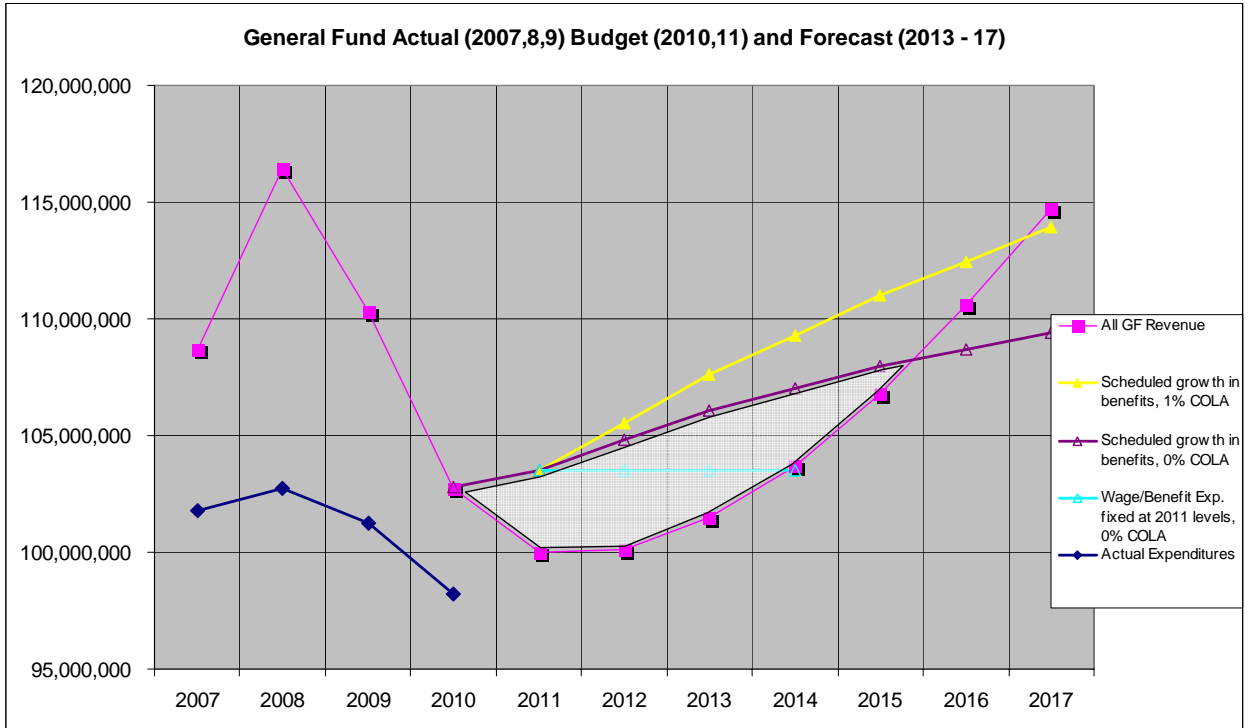
- 1. Draft Workshop Agenda – for Tues. March 8, 2011 (Page 2)**
- 2. Update on Budget Issues for 2011/2012 (Page 3,4)**
- 3. Re-districting Update (Page 5)**
- 4. Master Plan 2011 Update Process (Page 6)**
- 5. Master Plan Identified Policy Priorities (Attachment A)**

**Draft Agenda, Tuesday, March 8, 2011:**

- |            |  |  |
|------------|--|--|
| 12:30 p.m. | Call to Order & Workshop Procedure<br>Opening Comments<br>Outline of 2011 Workshops                | President Lane<br>GM Robert E. Doyle<br>AGM Dave Collins |
| 12:45 p.m. | Identify Board Members' Interests<br>Individual Priorities (5 minutes each)                        |  |
| 1:20 p.m.  | Consensus on priorities for today's discussion<br>and disposition of remaining issues              |  |
| 2:00 p.m.  | Break – 15 minutes   |  |
| 2:15 p.m.  | Dialog on priority issues - 90 minutes<br>Consensus solution or action plan                        |  |
| 3:45 p.m.  | Recap Consensus Review of Issues<br>Confirm March 23, 2011 Workshop Priorities<br>Workshop wrap-up |  |
| 4:15 p.m.  | Public Comments  |  |
| 4:30 p.m.  | Adjournment  |  |

## Update on Budget Issues for 2011/2012

- District General Fund revenues in 2011 are \$17 million less than the peak year of 2008. To address this major decline, roughly 25 staff positions have been removed from the budget and funding for important capital needs such as paving, infrastructure, fuels management, and fleet replacement has been reduced or eliminated. “Pipeline” operational funding for new properties and projects previously scheduled to open have been deferred to indefinite dates in the future.
- In spite of these significant reductions in services and capital expenses, the 2011 budget is in deficit by \$3.5 million, which is being funded by use of previously allocated one-time reserve funds.
- Benefit expenses for current employees are projected to rise at a double digit rate for the next several years. The outcome of the 2011 labor negotiations will have a significant bearing on the District’s ability to sustain our current, but already-reduced levels of operation.
- \$9 million in “Smoothing” funds reserved from 2009 to buffer low property tax revenues are being drawn down by \$3.5 million to balance the 2011 budget, leaving \$5.5 million in reserve for future years.
- The remaining \$5.5 million “smoothing” reserve fund balance is expected to be sufficient to cover the projected 2012 annual revenue/expenditure shortfall, but will not be enough to retain current levels of operations in 2013 and beyond.
- 2010 preliminary budget to actual results indicate that the District will end the year with between a \$4.5 and \$5 million positive variance that will accrue to fund balance.
- **Under current assumptions, appropriation of \$4.5 million into the Smoothing reserve should allow the District to use this source to augment revenues and stabilize our budget at current levels of operation without further reduction in staff through 2013.**
- The District is not projected to balance our budget between current revenues and expenditures (without use of reserve funds) until between 2014 and 2017, depending on our cost factors. Reinstatement of dormant programs and growth in District operations and services, at any significant levels, is unlikely before that time.
- The State Budget debate and unsettled real estate market mean a higher level of volatility and continuing uncertainty in the District’s budget projections.
- The Counties will issue the next property tax roll in August 2011, at which time the District’s revenue forecast for the second half of 2011 and the 2012 year can be assembled, the Beacon Economics report on future tax revenue will be updated, and the above findings revisited as appropriate in advance of the 2012 budget preparation.



The below table indicates the reserve funding projected to be needed to balance the District's budget in future years assuming current (January, 2011) levels of staffing, current benefit levels, benefit cost increases as projected, no COLA, no project or major initiative appropriations (paving, fuels mgt., etc.), and revenues as forecasted. The cumulative total is estimated to be \$17.35 million, represented by the shaded area in the chart above.

"Smoothing"/Deficit financing required		
Year	Annual Amt.	Cumulative
2011	(3,500,000)	(3,500,000)
2012	(4,700,000)	(8,200,000)
2013	(4,600,000)	(12,800,000)
2014	(3,350,000)	(16,150,000)
2015	(1,200,000)	<b>(17,350,000)</b>
2016	-	(17,350,000)
2017	-	(17,350,000)

## Re-districting Update

- The District is required to review and adjust ward boundaries following each Federal Census to ensure that Wards contain populations that are of roughly equal size.
- Census information, detailed to the Census Tract and Block level, is scheduled to be released by April 1, 2011.
- District staff is preparing to map the census information into the current ward Boundary descriptions using our GIS system. This will allow analysis of the differences in population between Wards that may have evolved over the past ten years.
- In 2001, the District adjusted ward boundaries by the minimum amount necessary to result in a variance of 5% or less between the populations of any two wards. Based on legal review, this was considered to be a valid standard that provided good public representation by creating wards of equivalent populations while keeping boundary changes to a reasonable number and minimizing subdivision of communities.
- This standard is consistent with Elections Code 22000, which states that “Each district ...shall, by resolution, after each federal decennial census, and using that census as a basis, adjust the boundaries of any divisions, so that the divisions are, *as far as practicable*, equal in population...”. Additionally the U.S. Supreme Court says a 10 percent variance is acceptable for state legislative redistricting. **Therefore, unless otherwise directed by the Board, staff intends to use the same 5% standard for the 2011 process.**
- Should the census information reveal any ward-to-ward variances beyond 5%, staff will inform the Board of the size of the variances and the need to proceed with the process, and will construct different scenarios that result in the correct adjustment.
- Options for adjustment, as in previous years, will be constructed to:
  - Minimize changes to current wards.
  - Keep whole cities and communities in one ward, where possible.
  - Retain boundaries to be consistent with census tracts/blocks.
  - Align boundaries with other major features (roads, county lines, city boundaries, etc.).
  - Keep current park representation.
- These scenarios, and any preferred scenarios/alternatives will be brought to the Board Legislative Committee for review (with copies to the entire Board as information) prior to coming before the full Board for consideration. Changes to ward boundaries, should there be any, will be submitted to the counties by their respective deadlines, which will be well in advance of the next election.
- Staff anticipates the analysis of the census data will take approximately one month; therefore, if necessary, we expect to begin to accept input on scenarios in early May prior to developing more detailed proposals.

**Status of Master Plan Update 2011**

**As of 3/2/2011** \*Completed tasks are followed by a (date in parenthesis)\*

**The Update process can be generalized into 4 steps:**

**1) Present Update Process Proposal for Review**

- Present proposed process “preview” to **PAC** for review and comment (9/28/09).
- Present proposed process “preview” to **Executive Committee** for review and comment (10/22/09).
- Present proposed process “preview” to **Management Staff** for review and comment (12/14/09).

**2) Identify Issues for Update or Revision**

- Discuss Draft Update Process and interests at the 2010 **Board** Workshop for review and comment (2/23/10).
- Provide revised Update Process schedule at **Board** Workshop (3/26/10).
- Review available user survey data to identify policy issues to be addressed in the update process (9/23/10).
- Posting of public notification in RIN and website (4/15/10).
- Initiate reformatting of existing Master Plan text for improved use and distribution through web based forums (currently in process).
- Review, confirm and solicit issues through an internal **executive/staff** survey process (8/26/10).
- Make a preliminary determination of the high priority issues (9/23/10).
- Test ranking and priority of issues through a **community** survey (12/23/10).
- Revise priority issues based upon **community** survey results to develop a "top ten" list of priority updates of new policy additions (2/24/11).
- March 2011 Board Workshop Update
- Present identified priorities to **Executive Committee** for review and comment.
- Present identified priorities to **PAC** for review and comment.

- Present identified **PAC** priorities to **Executive Committee** for consideration.

### 3) Develop Draft Plan Language

- Draft new and revised policy language to address priority issues.
- Test draft policy language through **Community** survey.
- Revise draft language based on survey findings, compile with reformatted, unchanged Master Plan text, creating Administrative Draft.

### 4) Board Review, Public Hearings and Approval

- **Board** presentation on Admin. Draft Plan Update to gain approval for circulation for **public** review and input.
- Revise plan based on **Board** input and publish Draft Plan for **public** review and comment.
- Solicit **public** input through six Town Hall meetings hosted by **Board** members assisted by **PAC** members; two in each Metro area.
- Presentation of Draft and discussion of **public** review input with **Executive Committee**.
- "Revise Draft based on input from **Executive Committee**, creating Final Draft."
- Presentation of Final Draft to **PAC** for review and recommendation.
- Presentation of Final Draft to **Executive Committee** with **PAC** recommendations for review and recommendation.
- Presentation of Final Draft to **Board** for approval.
- Publish Master Plan Update.

# MASTER PLAN 2010 PLAN 2011



Based upon the results of the Community Survey, the Board, PAC and Staff survey and input received from a variety of presentations, staff is proposing the following issues to be the focus of the Master Plan Update process.

## STAFF'S PROPOSED LIST OF ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE MASTER PLAN UPDATE AND BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

### 1) Providing "Trails for all":

#### Community Survey Data:

- Multi-use trails (60%) should be given a priority over dedicated trails.
- The second highest spending priority for active activities is a wide variety of trail opportunities (56%).
- For trails, shared (51%) and regional trails (51%) are the highest preferred type of trails.
- 61% support dogs on-leash in most areas of the parks.

#### Findings:

Survey data indicates that the community prefers a wide variety of shared and multi-use trails and the development of dedicated trails should be a lower priority. Related concerns were also raised by staff regarding the increasing impact to natural resources from "overland" (off-trail) access by equestrians and off-leash dogs.

#### Recommendations for Master Plan Update:

- Develop language allowing seasonal trail closures to protect resources as needed.
- Consider on-leash and on-trail policies for areas subject to heavy use and/or significant resource damage.
- Emphasize the development of shared-use trails
- Review recent changes in ADA law regarding the use of motorized vehicles on trails.
- Incorporate the proposed Bay Water Trail into planning guidelines.

### 2) Leading the movement for Healthy Parks Healthy People:

#### Community Survey Data:

- A large majority of people exercise as a regular part of their routine (86%).
- Walking is by far the leading form of exercise (59%).
- A majority of the community (62%) support the Park District in taking a leadership role in the Healthy Parks/Healthy People movement.
- 56% feel that the provision of a wide variety of trails should be high spending priority.
- Security (33%) and parking fees (32%) are the highest rated barriers to park usage.

#### Findings:

Survey data indicates that the community is exercising regularly and most often by walking. They support the District taking a leadership role in the Healthy Parks Healthy People movement, once they know what it is.

#### Recommendations for Master Plan Update:

- Support the exercise preferences of the community with the identification and/or development of a wide variety of walking opportunities at close-in park locations.
- Review park hours to be sure they are consistent with the available "off work hours" that people have for exercise.

- Consider the development of fitness trails or Par Courses that provide outdoor equipment to enhance levels of exercise.
- Develop a specialized on-line site that identifies the variety of walking experiences that are available in nearby regional parks. This information should also be available on trail maps or via mobile devices while at the park.
- Address perceived issues related to security.
- Consider reduced parking fees for short “exercise related visits”.

### 3) Affirming the role and identity of the Regional Parks:

#### Community Survey Data:

- 86% strongly agree that the regional park system is a valuable public resource.
- 77% strongly agree that the system improves the quality of life.
- A majority (52%) is extremely satisfied with the Park District meeting their expectations.
- 64% want the District to purchase and protect more underdeveloped land and open space.
- 63% prefer passive park facilities.
- Only 29% have attended a District class or program.
- Among the most visited District parks: Livermore (18%) and Mt. Diablo (9%).

#### Findings:

As a system focused on the preservation of open space and undeveloped landscapes, the Park District defines the boundary between what is developed and what is wild; offering the visitor a variety of close-to-home “urban wilderness” experiences. The community overwhelmingly approves of this open space system and feels that it directly improves their quality of life. Through its land acquisition, the District is meeting the expectations of the community while providing the desired passive park experience. The community recognizes the value of the District, although they may not always be able to differentiate District facilities from those of other park agencies.

#### Recommendations for Master Plan Update:

- Highlight the District’s importance and value to local, county and State levels of government as an independent special district.
- Work to bolster the community’s understanding of the mission of regional parks and the values of a regional scale open space system, as distinct from local parks and recreation programs.

### 4) Balancing funding priorities, meeting expectations and sound fiscal practices:

#### Community Survey Data:

- 83% of the community strongly agrees that the regional parks and facilities must be properly maintained.
- 61% strongly agree that the District should place a high priority on environmental maintenance.
- 64% want the District to purchase and protect more land.
- 68% feel that fire hazard reductions and protection should be a high priority.
- 67% feel that maintenance of park facilities should be a high priority.
- 52% are extremely satisfied that the Park District is meeting their overall expectations.
- 38% agree that the District is accountable with respect to financial management.
- 56% are **unsure** that the District is fully accountable in managing their tax dollars.

#### Findings:

The District has successfully balanced the allocation of budget resources to a wide variety of demands. Maintenance of existing trails, campgrounds, visitor centers and swim areas are high priorities. Strong public interest is also apparent for both continuation of the District’s acquisition program and development of public access facilities on existing lands. However, knowledge of the District’s responsible management of financial resources is not evident.

#### Recommendations for Master Plan Update:

- Develop language supporting the current methods used to anticipate and fund cyclic or recurring operational and maintenance expenses such as paving, fuels management, building upkeep, replacement and funding staff pension, and post-retirement liabilities.

- Educate the public of what is required to operate and maintain a well-run regional park system while balancing the commitment of financial resources between several mandates, including:
  - The difficult choices of which new land acquisitions to open and which to leave in land bank in order to match new parklands with operational capacity.
  - Strategic selection of capital development projects to take advantage of grant or other opportunity funding to provide public amenities while limiting expansion of operational responsibilities.
  - Emphasizing the construction or renovation of infrastructure and other projects that reduce operational expenses.
  - The need to fund long-term renewal of existing facilities as well as current operational needs.
- Include a clear statement of the District's financial values and policies that emphasize long-term fiscal responsibility, conformance with financial best practices, a commitment to balanced budgets, transparency, and making short-term decisions to benefit the District's long-term responsibilities.
- Provide a brief synopsis of the management decision made by the District to navigate the current economic recession.

**5) Supporting the shift to Green communities:**

Community Survey Data:

- 75% of the Community feels that addressing global warming should be a priority for the Park District.

Findings:

As a steward of large areas of carbon sequestering vegetation, the Regional Parks have a clear role as the region's buffer against climate change and to help meet the requirements of SB 375. Completion of the regional trails system, offering an alternative to vehicle use, will ultimately improve the chances that the region will meet its requirements under SB 375. Our miles of shoreline parks will also have a role in helping to buffer adjacent communities from the anticipated effects of sea-level rise. The District should also take a leadership role in being green and sustainable in the operation of its facilities and vehicle fleet.

Recommendations for Master Plan Update:

- Highlight the significant role that the Regional Parks play in the region's quest for sustainable communities, since the scale of the system allows for the implementation of environmental enhancement and mitigation projects that are significant in the protection and enrichment of natural and cultural resources.
- Note the acquisition of new lands through the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan, specifically to mitigate the effects of urban development and preserve habitat for protected species.
- Educate the public on the significant role the District plays in addressing the region's concerns for improved air quality and buffering the effects of climate change.
- Implement studies on the risks and benefits of incorporating alternative energy sources on District lands, such as whether to continue to lease lands to wind energy projects.
- Support the use of renewable resources, continue the overall emphasis on reuse and recycling in park operations and maintenance, encourage sustainable products through "green" purchasing, use LEED type measures to assure energy efficient and green construction projects, use alternative fuels and car-pooling whenever possible.

**6) Developing productive partnerships:**

Findings:

The inevitable "compression of government services" in response to limited available revenue will encourage the consideration of partnerships with both public and private interests. State and local agencies, as well as many independent private interest groups who approach the Park District to "partner with them" by providing land or staff to support for their programs. Many of these partnerships turn into expensive projects, with the District bearing most of the cost. Better defining the types of partnerships that the District will consider should result in productive partnerships of mutual benefit that are backed by simple and well-conceived agreements. The possibility of specifically enhancing the value of local

science education through Stewardship volunteers or interns is an example of a potential partnership of this type.

Recommendations for Master Plan Update:

- Review and make explicit its policies on development partnerships and operational agreements, both in the interest of managing operational expenses and to ensure an equitable use of public funds.
- Use volunteers where safety, efficiency and contractual constraints permit. Investigate developing and using the help of local organizations and community volunteer groups to expand on successful models like the volunteer trail patrol and the ambassador program.
- Support the Children’s Bill of Rights and the spirit of “No Child left Inside” through a concerted outreach to youth and their parents which may be done most easily through partnering with City Park and recreation departments to create a linkage from the more accessible and familiar City Park to the Regional Park experience.

**7) Responding to changes in demographics:**

Findings:

California’s senior population will double by 2020. There will be more retirees looking for active recreation and meaningful participation. As time goes on, they will also have increasing needs for physical accessibility. At the same time, the youth population is larger: 27% under 18. Many kids spend an increasing amount of time indoors, involved with electronic media, and don’t seek or get opportunities to be outdoors in nature. Our population is multi-ethnic. We hear many different languages spoken in our parks. People with different ethnic backgrounds relate to nature and outdoor recreation in different ways.

Recommendations for Master Plan Update:

- Emphasize identification of activities and programs that will relate to the interests of seniors and youth.
- Implement a program for the provision of Park information in a variety of ethnic-based media.
- Monitor evolving park and trail use patterns to maintain the relevance and usefulness of our developed facilities for park users and guide the development of new facilities to match new population centers.
- Map and confirm ongoing transit access to parks and assure that this information is widely available.
- Work to make all Regional Parks and their external entry routes ADA compliant from transit stops.

**8) Creating conservation and management standards for cultural and historic resources:**

Findings:

Staff review of the 1997 Master Plan discovered nine (9) different policy statements related to the management of natural resources and only one (1) for the management of cultural resources. Staff feels that this disparity demonstrates the need to develop a more detailed and directed set of standards and protocols for the recognition and protection of historic and cultural resources.

Recommendations for Master Plan Update:

- Develop language that sets a procedure for the protection of cultural resources which includes the appropriate consultation of Native American representatives.
- Define and clarify the role of the District in the protection of significant historic and cultural resource areas that extend beyond the lands of the District.