

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS EDEN AREA
LOCAL POSITIONS**

GOVERNMENT

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

The League of Women Voters of the Eden Area supports a responsive, visible system of county and city boards and commissions as a means of ensuring effective resident involvement in the government decision-making process.

Policies to promote:

A. An up-to-date directory of boards and commissions to make the following information available to the public, including electronically:

- Functions and jurisdictions
- Dates and places of regular meetings
- Staffing
- Dates of commissioners' appointments and by whom appointed
- Length of terms.

B. Public awareness of the obligations and responsibilities of elected and appointed members.

C. Limitation of appointments to two full terms or ten years, whichever is longer.

D. Listing of specific costs of commissions in budgets.

E. Publicizing vacancies and applicant requirements.

F. Periodic review of existing boards and commissions including Brown Act compliance.

G. Justification for formation of new boards and commissions; discontinuance of unnecessary boards and commissions.

H. Effective communication and coordination between boards and commissions and the elected bodies which appoint them.

I. Adoption by public agencies of policies and procedures which require the use of alternative dispute resolution processes (ADR)* in local public policy disputes as a predecessor/supplement to the traditional litigation process, ADR: non-adversarial collaborative approaches to building consensus and resolving differences.

Boards and Commissions:
Adopted 1980 (H) (SL)
Updated: 1990 (EA)
Updated: **2005** (EA)

Alternative Dispute Resolution:
Concurrence: 1996 (EA)

UNINCORPORATED AREAS POLICY

A. The League of Women Voters of the Eden Area supports the policy that residents in all urbanized unincorporated areas within Eden Township are best served by having their own locally elected representatives, and that the preferred form of governance is as an incorporated municipality. The LWVEA believes that incorporation as a city improves citizen access to local government. It also enables communities to have self-determination and local control related to the taxes they pay and the land-use decisions they make.

Recognizing that incorporation may not be always possible, then residents in urbanized unincorporated areas of Eden should be enabled to choose the type of governance best suited for their particular area. In addition to incorporation, those choices could be municipal annexation, special district formation and informal government organization.

1. Municipal incorporation: Incorporated community with its own government that meets requirements of California law

2. Municipal annexation--the process by which an incorporated local government may extend its legal control over surrounding areas. Within the legislation, the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) is given the sole and exclusive authority for the annexation of additional territory to a city.

3. Special district formation: Special districts are a form of local government created by a local community to meet a specific need.

a. Independent districts-- which have their own separate boards of directors elected by the districts' own voters. Larger independent districts (H.A.R.D) have a professional manager, similar to county administrator, to assist the governing officials. The governing boards adopt policies that the general managers carry out.

b. Dependent districts (all County Service Areas, like Flood control and mosquito abatement) are governed by legislative bodies like board of supervisors

4. Informal government organization: Unincorporated community with a Community Planning Organization, such as Castro Valley's MAC that reacts to land use proposals. They may also engage in long-range planning and advocate for community interests. Advisory boards may be elected, appointed, or chosen by residents. The League recommends that members be elected.

B. Before an urbanized unincorporated area changes its governance model, there needs to be evidence that:

1. change would be fiscally viable to sustain the new entity.
2. residents have been informed and have participated in the action to make the change in governance model
3. no significant negative impact to the County.
4. no significant negative impact to adjoining incorporated areas.
5. the new model meets all legal standards for governance.
6. there is leadership to implement the new model.

C. When the residents have made the choice for change in governance for their unincorporated area, there should be assurance that payment for property-related services shall be equitable to those of similar governance types in the county, and there

shall be active participation by residents of the unincorporated areas in development of policies which will affect them.

Policies to promote:

1. Ensure that urban unincorporated areas should incorporate or annex to an existing municipality. This policy does not assume automatic dissolution of special districts have the opportunity to explore the various types of governance models that may be suitable for their community.
2. Support governance models that residents feel would improve the livability and sustainability of their community.
3. Support the equitable payment for property-related services by service users in incorporated or unincorporated areas. - These services include sanitary, water, parks, and fire services not provided by city or county. (Parks are considered as property-related; their recreational programs are not.)
4. Include maintenance, operations, and capital development costs in the definition of equitable payment.
5. Evaluate existing property-related services for effectiveness when unincorporated areas incorporate or annex to ensure adequate information to be used in decision-making.
6. Support special policies by Alameda County and the Local Agency formation Commission (LAFCO) for the heavily urbanized unincorporated areas of Eden Township with respect to special districts.
7. Support more continued broad representation for unincorporated areas on the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO).
8. Support the greatest possible citizen participation by people in unincorporated areas in all questions of incorporation and annexation changing governance models for their community.

D. Study appropriate means for local residents in the unincorporated areas to take an active part in the decision-making process. The overriding consensus of the League is that there is a particular need at this time of economic crises and changing governmental relations to reiterate League unerring support for resident participation at all levels of government if the democratic nature of that government is to be preserved in any real sense. Therefore, in relation to the particular problems facing residents in unincorporated areas, the League supports the following institutional and attitudinal changes:

1. An institutional change from unincorporated to incorporated another governance model. This would minimize the excessive fragmentation which exists because the government of the unincorporated areas now consists of uncoordinated special functions. This change would allow for greater resident participation, and in turn, would create a more effective governmental structure.
2. In order to bring about the kind of institutional change which is needed, the League supports the organization of community-based groups. Such organizations create mechanisms through which individual residents may band together to more effectively:
 - a. Promote annexation and incorporation efforts suitable governance models to replace unincorporated areas.
 - b. Lobby to obtain quasi-governmental groups for their areas, such as Municipal Advisory Councils (MACs)

- c. Coordinate the other ordinary means of being heard, such as letter-writing campaigns, testifying, writing position papers, getting a member appointed or elected to advisory or elected positions, or, if necessary, bringing suit.
- 3. Because the institutional change is a long-range goal, the League supports the improvement of current governmental practices. The Board of Supervisors and special districts should promote cooperation among these fragmented governmental entities for greater efficiency and accessibility.
 - a. Boards must be both intellectually and financially committed to resident participation with a recognition of the importance of readily available information such as:
 - (1) meeting times and places
 - (2) agendas which are understandable by the layman
 - (3) minutes which are accessible without undue cost
 - (4) procedures for testifying
 - (5) procedures for following through on particular concerns
 - (6) budget
 - (7) use of electronic mail and Internet
 - b. Board decisions, both in the pre- and post- deliberative stages, should be open to public process. There is a special need for decisions made at one level to be communicated to other affected levels in order to provide for coordinated planning.

E. The following actions are recommended:

- 1. Monitor the activities of boards and commissions, especially the Board of Supervisors, the Local Agency Formation Commission, and other boards and commissions that affect services in the Unincorporated Area.
- 2. Encourage increased and more effective media coverage in the local press and cable television.
- 3. Heighten the awareness of residents who make decisions in their areas on how to approach and influence decision-makers by:
 - a. Encouraging the Board of Supervisors to continue to meet on a regular basis in the Unincorporated Area, and to continue the Unincorporated Services Committee.
 - b. Continuing the League telephone hot line to help residents gain information on voting and cutting through red tape. The hot line could provide information on whom to call, when, and how to do it.
- 4. Monitor for possible study the problems of unincorporated areas, including effect on land use planning, delivery of services and costs, function of the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) and specific budget information on county expenses and income for each unincorporated area.

Adopted: 1979 (H) Consensus: 1990 (EA)

Adopted: 1982 (H) Updated: 1999, 2005 (EA) 2006 (EA)

LAND USE AND PLANNING

The League of Women Voters of the Eden Area supports positive planning policies to achieve a livable and harmonious physical environment for a diverse population with a healthy balance of residential, commercial, industrial, public uses and open space; a variety of densities and housing types; and the necessary services and amenities for all residents.

The League of Women Voters of the Eden Area supports measures which ensure protection for parks, open space, agricultural land, and baylands with emphasis on comprehensive regional land use planning, control of urban sprawl, transportation and increased inclusive public participation and review in land use decisions.

Policies to promote:

A. General and Master Plans: support the concept of the General Plan as a guide to long-range planning.

B. General and Master Plans that are comprehensive, flexible, and innovative, and require adequate public discussion to change designations and more extensive notification procedures prior to hearings and appeals on rezoning, variances, and conditional use.

C. Specific planning for urban growth (infilling) rather than continued urban sprawl; choices should include single-family dwellings, multi-family dwellings, which include affordable housing; density compatible with surrounding community, with quality and inclusion of an adequate transportation plan for such developments.

D. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines should be followed in recommendations for mitigation and identification of the comprehensive and realistic environmental impacts of a project. Support the LWV Bay Area policy.

E. Zoning: Support a planning approach to zoning which conforms to the General Plan.

1. Strengthening requirements for naturally developed open space.

2. Greater compliance by Planned Unit Development (PUD) to the presented precise plans.

When a PUD is approved by a city or county planning commission/council, the Board of Supervisors should allow only minor modifications. Major modifications to a PUD should require a public hearing and input.

F. Adequate funding should be provided to cities and counties for general and specific plan development.

G. Planning Commissions should represent the entire community, have standards and procedures for appointment, and do long-range planning and study, including capital improvement projects which relate to the General Plan.

H. Provision for structured resident participation in the process of land use planning in addition to that provided by the city commissions and county.

I. Rationalization of city boundaries by annexation or de-annexation of properties outside of influence.

J. Community concurrence with the decisions made by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) of city boundary annexation or de-annexation of properties of adjacent spheres of influence.

PARKS AND RECREATION

The League of Women Voters of the Eden Area supports measures that ensure that adequate parks and recreational facilities are provided for all the communities served by the various recreation and park districts in the Eden Area. Protection should be provided for natural resources, open space and environmentally sensitive areas. Adequate funding should be available to provide a variety of recreational opportunities.

The League of Women Voters of the Eden Area supports:

- Important multi-jurisdictional recreational opportunity providers and protectors of many natural and man-made assets;
- The maintenance and enhancement of the refuges, park system areas, trails, baylands, and recreation programs provided within the Eden Area;
- Efforts to avoid fragmenting the established districts or eroding their tax bases in order to effectively operate these important community facilities and services;
- Formation of a citizen's advisory committee for Hayward Area Recreation and Park District..

Policies to promote:

A. Encourage joint planning and cooperative projects for the acquisition and creation of parklands, baylands, ridge-lands, open space and trails for recreational and educational uses by the East Bay Regional Park District, the Hayward Area Recreation and Park District, Alameda County, the Local Agency Formation Commission, the City of Hayward, and the City of San Leandro.

B. Adoption, continual review and updating of the Master Plans to guide acquisition and development with emphasis on preservation of the area's natural state of parklands, park facilities, and trails within districts.

C. Purchase of baylands jointly by public agencies--local, regional, state, and federal--with funding capabilities. Wetlands on the shoreline should be protected and enlarged wherever possible. Local governments, with the help of citizen involvement, can benefit in the long term from a protected shoreline.

1. Preserve the historical and education value of area salt ponds.
2. Reversion to marshes of as many areas as possible.
3. Consideration of the creation of a freshwater lake as a much-needed watering area for water birds and other species needing other than Bay waters.

D. Encourage joint planning and cooperative projects for the acquisition and creation and maintenance of parklands, baylands, ridge-lands, open space and trails for recreational and educational uses by the East Bay Regional Park District, the Hayward Area Park and Recreation District, Alameda County, the Local Agency Formation Commission, the City of Hayward, the City of San Leandro, state and federal agencies.

E. Expenditure of capital funds on an equitable basis in line with the priorities in Master Plans within the districts.

F. Acquisition of parklands for recreation, conservation of significant habitat areas, protection of rare species, and educational development.

- Acquisition of new parklands
- Wetlands (baylands) and shorelines
- Trails, including Bay Trails, Ridge Trails, Creek Corridors, and Bay-to-Bridge connections

G. Protection of existing parklands from degradation; urban intrusion, freeway, or roadway, intrusion, utility lines, or visual intrusion, and traffic.

H. Promotion of public discussion and input for Master Plan and planning process.

Hayward Land Use:	Eden Area Planning	Parks & Recreation	Eden Area Shoreline
Adopted: 1963 (H)	Adopted: 1981 (SL)	Adopted: 1968 (H)	Adopted: 1972
Updated: 1964 (H)	Consensus: 1990 (HA)	Consensus: 1990 (EA)	Consensus: 1990 (EA)
Consensus: 1990 (EA)	Updated: 1993 (EA)	Updated: 1997	
Updated: 1997		Updated: 2005 (EA)	
Updated: 2005 (EA)			

SOCIAL POLICY

MENTAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES

The League of Women Voters of the Eden Area supports the availability of comprehensive mental health care for all residents of Alameda County, regardless of their ability to pay for these services.

Policies to promote:

A. Implementation of legislation and regulations that provide community-based mental health care.

B. A three-tiered module approach consisting of prevention, intervention and follow-up therapy for patients of all ages.

C. Emphasis placed on meeting the needs of children and veterans.

D. Appropriate level of treatment of patients in their local environment when possible.

E. Expansion of the number of quality facilities in all communities to provide necessary follow-up care for the mentally ill, particularly those who have been hospitalized.

F. Use of sliding fee scale to ensure that community health care clinics serve all residents in need of mental health care services.

- G. Support requirement of appropriate level of training for providers of mental health care services.
- H. Support appropriate level of compensation for mental health care service providers.
- I. Support collaboration, including funding sources and other resources, of community health care service providers with other agencies and community-based organizations to meet the mental health care needs of all residents.
- J. Support initiatives that increase funding for improved mental health care services, and lower costs for medication for mental health care patients.
- K. Support community development of resources promoting publicly accessible mental health education and awareness.
- L. Eliminate barriers and disparities for providing appropriate mental health services for different ethnic population.
- M. Effective implementation of evidence-based best practices and support for research in mental health care.
- N. Americans with Disabilities Act, as well as other programs and initiatives that protect and enhance patients' rights.

Mental Health Care:

Adopted: 1970 (H)	Consensus: 1990 (EA)	Updated: 1974 (H)
Updated: 2000 (EA)	Updated: 2005 (EA)	

LIBRARY SERVICES

The League of Women Voters of the Eden Area supports a free public library system that meets the informational, educational, technological, and recreational needs of all Eden Area residents and that is financed with long-term, assured, stable and adequate public funding.

The LWVEA supports access by all persons to free library services/functions that educate and inform on a wide variety of issues to facilitate citizen participation in government decision-making.

Policies to promote:

- A. Measures to improve patron service:
 1. Ensure library services are up-to-date in technology and automation
 2. Achieve a size of book and non-print collections which meets information needs of the public;
 3. Provide adequate hours of service, including evening and weekend hours, and maintain staffing levels adequate for the hours open, size of collection, and usage level;
 4. Continue the use of volunteers to support staff.
 5. Encourage cooperation between the public library system and local school districts; including after-school homework programs, etc.
 6. Provide assistance to those who need special help for access to library services and information technologies;

7. Develop special programs to build a love of reading in pre-school children;
8. Provide literacy and life-long learning services funded by public and/or private sources, offered free for those who qualify or with a sliding scale.
9. Provide adequate parking and convenient, well-lighted, safe access to facilities.

B. Construction of new libraries is needed to serve population growth both within the cities and the unincorporated areas in Eden Area.

C. Methods for financing construction of new libraries, expansion, and/or rehabilitation of existing facilities:

1. A state bond issue; a National Library Services and Technology Act grant; a local tax, such as utility-user tax, parcel tax, assessments or districts' general funds.
2. Encourage private contributions.
3. Achieve cost-effectiveness by consolidation of functions/systems.

D. Community participation in shaping library policies, such as Advisory Commissions, membership in the Bay Area Library Information System (BALIS), etc.

E. Public review of annual costs to operate libraries and of charges assessed to patrons for other than basic library service.

Adopted: 1981 (SL) Revised: 1991 (EA)

Consensus: 1990 (EA) Updated: 1997 Updated: 2005 (EA)