



## **CITY OF ALBANY CITY COUNCIL AGENDA STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Date: June 2, 2025  
Reviewed by: NA

**SUBJECT:** Nominating and Submission of Three Priority Conservation Areas to the Association of Bay Area Governments

**REPORT BY:** Leslie Mendez, Planning Manager  
Jeff Bond, Community Development Director

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### **SUMMARY**

The action before City Council is to adopt a resolution nominating three Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs) to the Association of Bay Area Governments.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

That the Council adopt Resolution No. 2025-32, nominating three priority conservation areas and authorizing submission of the nominations to the Association of Bay Area Governments

### **CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)**

The proposed nomination is not a project subject to CEQA under Public Resources Code section 21065.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Priority Conservation Area (PCA) Program was created and is administered by Association of Bay Area Governments/Metropolitan Transportation Commission (ABAG/MTC). Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) is the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area Council of Governments (COG) regional planning agency and local government service provider. Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) is the transportation planning, financing and coordinating agency for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area.

PCAs are designated geographic areas identified to support the Bay Area's regional conservation, resilience, and sustainability objectives. First introduced in 2007, the PCA program was updated in 2024 to ensure improved alignment with regional planning and funding opportunities and expanded the concept of conservation to include urban greening, recreation, and opportunities for climate adaptation. The five types of PCAs with a summary of their eligibility requirements are listed in the table below. Any nominated PCA must meet a 75% coverage required as identified on the [ABAG/MTC Priority Conservation Area](#)

[Nomination Tool GIS map](#) and may not overlap with an existing PCA. In addition, the geographic boundaries for the PCAs must align with the data as mapped in the ABAG GIS tool. While city staff recognize that more detailed local information could suggest different PCA boundaries, this option is not currently available.

PCA Type	Definition
Natural Land	Areas critical to the functioning of wildlife and plant habitats, aquatic ecosystems and the region's water supply and quality. Must be 100% outside city limits or urban growth boundaries.
Working Land	Farmland, grazing land and timberland that support the region's agricultural economy and provide additional benefits such as habitat protection and carbon capture. Must be 100% outside city limits or urban growth boundaries
Urban Greening*	Existing and potential green spaces in cities that improve community health, capture carbon emissions, address stormwater, and enhance the public realm. Must be 100% inside city limits or urban growth boundaries.
Recreation*	Existing and potential parks, trails, and other publicly accessible recreation facilities that support community wellbeing. Can exist inside or outside city limits or urban growth boundaries.
Climate Adaptation*	Areas that will accommodate habitat range shifts and will buffer climate impacts to enhance ecosystem and community resilience. Can exist inside or outside city limits or urban growth boundaries but must be nominated with another PCA type.

\*Signifies PCA types eligible in the City of Albany

PCA designations encourage the preservation or enhancement of areas with high conservation values or needs. The PCA nomination process is locally driven, allowing jurisdictions to identify and propose areas of regional significance based on local priorities and community input. Jurisdictions that nominate PCAs gain access to the PCA Grant Program, which provides funding for acquisition, restoration, and public access improvements. PCAs are voluntary designations under a sustainable communities' strategy (Plan Bay Area), and as such, pursuant to Government Code 65080 (b)(2)(K), they do not supersede a jurisdiction's local land use authority.

The City currently has one PCA, the Albany Hill PCA, which was nominated in 2007. Due to the update in PCA Program types, the Albany Hill PCA required amendment this year to achieve compliance with the updated PCA eligibility requirements. The amendment to the Albany Hill PCA from Agricultural land to Recreation does not require Council action but will allow continued participation of the PCA in future grant programs.

Staff presented the PCA nominations to the Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Commission on May 8, 2025. The Commission unanimously recommended that City Council adopt a resolution nominating the proposed PCAs.

## **DISCUSSION**

Staff are proposing the nomination of three new PCAs as described in more detail below. Each of the proposed PCAs have been carefully mapped to satisfy the MTC/ABAG eligibility map requirements and avoids overlap with ineligible areas. Additionally, each nomination reflects goals and policies outlined in the City of Albany General Plan, Climate Action & Adaptation Plan and the City Council Strategic Plan, as well as the priorities that are being advanced during the preparation of the Street Tree Management Plan.

### **Albany Bay Trail/Waterfront PCAs**

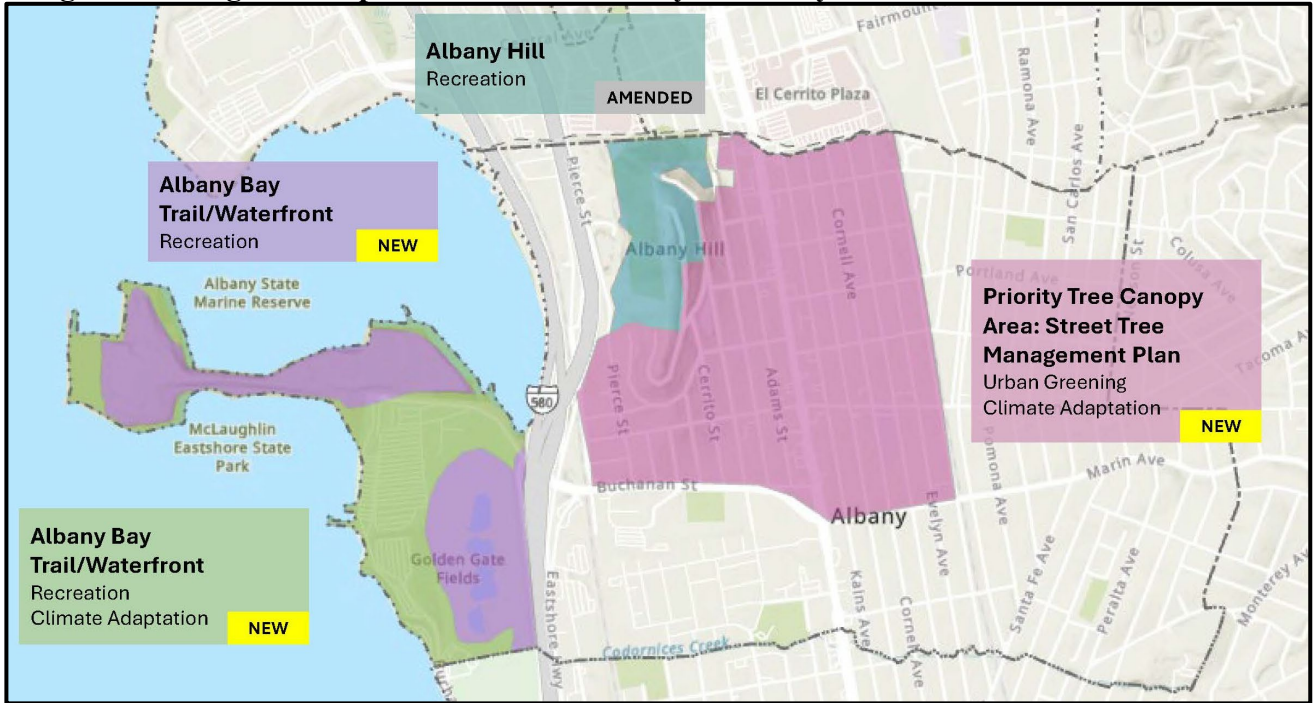
The Albany waterfront presents myriad opportunities for recreation and natural resource management. It also represents the area of the City which will be most greatly impacted by the effects of climate change related to sea level rise. To ensure flexibility of potential grant funding eligibility, while maximizing coverage area of the waterfront, staff proposes the nomination of two separate PCAs:

- ***Albany Bay Trail/Waterfront*** – Recreation Only PCA. Potential funding could assist to promote the appreciation of the natural features and beauty of San Francisco Bay by providing adequate access to the waterfront for people of all ages and physical abilities through a variety of recreational opportunities, including organized and informal amateur sports, observation of nature, hiking, water-related activities, and further extension of the Bay Trail.
- ***Albany Bay Trail/Waterfront*** – Recreation and Climate Resilience PCA. Potential funding as stated above as well as for potential restoration or improvements projects to buffer climate impacts to enhance ecosystem and community wellbeing.

### **Priority Tree Canopy Area: Street Tree Management Plan PCA**

Street trees are an essential social, environmental, economic, aesthetic, and community asset to improve community health, capture carbon emissions, address stormwater, and enhance the public realm. Staff is proposing the nomination of an urban greening/climate adaptation PCA, which would align with the implementation of the Street Tree Management Plan, which is currently nearing completion. Funding could be secured to assist in the planting and maintaining of the City's street tree population.

**Image 1. Existing and Proposed PCAs for the City of Albany**



## **SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS**

The proposed PCA nominations would allow potential access to grant funding to address issues of climate resilience along the waterfront and citywide through urban greening (e.g. tree planting). Potential grant-funded project would align with the City’s Climate Action & Adaption Plan (CAAP) goals to increase: 1) urban tree canopy cover and landscaped area; 2) resilience of built systems and infrastructure; and 3) resilience of natural lands and systems. In addition, the project would support the following General Plan policies:

**Policy CON-1.4: Albany Waterfront.** Protect and sustain the Albany waterfront and surrounding wetlands as a natural and cultural resource, a vital ecosystem, a place of scenic beauty, and a defining feature of Albany’s physical environment

**Policy EH-1.8: Sea Level Rise and Tsunamis.** Consider the effects of sea level rise and tsunamis on the long-term safety and viability of structures, utilities, and other improvements built in low-lying areas. Sea level rise should be considered in any plans for the Albany Neck and Bulb and plans for any future reuse of Golden Gate Fields. The City should examine potential “worst case scenario” impacts as well as impacts consistent with current predictions and models.

**Policy W-1.1: Preservation, Conservation, and Recreation Areas.** Utilize the Eastshore State Park General Plan designations of Preservation Areas, Conservation Areas, and Recreation Areas as a framework for the planning and design of the Albany portion of the proposed McLaughlin Eastshore State Park. energy.

**Policy W-1.9: Hazard Remediation.** Remediate environmental hazards which may be present as park areas are improved for public access and use. This could include mitigation of geologic hazards, such as settlement, slope stability, and erosion. Additional testing and geotechnical studies may be warranted prior to excavation, grading, removal or reuse of filled soils, and other construction activities.

**Policy CON-2.1: Trees and the Environment.** Recognize the importance of trees and vegetation to improving air and water quality in the City and contributing to local efforts to reduce global climate change.

**Policy CON-2.3: Tree Planting.** Undertake street tree planting and maintenance programs to beautify the City, create shade, provide habitat for birds and other animals, and enhance the built environment.

## **SOCIAL EQUITY AND INCLUSIVITY CONSIDERATIONS**

The proposed PCA nominations would allow potential access to grant funding to further City goals of equity and inclusivity by providing accessible recreational opportunities for all community members and to ensure fair and equitable tree coverage for all neighborhoods.

## **CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVES**

The proposed PCA nominations support the following Strategic Plan Initiative:

GOAL 1: Reduce Greenhouse Gas Pollution and Adapt to Climate Change;

OBJECTIVE 3: Identify opportunities to enhance management of the urban forest

## **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

There are no anticipated fiscal or budgetary impacts resulting from the PCA nomination request. Continued designation allows the City to apply for funding opportunities in the future. Preparation of grant applications would require staff resources

## **NEXT STEPS**

Upon Council approval, staff will forward a copy of the signed Resolution to ABAG to formalize the nominations. In the fall of 2025, ABAG/MTC staff will integrate the amended and newly adopted PCAs into the Plan Bay Area 2050+ Implementation Plan, whereby the PCAs will be eligible for grant applications as part of the second round of the PCA Grant Program funded by \$8 million of One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) 3.

## **Attachment**

1. Resolution No. 2025-32

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**WHEREAS**, the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) established the Priority Conservation Area (PCA) Program in 2007 to create a regionally consistent approach to designate key geographic areas eligible for acquisition and improvements to support the Bay Area’s regional conservation, resilience, and sustainability objectives; and

**WHEREAS**, the PCA planning framework includes locally nominated PCAs as locations to coordinate local and regional planning for the conservation of regionally significant areas which are adopted by the ABAG; and

**WHEREAS**, the PCA designation provides opportunities for grant funding to support conservation, restoration, climate adaptation, and recreational projects, helping to achieve both local and regional conservation and resilience goals and priorities; and

**WHEREAS**, the Albany Bay Trail/Waterfront – Recreation Only PCA contains urban parkland, waterfront recreational opportunities, and wildlife habitat that contribute to the ecological, recreational, and climate resilience needs of the City of Albany and the greater Bay Area; and

**WHEREAS**, the Albany Bay Trail/Waterfront – Recreation and Climate Resilience PCA contains urban parkland, waterfront recreational opportunities, and wildlife habitat that

1 are vulnerable to sea level rise and that contributes to the ecological, recreational, and climate  
2 resilience needs of the City of Albany and the greater Bay Area; and  
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4 **WHEREAS**, the Priority Tree Canopy Area: Street Tree Management Plan PCA  
5 contains urban lands, bike paths and pedestrian routes with proportionately less tree cover that  
6 contribute to the ecological, recreational, and climate resilience needs of the City of Albany  
7 and the greater Bay Area; and  
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9 **WHEREAS**, the City of Albany could commence and would welcome partnering with  
10 agencies and organizations including the East Bay Regional Park District, the San Francisco  
11 Estuary Institute, and other community partners to design and implement maintenance and  
12 expansion of Albany Bulb trails and the Bay Trail increasing accessibility to recreational  
13 opportunities for all users within the Albany Bay Trail/Waterfront – Recreation Only PCA;  
14 and  
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16 **WHEREAS**, the City of Albany could commence and would welcome partnering with  
17 agencies and organizations including the East Bay Regional Park District, the San Francisco  
18 Estuary Partnership, and other community partners to design and implement accessible  
19 recreational projects as listed above as well as focus on shoreline resilience projects to buffer  
20 and protect the shoreline areas from the impacts of climate change within the Albany Bay  
21 Trail/Waterfront – Recreation and Climate Resilience PCA; and  
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23 **WHEREAS**, the City of Albany could commence and would welcome partnering with  
24 local community partners to assist in tree planting projects to address climate change, improve  
25 air quality, reduce the urban heat island effect, and ensure equity of program benefits within  
26 the Priority Tree Canopy Area: Street Tree Management Plan PCA; and  
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28 **WHEREAS**, the designation of the Albany Bay Trail/Waterfront – Recreation Only  
29 PCA, the Albany Bay Trail/Waterfront – Recreation and Climate Resilience PCA, and the

1 Priority Tree Canopy Area: Street Tree Management Plan PCA as a Priority Conservation  
2 Areas does not alter existing land use designations, zoning, or the local jurisdiction's land use  
3 authority; and  
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5 **WHEREAS**, the City of Albany recognizes the importance of nominating the PCAs to  
6 ensure eligibility for future funding and support for projects that enhance the area; and  
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8 **WHEREAS**, the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Commission held a  
9 public meeting on May 8, 2025, to consider the proposed nominations and voted unanimously  
10 to recommend City Council formally nominate the PCAs; and  
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12 **WHEREAS**, on June 2, 2025, at a duly noticed meeting, the City Council held a public  
13 hearing to consider the PCA nominations.  
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15 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Albany City Council hereby  
16 endorses the nomination of the Albany Bay Trail/Waterfront – Recreation Only PCA, the  
17 Albany Bay Trail/Waterfront – Recreation and Climate Resilience PCA, and the Priority Tree  
18 Canopy Area: Street Tree Management Plan PCA as a Priority Conservation Areas to be  
19 adopted by the Association of Bay Area Governments, recognizing their regional and local  
20 significance and authorizes staff to complete and submit the required PCA nomination form  
21 and any supporting materials to ABAG.  
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ROBIN D. LÓPEZ, MAYOR  
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