



Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District

R-13-57  
Meeting 13-13  
June 12, 2013

## AGENDA ITEM 4

### AGENDA ITEM

Vision Plan Update: Phase 2 Completion

### GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION *SM*

Discuss and provide input to staff regarding the Vision Plan process and progress to date.

### SUMMARY

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) initiated the Vision Plan Project in August 2012 when staff began scoping the project and the methodology to engage the District's partners, stakeholders, and the public in a District-wide vision for land preservation, resource management, public recreation, and working lands (see Report R-13-10) for a summary of the Vision Plan process and timeline). Since that time, the Vision Plan Project Team, working with the consultant teams hired to assist in developing the Vision Plan, have made significant progress on major elements to both engage the public and complete the technical analysis in support of the Vision Plan (see Reports R-13-08, and R-13-09 for a summary of the consultant teams' scope of services).

### DISCUSSION

#### Background

The District's Vision Plan Project, entitled 'Imagine the Future of Open Space', is a broad-based effort to engage the public, District partners, and stakeholders to create a shared vision for the future of the District and the region's open space. A multidisciplinary approach was developed to accomplish this goal and relies on scientific analysis combined with broad public engagement to ensure that the final vision reflects both District and community values and priorities.

#### Vision Plan Process and Timeline

The project remains on an aggressive timeline, and is on schedule for completion in April 2014 (see Attachment 1: Vision Plan Timeline). To meet this timeline and ensure meaningful, creative, and robust public involvement, the project is using a strategic public engagement five-phase process represented by the acronym SHEDD: Getting Started, Hearing the voices, Enriching the conversation, Deliberating, and Deciding. Through SHEDD, the public will help shape the outcomes of the planning and analysis process, which will assemble and critically evaluate information about the District to characterize relative land conservation values and identify land stewardship and recreation priorities. Progress within the first two phases of the project is summarized below.

**Phase 1: Getting Started (July 2012 – January 2013)**

The Getting Started phase ended with the completion of two major project efforts:

- Board endorsement of the project approach and authorization of contract amendments with the consultant teams working on the project (Public Dialogue Consortium (PDC) and Jodi McGraw Consulting), that occurred during the Board Special Meeting of January 15, 2013.
- Formation of a volunteer Community Advisory Committee (CAC, see Report R-13-32, see Attachment 2: CAC Membership Roster) to meaningfully engage selected members of the public and partners in the visioning process.

**Phase 2: Hearing the Voices (January – May 2013)**

This phase of the project is nearing completion and significant progress has been made to build new relationships, and broadly elicit comments from the public to clearly understand their values and vision for the future of District open space. Major milestones for this phase are discussed below:

**Community Engagement**

- *Community Advisory Committee:* A key component of the strategy to build support for the new Vision Plan was the formation of a volunteer CAC, whose first meeting was held on March 6, 2013. Since that time, the CAC has had three additional meetings; two land tours to familiarize the members with the District's Open Space Preserves and practices, and one additional working meeting to develop initial Themes and Goals. The CAC is an active and valuable contributor to the development of the Vision Plan and, through the co-chairs, Dianne McKenna and Karen Holman, will continue to provide recommendations and feedback directly to the Board of Directors regarding the project.
- *Community Conversations:* An extensive series of Community Conversations have been conducted and will continue throughout the month of June and into July with an emphasis on those groups that have not yet been reached. Community Conversations began with the District Board, the CAC, and other close partners (see Report R-13-33). Additional broader outreach has been achieved using the Community Conversation model and is now spreading outward to an ever broadening network through a structured series of small, informal interviews. Trained student interns (from San Francisco and San Jose State Universities) and District Rangers have expanded the conversations, documenting the general tenor of the conversation as well as inspirational quotes. Community conversations were held at six farmers markets, District events, and on District preserves. Students also conducted a number of phone interviews of members of the public referred by the CAC.
- *Baseline polling:* In early 2013, the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) commissioned a benchmark study to assess likely voter opinion on a wide range of open space issues, including Vision Plan related themes. Results were presented at the April 24, 2013 Board meeting. Core value statements from the survey results will be incorporated into the next phase (Enriching the Conversation) of outreach.
- *Vision Plan Engagement Website (MindMixer) and Social Networking Outreach:* Mindmixer is an interactive community engagement website that allows participants to

submit ideas and comments about specific topics or projects. It is popular among public agencies and operates much like a virtual town hall. The District launched its Mindmixer website, [imagine.openspace.org](http://imagine.openspace.org), in March 2013 starting with specific community conversation questions posed by the District and its consultants, Public Dialogue Consortium (PDC). Since that time, interest and participation in the website has demonstrated ongoing continuous growth, and as of May 29<sup>th</sup> over 1,300 online visitors have reviewed content, and 223 users have actively participated. In total, these participants have submitted 142 ideas and posted 220 comments deepening the dialog. The website's pages have been viewed over 13,100 times. According to analysts at Mindmixer in early May, the District site was among their top five sites for user growth (30% weekly increase in participation).

The District has also strategically used social media, primarily Facebook and Twitter, several times a week to promote the vision plan and the Mindmixer website. An additional strategy includes cross-promoting the Vision Plan on partners' and other agencies' social media pages, thus expanding the reach to new audiences. As a result of these efforts, the number of people following the District's Facebook and Twitter postings has more than doubled.

- *Community Outreach:* In January 2013, the Public Affairs Department created outreach material for the Vision Plan that included brochures, flyers, postcards, and event displays. Over 5,000 pieces of material have been distributed at events. Since March 2013, Public Affairs staff and Community Outreach Volunteers have attended 13 community events (four geared toward children/families; two to regional employee groups; one toward local governments; four to traditional user groups; two District-sponsored events with broad ethnic attendance including Wingding Festival and Spanish-speaking hike at Windy Hill). Public Dialogue Consortium (PDC) student interns attended several of these events, for Community Conversations.

## **Planning and Analysis**

- *Vision Plan Initial Themes and Goals:* One of the initial deliverables for the Vision Plan is the development of the initial Themes and Goals. Themes can be thought of as the 'chapters' of the Vision Plan; the organizational framework around which the Vision Plan will be built. The initial Themes and Goals were created through the work of the District's consultant teams and staff, resulting in drafts that were then reviewed and discussed by the CAC to identify gaps and to refine the initial Themes and Goals to better reflect the District's mission and community values (see Attachment 3: Vision Plan Themes). The Themes and Goals will be presented and discussed by the full Board of Directors at the upcoming Vision Plan Study Session scheduled for July 24, 2013 (discussed in more detail below).
- *Planning Area Characterization:* The Planning Area Characterization will be the final deliverable of Phase 2 of the project. The characterization will be presented to the Board during the July 24th Study Session. Currently, the District's consultant team, led by Jodi McGraw, is working on assembling and critically evaluating existing data about the Vision Plan themes and preparing new information based on analysis of the existing

conditions data, which will be used to characterize the planning area. The following is a brief summary of the current work being prepared by Jodi McGraw Consulting:

- The agricultural consultant (SAGE) has conducted a series of interviews to increase understanding of factors influencing agricultural viability, conducted a farmland change analysis between the years of 1990 and 2010 based on the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) data in the GIS, and is currently drafting a memo outlining existing agricultural conditions within the District.
- The recreation consultant (Alta) has worked to synthesize existing recreation data, and developed subregions to focus the recreation planning. They are currently creating maps that categorize open space preserves and surrounding parks into different levels of improvements, which will be used to solicit public comment and to assist with identifying priority actions. In addition, they are creating an existing conditions memo summarizing current recreational opportunities.
- The cultural resources consultant (Pacific Legacy), has worked to initiate consultation with Native Americans regarding the project, obtained cultural resource information from a variety of sources, and is creating a stewardship guide.
- Jodi McGraw, as biological consultant, is currently synthesizing available existing biological data to characterize the relative land conservation value within District boundaries. She is working toward developing the weighted overlay analysis that integrates numerous layers of information about rare species occurrences, sensitive habitat locations, important streams and watersheds for sensitive species and areas deemed important to maintaining landscape connectivity.
- Nadia Hamey of Big Creek Forestry, the Forestry consultant for the Vision Plan, is preparing a memo that will identify potential management practices that retain and promote biological diversity, resilient forest ecosystems and provide information on existing timber harvest conditions with District boundaries.
- In addition to Jodi McGraw Consulting team work, District staff has worked to develop the Beautiful Scenery theme. Current work has included:
  - The creation of a comprehensive map that depicts county and state designated scenic areas;
  - The investigation of areas appropriate for viewshed analysis;
  - Currently drafting memo characterizing the significant scenic areas within District Boundaries;
  - Developing methodology for soliciting public input on where and how beautiful scenery is most valued.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The current and planned expenditures for the Vision Plan are shown in the following table:

	<b>Project Expenditures to Date (Includes FY12-13 and FY13-14)</b>	<b>Remaining FY13-14 Budget</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Consultant Costs</b>			
Public Dialogue Consortium	\$63,900	\$159,100	\$223,000
Jodi McGraw Consulting	\$92,600	\$274,439	\$367,039
<b>Direct Costs</b>			
Online Public Engagement (Mindmixer)	\$1,995	\$8,005	\$10,000
Graphics Services	\$11,205	\$1,495	\$12,700
Mailing	\$330	\$9,670	\$10,000
Meetings	\$4,698	\$15,302	\$20,000
<b>Employee Backfill</b>			
Planning Intern	\$3,166	\$15,834	\$19,000
Contract Planner	\$0	\$110,000	\$110,000
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$177,894</b>	<b>\$593,845</b>	<b>\$771,739</b>

The FY13-14 budget includes \$590,900 for the Vision Plan project. The Contract Planner services have not yet been awarded, which is expected to reduce the anticipated expenditures in the line item as the budget assumes a full year term. A more detailed project accounting with any necessary amendments will be part of the District's Midyear Budget process.

**BOARD COMMITTEE REVIEW**

The Board waived Committee review of this project in lieu of full Board engagement. The full Board continues to remain apprised of ongoing Project progress and next steps.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Notice was provided pursuant to the Brown Act. Notice was also sent to the interested parties list for this project.

**CEQA COMPLIANCE**

The Vision Plan update does not constitute a project under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

**NEXT STEPS****Phase 3: Enriching the Conversation (June – September 2013)**

- The Enriching the Conversation phase of the Vision Plan is focused on enhancing the District's perspective, and synthesizing public input to shape the major Vision Plan components (i.e. open space themes, goals, action selection criteria, and priority actions). A critical component of this phase is an evaluation of the community outreach conducted for the project so far, identifying those communities and areas where additional focused

outreach is still needed to fill any gaps, and conducting additional outreach and engagement activities to address the gaps.

- The Planning and Analysis consulting team will assist District staff and the CAC in integrating community input and other available information to create spatial data layers that depict the various open space values, and otherwise illustrate the Vision Plan themes and Open Space Goals via Priority Area Maps, which will assist with the identification of Priority Areas and Actions in the next phase.
- Three CAC meetings (one of which is a land tour) and one Board meeting will occur during this phase. The final results will be:
  - Full list of Vision Plan themes
  - Full list of Open Space Goals and values
  - Full list of Action Selection Criteria
  - Priority Area Maps
  - Draft list of potential actions

Attachment(s)

1. Vision Plan Timeline
2. CAC Membership Roster
3. Vision Plan Themes

Responsible Department Head:

Kirk Lenington, Natural Resources Manager

Prepared by:

Kirk Lenington, Natural Resources Manager  
Sandy Sommer, Senior Real Property Planner  
Casey Hiatt, GIS Administrator  
Shelly Lewis, Public Affairs Manager

Contact person:

Kirk Lenington, Natural Resources Manager

**Phase 2**  
**Hearing the Voices**

**Phase 3**  
**Enriching the Conversation**

**Phase 4**  
**Deliberating**

**Phase 5**  
**Deciding**

**2013**

Jan Feb Mar Apr May June July Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec

**2014**

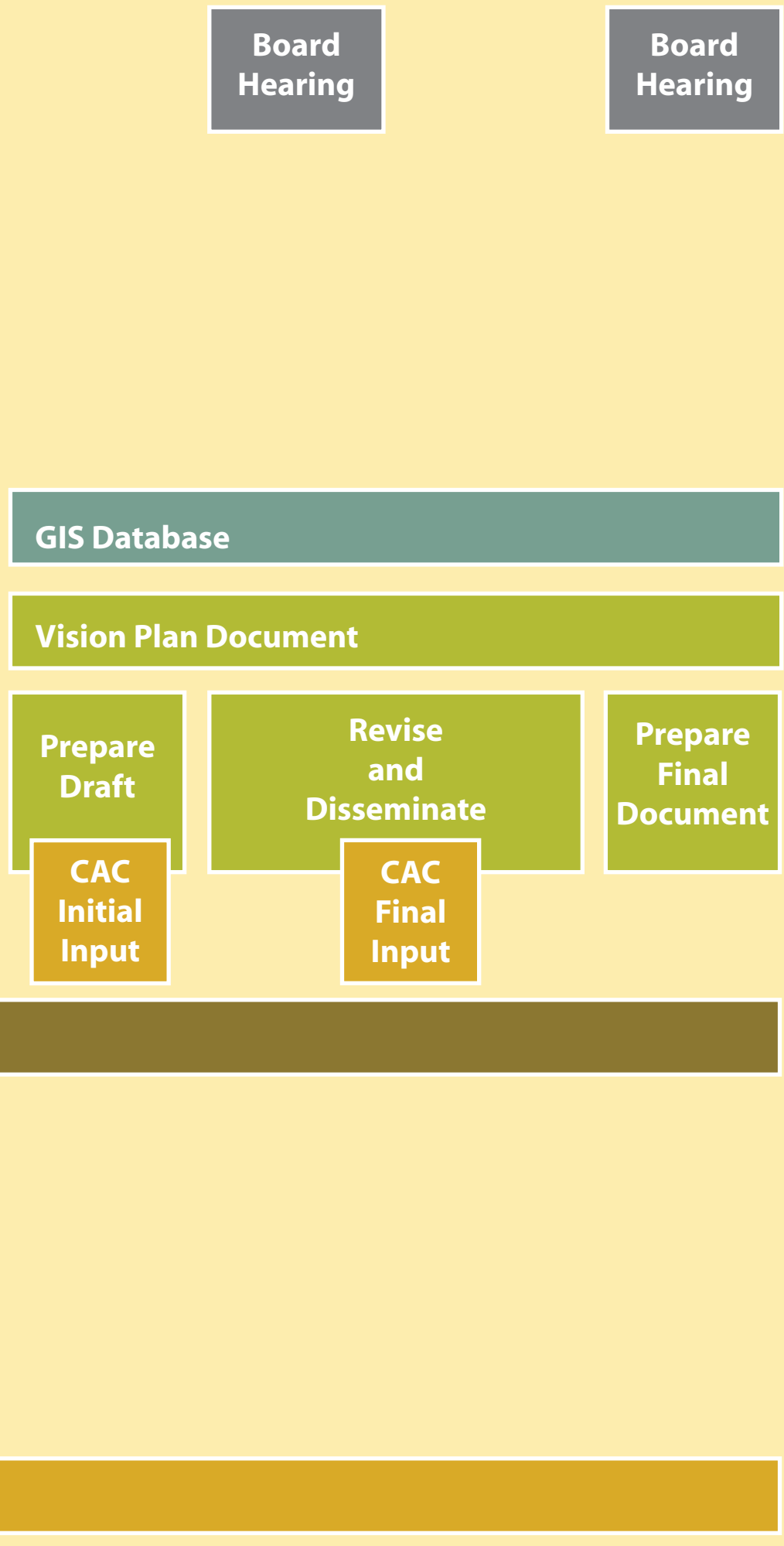
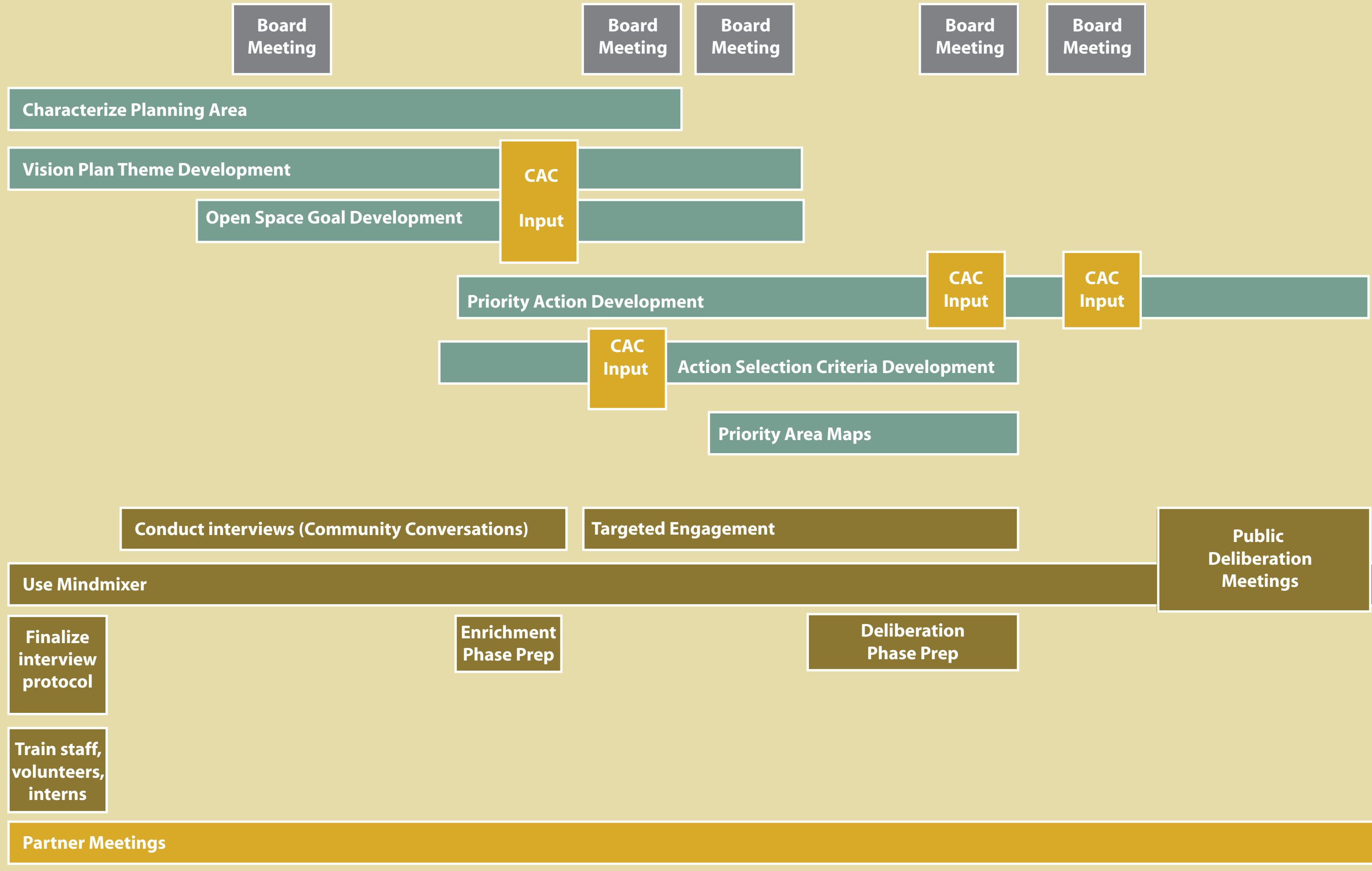
Jan Feb Mar Apr

**Board Input**

**Planning & Analysis**

**Public Engagement**

**Partnerships**





# IMAGINE *the Future of Open Space*

## Community Advisory Committee Membership List

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title/Affiliation</b>
Ann Waltonsmith	City of Saratoga
Bern Smith	Bay Area Ridge Trail
Alex Andrade	Silicon Valley Community Foundation
Carlos Romero	Former Mayor, City of East Palo Alto.
Chris Cruz	West Valley College
Chris Overington	Executive Director, Hidden Villa
Dianne McKenna, Co-Chair	Sunnyvale Community Leader
Don Horsley	San Mateo County Supervisor
Don Weden	Santa Clara County
Faye Brophy	Equestrian Trail Riders' Action Committee
Henrietta Burroughs	East Palo Alto
Jered Lawson	Operator, Pie Ranch
Joe Simitian	Santa Clara County Supervisor
John Bourgeois	Los Gatos Planning Commission
Karen Holman, Co-Chair	Palo Alto City Council, Palo Alto History Museum
Kellyx Nelson	SMC Resource Conservation District
Kristina Loquist	Policy Aide to Supervisor Simitian
Larry Watson	South Skyline Association
Lennie Roberts	Legislative advocate, Committee for Green Foothills
Lynn Jackson	Docent, Volunteer,
Marc Landgraf	Peninsula Open Space Trust
Melissa Hippard	Program Director, Greenbelt Alliance
Mike Bushue	Equestrian Trail Riders' Action Committee
Paul Heiple	Botanist, Acterra
Philippe Cohen	Director, Jasper Ridge Ecological Preserve
Reed Holderman	Executive Director, Sempervirens Fund
Robb Courtney	Director, County of Santa Clara Dept. of Parks & Rec.
Ruth Waldhauer	South Skyline Association
Sarah Rosendahl	Legislative Aide
Steve Wood	REI Outdoor Education Programs Director
Sue Garner	Saratoga/Monte Sereno Community Leader
Valentin Lopez	Amah Mutsen Tribal Chairman





# **IMAGINE *the* Future of Open Space**

## **VISION PLAN THEMES *and* Quotes from *the* Community**



*imagine the future of open space...*

# OUTDOOR RECREATION & HEALTHY LIVING

*voices of the community:*

*"I would love to see the Bay Area Ridge Trail extend uninterrupted from Montara in the North to Mt Umunhum in the South."*

*"I love walking around the natural beauty and more trails would be a plus."*

*"I'd love to hike more, but not having a car makes it hard to do. I wish there were means of public transportation that could take you to these lovely hiking trails."*

*"Public access facilitates personal connections with the land that are critical for people to have a relationship with nature."*

*"Open space is the best way to exercise outdoors and catch fresh air while hiking or running or cycling, especially after work."*

*"I think there is a delicate balance between providing access, and the health of the land. If there is too much access the land will be negatively impacted."*

*"Trails and open space allow me to get out of the city, recharge, and enjoy creation."*





*imagine the future of open space...*

# *HEALTHY PLANTS, ANIMALS & WATERWAYS*

*voices of the community:*

*"These spaces are abundant with nature's true treasures.  
We should see them as jewels, not for sale."*

*"Nothing is more important to me than  
keeping our water system clean,  
animals free, and plants safe from foreign weeds."*

*"We need to look at the question; 'Are we saving the land the right way?'"*

*"Improve water quality and balance water use  
so the Coastal creeks can support fish again!"*

*"Yes please! We need salmon and steelhead again!!!"*

*"Yes, yes, stream restoration should be a high priority."*



*"We need connected lands for plants and animals to thrive."*

*"I like to run through natural preserves, and seeing  
plants and animals is part of that experience"*







*imagine the future of open space...*

# **ENRICHED EXPERIENCES**

*voices of the community:*

*"Let's get people connected to the land, so they know why it's important."*

*"Please increase interpretive centers and signage!"*

*"If we start educating youth today about the benefits of the open space, they can be the leaders and advocates for the future."*

*"There needs to be more outreach to universities; even college students do not know much about open space."*

*"Education is where the District should begin.,  
Many people are uneducated about the lands and can't appreciate them."*

*"I didn't even know these places you're mentioning existed, why is that? Is it really anyone's fault or just my own?"*

*"Let's get kids out from behind computers and learning to enjoy the outdoors!"*

*"As a first grade teacher, bringing students to a working farm close by would be an unforgettable experience."*







*imagine the future of open space...*

# *NATURAL, CULTURAL & SCENIC LANDSCAPES*

*voices of the community:*

*“I am a writer, and I find inspiration in tranquility, peace, and silence like the open space gives. It's miles from the busy city, it's like a whole new world. I find it's beauty, scenery, and history a kickoff for my poetry. It's a real joy to leave the city life, for just a moment, and meditate here. I find serenity, sublime, and beauty in these green scenes.”*

*"You never run out of beautiful places to go here!"*

*“Most people I know who visit our preserved open spaces appreciate the stability of them - there is comfort in returning to a place and seeing it (relatively) unchanged year on year, decade on decade... This holds true also for the coastal landscapes, even the pastoral, rural working lands. Coastsiders (even those of us who only recently rooted here) want the backdrop of our lives to maintain...”*

*“I'd like to see them preserved as much as possible - particularly those areas that hold some significance - some historic value.”*

*“Also being able to lift my eyes up to the open and beautiful hills from the busy freeways keeps me sane because it brings back memories of wonderful, peaceful times and makes me smile. Thanks for keeping the open spaces open and safe from urban sprawl.”*





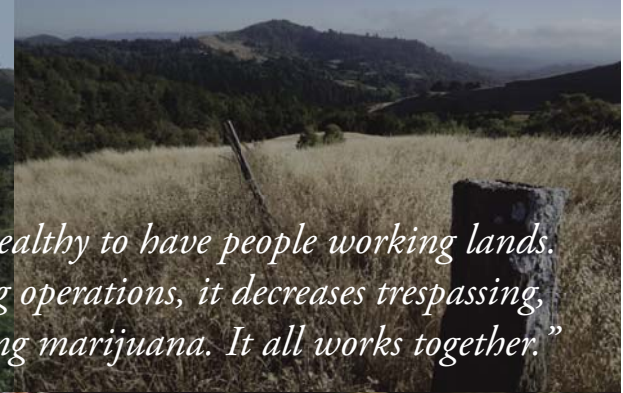
*imagine the future of open space...*

# *VIABLE WORKING LANDS*

*voices of the community:*

*"Agriculture is healthy for the community and healthy for the land."*

*"Let's find a way to connect the food grown in our area to the people that live here."*



*"It is healthy to have people working lands. By having ag operations, it decreases trespassing, vandalism, and growing marijuana. It all works together."*

*"Working land is just as important to our world as the parks and reservoirs."*

*"There should be productive use of land however, farming should not hinder the preservation of that land for the animals living there."*