



PARKS, RECREATION, AND WATERFRONT COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, March 11, 2026, 7:00 P.M.
Frances Albrier Community Center - auditorium
2800 Park Street, Berkeley, CA 94702

Minutes - Draft

1. **Call to Order** (chair).
2. **Roll Call** (Secretary).
3. **City of Berkeley Land Acknowledgement:**¹
4. **Action: Election of Officers** (chair).
(M/S/C: Rybczynski/Musczyński/U) to appoint Commissioner Abshez as Chair; Ayes: Muszynski; Nash; Philip; Rybczynski; Stewart; Noes: none; Absent: none.
(M/S/C: Rybczynski/Musczyński/U) to appoint Commissioner Rybczynski as Vice-Chair; Ayes: Muszynski; Nash; Philip; Rybczynski; Stewart; Noes: none; Absent: none.
5. **Action: Approval of Agenda.** (chair) (M/S/C: Rybczynski/Muszynski/U) to approve agenda and move items 14 (PRW CIP Plan) and 15 (Misc Rec and Waterfront Fees) up to before item 9; Ayes: Muszynski; Nash; Philip; Rybczynski; Stewart; Noes: none; Absent: none.
6. **Action: Approval of Minutes** for Wednesday, February 11, 2026 (chair).* (M/S/C: Stewart/Rybczynski/U); Ayes: Muszynski; Nash; Philip; Rybczynski; Stewart; Noes: none; Absent: none.
7. **Public Comment** (2 min each). a) Paul Kamen, Marina berth marketability; b) Gordon Stout, Marina Parking Plan; c) David Fraser, EIR/Ferry; d) Emily Strauss, Ferry; e) Jim McGrath, Draft EIR Pier-Ferry; f) Kelly Hammargren, Non-agenda items; g) Dana Buntrock, District 8 parks; h) Court Jackson, San Pablo Park tot lot.
8. **Chair's Report/Discussion.** No update was provided.
9. **Discussion:** PRW CIP Plan for FY2027-28 (Ferris/Erickson).** Update was provided. Public Comment: Kelly Hammargren.
10. **Discussion:** Miscellaneous Recreation and Waterfront Fees for FY2027 (Ferris/Erickson).** Update was provided.
11. **Director's Report:** Update on special events, community engagement, capital and maintenance projects, forestry, recreation, budget, fees (Ferris). Update was provided.
12. **Discussion/Action:** Consideration of Subcommittee Report on potential facilities bond measure for Nov 2026 and Commission recommendation to Council (Stewart).** Update was provided. Public Comment: a) Erin Diehm; b) Paul Kamen; c) Kelly Hammargren. (M/S/C: Stewart/Nash/U) to submit the subcommittee report as an Information Item to Council

¹ Land Acknowledgement Statement: The City of Berkeley recognizes that the community we live in was built on the territory of xučyun (Huchiun (Hooch-yoon)), the ancestral and unceded land of the Chochenyo (Cho-chen-yo)-speaking Ohlone (Oh-low-nee) people, the ancestors and descendants of the sovereign Verona Band of Alameda County. This land was and continues to be of great importance to all of the Ohlone Tribes and descendants of the Verona Band. As we begin our meeting tonight, we acknowledge and honor the original inhabitants of Berkeley, the documented 5,000-year history of a vibrant community at the West Berkeley Shellmound, and the Ohlone people who continue to reside in the East Bay. We recognize that Berkeley's residents have and continue to benefit from the use and occupation of this unceded stolen land since the City of Berkeley's incorporation in 1878. As stewards of the laws regulating the City of Berkeley, it is not only vital that we recognize the history of this land, but also recognize that the Ohlone people are present members of Berkeley and other East Bay communities today. The City of Berkeley will continue to build relationships with the Lisjan Tribe and to create meaningful actions that uphold the intention of this land acknowledgement.

meeting of April 14, 2026; Ayes: Muszynski; Nash; Philip; Rybczynski; Stewart; Noes: none; Absent: none.

- 13. Discussion/Action:** Consideration of Subcommittee Report on potential dog park locations and Commission recommendation to Council (Nash).* Update was provided. Public Comment: a) Erin Diehm; b) Emily Strauss; e) Nancy Okada; d) Court Jackson. (M/S/C: Nash/ Muszcynski/U) to send the subcommittee report on dog parks as an attachment to the subcommittee report on the bond measure for the Council meeting of April 14, 2026; Ayes: Muszynski; Nash; Philip; Rybczynski; Stewart; Noes: none; Absent: none.
- 14. Discussion/Action:** Formation of Subcommittee to study the provision of new park and recreation facilities to serve the underserved SE quadrant of the City (Abshez (District 8), Nash (District 3), Philip (District 7). The commission M/S/C (Rybczynski/Nash) to create a subcommittee for one year comprised of the following commissioners (Abshez; Nash; Philip); Ayes: Muszynski; Nash; Philip; Rybczynski; Stewart; Noes: none; Absent: none.
- 15. Discussion/Action:** Potentially form subcommittee to prepare written comments on Draft EIR for Pier Water Transportation Project (Muszynski). The commission M/S/C (Rybczynski/Stewart/U) to create a subcommittee comprised of the following commissioners (Muszynski; Philips) for a three month period; Ayes: Muszynski; Nash; Philip; Rybczynski; Stewart; Noes: none; Absent: none. Public Comment: a) Emily Strauss; b) Erin Diehm; c) Kelly Hammargren; d) Nancy Okada; e) Kelly Hammargren; f) Emily Strauss; g) Erin Diehm; h) Paul Kamen i) Laurel.
- 16. Information Reports:** Recent PRW Council Reports.*
- 17. Future Agenda Items:** Comments on Draft EIR for Pier Water Transportation Project; Bond Measure 2026; underserved SE quadrant of Berkeley; State of the Parks; Workplan; Nexus Study; Public Art in Aquatic Park.
- 18. Communications.***
- 19. Next PRW Commission meetings:** Wed, April 8, 2026 (Regular).
- 20. Adjournment.** 9:40pm.

* document is attached to agenda packet and on the commission website.

** document will be provided at the meeting.

- Commissioners in attendance: 5 of 5 appointed.
- Public in attendance: 16
- Public speakers: 24

PRW Capital FY27-28

3/11/2026

CIP Fund	FY27	FY28	Notes
<i>Budget</i>	\$400,000	\$400,000	
Tom Bates Annual Contribution	\$15,000	\$15,000	Annual Tom Bates JPA contribution for turf replacement
King Pool Leak Repair	\$185,000		25 Meter-Dive pool exchange line leak
MLK Jr. Youth Services Center FFE	\$200,000		Phase 1 project in construction. \$14.5M is funded by T1 and FEMA grant
Echo Lake Water Line		\$385,000	Partial cost (45%) for replacement of failing lake line/ water access
<i>Balance</i>	\$0	\$0	
Parks Tax	FY27	FY28	
<i>Budget</i>	\$5,525,000	\$2,750,000	
SFROW - Rails to Trails Project	\$3,950,000		Phase 1 in construction. Phase 2 will bid Summer of 2026. \$5M of \$9.1M project is funded by State Prop. 84 grant
Tom Bates Sports Complex Project	\$369,000		Project in pre-construction. \$8.735M is funded by T1, Parks Tax and CIP Fund.
Cedar Rose 5-12 Playground	\$1,206,000		Project bidding. Remaining funding in FY26 Parks Tax
James Kenney Sports Field/ ADA Improvements- Design only	\$200,000		Sports Field and related site improvements
MLK Jr. Youth Services Center Solar plus Storage	\$400,000		Phase 2 Project will bid in November 2026. \$750K of \$1.15M is funded by HUD grant
James Kenney Park Sports Field/ ADA Improvements		\$1,500,000	Design funded in FY27
Park Restroom (Cedar Rose or Codornices)		\$500,000	Completes 1 restroom or provides potential matching allocation for multiple park restrooms for other funding source in FY27 (\$500k of \$1.75M)
Cedar Rose 2-5 Play Structure		750,000	Matching contribution for potential additional funding source in FY28 (\$750 of \$2.5M). Design is complete
<i>Balance</i>	(\$600,000)	\$0	
Marina Fund	FY27	FY28	
<i>Budget</i>	\$350,000	\$350,000	
Skates Parking Lot	\$25,000		Project Bidding/ Balance (440k) to be paid by Skates
South Cove East Slurry/ Stripping	\$100,000		Maintenance needed for 8 year old parking lot
O&K Electrical	\$200,000		O dock Switch Board electrical meter and installation. \$1.86M funded in Marina Fund, CIP Fund and GF.
L&M, N Dock Garbage Relocation	\$25,000		Remove garbage bins from water's edge
O Dock Parking Lot Design		\$150,000	Design for failing parking lot
Finger Docks		\$200,000	K dock Large finger dock replacement
<i>Balance</i>	\$0	\$0	
Camps Fund	FY27	FY28	
<i>Budget</i>	\$585,000	\$415,000	
Echo Lake Generator	\$130,000		Back-up power access installed in FY26-Generator needed.
Echo Lake Fireplace	\$70,000		Seismic repairs to damaged fireplace
Cazadero Cabin Replacement/Storm Damage	\$185,000		Anticipated non-insurance coverage amount for cabin #1
Echo Lake Water Intake Line	\$200,000	\$415,000	Design (FY27) and partial constuction (FY28-55%) for failing lake line/drinking water access.
<i>Balance</i>	\$0	\$0	
Bayer Aquatic Park Fund			

PRW Capital FY27-28

3/11/2026

CIP Fund	FY27	FY28	Notes
Bolivar Parking Project	\$100,000		Completes funding for Aquatic Park parking project associated with PW Bioswale project
Total Additional Request	(\$600,000)	\$0	

Potential Recreation Fee Increases for May 2026

These are fee increases being considered in addition to the Gilman/Harrison Sports Field Rental Fees discussed at PRW Commission in Feb 2026.

1. Sports Field Lighting Fees:

Current Fee: n/a (new fee)

Proposed fee: \$18/hour

Rationale: A \$15/hour lighting surcharge was added for Gilman/Harrison sports fields in 2024; and that is proposed to increase to \$18/hour in 2026. We would also propose to extend this \$18/hour lighting surcharge to other City fields with sports field lighting. The fee is only assessed on rentals during evening periods, adjusted seasonally for daylight savings. It is needed to offset the City's electricity costs at these peak usage times.

Comps (from 5/21/24):

Table 7 – Comparison of Additional Charges for Sports Field Lighting

City	Add'l Hourly Lighting Charge (Res)	Notes
Hayward	\$10 - \$27	\$10/hr for youth synthetic; \$15/hr for youth grass; \$15/hr for adult synthetic; \$27/hr for adult grass
Albany	\$14	
Berkeley - Gilman/Harrison - proposed	\$15	
San Francisco	\$15	
Oakland	\$15	
Emeryville	\$17	
Richmond	\$21	
Fremont	\$29	
Union City	\$32.50	

2. Summer Fun Camp Fees:

Current fee: \$165/week (residents)

Proposed fee: \$200/week (residents)

Rationale: Summer Fun Camps are community center-based, subsidized programs offered during the summer for youth ages 5-12. Program fees were increased in January 2026 by 10%, or approximately \$15 per week for the core program. Due to additional budget constraints, a further fee increase is required as a budget-balancing measure. Revenue generated from Summer Fun Camps will be deposited into the General Fund.

Program	Unit	Resident (Current)	Resident (Proposed)	Non-Resident (Current)	Non-Resident (Proposed)
Summer Fun Camp					
Core	Session	\$165	\$200	\$198	\$240
AM Care	Session	\$27.50	\$35	\$33	\$42
PM Care	Session	\$82.50	\$100	\$99	\$120

Comps:

Note: This analysis compares the per session rate for a single Summer Fun Camp enrollment during primary program periods for a 5-day session Monday through Friday. Agencies are all comparative in services, activities and locations provided per registration.

Agency	Fee
City of San Pablo	\$90
Oakland Town Camp	\$158
Summer Fun Camp (Current)	\$165
City of Emeryville	\$199
Summer Fun Camp (Proposed)	\$200
City of Richmond	\$207
City of Hercules (Camp Dynamite)	\$271
Friendship Summer Camp (Albany)	\$390

3. Picnic Site Fees:

Current fees: n/a (new locations)

Proposed fees:

Location	Unit of Measure	Resident	Non-Resident
Berkeley Rose Garden Area 1	4-hours	\$50	\$60
Berkeley Rose Garden Area 2	4-hours	\$50	\$60
Charlie Dorr Mini Park Area 1	4-hours	\$33	\$40
George Florence Mini Park Area 1	4-hours	\$33	\$40

Rationale: Picnic site fees offset the costs of maintenance, managing reservations and staff who

ensure reservations are appropriate and safe. Four new reservable sites are proposed, with fees based on current reservation rates, availability and frequency for assistance with reserving these spaces.

Comps:

Changes to Selected Recreation Facilities and Camp Program Fees PUBLIC HEARING
June 17, 2025

Table 4: Picnic Site – Per Hour Fee Comparison
 Note: This analysis compares hourly rates for picnic reservations.

Agency	Resident Rate	Non-Resident Rate	Details
City of Berkeley (Proposed)	\$8.25	\$10	Reservation for a 4-hour time block.
City of El Cerrito	\$11	\$14	Each reservation is for the full day sun-up to sun-down, generally 8am-7pm.
City of Albany	\$24	\$27	Set start and end times for blocks, like COB.
City of Pinole	\$30	\$39	
City of Lafayette	\$30	\$36	Fee is based on number of patrons. These are for 1-20 attendees.
City of Richmond	\$39	\$39	
City of Oakland	\$40	\$43	Includes Park use fee in addition to picnic fee. Park use fee is based on number of patrons.
City of Orinda	\$62	\$79	4 categories for rates: OUSD, Nonprofit, Private, Commercial. These rates are for Private (Resident) and Commercial (Non-resident).

4. Bounce House Permit Fee:

Current fee: \$30 (4-hr rental)

Proposed fee: \$40 (4-hr rental)

Rationale: This fee was established in 2023. It is proposed to offset more of the cost of staff to verify insurance, monitor reservations, and address damage to turf that occurs with bounce house wear and tear.

Comps:

- Redwood City charges an additional \$50-\$75 for full day.
- Morgan Hill charges \$26 for 8-hours.
- Santa Clara County charges \$30-\$50 for full day.
- Other Bay Area cities (Pleasant Hill, Dublin, Union City) permit bounce houses only with full day picnic site reservations.

5. **Wedding Venue Fee:**

Current fee: (see below)

Proposed fees:

Location	Unit of Measure	Resident	Non-Resident
Aquatic Park – Covered Lagoon Pier (new)	Hour	\$250	\$300
Codornices Park – Redwood Grove (new)	4-hours	\$450	\$540
Rose Garden (existing; current fee is \$1,000 for resident; \$1,200 for non-resident)	4-hours	\$1,150	\$1,380
Rose Garden (additional hour) (existing; current fee is \$170 for resident; \$195 for non-resident)	Per hour	\$204	\$235

Comps:

- Live Oak Park, Berkeley: \$450 / \$540 (4 hrs)
- Cragmont Park, Berkeley: \$450 / \$540 (4 hrs)
- Tilden Brazil Room (EBRPD): \$1,310–\$1,750 (8 hrs, varies by residency)
- Oakland Morcom Rose Garden: ~\$900 (flat, 4 hrs)
- Berkeley Rose Garden (proposed): \$1,150 / \$1,380 (4 hrs)
- SF Shakespeare Garden (Golden Gate Park): \$1,200–\$1,400 (4 hrs)
- UC Botanical Garden: \$1,800–\$2,400 (4 hrs)

Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Commission

Bond Measure Subcommittee — Final Report

Prepared by: Leigh Stewart, Mary Muszynski, Ben Nash

Date: March 11, 2026

To: Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Commission, for transmittal to City Council

1. Summary

Berkeley has approximately \$1.65 billion in unfunded capital liabilities, including roughly \$340 million for Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront alone.^[^1] Construction costs continue to rise. A \$300 million infrastructure bond is the right response — and the city has done serious work to get it right.

The City contracted with a professional survey company to conduct a 500-resident poll, held community meetings, consulted six commissions, and convened four focus groups with targeted constituencies. The \$300 million figure polled at 72% support — stronger, notably, than \$200 million.^[^2] The defined-project-list approach directly addresses what went wrong with Measure L, which failed at 59% in 2022 after being criticized as too large, too vague, and too bundled.^[^3] There is appetite for this.

This report focuses on the 20 PRW projects (\$107.6 million) and offers five recommendations: clarify the pool strategy, improve selection transparency, strengthen climate framing, reconsider the Civic Center allocation, and address the Southeast Berkeley gap.

The commission enthusiastically supports this bond — the need, the process, and the great majority of the project list. We want it to pass. The recommendations below are offered in that spirit — we believe addressing them will strengthen the bond and improve its chances with voters.

2. PRW Project Review

The subcommittee has reviewed all 20 PRW projects through meetings with the PRW Director, community outreach sessions, subcommittee discussion, and review of the December 2 staff report and supporting materials. Below is our assessment of each project.

Community Facilities

Frances Albrier Community Center — \$30M. This is a major community facility serving West Berkeley. Based on resident feedback and commissioner input, this is one of the strongest items on the list.

King Pool & Locker Room Replacement — \$25M. The pool itself is needed — King is an outdated 1960s facility. However, the subcommittee has concerns about the pool strategy that go beyond this single line item. The city does not own the land at King; it sits on BUSD property. The question is not just whether to upgrade King, but whether the city's overall pool plan is resilient — particularly given the risk of leaving the flats with no pool at all. See Section 3A.

Shoreline & Sea Level Rise

South Cove Seawall — \$5M. Critical infrastructure. As the PRW Director noted in discussions with the subcommittee, if this seawall fails — which he described as a real risk given its condition — the entire landmass where the sailing clubs operate becomes unusable, and the city would have to fund repairs later at higher cost.^[^4] The shoreline projects are well-positioned for state and federal matching grants. Measure T1 demonstrated this model: \$100 million in bond funds leveraged an additional \$80 million in grants, producing over \$183 million in total infrastructure investment.^[^1]

University Ave / Seawall Dr / Bay Trail / Plaza — \$5M. Supports climate resilience and sea level rise adaptation. Highly competitive for existing state grants.

Marina Docks Timber Pile Replacement — \$6M. Critical for maintaining the marina as a revenue source for the Waterfront. This is a deferred maintenance that is not eligible for known grants or Parks Tax — it can only be funded through general fund or bond or the Marina Fund.^[^5]

Marina Blvd Sea Level Rise & Bay Trail — \$1.9M. Climate resilience infrastructure that protects access to the north side of the Waterfront, Cesar Chavez Park, and prevents SLR damage to important commercial tenants (Doubletree, Marine Center, and berth slips). Highly competitive for existing state grants.

University Ave Sea Level Rise – Bike Park — \$2.75M. Supports climate goals and adds a new Bike Park (on newly-vacant land) and has gone through an extensive community planning process . Highly competitive for existing state grants.

Park Amenities & Open Space

Adeline Corridor Open Space — \$6M. One of the strongest items on the list. South Berkeley is projected for significant residential growth and needs more green space as a matter of equity. In a landlocked city, opportunities to create new open space are rare — this is one of them. Per the PRW Director, a \$825,000 federal earmark has already been secured for design.^[^4]

Glendale-La Loma Park Improvements — \$3.5M. Safety and ADA improvements to playgrounds, parking lot, and pathways.^[^5] Playstructure is close to 50 years old, needs replacement. Play structures are consistently among the highest-demand categories in community feedback, particularly popular with families.

Cesar Chavez Park Restroom & Pathway — \$3M. This is a high-use waterfront park and it urgently needs a proper bathroom. The pathway has deteriorated significantly and does not meet current ADA accessible codes, and needs replacement. Only 60% of the project cost comes from the bond; the project is highly competitive for State Coastal Conservancy grants.^[^5]

Cedar Rose Play Structure — \$2.5M. The play structure has not been replaced in almost three decades. Play structures are extremely popular with families — high-use, high-visibility improvements that generate broad support.

Aquatic Park Dreamland Area — \$2.1M. One of the best returns on bond investment. The full Dreamland project totals \$8.4 million — including a bioswale, parking, restroom, and an expanded play area roughly 175% the size of the current one.^[^4] The bond's \$2.1 million serves as the 25% local match with over \$6 million likely from a local developer.^[^5] Very popular with families.

Dog Parks (4–6 sites citywide) — \$2.5M. Dogs using regular parks creates significant conflict among residents. Dedicated dog parks are a relatively inexpensive way to address a real and widespread problem, and distributing sites citywide means broad benefit.

Restrooms: Cedar Rose (\$500K), Codornices (\$500K), Harrison (\$750K) — \$1.75M total. Overdue bathroom replacements at well-used parks.^[^5] Public restrooms are a critical basic service.

Sports Facilities

Harrison Field Turf Conversion — \$6M. Strong community support. Harrison is a heavily used field; conversion to artificial turf would roughly double usable field capacity and significantly reduce maintenance and irrigation costs — and may increase revenue as well. Berkeley used to have a reputation for having the best sports fields in the region. It's important to keep investing here.

Live Oak Soccer/Basketball/Lighting — \$3M. Needed modernization at a well-used facility — re-levels uneven basketball courts, converts soccer field to turf, and adds lighting.^[^5] Popular with families and youth sports. 66% of the project cost comes from the bond; the remainder may be funded with Parks Tax.^[^5]

San Pablo Sports Field Irrigation & Drainage — \$1.6M. Critical system upgrade. Will significantly reduce maintenance and irrigation costs and allow this very popular, heavily used park to serve even more residents.

3. Recommendations

A. The pool strategy needs more work

The bond proposes upgrading King Pool for \$25 million. Upgrading our existing pools is reasonable — but the current plan doesn't account for the fact that the city doesn't control any of its pool sites, and that creates real risk.

Both remaining city-operated pool sites — King and West Campus — sit on BUSD land.^[6] The city does not own any pool site. Willard has already been lost; BUSD reclaimed the site in 2010. West Campus has only four years remaining on its lease, and BUSD could choose not to renew — as it did with Willard. King has 24 years on its lease, but the City Attorney requires a minimum 25-year lease for bond-funded construction, meaning the lease would need to be renegotiated before bond funds could be spent.^[4]

The Frances Albrier Community Center Replacement Project included an option for a 25-meter community pool with play elements.^[4] It is the only potential pool site where the city owns the land outright.

If West Campus is lost, the city could end up with only one pool — at King, in Northeast Berkeley, the area that already has the highest park density in the city. The flats would have no pool at all.

If the city is confident that both leases will be secure for the long term, then upgrading King is reasonable. But even in that case, the city should seriously consider building a pool at San Pablo Park. It would put aquatic infrastructure on city-owned land, and its location near Southeast Berkeley adds particular value — SE has the fewest city park facilities of any quadrant and zero PRW projects on the current bond list.

If there is any doubt about whether West Campus will be available for the next decade, then a pool at San Pablo Park is essential. Staff estimates suggest the cost difference between replacing King and building new at San Pablo would not justify the risk of depending entirely on BUSD's continued cooperation.

The PRW Director has had preliminary conversations with the BUSD superintendent, who indicated that the district has no current plans for the King or West Campus sites and is willing to discuss sale, trade, or longer leases.^[4] This is encouraging, but informal — it is not a binding commitment, and the history with Willard shows how quickly circumstances can change.

The city should have more confidence in its pool site agreements before going to voters. In particular, the commission urges Council to assess the long-term viability of the West Campus lease, given that losing it would leave King as the city's only pool.

B. The selection process needs more transparency

The December 2 staff report lists five selection criteria: health, life, and safety needs; critical infrastructure condition and accessibility; community use and equity; geographic distribution; and potential to leverage external or matching funds.^[1] These are good criteria. The problem is that the staff report does not document how the criteria were applied — no scoring, no weighting, no

documented analysis of how individual projects were evaluated against each criterion. The PRW Director confirmed in discussions with the subcommittee that there was no formal scoring system.^[^4]

This matters because when multiple reasonable criteria point in different directions — as they inevitably do — the lack of a transparent process makes it impossible to understand why certain trade-offs were made. Southeast Berkeley is one example — see Section 3E.

The commission recommends that Council document how the selection criteria were balanced or applied.

C. Climate framing is an opportunity

Many projects on the list have significant climate benefits — electrification, sea level rise protection, resilient infrastructure — but these are not being communicated to voters.

Polling shows that environmental and climate infrastructure is among the most popular categories with residents, while waterfront projects poll poorly.^[^2] But waterfront projects *are* climate projects — the seawall, the Bay Trail, the sea level rise adaptation work. This is a communication gap that may be leaving support on the table.

The seawall is the clearest example: if it fails, the city loses an entire recreation area, disproportionately affecting users of low-cost activities like sailing and windsurfing — and then has to pay to fix it anyway, at higher cost. That's climate resilience, equity, and fiscal responsibility in one project.

Several shoreline projects in the bond list are also consistent with the regional shoreline adaptation planning now required by the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, reinforcing their importance as long term climate resilience infrastructure.

Finally, many facility projects also involve electrification and gas removal. These climate benefits are real but invisible in the current framing.

The commission recommends that the city make the climate benefits of these projects visible to voters. This does not change the project list — it changes how the list is presented, and it aligns with what polls best.

D. Civic Center improvements are difficult to justify

Old City Hall and Veterans Memorial Building are included in the bond for seismic work. The commission has significant concerns about this allocation.

Community reaction to these projects has been consistently tepid to negative — met with skepticism at the Willard community meeting and across focus groups and commission consultations. These are closed buildings that are not currently serving the public.

The bond covers seismic work only. But seismic investment in closed buildings creates an implicit commitment to full rehabilitation, which would cost hundreds of millions more.^[^4] This is not just a one-time expense — it is the first installment on a much larger obligation.

Berkeley has \$1.65 billion in unfunded capital liabilities. PRW alone has a \$340 million backlog.^[^1] With that much deferred maintenance on active-use facilities — pools, playgrounds, parks that residents use every day — it is hard to see why seismic work on closed buildings should take priority.

These are Public Works projects, not PRW. But they share a ballot, and they affect whether the bond reaches the two-thirds threshold it needs. Voters who see money going to buildings they don't use may be harder to persuade on the rest of the bond.

The commission recommends that Council either provide a substantially stronger public justification for these projects — one that explains why they should take priority given the scale of unfunded needs elsewhere — or consider reallocating those funds to higher-impact items.

E. Southeast Berkeley deserves a closer look

Southeast Berkeley had the fewest city park facilities of any quadrant.^[^7] BMC 6.42.020.C establishes a standard of two acres of parks and open space per 1,000 residents, with areas below that standard designated as high priority for investment. The *Equitable Future* report (2016), produced by this commission, documents the SE deficit in detail.^[^7] It is not referenced in the staff report.

The word "southeast" does not appear anywhere in the 50-page staff report.^[^1] Neither does "quadrant." No census tract analysis was performed. "Geographic distribution" appears exactly once — as a criterion name — with no supporting analysis.

The result is zero PRW projects in the quadrant with the fewest city park facilities. This is also consistent with a pattern: Measure T1 was similarly light on Southeast Berkeley improvements. This may reflect legitimate trade-offs against other criteria — but without a transparent process, there is no way to know.

The commission recommends that Council specifically address the SE quadrant omission and explain how geographic distribution was weighed against other criteria in the selection process.

4. Conclusion

This bond is necessary and well-structured. The commission is enthusiastic about the vast majority of the PRW project list and believes this bond can and should pass. The recommendations above are intended to make it stronger — to close gaps in the pool strategy, improve transparency, sharpen the climate case, address geographic equity, and ensure every dollar on the ballot can be defended to voters. We urge Council to address these items before the bond goes to voters.

Sources

[^1]: City of Berkeley, "Discussion Regarding Potential Ballot Measures for the November 3, 2026, General Municipal Election," Staff Report, December 2, 2025.

[^2]: Polling results presented by PRW Director to subcommittee, March 3, 2026. Results not yet public at time of writing; expected to be presented to Council March 17.

[^3]: Ballotpedia, "Berkeley, California, Measure L, Housing and Infrastructure Bond Measure (November 2022)." 26,545 yes (59.42%) / 18,130 no (40.58%).

[^4]: PRW Director Scott Ferris, in discussions with the subcommittee (January–March 2026).

[^5]: City of Berkeley, "Discussion Regarding Potential Ballot Measures — Supplemental," December 2, 2025. (Attachment 5, corrected project details.)

[^6]: City of Berkeley, *Citywide Pools Master Plan*, 2009, p. 7: "These are all pool venues currently operated by City of Berkeley and located on BUSD property."

[^7]: Parks & Waterfront Commission Subcommittee on Planning, *Berkeley Parks Planning for an Equitable Future*, July 2016.

[^8]: City of Berkeley, *Frances Albrier Community Center Replacement Project — Executive Summary with Attachments*, Siegel and Strain Architects, 2019. Design goals include "net-zero and all-electric strategies"; existing gas equipment flagged as conflicting with the city's all-electric goal.

Addendum A: Selection Criteria Analysis — PRW Bond Projects

The December 2 staff report lists five core criteria used to evaluate projects for the bond, plus additional criteria from the Vision 2050 framework.[^1] No definitions are provided in the report. The following definitions are inferred from project descriptions, the bond's category structure, and city context. Each PRW project is then assessed against these criteria.

Criteria Definitions

1. Health, Life, and Safety (HLS) Does this project protect the public from physical harm? Seismic hazards, structural failure, ADA non-compliance, lack of basic sanitation. Across the full bond, the paradigm case is fire stations — not just because the buildings are aging, but because without functional fire infrastructure, the city's ability to protect residents is compromised. For parks: seawall failure risk, safety hazards at aging facilities, missing restrooms.

2. Critical Infrastructure Condition and Accessibility (CICA) How deteriorated is the asset, and can the public actually use it? This covers the deferred maintenance backlog — assets that are failing or approaching failure — and the rising cost of maintaining them in their current state. The "accessibility" piece includes ADA compliance and the \$48M backlog identified in the city's

Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan. Distinct from HLS: this is about asset condition and cost trajectory, not immediate danger to people.

3. Community Use and Equity (CUE) How many people does this serve, and does it reach underserved populations? This criterion blends two things: raw usage volume and distributional fairness. These can pull in opposite directions — a heavily used Northeast Berkeley facility scores high on use but low on equity if NE already has the highest park density. Bundling them as a single criterion means the trade-off between the two is never made explicit.

4. Potential to Leverage External or Matching Funds (LEV) Can this bond dollar unlock additional dollars? Grant eligibility and matching fund ratios — where bond funds serve as local match to access state or federal grants. The inverse also matters: some projects (marina docks, King Pool) have no alternative funding path, meaning the bond is the only option.

5. Climate Resiliency and Sustainability (CRS) Does this project protect against climate impacts or advance decarbonization? Sea level rise adaptation, electrification, gas removal, stormwater management. For parks, this is strongest in the shoreline projects. Many facility rehabs likely include electrification as part of modernization, but this is not documented in current project descriptions.

Geographic Distribution is omitted from the per-project analysis below. It is a portfolio-level criterion — applied to the overall project list rather than scored per project. The staff report lists it as a criterion but provides no supporting analysis. See Sections 3B and 3E of this report for a full discussion.

Per-Project Assessment

Shoreline & Sea Level Rise

Project	HLS	CICA	CUE	LEV	CRS
South Cove Seawall \$5M	Yes — "imminent failure," immediate safety	Yes — full replacement	Moderate — low-cost recreation, equity angle	Yes — 20% match unlocks state/federal grants	Yes
Univ Ave / Seawall Dr / Bay Trail \$5M	Low — proactive adaptation	Moderate	Yes — major public trail, high traffic	Yes — 20% match, grant-eligible	Yes
Marina Timber Piles \$6M	Moderate — structural	Yes — timber piles, 50+ yr fix	Moderate — marina users, but revenue source	No — not eligible for grants[^5]	Moderate

Marina Blvd Sea Level Rise \$1.9M	Low — proactive adaptation	Moderate	Yes — Bay Trail connection, high traffic	Yes — 50% match, grant-eligible	Yes
Univ Ave Bike Park \$2.75M	Low — proactive adaptation	Moderate	Yes — Bump track elements for youth	Yes — 50% match, grant-eligible	Yes

Community Facilities

Project	HLS	CICA	CUE	LEV	CRS
Albrier \$30M	Moderate — seismic; only major community center not rebuilt or upgraded; emergency shelter	Yes — dramatically undersized, aging	Yes — high-use facility, West Berkeley (equity)	Low — limited eligibility for FEMA/sustainable energy grants ^[^5]	Yes — conceptual design targets net-zero and all-electric; includes heat pumps, 216 kW solar array ^[^8]
King Pool \$25M	Low	Yes — 1960s facility, full replacement	Yes on use (doubles programmatic capacity), weak on equity (NE has highest park density)	No — difficult to secure grants for pool facilities ^[^5]	Likely — modernization, but not documented

Park Amenities & Open Space

Project	HLS	CICA	CUE	LEV	CRS
Adeline Corridor \$6M	Low — new construction	No — new construction	Yes — equity-priorit y area, South Berkeley growth, rare new open space	Moderate — federal earmark for design secured ^[^4]	High - new green space in urban area reduces Urban Heat Island, new trees absorb CO2

Glendale-La Loma Play \$3.5M	Moderate — safety/ADA	Yes — aging, ADA access	Yes — play structures, families	Low	Low
Cesar Chavez Pathway and Restroom \$3M	Moderate — basic sanitation (portable toilets)	Yes — pathways deteriorating, do not meet ADA codes	Yes — high-use waterfront park	Yes — 60% bond, highly competitive for State Coastal Conservancy grants ^[^5]	Low
Cedar Rose Play \$2.5M	Low	Moderate — heavily used play area needs safety/accessibility upgrade	Yes — families, high-visibility	Low	Low
Dreamland \$2.1M	Low	Moderate	Yes — expanded play area	Yes — 25% local match, with \$6M+ likely from additional sources ^[^5]	Moderate — bioswale
Dog Parks \$2.5M	Low	No — new construction	Yes — citywide, addresses significant community demand	Low	Low
Restrooms \$1.75M	Moderate — public health, basic sanitation	Yes — aging/overdue	Yes — well-used parks	Low	Low

Sports Facilities

Project	HLS	CICA	CUE	LEV	CRS
Harrison Turf \$6M	Low	Yes — failing natural fields	Yes — heavily used, doubles capacity	Low	Moderate – water savings
Live Oak \$3M	Low	Moderate — modernization	Yes — families, youth sports	Low	Low – water savings from turf

San Pablo Irrigation and Drainage \$1.6M	Low	Yes — failing irrigation/drainage, most used sports fields in the city	Yes — most used sports fields	No — not eligible for grants[[^] 5]	Low
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Addendum B: Summary Support Language — Options

Three options for the support statement at the end of the summary. Each is followed by the same closing sentence: "We want it to pass. The recommendations below are offered in that spirit — we believe addressing them will strengthen the bond and improve its chances with voters."

Option A (original):

The commission is enthusiastically supportive.

Strongest. Unqualified enthusiasm. Risk: could read as rubber-stamping before the reader has seen the recommendations.

Option B (current draft):

The commission enthusiastically supports this bond — the need, the process, and the great majority of the project list.

Same confidence, but scopes the enthusiasm. "Great majority" signals that the commission reviewed each item individually. Carves out space for the recommendations without hedging.

Option C (softer):

The commission supports this bond. The need is clear, the process has been thorough, and the project list is strong.

Removes "enthusiastically" entirely. Support is stated as a fact, then justified in three short clauses. Confidence comes from the reasoning rather than the adjective. Leaves more room for the recommendations to carry weight — but also reads as more equivocal, which may not match the commission's actual position.