

Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau Policy Platform

Position Statement

We drive economic prosperity by connecting businesses, shaping policy and fostering innovation to make Walnut Creek the best place to start, grow and thrive. We rise above our competing interests and embrace collaboration to create greater prosperity for all.

The cornerstone of our Policy Platform is strategic alliance-building with regional and civic organizations, creating a powerful unified voice that amplifies business advocacy across sectors and jurisdictions. Through these deliberate partnerships, we transform individual advocacy efforts into coordinated campaigns that deliver measurable results for our business community while strengthening our regional economic ecosystem.

Economic Development & Fiscal Policy Platform

Policy Objectives

1. Encourage Equitable Economic Opportunity

Promote economic development policies that remove barriers and create opportunities for underserved communities, ensuring that economic growth benefits all residents.

2. Champion Sustainable Fiscal Policies

Support responsible fiscal management at all levels of government, including balanced budgets, sustainable debt practices, and long-term economic planning to create a predictable financial environment for businesses.

3. Support a Competitive Tax Structure

Advocate for a fair and competitive tax system that incentivizes investment and job creation while preventing excessive tax burdens on businesses.

4. Encourage Public-Private Partnerships

Advocate for the use of public-private partnerships to advance infrastructure development, including transportation, housing, and digital connectivity, to foster regional economic competitiveness.

5. Simplify Regulatory Processes

Promote streamlined regulatory, licensing, and permitting processes to reduce the costs and complexities faced by businesses, with particular attention to safeguarding the

region's economic base. Address regulatory overreach that puts existing and emerging industries at risk of closure.

6. Promote Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Advocate for policies that encourage innovation and entrepreneurship through financial incentives, research and development credits, and support for innovative industries including, but not limited to technology, energy, and manufacturing.

7. Support Local Retailers Through Zoning and Regulatory Reforms

Advocate for policies that strengthen local retailers by improving access to affordable commercial space, reducing regulatory burdens, and ensuring zoning practices that foster the growth of vibrant retail districts.

8. Enhance Access to Capital for Businesses

Support initiatives that improve small and medium-sized businesses' access to diverse funding sources, including microloans, grants, and public-private funding partnerships, enabling them to thrive and expand.

9. Promote Regional Resilience and Risk Management

Advocate for policies that strengthen regional economic resilience, including emergency preparedness and risk management planning, ensuring businesses can withstand economic disruptions and natural disasters.

10. Invest in Data-Driven Economic Strategies

Promote the use of high-quality data to inform economic development decisions, helping local governments and businesses target resources effectively and measure impact.

11. Foster Collaborative and Transparent Insurance Regulation

Advocate for a balanced regulatory environment that allows insurance companies to provide affordable, comprehensive coverage to businesses and residents.

12. Promote Public Safety Policies Necessary for Economic Development

Advocate for public safety policies that incentivize investment in communities, protect workers, consumers and businesses from violent crime and loss, and narrowly target perpetrators of crimes in a proportional fashion.

13. Strengthen Financial Literacy for Business Owners

Advocate for funding and public-private partnerships to deliver financial literacy programs, equipping business owners to present strong financial records, articulate funding needs, and secure capital.

14. Foster Innovation and Early Adoption Across Public Agencies

Promote pilot programs in emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, across cities, counties, and public agencies in the East Bay. Encourage these entities to lead as early adopters, leveraging AI to enhance public services, optimize resources, and tackle critical community challenges. Build partnerships with technology developers, academic institutions, and businesses to create a collaborative ecosystem that drives innovation and economic growth.

Education & Workforce Development Policy Platform

The Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau aims to build a thriving workforce ecosystem by aligning education, industry, and workforce initiatives to meet regional needs. We advocate for policies and investments that strengthen education pathways, expand access to training programs, and ensure that local talent drives the East Bay's economic vitality.

Policy Objectives

1. Invest in Career Technical Education (CTE) and Apprenticeships

Support policies and investments that create programs that offer practical skills and experiences through industry-aligned CTE, apprenticeships, and internship programs to create clear career pathways, particularly in growing sectors like healthcare, technology, and the trades. Explicitly identifying career pathway needs will ensure that programs align with both current workforce demands and future opportunities.

2. Expand Access to Higher Education

Advocate for affordable, equitable access to higher education, including community colleges, four-year universities, and certificate programs, with a focus on building a talent pipeline that reflects the diversity of our communities. Addressing affordability concerns—including tuition and cost of living—is critical to reducing barriers for adults to enroll or re-enroll in education or training programs.

3. Support Early Care and Education

Advocate for investment in high-quality, affordable early care and education (ECE) to equip East Bay children with essential cognitive, social, and emotional skills for lifelong learning. Support training for ECE careers to ensure a stable, qualified workforce in this critical sector.

4. Strengthen K-12 and Business Partnerships

Promote partnerships between businesses and K-12 schools to introduce students to career opportunities early, enhance STEM education, and provide mentorship and resources to underrepresented students.

5. Promote Workforce Upskilling and Reskilling Programs

Support policies, programs, and local nonprofit organizations that enable workers to continually upskill and reskill throughout their careers, ensuring that employees remain competitive in a rapidly evolving labor market. Emphasize the use of data to assess program outcomes, alignment with workforce demands, and career placement metrics to ensure economic mobility for students and maximize funding impact.

6. Address Barriers to Workforce Participation

Advocate for policies and investments that reduce barriers to workforce participation, including affordable childcare, reliable transportation, and access to broadband, which disproportionately affect low-income and underserved communities.

7. Support Lifelong Learning Initiatives

Encourage the adoption of policies and investments that promote lifelong learning, ensuring that workers of all ages and abilities can access continuing education and training opportunities that enhance career growth and personal development.

8. Champion Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in the Workforce

Prioritize initiatives that foster diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace by addressing systemic barriers, promoting inclusive hiring practices, and encouraging leadership development opportunities for underrepresented groups.

9. Enhance Public-Private Collaboration in Workforce Development

Advocate for collaboration among government agencies, educational institutions, employers, and unions to create accessible pathways to stable, high-quality jobs, particularly for underserved communities, and to maximize the impact of public investments in education and training. Strengthen local interagency coordination to unlock federally and state-funded opportunities that provide greater support for students, such as leveraging data-sharing between colleges and county agencies to facilitate access to essential benefits like CalFresh.

10. Support Policies That Streamline Credentialing and Certification

Ensure that credentialing and certification processes for workers are efficient, affordable, and recognized across industries to improve mobility and access to high-paying jobs.

11. Support Investments in Educational Infrastructure

Advocate for funding to modernize aging educational facilities, ensuring that students and educators benefit from safe, up-to-date, and accessible learning environments that enhance educational outcomes at all levels.

Energy Policy Platform

The Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau is committed to strengthening the economy and fighting climate change through a future that embraces a broad mix of energy sources. Our region relies on a resilient infrastructure, constant innovation, and a dependable fuel supply chain to drive economic activity and job creation. Our goal is to foster continued energy innovation while maintaining reliability, affordability, and equity, ensuring the East Bay remains competitive in the global economy.

Policy Objectives

1. Advocate for Diverse Energy Sources

Advocate for policies that enable a diverse energy mix, including solar, wind, biodiesel, bioenergy fueled by organics, hydrogen, battery, nuclear, and petroleum. Recognize the economic and workforce contributions of current industry operations while supporting innovation to reduce emissions and ensure safety.

2. Forge a Reliable and Equitable Energy Grid

Support the expansion and modernization of the electrical grid to handle increasing demand from alternative energy inputs, electric vehicles, and future technologies. Prioritize upgrades in vulnerable and low-income areas to improve resilience, reduce energy costs, and ensure equitable access to reliable power. Expand incentives such as tax credits and rebates to encourage adoption of residential and commercial energy storage systems.

3. Encourage Permit Streamlining

Advocate for streamlined permitting to accelerate the development of energy infrastructure, including grid upgrades, EV charging stations, hydrogen fueling stations, and renewable energy projects. Ensure permitting processes balance environmental protections with the need for timely, efficient energy infrastructure development.

4. Address Energy Affordability

Support measures that maintain energy affordability and grid reliability. Advance equitable access to affordable electric energy for low-income and historically underserved communities. Champion policies that promote affordable gas prices at the pump. Foster a thriving energy marketplace that includes Investor Owned Utilities, Public Utilities, and Community Choice Aggregators to offer consumers a range of cost-effective and sustainable energy options.

5. Invest in Critical Infrastructure Upgrades

Advocate for policies and funding to modernize California's pipelines, ports, refineries, and electric energy infrastructure. Prioritize upgrades that increase resilience to natural disasters, such as undergrounding distribution and transmission lines where feasible, respond to regulatory changes, and facilitate integration of alternative energy into the grid. Support the development of data centers that are powered by sustainable and renewable energy sources.

6. Promote Innovation

Support innovations in carbon capture, hydrogen production, battery storage, fusion energy, and other technologies that improve the efficiency and sustainability of both traditional and alternative energy sources. Advocate for establishing innovation hubs where companies, higher education institutions, nonprofits, and public entities collaborate to advance new technologies.

7. Expand Funding for Energy Projects

Help local governments and businesses access state and federal funding, including Inflation Reduction Act grants, for projects that enhance energy reliability. Ensure funding supports critical needs like grid expansion, alternative energy integration, workforce transition, and tax credit opportunities for energy adoption.

8. Support Refinery Operations as an Economic Driver

Collaborate with refinery partners to secure the tools necessary for safe, efficient, and environmentally responsible operations. Highlight their critical role in producing biofuels, gasoline, jet fuel, and other essentials that power housing, vehicles, public transportation, and local industries.

9. Advocate for Thoughtful Regulation

Push for clarity and balance in regulatory changes affecting the energy sector, including refinery operations, electric grid upgrades, and alternative energy adoption. Advocate for thorough planning, realistic timelines, and infrastructure investments to ensure compliance without jeopardizing energy supply.

10. Address Energy Transition Workforce Needs

Support funding to develop training programs and workforce initiatives focused on preparing workers for career transitions to renewable energy. Support the expansion of apprenticeships, vocational training, and education programs to grow this vital workforce for the regional economy.

11. Foster Regional Collaboration

Encourage initiatives, such as the Northern Waterfront Economic Development Initiative, that harness collaboration between cities, counties, and businesses to foster regional economic and energy development.

Environment Policy Platform

The Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau is dedicated to increasing the East Bay's environmental resiliency in response to the rising challenges brought about by climate change. Wildfire risk, drought, extreme heat episodes, sea-level rise, ecosystem degradation, and worsening air quality all threaten the health and safety of East Bay residents and businesses. The anticipated costs of curbing climate change are growing exponentially, making early intervention a necessity for the economic vitality of the region. The Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau is committed to addressing these issues through supporting mitigation tactics that prioritize equity as well as environmental and economic sustainability.

Policy Objectives

1. Champion Wildfire Preparedness Efforts

Support a regional approach to wildfire preparedness, with government entities partnering to reduce wildfire risk across the East Bay. Promote policies and grants that encourage smart-landscaping practices and the use of wildfire-resistant building materials and retrofitting for homes and businesses. Support strategic land conservation tactics such as prescribed burns and open space buffers to help prevent catastrophic wildfires. Work with utility partners to make vital improvements to utility infrastructure, such as undergrounding distribution and transmission lines where feasible. Support policies that balance both the affordability of insurance in increasingly high fire-risk areas and the economic sustainability of insurance providers.

2. Advocate for Ecosystem and Habitat Protections

Support conservation organizations and land trusts in preserving biodiversity and open spaces, which serve as crucial carbon sinks used to help address emissions. Advocate for dense infill housing development to reduce urban sprawl and protect green spaces. Champion brownfield remediation and redevelopment efforts to protect the environment from hazardous pollutants.

3. Address Air Quality Concerns

Collaborate with local government, regional governing bodies, and industry and community partners to develop air quality policies that balance the economic role of industry with well-grounded, science-based standards that prioritize equity and impactful outcomes. Support the expansion of public transit and transit-oriented development to reduce the release of greenhouse gas emissions.

4. Promote Waste Reduction and Conversion

Encourage community members and businesses to better recycle and compost their waste products. Advocate for the adoption of waste-to-energy practices that convert biogas to renewable electricity, renewable natural gas, or hydrogen.

5. Foster Equitable Infrastructure Improvements

Leverage local, state, and federal funding, including Inflation Reduction Act grants, for infrastructure improvements that will help reduce harmful climate change effects, such as upgrades to infrastructure in vulnerable and low-income communities to increase resilience to fire, extreme heat, flooding, and air quality issues.

6. Implement Extreme Heat Mitigations

Support policies that promote cooling and energy-efficiency improvements to buildings and other infrastructure projects, where financially feasible. Push for the use of rebates and tax incentives to encourage installation of electric air-cooling fixtures in homes and businesses. Ensure regional emergency planning includes transportation to cooling centers for vulnerable communities, especially seniors and people with disabilities.

7. Support Sea-Level Rise Adaptations

Advocate for the implementation and protection of flood mitigation infrastructure, including human-made structures (i.e. seawalls and levees) and natural barriers (i.e. wetlands and horizontal levees). Urge local governments and developers to collaborate on integrating sea-level rise projections into urban planning and development projects, where financially viable. Ensure relocation plans are in place for at-risk communities during severe flooding incidents.

8. Encourage Businesses to Adopt Climate Action Plans

Support businesses in their efforts to develop smart Climate Action Plans that will prioritize the health and safety of their employees along with the greater region. Encourage businesses to adopt customized plans that address their unique environmental impacts and operational needs to ensure the long-term sustainability of the business.

Health Policy Platform

The Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau has a vested interest in improving the health and healthcare system in the East Bay because a healthy population is essential for sustained economic growth and community well-being. As a leading regional organization representing diverse industries, we recognize that access to quality healthcare not only supports a productive workforce but also reduces healthcare costs for businesses. By advocating for improved healthcare infrastructure, mental health services, and equitable access, the Chamber aims to address disparities, promote public health, and enhance the overall quality of life for residents.

Policy Objectives

1. Strengthen Workforce Development and Language Access

Advocate for expanded workforce development programs, particularly in nursing and behavioral health. The Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau, in association with regional partners, can support initiatives that invest in training and retaining healthcare professionals through partnerships with healthcare providers, local educational institutions, and nonprofits. Additionally, our collective efforts should push for county and state funding to expand workforce training. It should also promote a healthcare workforce with multilingual capabilities to better serve East Bay communities.

2. Expand Access to Care

Support efforts to increase Medi-Cal and Medicare reimbursement rates for health care providers and advocate for policies and programs that expand access to a full continuum of health care services, including preventive, primary and behavioral health care services, and social supports. Our coalition's advocacy should take into consideration the lived experience of Medi-Cal recipients and other vulnerable populations in the region.

3. Invest in Health Infrastructure

Advocate for funding and support to improve infrastructure investments that protect against certain environmental-related risks and mental health, such as earthquakes, extreme heat, wildfires, and air quality emergencies, which affect the health and wellness of East Bay residents.

4. Increase Health Equity

Support policies that promote health equity, as healthier communities lead to stronger local economies and workforces. By investing in initiatives that reduce health disparities and improve access to care, businesses can contribute to a more resilient and productive workforce, reducing absenteeism and increasing employee well-being.

5. Address Behavioral Health Disparities

Support policies that address mental health and wellness disparities, including existing disparities in the criminal and youth criminal justice system. Taking into consideration the lived experience of East Bay residents, the Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau joins regional partners in advocating for funding to expand the full continuum of behavioral health care services, including inpatient and outpatient psychiatric care, crisis intervention, substance use treatment, and community-based mental health services, among others.

6. Support Public-Private Partnerships

Support partnerships that encourage public-private collaboration with the goal of efficiently providing healthcare to residents of the East Bay. Additionally, our regional

collaboration should advocate for collaborative frameworks that ensure providers are involved in health equity programs and managed care transitions. This includes participating in county committees and working groups focused on health system reform, behavioral health, and Medi-Cal expansions. Further, the Walnut Creek Chamber & Foundation in association with regional partners should work alongside the Contra Costa Economic Partnership and regional academic partners to develop new training programs for the healthcare industry, addressing urgent needs such as behavioral health care. Our coalition should also support policies that expedite and modernize the contracting process between public and private actors delivering healthcare services.

7. Measure X Advocacy

Advocate for Measure X funds to support hospital infrastructure projects, particularly those that alleviate overcrowding and improve patient care capacity. Framing these investments as essential for public health, particularly for underserved populations, can help ensure ongoing financial support.

8. Emphasize Interconnectedness of Housing and Health

Support policies that aim to address both the housing crisis and issues relating to health. The Board of Supervisors has increased its focus on addressing homelessness and its impact on healthcare. Hospitals often see frequent visits from homeless individuals with complex health needs, which strains emergency services. Measure X funding has gone to the production of affordable rental housing, permanent supportive housing, and preservation of existing affordable housing. Moreover, we all should combat NIMBYism against health facilities, such as sober facilities, projected to be built in communities across the East Bay.

9. Ensure Healthcare Access to Immigrants

Advocate for healthcare access and social supports for immigrant communities, regardless of documentation status. Focus on removing systemic barriers, providing culturally appropriate care, and expanding access to preventive and mental health services.

10. Support Well-Being of Aging Population

Advocate for policies that support the well-being of the East Bay's aging population by ensuring access to affordable healthcare, preventative care, and long-term support services. Prioritize initiatives that address social isolation, transportation barriers, and the growing demand for skilled caregivers. Additionally, incorporate the perspectives and interests of the aging population into regional planning and policy discussions, ensuring their voices are heard and implemented.

11. Promote Health and Development of Youth

Advocate for policies that promote the health and development of children and youth by addressing critical issues such as mental and behavioral health services, access to nutritious and affordable meals, and reducing food insecurity. Support initiatives to make childcare more accessible while emphasizing the importance of increasing child vaccination rates to protect public health. Focus on integrating health services with schools and community-based organizations to provide holistic support for children and families.

12. Ensure Safety of Healthcare Workers

Advocate for policies and investments that enhance security at healthcare facilities, ensuring the physical and mental well-being of healthcare providers. Support measures that address workplace violence prevention, implement advanced security systems, and establish clear protocols for emergency responses. Advocate for resources that support healthcare workers' mental health, recognizing the unique challenges and risks they face in their profession.

Housing Policy Platform

The Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau recognizes the significant negative economic and quality of life impacts on our communities because of the persistent and pervasive housing shortage in the East Bay. To support economic growth and help the East Bay remain a hub of innovation, the coalition will adopt a comprehensive advocacy strategy to support legislation that reduces barriers for the production of timely and adequate new housing. By advocating for policies that streamline development, reform zoning laws and promote public-private partnerships, among others, the Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau and regional partners will help create a more dynamic housing market that supports the needs of East Bay residents. Accordingly, we will support policies, including the ones listed below, that aim to make the East Bay a more affordable place to live.

Policy Objectives

1. Streamline housing approval and permit processes

Advocate for legislative reforms that speed up the processing of housing development applications. These reforms should include standardizing timelines for housing approvals; mandating that municipalities adopt digital permitting systems within a specific timeline (e.g., within 2 years); modernizing zoning laws for all varieties of housing typologies and mixed-use developments, including but not limited to, allowing by-right residential development in underutilized commercial zones and streamlining

approval for small-scale multifamily housing (e.g., duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes). Lengthy approval processes are a significant barrier to housing production.

2. Increase Public-Private Partnerships

Advocate for the incentivization of public-private partnerships and affordable housing development, such as expanding the reach of state tax credits and making it easier for governments to develop housing on government property.

3. Strengthen Housing Accountability Act (HAA)

Support policies that strengthen the HAA and Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) oversight to correct ways in which local governments fail to meet their housing obligations, obstruct new projects and exacerbate the housing crisis. Strengthening accountability and oversight mechanisms will ensure that housing gets built where it is needed.

4. Modernize CEQA

Support CEQA exemptions, judicial streamlining, or any other proposals that decrease CEQA interference of attainable housing construction. California's housing crisis is driven in part by lengthy and costly reviews that cause housing developments to be delayed. While environmental protections are crucial, CEQA must be modernized to accommodate certain kinds of housing projects aimed at easing the negative health and economic effects of an underhoused population in the East Bay.

5. Streamline Lower Density Projects

Advocate for streamlining of certain lower density projects, such as SB-9 projects and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).

6. Standardize Impact and Development Fees and Reduce Burdens of Community Facility Districts (CFDs)

Support policies that aim to standardize impact and development fees throughout California to streamline housing production, reduce costs and provide more predictability for developers. These fees can be opaque, excessive and unpredictable, creating barriers to housing development, especially for affordable and multifamily projects.

7. Oppose Expansion of Rent Control

Support the current rent control regime in California, codified by AB 1482 in 2019, which was passed to address price gouging in the state's rental market. The Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau, along with regional partners, will oppose changes to the law that expand rent control or just cause evictions.

8. Endorse Local Housing Projects

The Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau should consider endorsing housing projects in the East Bay that align with regional partner's housing endorsement criteria and move the region toward the goal of providing adequate housing for all. This criterion takes into consideration a host of factors, such as density, affordability, climate and wildfire resilience, missing middle-income housing, and proximity to transportation and job centers

9. Increase Flexibility in Providing Targeted Housing

Support legislation that makes it easier and more cost-effective to build more housing for workers, students and low-income families, etc. The Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau, along with regional partners, will advocate for policies that allow developers maximum by-right flexibility when providing housing for very low-, low- and moderate-income households. This includes the option to pay an in-lieu fee, dedication of land for affordable housing and partnerships with developers that specialize in affordable housing. The Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau, along with regional partners, will also support efforts in local communities to establish broad funding sources for affordable housing such as community trusts for down payment assistance and low-interest loan programs to help families rehabilitate aging homes that require accessibility or other critical improvements.

10. Reform Historic Preservation Practices

Support legislation that critically evaluates and reforms the practice of municipalities using historic preservation as a method of inhibiting housing production. In many cases, municipalities inappropriately designate buildings or parcels as having historic significance, thereby preventing those properties from being redeveloped into housing.

Transportation Policy Platform

The Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau recognizes that strong, equitable transportation infrastructure is essential for the growth and vitality of our region. Advocating for smart public policy on transportation is crucial because it ensures efficient mobility for residents, reduces traffic congestion, and supports economic development. By investing in sustainable transportation solutions—like public transit, bike lanes, and road improvements—we can create more connected communities, improve access to jobs and services, and reduce environmental impacts. The Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau, along with regional partners, will advocate for transportation policies such as these that build a more resilient, prosperous, and inclusive East Bay for all.

Policy Objectives

1. Increase Flexibility in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Requirements

Support policies that increase flexibility on VMT requirements, such as allowing adjacent housing projects to count as VMT mitigation, while still supporting the policy rationale behind mitigating against VMTs.

2. Incentivize Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Programs

Support TDM strategies—such as transit incentives, carpool incentives, and flex scheduling—that can significantly reduce VMT, while more efficiently transporting East Bay residents from place to place. Our coalition should also support policies that create incentives for private and public actors to collaborate to meet TDM obligations, such as tax incentives, grants, or regulatory relief.

3. Expand and Improve Public Transit Access

Support policies that encourage collaboration between private sector and transit agencies to provide first and last-mile services from transit hubs like BART stations to office parks and industrial zones. Moreover, the Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau, along with regional partners, should continue to advocate for investments in maintaining and increasing service frequency, reliability, and safety of public transportation that will enhance worker access to job centers.

4. Support Active Transportation Infrastructure

Promote policies that encourage cycling and walking by investing in a paved and interconnected regional trail system, dedicated bike lanes, pedestrian-friendly street designs, and safer intersections.

5. Integrate Land Use and Housing Policy

Support policies that incentivize the development of housing near transit corridors to reduce commuting distances and VMT.

6. Support Innovation and Technology

Support policies that invest in innovation and smart infrastructure such as adaptive metering, tolling, smart corridors, technology additions and zero-emission infrastructure. Moreover, the Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau, along with regional partners, should support current efforts such as CCTA's GoMentum Station, which is a dedicated secure testing facility for connected and automated vehicle technology, and local and regional aerial transit.

7. Support Transit Operator Zero-Emission Initiatives

Advocate for government grants and other financial support to help local transit operators meet state emission mandates and to meet the state's goals for all zero-emissions vehicles by 2035.

Water Policy Platform

The Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau, along with regional partners, continues a commitment to increasing water safety and reliability throughout the region through strategic public policy advocacy. In the face of droughts, floods, habitat degradation, and water storage challenges, the Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau, along with regional partners, support a wide range of mitigation efforts to address these mounting issues that balance water accessibility, watershed and habitat protection, long-term sustainability, community resilience, and equity.

Policy Objectives

1. Develop Diverse Water Supplies

Support policies that advance a mix of water supply solutions to increase water reliability. This includes advocating for regulations that protect the quality of East Bay watersheds while also advancing additional supply options such as recycled water (for both potable and non-potable reuse), desalinated water, conservation water storage, groundwater, and stormwater captures. As we invest in expanding water supplies, ensure financial support is available to low-income households through programs such as rate-assistance.

2. Increase Water Storage Capacity

Champion the protection and management of aquifers, expansion of reservoirs, and development of stormwater collection facilities to safeguard against water shortages and support continued economic growth in the region.

3. Support Habitat Restoration

Advocate for watershed restoration projects that protect native biodiversity. For example, support interventions that improve native fish habitats while enhancing water quality and supply in East Bay watersheds.

4. Encourage Water Conservation

Support a range of incentives, including rebates and tax credits, that encourage the widespread implementation of water-saving technologies such as low-flow fixtures, greywater systems, flow meters, and smart landscape irrigation systems.

5. Foster Technological Innovation

Promote advancements in water recycling, advanced purification, desalination, filtration systems that remove pollutants (i.e. PFAs and pharmaceuticals), in-home water conservation devices, and other technologies that will create safe, resilient, and reliable water supplies.

6. Implement Strategies for Flood Mitigations

Protect water supplies and communities from the effects of floods through elevating infrastructure in vulnerable areas, increasing groundwater recharge, building flood barriers, maintaining levees, protecting wetlands that naturally absorb flood water, and supporting robust stormwater drainage systems.

7. Invest in Equitable Infrastructure Modernization

Support federal, state, and local investment in new projects and infrastructure modernization to meet present and future needs of the region. Advocate for fair allocation of state and federal dollars to East Bay projects. Support the leveraging of private sector partnerships and innovative financing models to guarantee long term sustainability. Ensure infrastructure investments are equitable so vulnerable and low-income communities are protected from escalating water prices, water quality issues, water shortages, and harmful effects from floods.

8. Support Sustainable Wastewater Regulations

Support regulations that protect the San Francisco Bay from harmful constituents while also maintaining effluent limits that are not overly burdensome on East Bay wastewater treatment facilities. Encourage further studies on the effects of nutrient discharges to the Bay so regulations are based on scientific research. Support efforts to prevent harmful chemicals from reaching wastewater treatment facilities by managing them at the source.

9. Support Regional Partnerships

Help facilitate public-private partnerships to solve regional water issues. For example, support the collaboration between water agencies, local government, employers, and regional stakeholders to expand reservoirs, recycled water infrastructure, and other water projects.

10. Champion Workforce Development for Evolving Industry

Support policies that help build a skilled and diverse workforce capable of addressing the region's evolving water management challenges, from water recycling to sustainable infrastructure. This includes advocating for training programs and educational pathways in water technology, environmental science, and engineering as well as the trades to prepare individuals for careers in water-related fields.