



Staff Liaison
Christopher Jones | (510) 559-7000
cjones@elcerrito.gov

This information can be interpreted for you free of charge. Visit City Hall at 10890 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530 or learn more at www.el-cerrito.org/LanguageAccess

Esta información se puede interpretar gratuitamente. Visite el Ayuntamiento en 10890 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530 o obtenga más información en www.el-cerrito.org/LanguageAccess

这些信息可免费为您解释。请访问位于 10890 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530 的市政厅，或访问 www.el-cerrito.org/LanguageAccess 了解更多信息

AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING OF THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Wednesday, July 22, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

Council Chambers
10980 San Pablo Ave, El Cerrito

7:00 P.M. CONVENE REGULAR MEETING

1. **ROLL CALL** – Chair Lauren Dodge; Vice Chair Jennifer Kaczor; Members Carinne Brody, Stephanie Ferrara, Hari Lamba, Anne Perkins and Julia Salinas
2. **COMMISSION/STAFF COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**
Informal reports on matters of general interest which are announced by the Park and Recreation Commissioners and City Staff.
3. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**
Remarks are typically limited to three minutes per person and may be on anything within the subject matter jurisdiction of the body. Remarks on non-agenda items will be heard first. Remarks on agenda items will be heard at the time the item is discussed.
4. **COUNCIL/STAFF LIAISON ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS**
Staff and/or Councilmember Carolyn Wysinger may report on matters of general interest to the Park and Recreation Commission, Council policies, priorities and significant actions taken by the City Council.
5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
Consider a motion adopting the minutes of the Park and Recreation Commission meetings on **May 27, 2026** and **June 24, 2026**.
6. **PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION WORK PLAN**
Commission discussion on Work Plan goals and progress including possible updates from Work Plan Groups and Community Group Liaisons. Review of the Draft 2026 Park and Recreation Commission Mid-Year Report to the City Council with possible action to approve.

7. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF PARKS AND RECREATION RELATED PROJECTS

Review Parks Projects Status Sheet of funded and unfunded capital improvement program projects related to Parks and Recreation.

8. RECREATION DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Update on items of interest in the Recreation Department.

9. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

- Next Regular Meeting: Wednesday, August 26, 2026 at 7pm
- Parks and Recreation Facilities Projects Update – Ongoing
- Work Plan Groups and Liaison Reports – Ongoing
- Recreation Supervisor Presentations - TBD

10. ADJOURN PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Staff Liaison, (510) 559-7005. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. (28 CFR 35.102-35.104 ADA Title I).

Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the members regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at the El Cerrito Community Center, 7007 Moeser Lane, El Cerrito, CA 94530 during normal business hours.

AGENDA MATERIALS
SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
July 22, 2026

AGENDA ITEM 5 - APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. **DRAFT** Meeting Minutes, May 27, 2026
2. **DRAFT** Meeting Minutes, June 24, 2026

AGENDA ITEM 6 – PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION WORK PLAN

1. For Reference: [Fiscal Years 2026/2027 & 2027/2028 Work Plan](#)
2. **Updated DRAFT Park and Recreation Commission 2026 Mid-Year Report** (received before 7/22/26 at 4pm)

AGENDA ITEM 7 - REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF PARKS AND RECREATION RELATED PROJECTS

1. **Updated Project Status Sheet** (received before 7/22/26 at 4pm)



Staff Liaison
Christopher Jones | (510) 559-7000
cjones@elcerrito.gov

This information can be interpreted for you free of charge. Visit City Hall at 10890 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530 or learn more at www.el-cerrito.org/LanguageAccess

Esta información se puede interpretar gratuitamente. Visite el Ayuntamiento en 10890 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530 o obtenga más información en www.el-cerrito.org/LanguageAccess

这些信息可免费为您解释。请访问位于 10890 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530 的市政厅，或访问 www.el-cerrito.org/LanguageAccess 了解更多信息

DRAFT MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Wednesday, May 27, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

Council Chambers
10980 San Pablo Ave, El Cerrito

7:00 P.M. CONVENE REGULAR MEETING - Chair Dodge called the meeting to order at 7:07pm

1. **ROLL CALL – Present:** Chair Lauren Dodge; Vice Chair Jennifer Kaczor; Members Stephanie Ferrara and Julia Salinas. **Absent:** Members Carinne Brody, Hari Lamba, and Anne Perkins
2. **COMMISSION/STAFF COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**
Informal reports on matters of general interest which are announced by the Park and Recreation Commissioners and City Staff.

Comments: None

3. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**
Remarks are typically limited to three minutes per person and may be on anything within the subject matter jurisdiction of the body. Remarks on non-agenda items will be heard first. Remarks on agenda items will be heard at the time the item is discussed.

Public Comments: None

4. **COUNCIL/STAFF LIAISON ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS**
Staff and/or Councilmember Carolyn Wysinger may report on matters of general interest to the Park and Recreation Commission, Council policies, priorities and significant actions taken by the City Council.

Staff summarized applicable topics from the prior City Council meetings on May 5 and May 19, 2026. Topics included public hearings on redistricting and the transition to district-based elections, recognition of National Public Works Week and various heritage and awareness month proclamations, public hearings on the Landscaping and Lighting Assessment District

and storm drain fees, budget study sessions, a Marin Clean Energy presentation, and adoption of the master fee schedule. Staff noted that Recreation Department fees are market-based and that the Commission would receive updates on fees at future meetings before making a recommendation for the next fiscal year. Upcoming Council items include additional budget study sessions, budget adoption in June, additional district-based elections hearings, and a presentation on strategic economics and affordable housing.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Consider a motion adopting the minutes of the Park and Recreation Commission meeting on **April 22, 2026**.

Moved/Seconded: Member Ferrara/Vice Chair Kaczor. **Action:** Passed a motion to approve the minutes of the Park and Recreation Commission meeting on April 22, 2026. **Ayes:** Chair Dodge; Vice Chair Kaczor; Members Ferrara and Salinas. **Absent:** Members Brody, Lamba, and Perkins

6. HILLSIDE NATURAL AREA FIRE RESILIENCE AND FOREST CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Presentation on implementation activities associated with the HNA Plan including a project in Quarry Hill to remove trees and restore the area.

Presentation and Discussion: Public Works staff presented an update on implementation of the Hillside Natural Area Fire Resilience and Forest Conservation Management Plan. Staff described a new implementation grant with the City of Albany to remove hazardous invasive trees, replant and stabilize the project areas, host public engagement days, and provide a public milling demonstration at the Recycling Center.

Commissioners asked about additional grant opportunities, project costs, wood reuse, and milled wood. Staff noted work on a Cal Fire wildfire resilience grant, possible federal earmark funding, budget constraints related to tree removal, expected use of milled wood for log benches, trail treads, and raised bed timbers, and that a day of the milling demonstration would be open to the public.

Action: Receive and file

8. PARKS AND RECREATION RELATED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP) PROJECTS

Review, discussion and possible action to recommend the proposed CIP projects for parks and recreation facilities for the City's Fiscal Years 2026-27 & 2027-28 Budget.

(Item Heard Out of Order)

Presentation and Discussion: Public Works Director Yvetteh Ortiz presented the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) as part of the Fiscal Years 2026-27 & 2027-28 Biennial Budget. Parks and recreation-related projects discussed included the Hillside Natural Area project, Ohlone Greenway uptown and downtown improvements, public path and stairway signage, urgent roof repairs, playground surfacing at Tassajara and Arlington parks, tennis court resurfacing and repairs, baseball field fence repairs, and a Cerrito Vista handrail assessment.

Commissioners asked about playground equipment life spans, play surface needs, funding limits, prioritization, funded versus unfunded projects, possible Measure C impacts, active transportation, traffic calming, and formalizing Ohlone Greenway connections. Staff noted that playground assessments are planned, grant funding will continue to be pursued,

prioritization tools are still being considered, and active transportation improvements are incorporated into street resurfacing and complete streets projects.

Moved/Seconded: Members Salinas/Ferrara. **Action:** Passed a motion to recommend approval of the 2026-27 and 2027-28 parks and recreation facilities-related Capital Improvement Program Biennial Budget as presented. **Ayes:** Chair Dodge; Vice Chair Kaczor; Members Ferrara and Salinas. **Absent:** Members Brody, Lamba, and Perkins

7. RECREATION DEPARTMENT BUDGET PRESENTATION

Presentation, discussion and possible action to recommend the proposed Fiscal Years 2026-27 & 2027-28 Recreation Department budget.

(Item Heard Out of Order)

Presentation and Discussion: Staff presented the proposed Fiscal Years 2026-27 and FY 2027-28 Recreation Department Biennial Budget and discussed addressing the City's current structural deficit, efforts to slow spending growth, and planned internal service funds for equipment replacement, deferred maintenance, and capital infrastructure. Staff summarized department staffing, revenues, expenditures, special funds, and the department's relatively high direct cost recovery compared with nearby agencies. Staff also highlighted recent accomplishments and upcoming priorities, including senior programming, childcare staffing, technology improvements, Swim Center and court projects, 4th of July sponsorships, Recreation Department organization, paratransit expansion, and a Recreation Department registration app.

Commissioners discussed budget timing, grant writing and lobbying, special versus general funds, cost recovery by division, equity in program pricing, subsidized childcare comparisons, and the budget development process.

Moved/Seconded: Vice Chair Kaczor/Member Ferrara. **Action:** Passed a motion to recommend approval of the 2026-27 and 2027-28 Recreation Department Biennial Budget as presented. **Ayes:** Chair Dodge; Vice Chair Kaczor; Members Ferrara and Salinas. **Absent:** Members Brody, Lamba, and Perkins

9. PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION WORK PLAN

Commission discussion on Work Plan goals and progress including possible updates from Work Plan Groups and Community Group Liaisons. Review of 2025-26 accomplishments and development of 2026-27 & 2027-28 Park and Recreation Commission Work Plan with possible action to approve.

Action: Postponed to special meeting on June 24, 2026

10. FOURTH OF JULY PARTICIPTION

Discussion of potential Park and Recreation Commissioner participation and community outreach at the City of El Cerrito/worldOne 4th of July Festival

Action: Postponed to special meeting on June 24, 2026

11. RECREATION DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Update on items of interest in the Recreation Department.

Action: Postponed to a future meeting

12. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

- Next Special Meeting: Wednesday, June 24, 2026 at 7pm
- 2026-27 & 2027-28 Work Plan – June
- 4th of July Participation – June
- Parks and Recreation Facilities Projects Update – Ongoing

13. ADJOURN PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING - Chair Dodge
adjourned the meeting at 9:02pm.

Lauren Dodge, Chair

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Regular Park and Recreation Commission meeting on May 27, 2026 as approved by the Park and Recreation Commission.

Christopher Jones, Staff Liaison



Staff Liaison
Christopher Jones | (510) 559-7000
cjones@elcerrito.gov

This information can be interpreted for you free of charge. Visit City Hall at 10890 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530 or learn more at www.el-cerrito.org/LanguageAccess

Esta información se puede interpretar gratuitamente. Visite el Ayuntamiento en 10890 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530 o obtenga más información en www.el-cerrito.org/LanguageAccess

这些信息可免费为您解释。请访问位于 10890 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530 的市政厅，或访问 www.el-cerrito.org/LanguageAccess 了解更多信息

DRAFT MINUTES

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Wednesday, June 24, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

Council Chambers
10980 San Pablo Ave, El Cerrito

7:00 P.M. CONVENE REGULAR MEETING - Chair Dodge called the meeting to order at 7:07pm

1. **ROLL CALL – Present:** Chair Lauren Dodge; Vice Chair Jennifer Kaczor; Members Stephanie Ferrara and Julia Salinas. **Absent:** Members Carinne Brody, Hari Lamba, and Anne Perkins
2. **COMMISSION/STAFF COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**
Informal reports on matters of general interest which are announced by the Park and Recreation Commissioners and City Staff.

Comments: None

3. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**
Remarks are typically limited to three minutes per person and are limited to items on the special meeting agenda only. Remarks on agenda items will be heard at the time the item is discussed.

Public Comments: None

4. **PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION WORK PLAN**
Commission discussion on Work Plan goals and progress including possible updates from Work Plan Groups and Community Group Liaisons. Review of 2025-26 accomplishments and development of 2026-27 & 2027-28 Park and Recreation Commission Work Plan with possible action to approve.

Presentation and Discussion: Staff and Commissioners discussed and answered questions about their Draft Fiscal Year 2025–26 accomplishments and Fiscal Years 2026-27 & 2027-28 Work Plan and discussed revisions to the Work Plan that focused on Parks and Recreation resources, funding, transparent project prioritization, donation policies, deferred maintenance and maintenance levels, and implementation of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Revisions included adding advocacy language for resources, including staffing/capacity, alternative funding sources, and creative funding structures and the use of broader language to

describe Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan priorities rather than calling out specific projects.

Commissioners asked questions and discussed City budget impacts to Recreation special events, the Dorothy Rosenberg Memorial Park, and funding new park enhancements versus existing maintenance needs and including the Commission in reviewing donation guidelines, community project prioritization, and implementation of Master Plan related efforts.

Moved/Seconded: Members Ferrara/Salinas. **Action:** Passed a motion to approve of the Fiscal Years 2026-27 and 2027-28 Parks and Recreation Commission Work Plan incorporating the discussed revisions. **Ayes:** Chair Dodge; Vice Chair Kaczor; Members Ferrara and Salinas. **Absent:** Members Brody, Lamba, and Perkins

Moved/Seconded: Vice Chair Kaczor/Member Ferrara. **Action:** Passed a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Park and Recreation Commission Accomplishments as presented. **Ayes:** Chair Dodge; Vice Chair Kaczor; Members Ferrara and Salinas. **Absent:** Members Brody, Lamba, and Perkins

5. FOURTH OF JULY PARTICIPTION

Discussion of potential Park and Recreation Commissioner participation and community outreach at the City of El Cerrito/worldOne 4th of July Festival

Presentation and Discussion: Commissioners discussed participation, scheduling, and community outreach, including survey questions developed by the Communications Work Plan Group, for the City of El Cerrito & worldOne 4th of July Festival.

Action: Receive and file

6. ADJOURN PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING - Chair Dodge adjourned the meeting at 9:12pm.

Lauren Dodge, Chair

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Special Park and Recreation Commission meeting on June 24, 2026 as approved by the Park and Recreation Commission.

Christopher Jones, Staff Liaison

PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION

MID - YEAR REPORT

20
26



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1-3

Executive Summary, Introduction, Background

4-7

Funding Landscape, ACM Notes, Grants

8-12

Benchmarked Jurisdictions

14-15

Community Sentiment, Next Steps, Conclusion

16-22

Appendix

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We continue to build our understanding of the City's and residents' priorities, available funding sources and opportunities, and partnership models other local cities use.

Over the past 6 months, the Park and Recreation Commission:

- Surveyed 30 people at the worldOne Festival
- Interviewed recreation leaders at 4 local cities
- Welcomed two new commissioners to the PRC, and bid farewell to Commissioner Jack Rozier as he relocated out of El Cerrito
- Absorbed outputs from the 2025 National Community Survey, city budget process, and June election

We learned:

- Securing funding for park and recreation CIP projects and maintenance remains a challenge
- There are alternate models used in other cities that may be viable options for El Cerrito
- Walking/Biking Trails and Open Space, Trees, Landscaping were the top priorities in the WorldOne Festival survey results
- The City is ready to take next steps to develop donation guidelines and standards and community project prioritization
- Per the National Community Survey, residents ranked Parks and Facility Maintenance as the third most important focus area

Our next steps include:

- Continued engagement with community groups
- Active involvement in developing the City donation guidelines and standards
- Working towards prioritizations and recommendations to share with City Council, potentially in our year-end report

INTRODUCTION

In early 2025, the El Cerrito Park and Recreation Commission created a subcommittee to focus on addressing funding gaps and opportunities. The subcommittee has pursued an understanding of:

- 2019 Park and Recreation Facilities Master Plan projects' status and priority
- Current community priorities via WorldOne Festival surveys, interviews with relevant community group members, and the National Community Surveys
- The funding landscape and potential opportunities, given the City's growing backlog of deferred park maintenance and lack of funds to more fully implement the Master Plan
- Successful models from other local cities in leveraging community groups and volunteers

The Commission requests acknowledgement from City Council of the information reported, support for continued reporting, and engagement and feedback on any recommendations for project funding and support.

We hope this report will maintain a regular communication pipeline between the community partners and residents who strengthen El Cerrito's parks and recreation, the Commission, and City Council.

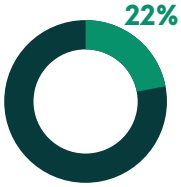
BACKGROUND

The Parks & Recreation Facilities Master Plan, finalized in 2019, is reflective of City planning efforts dating back to the El Cerrito General Plan (1999, 2015), as well as the Structural Facilities Management Plan (2004), Ohlone Greenway Master Plan (2009) and the Climate Action Plan (2013), among others.

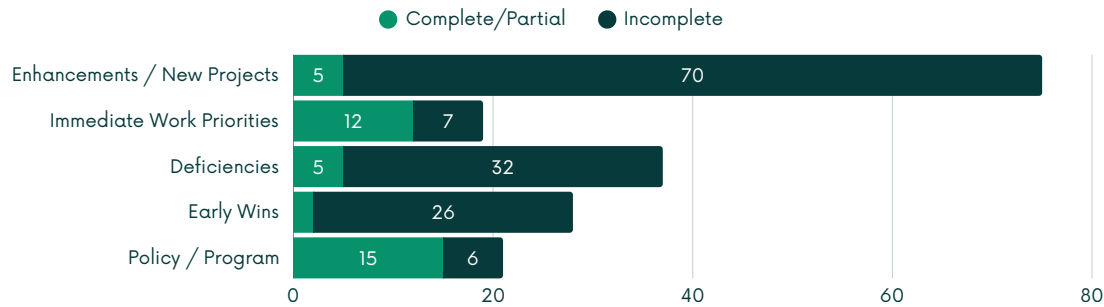


As of July 2026, significant opportunity remains to generate momentum and deliver on community priorities, with 22% of all approved projects completed. Conversely, there is significant risk of deferred maintenance liability, with 37% of Immediate Work Priorities and 86% of Deficiencies unaddressed.

Total Master Plan Status



Count of Recommendation Type by Status



FUNDING LANDSCAPE

Funding activities and decisions during the first half of the year were robust. The City ran its biennial budget process, resulting in a two-year financial plan, and revisited its Capital Improvement Projects list and plan. Economic headwinds remain a reality for El Cerrito along with many other cities. While the recreation budget and expected revenue remain at comparable levels to previous years, reductions in services and contractor support and events are being reduced, addressing deferred maintenance is a challenge, and ~\$30 million in funding would be needed to deliver all projects on the Park and Recreation Facilities Master Plan.

An occasional source of funding is via donations from community groups (pickleball courts and the Arlington Tennis Center are examples). A pause was placed on community-funded projects while the CIP projects list was revisited and reprioritized, and after the release of the budget book, two community-funded projects are on the CIP list. Per the new budget: "The development of the City donation guidelines and standards and community project prioritization" are planned, and the PRC will be actively involved in developing these guidelines and will make a formal recommendation on them before they are finalized.

COMMUNITY GROUP PLAYBOOK

For co-sponsored City projects

The PRC aims to develop a playbook to support community groups and residents with a resource for proposals, planning, and execution of co-sponsored projects with the City of El Cerrito. The goals of this resource are both to help community groups and to help City staff by making all phases of a project as efficient and clear to all parties as possible.

Plans for developing City donation guidelines and standards and community project prioritization will kick off in late summer or early fall, so the PRC will ensure coordination with its staff liaison to avoid duplication of efforts and strive for both resources to complement each other.

Draft playbook outline

- **Case studies:** Examples of both successful and challenging projects from community partners
- **Local benchmarks:** What other local cities are successfully doing that El Cerrito could consider
- **Donation guidelines and standards:** Inclusion or reference to this City-produced resource
- **Volunteerism opportunities:** Ongoing and repeat community group led volunteer opportunities, with links to resources to keep current
- **Donations and fundraising:** How to donate to the City and share funding ideas

CONVERSATION NOTES:

EL CERRITO ACM - FUNDING & PHILANTHROPY

Contact Name, Title:

Will Provost, Assistant to the City Manager El Cerrito



Overview of conversation:

A Commission member spoke with El Cerrito's Assistant to the City Manager about corporate sponsorship, personal donor pipelines, and how community groups should engage the city on funding requests, following a tour of a new modular housing project.

Funding Related Initiatives:

- Privately-funded park projects – Castro Park's dedicated pickleball courts (~\$50–100K) and the Arlington Park Tennis Center were both privately fundraised to expedite work already on the City's plan.
- Large philanthropic gifts – The city has received restricted donations before (e.g., the Dorothy Rosenberg property), which came with strings limiting how the asset could be used or sold.
- Corporate matching-gift mapping – City staff have already mapped Bay Area corporations with employee donation-matching programs (e.g., Google up to \$12K), but haven't built the outreach or website to act on it.
- "Friends of" nonprofit model – Other groups (e.g., urban forestry) use a "Friends of" nonprofit structure to channel donations, though it adds an extra organizational layer.
- Deferred maintenance rebranding – The city is exploring how to market its \$40M deferred maintenance backlog as something donors would want to fund.

One thing El Cerrito could do now (if applicable):

- Build a simple add-on to the existing [City giving page](#), clearly-marketed donor pipeline (a webpage or process for designating gifts to specific causes) so residents and corporate matching programs have an obvious, low-friction way to give.

GRANT FUNDING

We have identified over 20 possible grant opportunities from Federal, State, Regional/Bay Area, and Private sources.

The complete table is in the [Appendix](#) and should be shared with the City's Grant writer, and has been shared directly with Chris Jones to expedite the sharing.

Priority order is based on time to apply and relevance to the Recreation Department's Work Plan.

Quick-glance priority order (next 6–12 months)

Program	Type	Due Date
SPP Round 5	State	Fall 2026 (Date TBD)
Community Resilience Centers — Strategic Growth Council	State	Sep 4, 2026
SF Bay Restoration Authority Round 10	Regional	Oct 5, 2026
Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP)	Federal	Nov 1, 2026
Route to Parks	State	2027 cycle now open

BENCHMARKED JURISDICTIONS

Why We Benchmarked Other Jurisdictions

As El Cerrito explores ways to address park funding needs without relying on new taxes or parcel measures, our Commission set out to learn what alternative funding and partnership models other cities are using.

Jurisdiction Selection

We focused on nearby, comparably-sized cities with existing relationships or responsiveness to outreach: Belmont, Hercules, Millbrae, and San Rafael. Contacts were identified through the MMANC professional conference and cold outreach; all four responded and made time to speak with us. We also reached out to or researched several other jurisdictions but did not pursue them further: Berkeley (no response), San Pablo and Lafayette (limited focus on community groups, though both have notable funding mechanisms worth flagging — San Pablo's general-fund-supported community grant program, and Lafayette's established donation process/fund for park acquisitions), and Orinda, Moraga, and Pleasant Hill (no evidence of community group engagement on their websites). Richmond was also flagged as a strong candidate based on San Rafael's recommendation, but we did not have time to reach out before this report. This benchmarking was limited to Bay Area cities of comparable size and did not include jurisdictions with substantially different funding structures, such as those relying on special districts.

Methodology

Commissioners Lauren Dodge and Jen Kaczor conducted this research between May and June 2026, primarily through virtual (Zoom) interviews with city staff.

CITY OF BELMONT

Successes and Opportunities

Name of Jurisdiction:

City of Belmont



Contact Name, Title:

Michael Moran, Recreation Supervisor

Overview of conversation:

A Commission member spoke with Belmont's Parks and Rec Director about funding strategies, volunteer programs, and commission dynamics.

Park Related Initiatives:

- Health district grants – Belmont's local health district funds wellness initiatives and gives ~\$5K/year for health-related programming.
- Business sponsorships – Local businesses (and occasionally larger ones like Xfinity) sponsor events in exchange for tabling/visibility.
- Park Boosters nonprofit – A local nonprofit runs summer concerts in city parks independently and donates proceeds back to the city.
- Park-in-lieu fee – New commercial developments pay a fee toward parks (since 2019/2020) when they don't build their own park space.
- Volunteer program – A standing online sign-up system funnels volunteers.

Key Learnings:

- Funding requests tied to popular trends (like pickleball) can crowd out master-plan priorities, so Belmont leans on its master plan/use-fee study as the deciding tool for what gets built.
- Regular, substantive reporting to the commission builds trust and keeps the commission useful to staff.

One thing El Cerrito could do now (if applicable):

- Commission a **use/amenity fee study** to base future facility decisions on.
-

CITY OF HERCULES

Successes and Opportunities

Name of Jurisdiction:

City of Hercules



Contact Name, Title:

Christopher Roke, Parks & Rec Director

Overview of conversation or research:

The model the City follows focuses on leveraging community groups to reach a critical mass of ongoing support for City events. To receive benefits, groups must commit to and complete a minimum of 80 volunteer hours per year. The Park & Rec Director is the staff liaison to all groups, and he maintains contact with the boards of each. This arrangement enables the City to hold successful City-wide events almost fully staffed by volunteers, with minimal City staffing, thus keeping costs low. Examples of events include a community cleanup day, tree lighting, and egg hunt. Hercules runs a program called the Herculean Mile award which recognizes individuals for their exceptional contributions three times per year.

Park & Rec Related Initiatives:

- The City also runs Adopt a Park / Trail volunteer initiatives
- It seeks to offer as many recreational opportunities as possible, allowing groups to petition for fee waivers to run events

Key Learnings:

- After facing extreme financial difficulties, Hercules adjusted their model to enable low-cost delivery of large, popular events

One thing El Cerrito could do now (if applicable):

- Investigate opportunities to coordinate volunteers from our community groups for key City events
-

CITY OF MILLBRAE

Successes and Opportunities

Name of Jurisdiction:

City of Millbrae

Contact Name, Title:

Hannah Moran, Recreation Director



Overview of conversation or research:

A Commission member spoke with Hannah, Millbrae's Recreation Director, about public-private funding strategies for deferred maintenance and how Millbrae's commission balances community requests against its work plan.

Park & Rec Related Initiatives:

- Sponsorship package & bench/tree dedication programs – **In-development policies** let donors fund specific items (benches, memorial trees) at full cost, paired with formal council approval for larger gifts.
- Nonprofit fundraising partnership – Millbrae routed major fundraising through the Millbrae Community Foundation. Donors get tax write-offs.
- Donor walls/tile walls – Recognition-based fundraising ties small-dollar contributions to visible beautification projects.
- Work plan as gatekeeper – New project requests get weighed against the existing work plan/master plan before being accepted.

Key Learnings:

- Smaller-dollar donations (under ~\$1-2K) usually aren't worth the staff overhead unless routed through a standing nonprofit; bigger asks need a formal donation/sponsorship policy with City Council sign-off to avoid the appearance of "buying influence."

One thing El Cerrito could do now (if applicable):

- Follow up about dedication program policy results and impact.
-

CITY OF SAN RAFAEL

Successes and Opportunities

Name of Jurisdiction:

City of San Rafael

Contact Name, Title:

Catherine Quffa,
Library and Recreation Director

**Overview of conversation:**

A Parks & Rec Commission member spoke with Catherine, San Rafael's Parks and Rec Director, to learn how a comparable city handles deferred maintenance, funding gaps, and community partnership for use in an upcoming Council Report.

Park Related Initiatives:

- Bocce facility – Marin Bocce Federation funds and maintains a city bocce facility in exchange for public access.
- Softball field – Girls Softball does routine maintenance for free use of the field.
- Music venue partnership – A nearby business once maintained a park for event use, but it's been closed since the business folded.
- Library & Community Center – A resident-led parcel tax passed at 52%, funding new park improvements too.

Key Learnings:

- All community partnerships are legacy deals from the 70s–90s and hard to replicate now.
- Richmond's rolling RFP model (tied to its master plan) is worth exploring.

One thing El Cerrito could do now (if applicable):

- Contact Richmond's Economic Development Dept. (via the [RFQ doc](#))
-

COMMUNITY SENTIMENT

In addition to ongoing engagement with community members and stakeholders, the Park & Recreation Commission conducted a community survey at the 2026 WorldOne 4th of July Festival and online to better understand community priorities for parks and recreation.

Respondents were asked to identify the park features they value most, rank park priorities, describe their favorite park features and activities, and share feedback about park maintenance. The survey received 30 responses.

The following priorities emerged from a synthesis of survey responses, with walking and biking trails appearing most frequently across respondents' rankings, selections, and comments. The percentages below show the share of respondents whose answers reflected each priority.



Walking/ Biking Trails (83%)



Open Space, Trees, Landscaping (73%)



Clean Bathrooms and Park Maintenance (60%)



Gathering Areas (60%)



Play Structures and Safe Play (57%)



Sports Facilities (50%)

Open-ended responses highlighted appreciation for clean, well-maintained parks; trees, shade, native habitat and open space; playgrounds, trails, sports courts and fields, picnic seating and dog-park amenities. They also raised concerns about weeds, overflowing trash, bathroom cleanliness and supplies, maintenance at Arlington Park, and fencing at Bruce King Dog Park.

2022 & 2025 El Cerrito National Community Surveys

The El Cerrito 2022 National Community Survey revealed the importance that its residents place on parks and open spaces. Responding to the prompt: "Tell us how much of a priority, if at all, the City should place on each of the following aspects of the community in the next two years," Parks came in first place at 90%, ahead of public safety in second, and Open Space & Trails came in at third with 84%.

In the 2025 survey, the categories were slightly adjusted and Parks and Facility Maintenance came in 3rd with 81% after Fire Safety and City Budget, Tree Maintenance and Tree Planting came in 6th with 71%, and Open Space & Trail Maintenance in 9th with 65%.

Our continued work in public-private partnerships will include:



COMPLETE - Studying how other jurisdictions structure public-private partnerships



CONTINUE - Researching tools and models that support community-led projects



CONTINUE - Deepening relationships to better understand community goals and capacity



CONTINUE - Clarifying how Master Plan alignment, review, and input typically work



NEW - Contributing to the development to the City donation guidelines and standards and guidelines and community project prioritization

El Cerrito has a highly engaged community ready to support parks improvements. By focusing on learning, listening, and building shared understanding, the Commission aims to create a strong foundation for future collaboration and public/private partnership.

CONCLUSION

The Park and Recreation Commission recognizes the ongoing financial and staffing constraints faced by the City. In response, we are committed to partnering closely with City leadership to help facilitate progress while minimizing additional demands on City resources.

To ensure continued transparency and momentum, the Commission will provide its next progress report in six months, maintaining a twice-annual reporting cycle. As our work continues, we anticipate bringing forward specific recommendations informed by the patterns and needs we have observed through this year's review.

We welcome continued dialogue with the City Council to further explore our findings, clarify priorities, and determine appropriate next steps. We look forward to working collaboratively to support the long-term health, sustainability, and accessibility of our parks and recreation system.

APPENDIX

Grants	Deadlines	Eligible work	Match req	Funding Source	Amount
Federal					
🚩 Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP)	Next NOFO TBD (likely ~Nov 1, 2026); info sessions Jul–Oct 2026	Acquisition/d evelopment/r enovation of parks & rec space in underserved urban areas (fields, playgrounds, trails, rec centers)	Yes – 50%	Federal (NPS/LWCF via CA OGALS)	\$300K–\$15M
USDA Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry (via CAL FIRE)	No relevant regional cycle currently open — monitor	Tree planting, urban forest management, education/workforce, small-parcel greening acquisition	75/25 (waivable for disadvantaged communities)	Federal (USDA via CAL FIRE)	\$150K–\$1.5M (when active)

Grants	Deadlines	Eligible work	Match req	Funding Source	Amount
State					
🚩 Statewide Park Development & Community Revitalization Program (SPP) Round 5	Public comment May 26–Jun 26, 2026; guide summer 2026; applications fall 2026. App Date TBD	New park creation or expansion/ renovation in underserved communities (fields, courts, play areas, paths). One park, one application. Max per application is \$8.5M	No	State (CA State Parks/OGAL S, Prop 4)	\$188.5M statewide; prior rounds funded multi-million \$ per project
Community Resilience Centers – Strategic Growth Council	Planning grants due Sept. 4, 2026; implementation grants due Sept. 25, 2026.	Support planning activities to prepare communities to implement Community Resilience Centers. Ideas include building plans and studies, fiscal analyses and studies, staff training.	No	State (Strategic Growth Council)	Planning grants \$100K–\$500K; implementation grants \$1M–\$10M
Urban Greening Grant Program	Step 1 concepts May 4–Jun 4, 2026; Step 2 full proposals Jul 2026	Tree planting, park creation/enhancement, green streets/alleys, bike/ped paths; heat mitigation	No	State (CNRA/Strategic Growth Council, Prop 4)	~\$46.1M available Round 1; awards ~\$200K–\$5M
Environmental Enhancement & Mitigation (EEM)	Funds redirected; reassess later in 2026	Urban forestry, resource lands acquisition/enhancement	No	State (CNRA/CTC)	~\$500K–\$750K (historical)

Grants	Deadlines	Eligible work	Match req	Funding Source	Amount
WCB Land Acquisition Program	Continuous (apply via WCB Project Portal)	Land/water acquisition for wildlife habitat + compatible recreation; "old school site" would need habitat value	None	State (Wildlife Conservation Board)	Portal lists \$100M total (vs. prior \$10M figure – confirm)
WCB Public Access Program	Continuous, no LOI required	Wildlife-oriented recreation & education access (trails, fishing/wildlife viewing) – not ballfields	None	State (Wildlife Conservation Board)	\$3M total available
Habitat Conservation Fund (HCF)	Next due date ~2026/27	Nature interpretation, habitat, trails (acquisition or development/restoration)	Yes – 1:1	State (CA State Parks/OGALS)	~\$2M/year statewide
Recreational Trails Program (RTP) – non-motorized	Est. 2026 deadline – confirm motorized vs. non-motorized track	Trail development, maintenance, acquisition, rehab	Yes – min 12%	State/Federal (CA State Parks, BIL funds)	No stated min/max

Grants	Deadlines	Eligible work	Match req	Funding Source	Amount
Arts in California Parks (Implementation Grants only)	LOI passed (Mar 13, 2026); full app due Jun 26, 2026 – final pilot cycle	Art/culture programming & installations in parks, free & open to public - Native California Tribes	Preferred, not required	State (Parks California/C A Arts Council)	~\$2.5M total cycle
 Route to Parks	2026 awards already made; 2027 cycle open now	Transportation/access programming to state parks (not capital)	No	State (Parks California)	Avg. ~\$25K–\$33.8K per grant
 Active Transportation Program (ATP) Cycle 8	Nominally due Jun 22, 2026 – verify if passed	Bike/ped infrastructure, Safe Routes to School, trails connecting to parks	Statewide: scored; MTC regional: ~11.47% (waivable)	State/Regional (CTC/MTC)	~\$310M statewide + ~\$53M MTC regional
Youth Community Access Grant Program – CNRA	Draft guidelines open for comment July 1–Aug. 14; final guidelines and concept solicitation released Sept. 2026	Youth recreation access, outdoor education, field trips, nature connection.	No	State – CNRA / Proposition 64 YEPEITA.	\$15M for Round 4
Outdoor Equity Grants Program	Unfunded/unknown next round – monitor only	Programming connecting underserved residents to parks (not capital)	No	State (CA State Parks)	N/A currently

Grants	Deadlines	Eligible work	Match req	Funding Source	Amount
Regional/Bay Area					
Measure WW Local Grant Program	Likely fully disbursed for El Cerrito – verify balance with EBRPD	Local park/rec capital projects	Leverage encouraged	Regional (East Bay Regional Park District)	Per-capita allocation (largely spent)
EBRPD Community Engagement Grant Pilot	LOIs were due Jan 29, 2026	Community engagement (for CBOs, not cities directly)	N/A	Regional (EBRPD)	Up to \$20,000
San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority (Measure AA)	Next RFP (Round 10) expected ~Jul 2026	Shoreline restoration, flood protection, shoreline public access/recreation	Leverage favored	Regional (SF Bay Restoration Authority)	~\$25M/year region-wide; grants \$300K–multi-million
BAAQMD Community Grants (James Cary Smith program)	Last cycle closed Jan 7, 2025 – monitor next cycle	Community-led air quality/greening projects in disadvantaged communities	Not specified	Regional (Bay Area Air Quality Mgmt. District)	Varies

Grants	Deadlines	Eligible work	Matching req	Funding Source	Amount
Foundation/Private					
🚩 PG&E Foundation – Nature Positive Innovation Grant	Open – due Jul 3, 2026	Environmental stewardship: air quality, land & water (any project stage)	None	Private (PG&E Corp. Foundation)	Five \$100K regional grants (\$500K total); one per Bay Area region
PG&E Resilience Hubs Grant Program	Runs in cycles – monitor next round	Planning/design for community resilience hubs (cooling centers, backup power)	Not specified	Private (PG&E)	\$25K–\$100K tiers
U.S. Soccer Foundation – Safe Places to Play	Ongoing, 3 cycles/year	Field design/construction: turf, lighting, irrigation, surfacing, mini-pitches	Yes – ~50% secured at application	Private (U.S. Soccer Foundation)	Turf ~10% of quote; lighting \$25K–\$50K; irrigation up to \$15K; Sport Court up to \$30K
MLB-MLBPA Youth Development Foundation	Open year-round; LOI to decision up to 6 months	Capital projects: field building/renovation, lighting; baseball/soft ball programs & equipment	Yes – 50% secured (capital projects)	Private (MLB-MLBPA)	No set range; equipment grants up to \$5K

COMMUNITY GROUP ENGAGEMENT

Successes and Opportunities - from 2025 report

The creation of the 2019 Master Plan included significant input from the community. Due to its age, we have sought to understand the current landscape, to supplement the perspective provided in the Plan. Over the past several months, the Park & Recreation Commission has conducted broad outreach and research to understand community priorities, project readiness, and partnership opportunities. Commissioners engaged eight local groups, including youth sports organizations, stewardship groups, civic clubs, and longstanding community institutions.



**Eastshore
Alliance
Futbol Club**



**East Bay
Pickleball
Association**



**El Cerrito
Tennis Club**



**El Cerrito
Youth
Baseball**



**Trail
Trekking**



**El Cerrito
Garden
Club**



**Wildcat 4H
Club**



**Sundar Shadi
Holiday
Display**



**El Cerrito
Community
Foundation**



**El Cerrito /
Richmond Annex
Walk & Roll**

Across all groups, we heard a consistent message: residents are ready to partner with the City. Many are actively fundraising, developing design concepts, coordinating volunteers, consulting with professional experts, and exploring grants aligned with the Parks & Recreation Facilities Master Plan. Recent community-funded improvements at the Arlington Tennis Center and Castro Park pickleball courts show what is possible when community capacity aligns with City processes.

Park Recreation Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Projects, FY 2026-27
City of El Cerrito Park and Recreation Commission - 7/22/26

Funded & Approved Projects	Project #	Budget FY 2026-27	Funding Source	Status
Baseball Field Fencing Repairs & Upgrades	TBD	\$28,865	Donations	Finalizing RFP's, work should begin by late fall. Prioritized due to health and safety components.
<i>This project will repair and/or enhance fencing at Upper Canyon Trail Park, Castro Park, and Harding Park. At Upper Canyon Trail Park, it would extend the length of various sections of fence as well as increase to 8 feet high to improve playing conditions and safety. At Castro Park, it would repair several sections of fence. At Harding Park, several sections of fencing would be repair and netting would be installed to prevent balls from entering the houses next door or the after-care playground. The project would address safety and deferred maintenance needs.</i>				
Cerrito Vista Tennis Court Rehabilitation	TBD	\$70,000	General Fund	Sinkhole and stormdrain were repaired in mid-July 2026. Tennis Court patches can begin after two week curing process. Assessing whether one court can reopen in the meantime.
<i>The project will rehabilitate and repair the tennis courts due to ongoing soil settlement and a recent sinkhole. The project will improve safety and address deferred maintenance.</i>				
Hillside Natural Area (HNA) Tree Removal, Milling, and Restoration	TBD	\$510,000	State Grant (Coastal Conservancy)	Geotechnical evaluation of the project area completed. Biological services RFP completed and entered into a contract with biologist to conduct environmental surveys and develop planting and habitat stabilization plans. Tree removal work is scheduled for fall 2026 followed by planting and habitat stabilization activities, milling demonstration and community engagement events in spring 2027.
<i>Approximately 3.5 acres of upper Quarry Hill will have eucalyptus and other invasive trees removed, some of the trees will be milled, and the area restored. This is a high priority project to reduce fire risk as identified in the HNA Fire Resilience and Forest Conservation Management Plan adopted June 2025.</i>				
Ohlone Greenway Uptown Improvements	C3069/ C3084	\$222,000	Local Grant, Measure J	Timeline TBD; Applying for Construction Funding through CCTA Measure J and OBAG programs this summer.
<i>The Ohlone Greenway Improvement Project upgrades the trail segments between Wall Avenue and Conlon Avenue (including Hill to Blake and Knott to Baxter Creek). Key upgrades include: Safety - Adds lighting, signage, curb ramps, and crosswalk markings. Access - Creates new paths connecting the BART station to the Safeway grocery store. Bikeways - Upgrades Cutting Boulevard to a Class IV separated bikeway. Visibility - Relandscapes the area to improve sight lines. Current funding is for project design only.</i>				

Updated 7/22/26 before 4pm

Park Recreation Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Projects, FY 2026-27
City of El Cerrito Park and Recreation Commission - 7/22/26

Funded & Approved Projects	Project #	Budget FY 2026-27	Funding Source	Status
Recreation Facility Roof Repairs	TBD	\$110,000	General Fund	Timeline TBD
<i>This project would repair roof, canopies, gutter, and downspouts at priority locations including the Community Center and the Canyon Trail, Tassajara, and Arlington Clubhouses. The project addresses deferred maintenance and prevents further water damage to actively used recreation facilities.</i>				
SEE DESCRIPTIONS FOR FUTURE AND UNFUNDED CIP PROJECTS IN CITY BUDGET: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS (LINK)				

Updated 7/22/26 before 4pm