



Central Valley Communities of Practice: Creative Strategies to Increase Park Investments & Development

January 21, 2026

Connecting everyone to the outdoors™

English

If you are a monolingual English speaker, please select the world-like interpretation icon at the bottom of the screen, then select English. If you are using zoom via a telephone/tablet, you will select the three dots to see more options, followed by interpretation and then English.



ASK QUESTIONS AND COMMENT
HACER PREGUNTAS O DAR COMENTARIOS

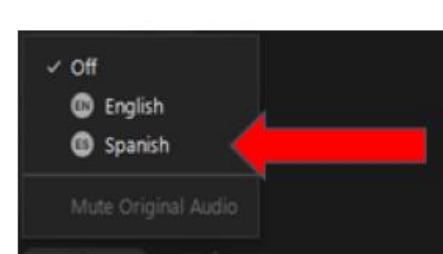
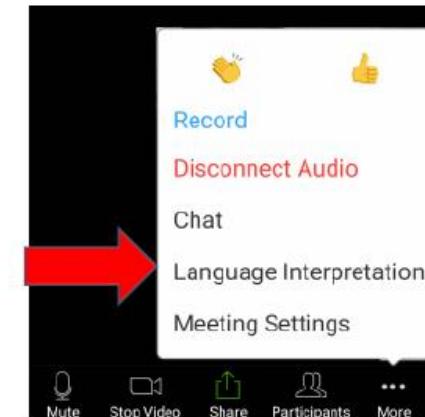
ZOOM APP ON PHONE OR TABLET APLICACIÓN DE ZOOM POR TELÉFONO O TABLETA



SELECT THE THREE DOTS
SELECCIONE LOS TRES PUNTITOS

Español

Si solo habla/o prefiere escuchar en español, seleccione el ícono de interpretación que parece a un mundo en la parte inferior de la pantalla, luego seleccione español y no olvide silenciar el audio original. Si está usando Zoom en un teléfono o tableta, seleccionará los tres puntos para ver más opciones, seguido por interpretación y después español.



SELECT YOUR LANGUAGE
SELECCIONE SU LENGUAJE

Welcome!

Today's Agenda:

- Welcome & Introductions
- Presentation
- Q&A Session
- Small Groups Discussions
- Report Back to the Group
- Next Steps & Exit Survey



Partner Team



Trust for Public Land

national nonprofit with the mission of protecting land and creating parks for people to ensure healthy, livable communities for generations to come.



PlaceWorks

Planning and Design firm that thrives on working with communities to tackle complex problems and develop workable solutions, with extensive experience in Stockton.



WRT

WRT is rooted in ecology, social equity, and community-based planning, with a parks and open space practice that works across scales. WRT works extensively in Fresno.

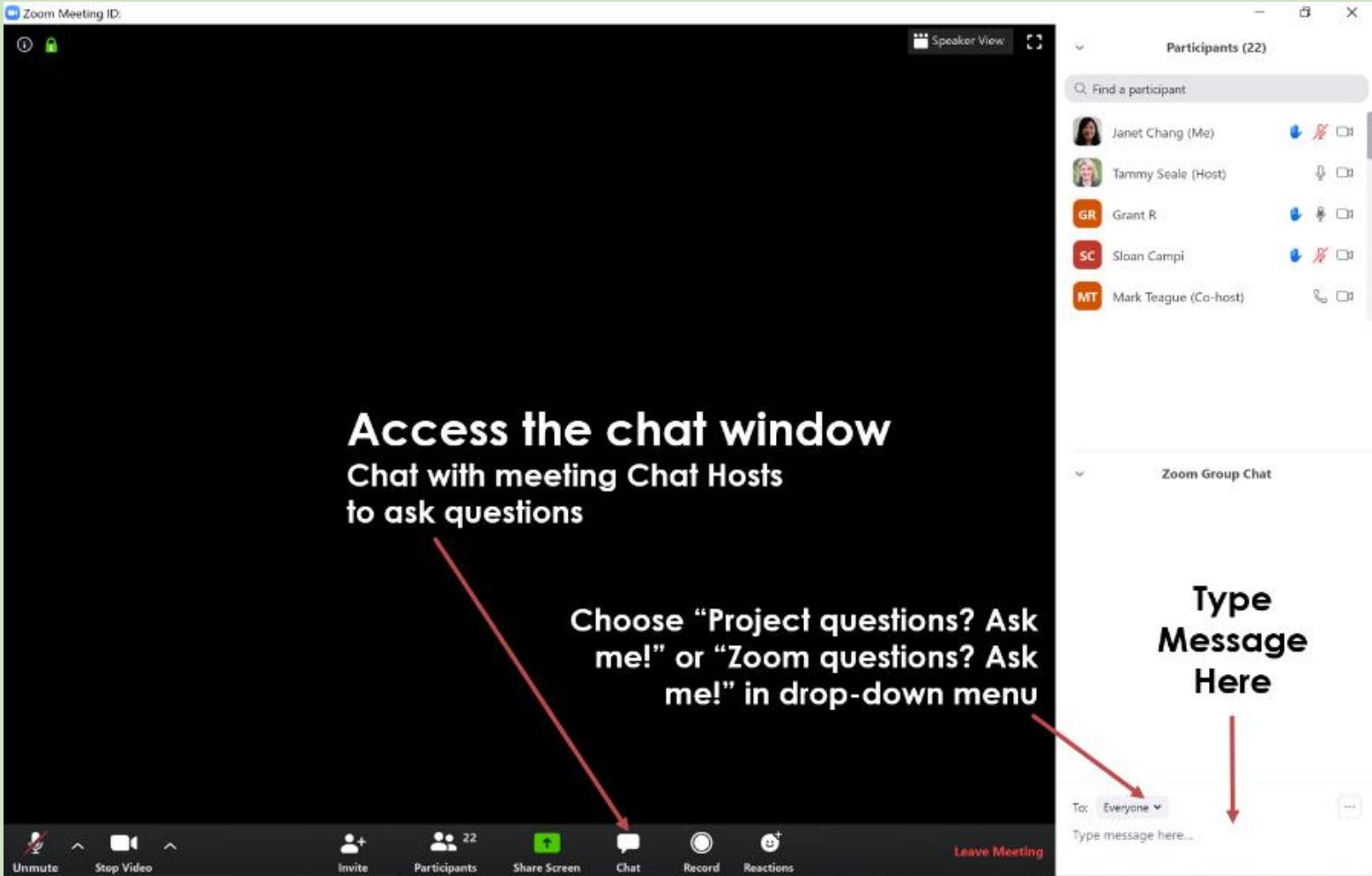


MIG

Multidisciplinary firm specializing in participatory planning, design, and policy, with extensive experience in Bakersfield.

Questions?

- Send your questions to
Questions? Ask me!
- Send zoom support
questions to **Zoom
Questions**



Icebreaker Activity

Introduce yourself in the chat:

- What is your name?
- What is your organization?
- What's a park project you'd like to see funded in your community?





Zoom Poll!

California has the largest outdoor recreation economy in the U.S. Approximately how much does it contribute to the state's GDP annually?

- \$25.5 billion
- \$45 billion
- \$81.5 billion
- \$120 billion

Central Valley Sessions – Join Us!

Program Structure

- 90-minute virtual workshops
- Panel presentations
- Sharing tools and resources
- Small group discussions
- Attend any session that interests you
- **Everyone is welcome – help us spread the word!**
- **GIVEAWAY! Win a prize at each session or the grand prize at the end of the series!**



Session 1 Park Equity Access



What we heard

- Close gaps in inequitable park distribution
- Improve park access, especially in rural communities
- Support 10-minute walk access to parks
- Address disparities in park amenities
- Leverage the multiple benefits of parks
- Activate parks and capture localized data
- Improve public safety in parks
- Create outreach templates for engagement
- Seek community buy-in and leadership support
- Support community programming in parks
- Encourage organizations and agency collaboration
- Preserve natural lands
- Address tree canopy coverage and planting programs
- Address accessible funding

Today's Objectives

Funding for Parks

- Learn about the process identifying funding opportunities
- Learn how to pursue ballot measure campaigns to support parks & recreation
- Share strategies and identify partnerships for local, state, and federal funding



Zoom Poll!

What is the biggest funding need for parks in the Central Valley?

- Maintenance
- Capital for new parkland acquisition
- Capital for improvements to existing parks
- Programming
- Other



Common Funding Sources for Parks



- **Impact Fees**
- **Parcel Tax**
- **Sales Tax**
- **Recreation and Park District**
- **Community Facilities Districts**
- **Bonds**
- **Grant Funding: Federal, State and Local**



Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) Program

- **Eligible activities:**

- Acquisition, Development, or Renovation of land for public, outdoor recreation
- ***Projects must be located within a “disadvantaged” census tract***

- **Eligible applicants:**

- States are lead applicants- **California State Parks Office of Grants and Local Services**
- Project Sponsors, or sub-recipients, ***must be a public agency (city, county, special purpose district or federally recognized tribe)***
- ***Project Sponsors must be, or represent, an incorporated city or town of 25k+***

- **Funding:**

- \$300,000-\$15,000,000 grants

- **Cost-share requirements:**

- 1:1 non-federal match required

- **Upcoming deadlines:**

- For States accepting applications from Project Sponsors/Sub-recipients is TBD by each state
- For NPS accepting applications from States is TBD.

- **Next steps:**

- Reach out to your state LWCF lead agency
- **TPL ORLP website**



Role of Private Development of Public Parks

TPL research underscores the urgent need.

Urban growth is outpacing park development.

65% of ParkScore cities had less park space per person in 2023 than in 2016.

Private development plays a critical role in new park creation.

67% of recent park and greenway openings across 10 representative U.S. cities were created through developer contributions.

62% of these parks were constructed by the developer or a private entity.

Many cities need help.

40% of city staff surveyed are dissatisfied with current policies.

Legal/political pressures escalating (Sheetz ruling, state-level bills).

Policy Tools That Meet the Moment

Local development drives growth—parks must keep pace.

Principle: Growth should help provide needed community infrastructure, including parks.

Key policy solutions

Park Dedication Ordinances

Require the developer to provide land, funding, or both to meet the park needs created by a new development, typically within the property boundary of the contributing development.

Park Impact Fees

A one-time charge required from developers to offset the cost of city infrastructure, such as parks, that will need to be built to serve the new development.

Tied to development review—most often for residential development.

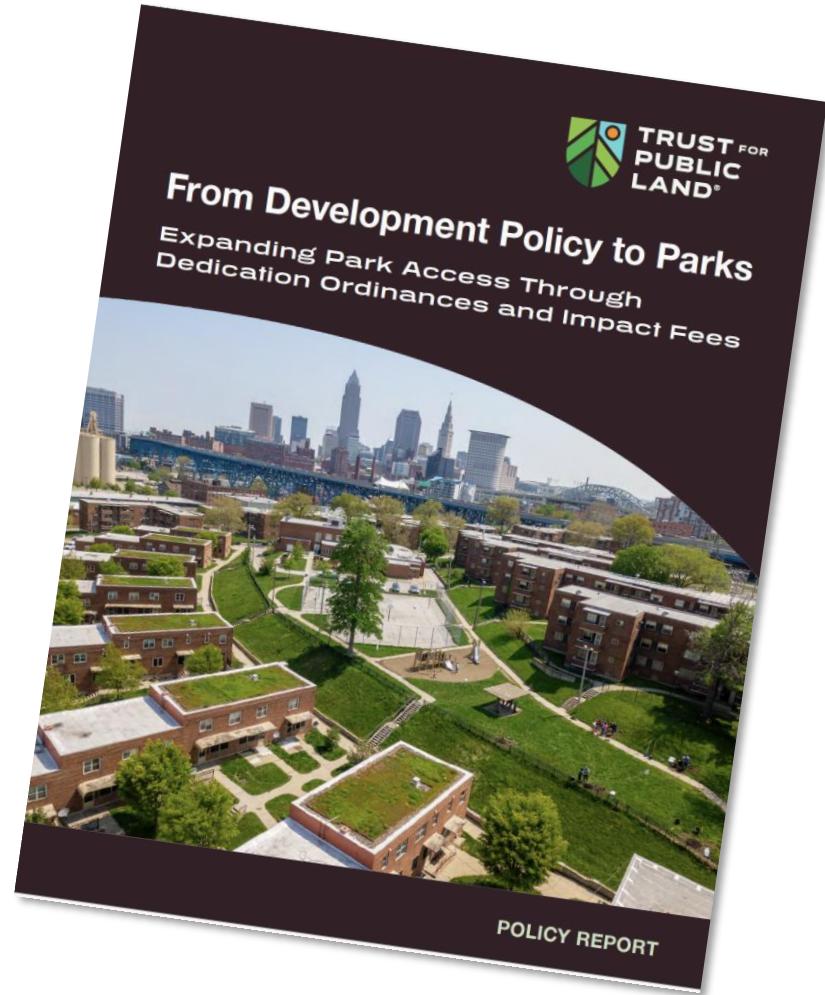
Development exactions—must meet specific legal tests.

State laws shape what's possible locally—policy and legal context are critical.

What's in the Policy Report?

Organized Around 3 Core Questions from City Staff:

1. **How can cities ensure that park creation keeps pace with new development and population growth?**
2. **How can cities leverage their land development policies to build equitable parks for all?**
3. **How can private partnerships be fostered to provide and manage parks while ensuring public access remains a core city value?**



Shawangunk Ridge, NY

In partnership with Open Space Institute, we have protected more than 21,300 acres on and around the Shawangunk Ridge.

Photo by: Chris Bennett

Conservation Finance

January 21, 2026

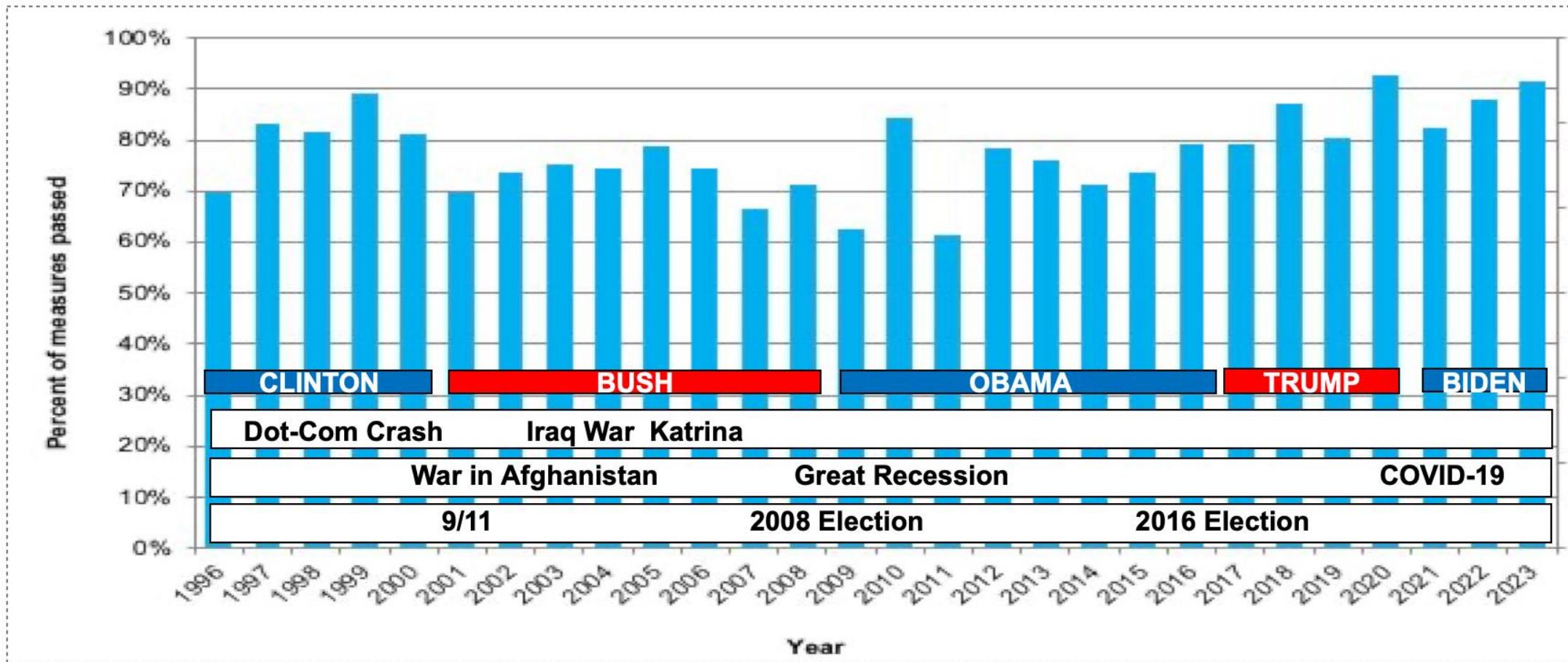


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What is the “Big Idea”? Engaging Voters to Approve Funding for Parks and Conservation

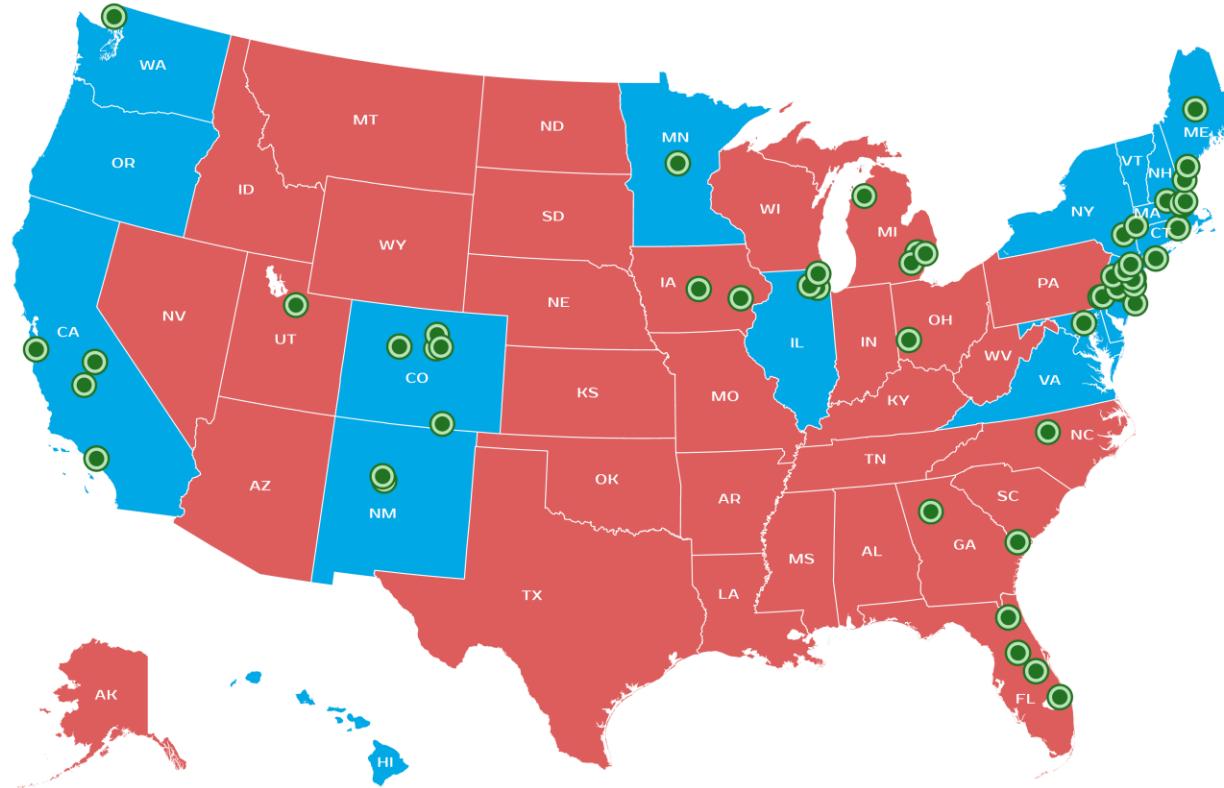
Is it really possible to get voters to raise
their TAXES to invest in parks and
conservation?

This is True in Good Times and Bad, In Red Communities and Blue



77% Overall Approval Rate Across the United States

Not Red or Blue, But Green - November 5, 2024



What is the Trust for Public Land's Conservation Finance Program?

We create new and protect existing public funding for land conservation, parks, and climate through the research, design, and passage of ballot measures and legislation and serve as thought leaders in the field.

Our Record of Success

- ✓ **687 wins**
- ✓ **84% passage rate**
- ✓ **\$112 billion created**
- ✓ **Over 135 million “Yes” Votes**

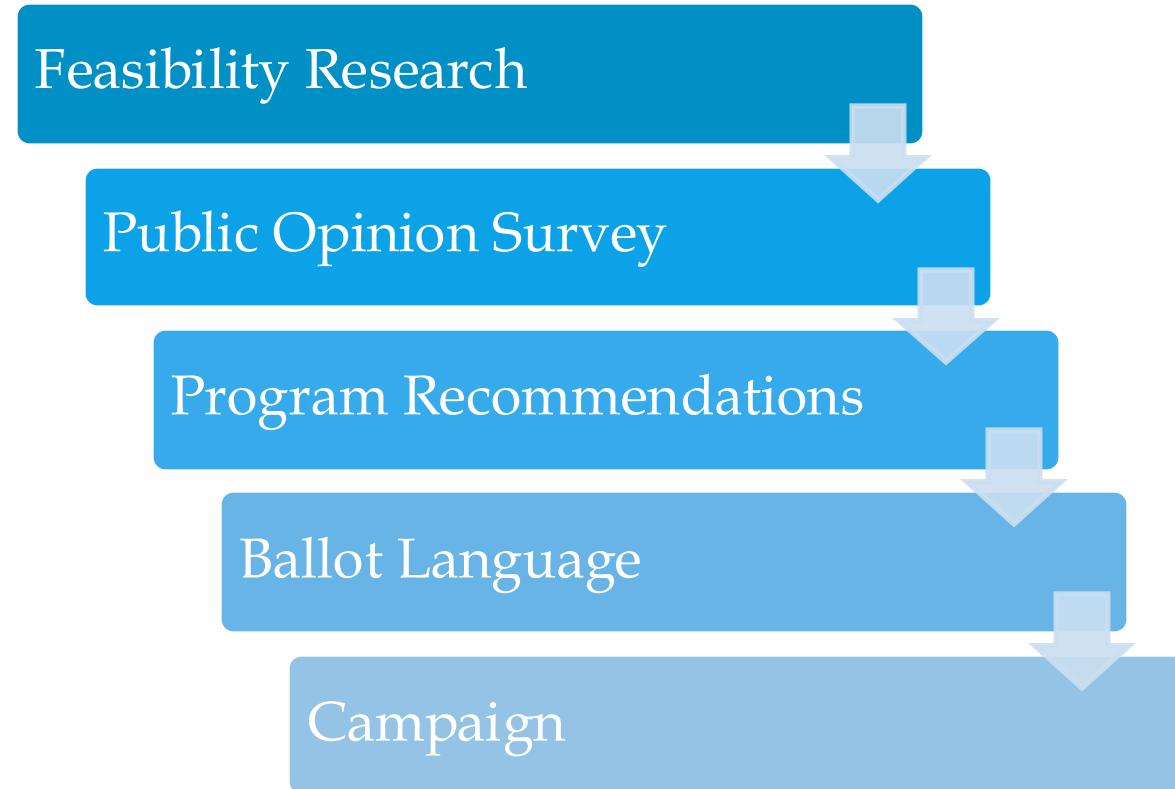


TPL-supported November 5, 2024 Park, Climate, and Conservation Ballot Measures

- 23 measures in 11 states
- 23 were approved by the voters
- 100 percent passage rate
- Over \$16 billion in funds for parks, climate, and conservation



Key Steps for Successful Ballot Measures



Step 1: Feasibility Research



Finance options
Conservation priorities
Fiscal capacity
Election requirements
Ballot language requirements
Pathways to ballot
Best practices
Election history

Step 2: Public Opinion Survey

Methodology: random, sample, voters, phones/text/email

Why poll?

- Reality test
- Messages
- Messenger

Polling goals?

- Affordable proposal
- Compelling purposes
- Accountability provisions

Step 3: Program Recommendations

- Funding source
- Amount (and duration)
- Purposes/Uses of funds
- Timing (choice of election date)
- Management/Accountability

Step 4: Ballot Language

- Legal constraints
- Best practices
- Integrate survey findings
- Negotiate with public attorney, bond counsel
- Interpretation/ballot pamphlet arguments

1 **Section 4. Referendum.** The form of ballot for said General Election shall be as
2 follows:
3
4

5 **Clean Water Protection, Overdevelopment**
6 **Prevention, Natural Area Preservation, Parks And**
7 **Trails General Obligation Bond Referendum**
8

9 To acquire and improve land to protect drinking water sources; preserve natural
10 areas; protect open space from overdevelopment; provide parks and trails;
11 improve the water quality of rivers and lakes; protect springs; and establish a
12 citizen oversight committee with full public disclosure of spending, shall Lake
13 County be authorized to issue unlimited general obligation bonds maturing within
14 20 years, not exceeding the legal maximum interest rate, not exceeding
15 \$50,000,000 payable from ad valorem taxes?
16

Step 5: Campaign

- Strategy/campaign plan
- Campaign committee
- Coalition building
- Campaign finance registration and reporting
- Fundraising
- Endorsements
- Communications (media)
 - Earned media
 - Paid media: digital, direct mail, radio, TV
 - Phones
- Grassroots/Field (GOTV)

Case Study: Fresno Measure P



Photo: Central Valley Community Foundation

Background & Need for Action

- **Lack of Access to Parks:** Per TPL's ParkScore Index, Fresno ranked near the bottom among the largest 100 U.S. cities for park access and quality
- **A Large Funding Deficit:** The city's Parks Master Plan revealed a \$112M funding gap; city spending was ~\$38 per resident vs. national median of ~\$80.
- **Equity Impacts:** Underserved neighborhoods lacked safe, accessible green spaces—impacting health, equity, and quality of life.
- **Need for Action:** Community leaders recognized urgent need for sustainable funding.

Action Taken & TPL's Role

- **Proposed Solution – 2018 Measure P:** A citizen-led initiative proposing a 3/8-cent sales tax for parks, arts, and trails.
- **Coalition formed:** Fresno Building Healthy Communities led the Fresno for Parks coalition, which included the Central Valley Community Foundation, Trust for Public Land, youth advocates, and others.
- **TPL's Contribution:**
 - Feasibility study and technical expertise on funding mechanisms and identifying equity priorities
 - Conducted polling showing strong bipartisan support for a sales tax increase.
 - Assisted with ballot language and campaign strategy.
 - Contributed to campaign and walked precincts.

Results & Impact

- **Election Result:** November 2018: Measure P, despite opposition from major institutional stakeholders, won at the ballot box with 52% voter approval
- **2020 court ruling:** Court ruled that citizen initiatives need only a simple 50+1 majority & Measure P upheld – providing a new pathway for future initiatives.
- **A Boost In Revenue:** Tax collections began July 2021; generating ~\$37M annually, projected \$1.5B over 30 years.

Keys to Success & Lessons Learned

Keys to Success:

- Strong coalition with diverse voices, including community foundations, youth, health advocates
- Data-driven approach – Polling, equity analysis, and clear messaging provided path forward.
- Legal persistence ensured victory despite initial setback.

Lessons Learned:

- Citizen-led measures can overcome structural barriers.
- Equity framing resonates with voters.
- Long-term implementation planning is critical for sustained impact.



Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a national nonprofit that works to connect everyone to the benefits and joys of the outdoors. As a leader in equitable access to the outdoors, TPL works with communities to create parks and protect public land where it is needed most.

Since 1972, TPL has protected more than 3 million acres of public land, created more than 5,000 parks, trails, schoolyards, and iconic outdoor places, raised \$84 billion in public funding for parks and public lands, and connected more than 9 million people to the outdoors.

Connecting everyone to the outdoors™

For More Information:

Nathan Henry
Western Conservation Finance Director
C. 608.695.8331
nathan.henry@tpl.org

Thank You!

California Climate Investment Programs

Funds generated through Cap-and-Invest* auction revenue; allocated annually through budget (was GGRF)

Previously funded:

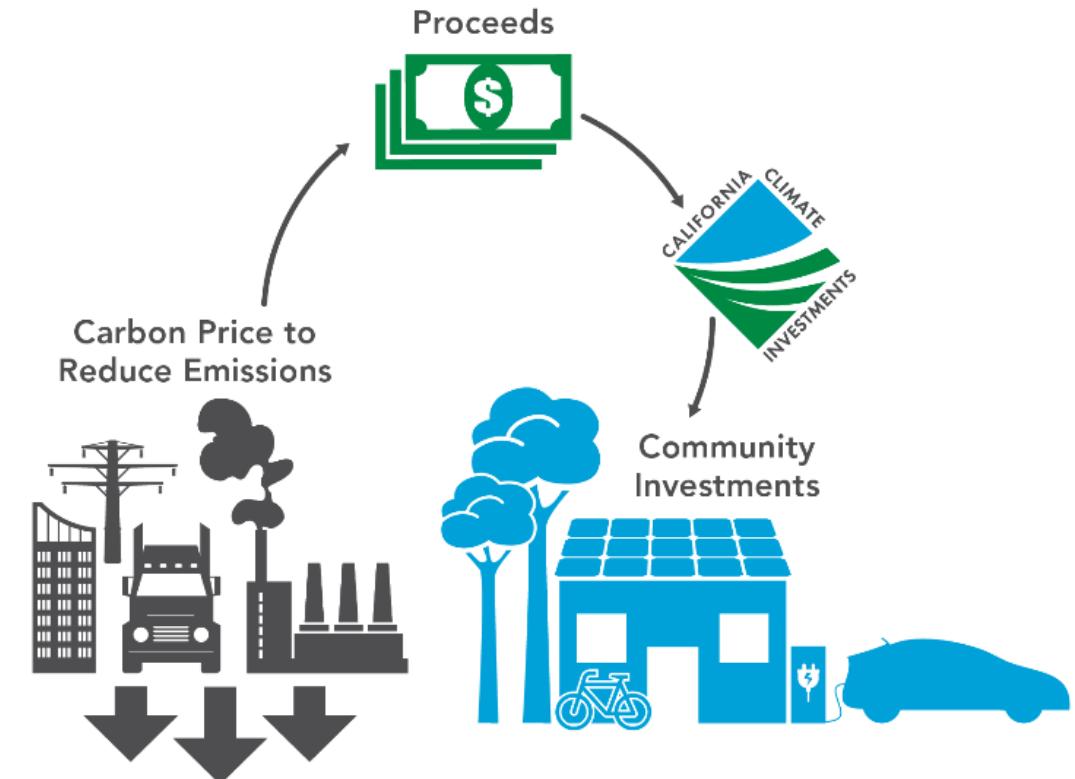
- Urban Greening
- Urban and Community Forestry
- Transformative Climate Communities

Min. of 35% must benefit priority populations (disadvantaged communities, low-income communities and households)

Now funding

- Healthy Forest \$141M CalFire and
- \$550M Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC)

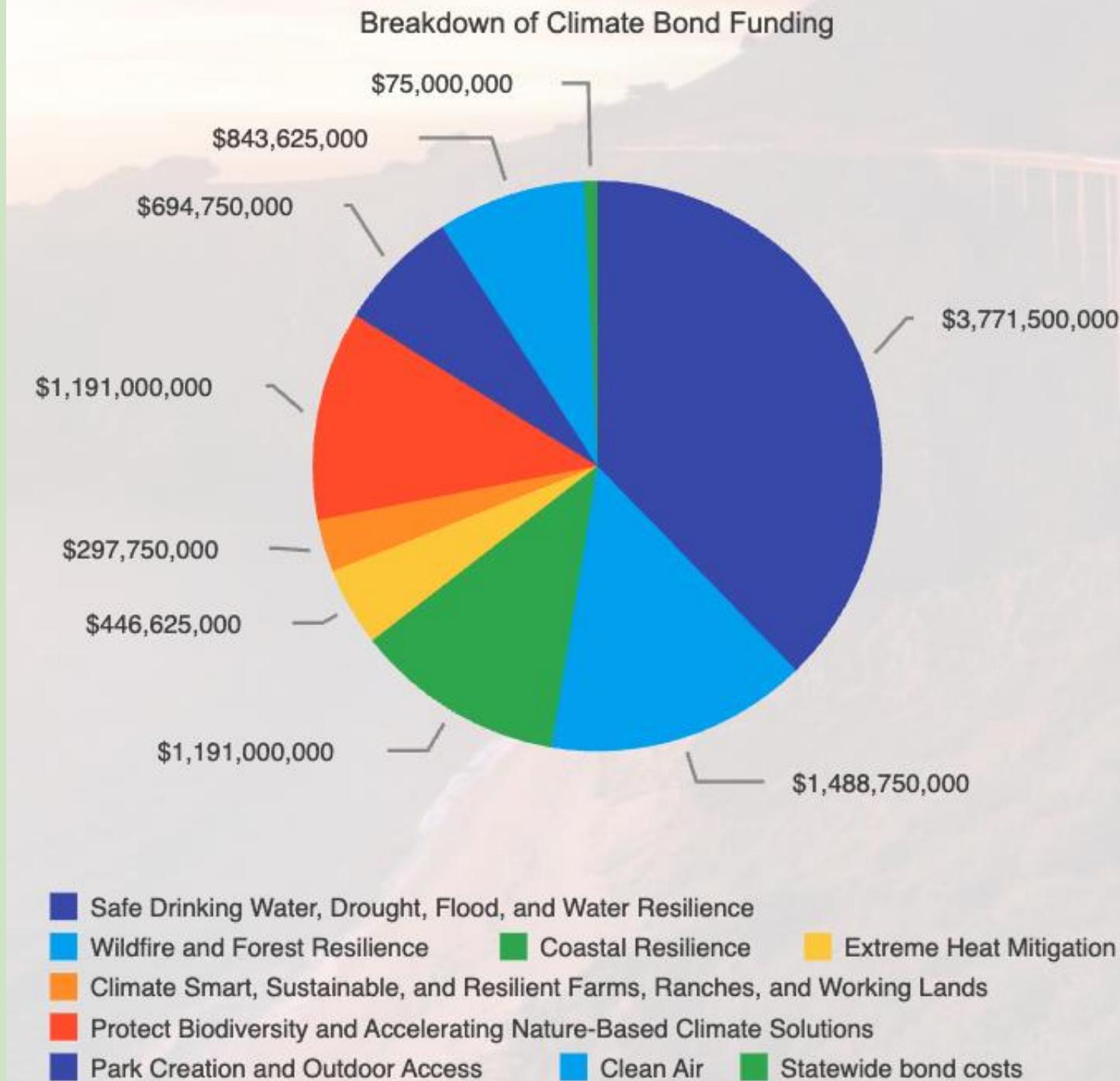
<https://www.caclimateinvestments.ca.gov/cci-data-dashboard>



State Bond Funding

Proposition 68 (2018) - \$4.1B Park Bond for state/local parks, environmental restoration, water infrastructure, flood protection, and climate adaptation - largely spent down

Proposition 4 (2024) - \$10B Climate Bond for natural resources and climate activities



Prop 4 - \$3.47B coming this year

Proposition 4 Expenditure Plan: 2025-26 Budget Package

(Dollars in Millions)

Category	Bond Total	2025-26	Percent of Total
Safe Drinking Water, Drought, Flood, and Water Resilience	\$3,800	\$1,199	32%
Wildfire and Forest Resilience	1,500	598 ^a	40
Coastal Resilience	1,200	279	23
Biodiversity and Nature-Based Climate Solutions	1,200	390	33
Clean Energy	850	275	33
Park Creation and Outdoor Access	700	466	67
Extreme Heat Mitigation	450	110	25
Climate Smart Agriculture	300	153	51
Totals	\$10,000	\$3,470	35%

Statewide Park Program

SPP creates new parks and new recreation opportunities in critically underserved communities (low-income or areas with few other parks).

- Based on past guidelines, projects must involve either development or a combination of acquisition and development to:
 - Create a new park
 - Expand an existing park
 - Renovate an existing park
- Recent community engagement required - how has the community shaped the project design?
- Max. grant amount - \$8,500,000 (previous application guide)
- Expected timing - spring/summer, due in fall
- \$188.5 million available

https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=29939



Ashland Zocalo

Urban Greening

Funds projects that reduce GHG emissions, mitigate the effects of extreme heat, and provide multiple additional benefits (e.g., decreased pollution and energy use)

- Based on previous guidelines: Projects will result in the conversion of an existing built environment into green space that uses natural and green infrastructure approaches to create sustainable and vibrant communities
- Funds acquisition or development projects
- Parks can be competitive but primary grant focus should be greening - trees, native plantings, green infrastructure, stormwater management
- Tentatively open in Summer
- \$46 million available

<https://resources.ca.gov/grants/urban-greening/>



Transformative Climate Communities

Can fund parks and green infrastructure as part of a highly complex and integrated multi-partner effort within a specified project area

- Planning, project development, and implementation grants; 50% leverage required for implementation grants
- Projects must be community designed, develop local workforce, and prevent displacement
- Expected timing: RFP Spring/Summer, Awards in 2027
- Past grants have been up to \$35M (for implementation projects)
- \$137 million available

[Draft guidelines available](#)



Richmond Wellness Trail

Community Resilience Centers

Funds the planning, construction and retrofit of community resilience centers that provide shelter and resources during climate emergencies

- Also supports year-round community services and programming
- Parks could be funded as part of CRC campus amenities, must have a building
- Expected timing: RFP Spring/Summer, Awards Spring 2027
- \$55.3 million available

[Draft guidelines available](#)

Others

- Water - DWR Dept of Water Resources \$992M
- CalFire - Urban Forestry \$22.8M
- Local Conservancies - Delta Conservancy (\$17.5M), San Joaquin River Conservancy (\$6.6M), Delta Stewardship (\$21M), Delta Protection (\$1.5M)
- Wildlife Conservation Board - restoration funds to restore natural habitats and to increase access adjacent to natural areas of high biodiversity

Next steps

1. Pick and prioritize park projects
2. Determine pre-work for grant program - site control, community engagement, find partners
3. Attend grant webinars - sign up for email notifications – technical assistance
4. Advocate for future funding with your local legislators and tell them about your park plans - the budget for next year is going through the legislative process

Shawangunk Ridge, NY

In partnership with Open Space Institute, we have protected more than 21,300 acres on and around the Shawangunk Ridge.

Photo by: Chris Bennett



Thank you!

Sharon.Sand@tpl.org



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Zoom Poll!

Do you need spanish interpretation?

- Yes/Sí
- No/No



Zoom Poll!

Select the geography or context you are most interested in for the small group discussion

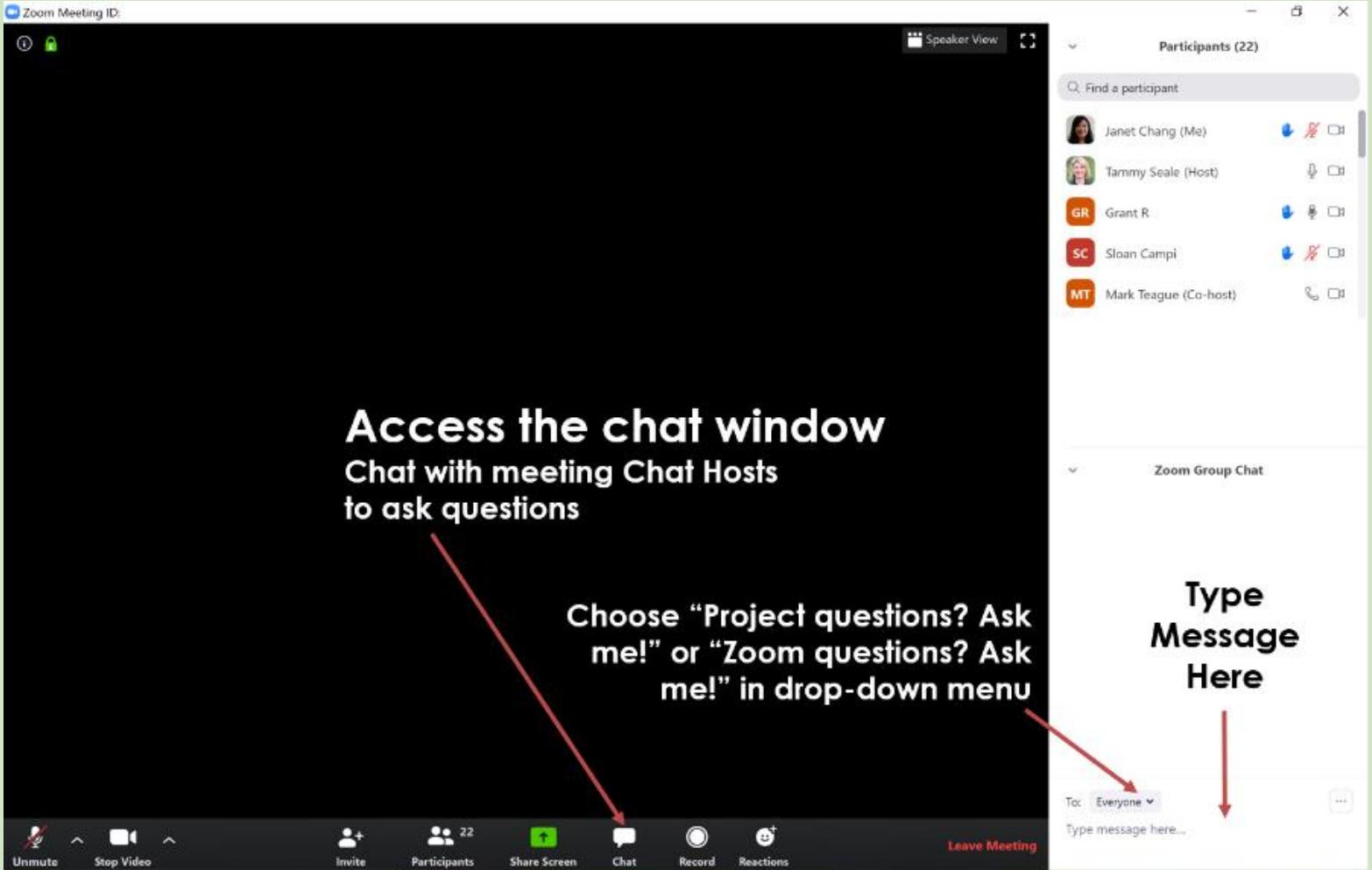
- San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Merced Counties
- Madera and Fresno Counties
- Kings, Tulare, Kern Counties
- Rural and/or Foothill Communities
- Central Valley Regionwide



Q&A Session

Questions?

- Send your questions to
Questions? Ask me!
- Send zoom support
questions to **Zoom
Questions**





Small Group Discussions

Breakout Groups

Question 1:

What kind of funding options are you most interested in learning about and pursuing in the future?

Question 2:

What types of improvements or activities are the most difficult to find funding for in your community?

Question 3:

From your experience, what has been your greatest strength in securing funding for parks and recreation?



Small Group Discussions

Breakout Groups

Question 4:

What are some previous or recent successes that can be leveraged or expanded upon to implement new projects and programs?

Question 5:

In your context, are there untapped stakeholders or specific groups that you'd like to build relationships with to go after funding?

Report Back to the Group



Next Sessions – Wednesdays at 12!

- **March 18** - Parks as a Climate Solution
- **May 20** – Parks as a Driver to Improve Public Health
- **July 22** - Community Engagement in Action



Funding Summit

To continue this conversation and provide Technical Assistance for folks applying for public funding.

We'll host **3 summits** across the Central Valley this **Spring** (April/May 2026).



Session Survey

Take our survey to join the giveaway!

Scan the QR code or click the link in the chat.





Connecting everyone to the outdoors™

Since 1972, TPL has protected 4 million acres of public land, created 364 parks, trails, schools, and iconic outdoor spaces.

To learn more, visit tpl.org.

Thank you!