



**SPECIAL MEETING**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT**

**Tuesday, September 12, 2023**

*The Board of Directors conducted this meeting in accordance with  
California Government Code section 54953.*

**DRAFT MINUTES**

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MIDPENINSULA  
REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT**

President Kishimoto called the special meeting of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to order at 5:02 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Jed Cyr, Craig Gleason, Karen Holman, Zoe Kersteen-Tucker, Yoriko Kishimoto, Margaret MacNiven, and Curt Riffle

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: General Manager Ana Ruiz, General Counsel Hilary Stevenson, Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan, Assistant General Manager Brian Malone, District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Maria Soria, Executive Assistant/Deputy District Clerk Loana Lumina-Hsu, and Planner II Tyler Smith

President Kishimoto announced this meeting is being held in accordance with Government Code section 54953. The public has the opportunity to comment on the agenda, and the opportunity to listen to this meeting through the internet or via telephone. This information can be found on the meeting agenda, which was physically posted at the District's Administrative Office, and on the District website.

**BOARD BUSINESS**

**1. Proposed Performance Measures, Service Design Concepts and Companion Measures for a Potential Shuttle Program and/or Ride Hail Program at Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve (R-23-98)**

Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan presented the staff presentation and provided background information on the Multimodal Access Study that was conducted for Rancho San

Antonio Open Space Preserve (RSA) in 2020 to address the high parking demand. The study looked for non-motorized mobility and transportation options as well as parking alternatives to address the parking and congestion issues and to identify and prioritize strategies that will encourage drivers to shift their modes of travel. Ms. Chan stated that the District partnered with a consultant to look at Transportation Demand Management Strategies (TDMs). Twenty-six TDMs were identified from best practices, consultant experience, and survey responses that fall into five categories: Access Improvements, Transit Improvements, Traffic Operational Improvements, Visitor Demand Management, and Capacity Improvements. Ms. Chan went on to review the scoring factors, prioritization, and recommendations of the TDMs.

Planner II Tyler Smith continued the presentation and stated that between the background analyses for the project and the District's involvement in the Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network's shuttle exploration team, staff has learned important factors to consider when designing transportation programs to access open space. He went on to describe the factors to take into consideration for program success. He stated that the project team also conducted outreach to various stakeholders and held a Joint Stakeholders Workshop that included partners such as Santa Clara County Parks, nearby municipalities, and school districts. The stakeholders provided feedback for implementing the TDM programs. Additional outreach was conducted with potential properties that are being considered as shuttle pickup and drop off locations, and use of their lots. Staff also contacted the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) for use of their transit stops and existing shuttle programs.

Mr. Smith commented that the shuttle and ride hail programs have the potential to free up parking spaces, but this does not mean that these programs on their own will solve the problem of reducing parking demand. The need for parking is decreased for those who take shuttle or ride hail. However, visitor demand at RSA is thought to be so great, that those parking spaces would likely get filled and the District would need to introduce TDM strategies alongside the shuttle and/or ride hail to manage peak visitation demand.

Mead & Hunt consultant Brian Laverty continued the presentation, explaining the public survey results of October 2020 to November 2022 to gauge visitor interest in shuttle and ride hail programs. He shared information regarding the preferred entrance location, ridership potential, service span, schedule, and fare. Mr. Laverty stated that a case study was conducted of nine different similar locations, including Muir Woods and some national park locations around the country that have implemented shuttle services and described the common themes of other shuttle programs. He went over the shuttle program performance measures that were developed during the course of the study that are meant to be measured in the 3 to 6 month timeframe after a shuttle service is implemented and reviewed the shuttle route concepts. Nine concepts were initially evaluated as potential satellite parking lots to access RSA via shuttle. The list was refined to the following four concepts for further evaluation:

- Foothill College
- Mountain View Transit Center via Lucky Supermarket (Foothills Expressway)
- De Anza College
- Lucky Supermarket

Mr. Laverty went over the roundtrip distance, the headway for each proposal evaluated at 15, 20, and 30 minutes, the number of required shuttle vehicles, the potential daily ridership, the annual cost, and the expected parking reduction for each of the four concepts.

Director Gleason asked if the data was based on a free or a for-fee shuttle program.

Mr. Lavery stated no charge has been factored for the shuttle at this point, and it is based on a free shuttle service.

Director Holman asked for clarification on the days that the shuttle would run.

Mr. Lavery reported it would only be Saturday, Sunday, and a certain number of weekday holidays when it is expected to have the same kind of peak as a weekend.

President Kishimoto commented that the goal of the study was not to have empty parking spaces but, rather to manage the demand, and suggested that it would be a better measurement to count the number of people queuing for a parking space rather than counting empty parking spaces.

Mr. Lavery stated that yes, the queuing up of people could be made into a measurement, and it would be just as valid.

President Kishimoto suggested that the Lucky supermarket is the only viable suggestion out of the four routes being considered for the proposed shuttle route.

Arcadis-IBI consultant Steve Wilks continued the presentation, providing an overview of what was heard from Ride Hail Service survey, which subsequently informed the design element of a ride hail service program. Respondents were asked about service characteristics that would encourage the use of a ride hail program, and the distance willing to travel in using a ride hail service. Mr. Wilks stated that Arcadis-IBI developed three ride hail service design concepts for consideration:

- Concept A. An independent ride hail program in which the District brings on an existing ride hail vendor to provide ride hail services for Preserve visitors.
- Concept B. A collaboration with *Silicon Valley Hopper* (formerly *Via Cupertino*), an existing on-demand service provider that already stops at the Preserve; and
- Concept C. An integrated system that integrates a shuttle program and ride hail program for the Preserve.

Mr. Wilks explained how the Ride Hail would work and that there are also a number of other important considerations that would need to be addressed in going forward with the functional requirements. He continued to highlight the cost and ridership for each of the three cost scenarios reflecting three different fares: \$1.50, \$2.50 and \$3.50. Mr. Wilks reviewed the ride hail costs for the three options and stated that the administrative costs for implementation typically range from 10% to 30% of the total operating budget. He reported that the parking space reductions will depend on several factors, including the demand for service, the willingness of individuals to shift from personal vehicles to shared mobility options, TDMs, and consideration of level of service, span of service, the days of week, hours of day, vehicle, occupancy, rates, etc. In addition, he reviewed the performance measurements for monitoring how well the performance is achieving program goals.

Director Riffle asked for clarification of when the Ride Hail program would be in service.

Mr. Wilks explained that the Ride Hail program would run from Monday through Friday because there will be no shuttle service during this time, and then it would take over in the early evening on the weekends and holidays to ensure that everybody who uses the shuttle inbound has a mode of transport or mobility for their outbound trip.

Ms. Smith continued the staff presentation on the TDM strategies that are being proposed to be evaluated further to complement the proposed shuttle and ride hail programs to encourage ridership of these programs and to better manage visitor demand during peak times. Mr. Smith reported that carpool parking could improve District operations by expanding parking options for beneficial access modes while limiting benefits for single-occupant vehicles. The District is concluding a year-long carpool pilot program at the main entrance. Based on staff observations over the duration of the pilot, the District has learned that adjustments to the program are necessary to improve the effectiveness of the carpool program (e.g., relocating the carpool lot to be adjacent to the main trailhead, etc.).

Director Kersteen-Tucker requested that staff explain whether each TDM strategy worked.

Ms. Chan explained the options being presented are not all yet implemented. The TDMs implemented to date were chosen based on ease of implementation. The Carpool Pilot Program has been in place for one-year and staff is reviewing the data. Preliminary review of the data of 2022-2023 compared to 2016-2017 is showing an increase in average occupants per vehicle and staff will be seeking direction from the Board in the future in terms of the Carpool Pilot Program.

Mr. Smith continued the presentation and reviewed in detail the four TDM companion measures, including the benefits, challenges, and costs.

Director Riffle inquired if a charge would be associated with the reservation system and, if a specific block of hours reserved has been exceeded, would someone be policing the parking lot and issuing tickets.

Mr. Smith remarked that enforcement may be necessary.

Director Riffle left the meeting at 6:59 p.m. and returned at 7:01 p.m.

Director Gleason asked if the parking reservation system would be free for users.

Mr. Smith indicated that District policy is not to charge users to access the preserves, and that if the District wants to implement one of the programs and compete with people driving to a preserve, the program will need to be free.

Director Gleason inquired if the reservation system was free what is the likelihood that someone may not show up for their reservation.

Mr. Smith stated that it is absolutely a consideration with a reservation system, and that it would need to be reviewed further, but that it is possible to enforce reservation limitations and confirm reservations prior to visits.

Assistant General Manager Brian Malone provided the presentation on the Visitor Use Management and Visitor Capacity. Mr. Malone stated that at the July 18, 2023 PNR Committee

(Committee) meeting, the Committee asked for the Board to consider a Visitor Capacity Study. A key consideration for the Board in taking on such a study are the limitations of what staff can do, particularly in relation to RSA. The Visitor Use Management Framework is a tool recommended by the Science Advisory Panel that was developed by the Interagency Visitor Use Management Council (Council) to manage visitor use impacts and benefits. Visitor Capacity is one component of Visitor Use Management. Mr. Malone reviewed the definition of visitor capacity and stated that it is not the same thing as carrying capacity, which is an ecological concept. In addition, in pursuing such a study, staff would not be able to come up with a specific number on the carrying capacity of RSA. The Visitor Use Management Framework instead guides decisions about visitor use management. The identification of visitor capacity is unique to each site and is based on the area studied, the desired conditions, and indicators and thresholds for those conditions. Although the Council provides guidance for visitor use management, the District would need to adapt the Council's framework to the District's desired goals and priorities. In order to set achievable goals and a scope for a visitor use capacity project at a preserve such as RSA, staff would need to work across multiple disciplines and departments and seek guidance from the Committee and Board on the desired framework for evaluating visitor uses. Findings from a visitor capacity study are not expected to provide a definite maximum visitor number target, and instead provide some general guidance and a framework to inform decisions. A Visitor Capacity is primarily a social science study conducted in areas of high visitation.

Director Holman inquired how staff is measuring the gradual degradation of environment for wildlife.

Mr. Malone explained staff identifies areas with sensitive resources and ensures protection measures are in place for these sites. In a high use area like the main corridor of RSA, wildlife habituation is present, however, to remove the habituation, the District would need to remove a tremendous amount of visitation.

Director Kersteen-Tucker commented that it is not so much about increasing parking capacity as it is about the visitor experience, and at what point is the visitor experience impacted by either being frustrated with the lack of parking that they do not return to the preserve or being frustrated that there are so many people on the trails around them. It is not so much a natural resource issue as it is of a visitor experience issue at RSA.

Mr. Malone noted that the TDM strategies under consideration tonight are only expected to potentially increase or decrease use in the +/-10% range, particularly during peak visitation.

Public comment opened at 7:30 p.m.

Wayne Whitlock voiced concern about the potential impacts on the St. Joseph's Avenue neighborhood and expressed appreciation and interest in RSA. He feels that the Visitor Capacity Study should be carried out in order to discover what is important for this specific preserve. In his opinion, the preserve is over capacity and believes it is affecting the experience and resources. Mr. Whitlock requested that the Board acknowledge in writing the constraints that exist in the St. Joseph's area. Mr. Whitlock acknowledged that shuttle and ride hail programs are not being considered along St. Joseph's Avenue at this time and wants to be sure they are not pursued in the future.

Elizabeth Montgomery spoke on the changes to the signage in the St. Joseph's Avenue neighborhood allowing parking at the end of St. Joseph's to access Rancho without direct input from the neighborhood. Due to neighbor concerns, the signs were reverted to the original signs. Ms. Montgomery spoke about her concerns against the use of St. Joseph's entrance to the preserve and requested written assurance from the District that St. Joseph's will not now nor in the future be pursued as an entry point for either of the programs. She commented that she is an avid user of the RSA and is there 3 to 4 times a week and spoke that the visitor experience is degraded when it is overcrowded, and suggested a stronger marketing campaign to direct visitors to less crowded preserves and to use those preserves closest to where they live.

Marlene Zimmerman spoke out in opposition to the proposed shuttle and ride hail programs and its impact on the St. Joseph's area. She stated that there are two solutions to the current problem: either build more parking places that may be accommodated in the existing parking lot area, or assume that when the lot is full, the preserve is full, and no additional visitors can be accommodated. Ms. Zimmerman believes that by adding a shuttle or ride-hail program it will add more people to the preserve, which is the problem and advocated for the visitor capacity study to be done. She suggested that rather than subsidizing the programs, which she feels will be underused and expensive, the money should be used to promote other preserves within the District.

Fred Witteborn spoke in support of completing a Visitor Capacity Study prior to further consideration of a potential shuttle or ride-hail program, and that the trail widths already show signs of overcrowding. Mr. Witteborn suggested that the parking lot near the horse trailer unloading zone can be expanded readily and can accommodate more than 200 new parking places immediately adjacent to excellent trail heads.

Public comment closed at 7:42 p.m.

Director Riffle requested for additional comments from the PNR Committee members.

Director Cyr stated there is a lot of information to digest and spoke in support of completing a carrying capacity study of the preserve, stating that the other options do not work for him right now.

Director MacNiven stated she is not on the Committee, but she believes that the Bay Area is not an area ready for a shuttle or ride-hail program as of now because it is too convenient to get anywhere right now by car. However, she suggests that the work that has been done should be completed. Director MacNiven stated that she will probably vote to finish the study, which may be helpful for other preserves such as Purisima Creek Redwoods.

General Manager Ruiz stated she senses a lot of uncertainty from the Board, namely to the fact that there are a lot of assumptions built into all of the models, and all of the assumptions have never really been tested well elsewhere. However, allowing the District to complete the studies may offer staff valuable information that, if it is not applied to RSA, may be best applied to other preserve sites. Because of the restricted parking spots, high levels of road-side parking, and attractiveness of the redwood trail head, Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve is becoming a viable contender for a pilot program for a shuttle system. If the Board allows staff to proceed, staff will be able to apply the lessons learned from this process elsewhere.

President Kishimoto stated that after reviewing the data she suggests that the only shuttle service route to consider be option “I” Lucky Supermarket, and for the ride-hail program, only keep options 2 (SV Hopper Collaboration) and 3 (Integrated Ride Hail Shuttle Program) as possibilities.

Director Holman stated that she is part of the PNR Committee and clarified that the motion by the Committee was to initiate a carrying capacity study of the preserve, not a visitor capacity study.

Mr. Malone explained that staff evaluated the Committee’s recommendation to determine what could actually be done specifically using the Visitor Use Framework as recommended by the Science Advisory Panel. Mr. Malone reiterated that carrying capacity does not have a good definition for visitor use and number of visitors, whereas the Science Advisory Panel's recommendation is to follow the Federal Visitor Management Framework, which does have a good framework for visitor capacity. While staff is not attempting to change the Committee’s recommendation, staff felt that visitor capacity is something that can be delivered, whereas carrying capacity, as previously stated, is a definition for a population limit or average for a particular species in a particular habitat and what can live in that area.

Director Holman thanked Mr. Malone for the clarification and noted that the Committee requested that a capacity study be completed before implementing a potential shuttle or ride-hail program.

Director Holman requested and received confirmation that the motion before the Board is to only complete the study and not to implement any programs.

Director Gleason spoke in support of completing the study, which will give a good framework going forward whether it applies to Purisima Creek Open Space Preserve or elsewhere. In addition, he stated that, as mentioned at the Committee meetings, he did a study online to understand where preserves are located in relation to where people live and concluded that RSA is indeed the closest and easiest preserve to with a significant trail system. In addition, he noted that after attending the Committee meetings, he felt that RSA is not a good option for a shuttle, but believes that the Silicon Valley Hopper has the potential to reach some other preserves like Fremont Older and suggested exploring the collaboration with the SV Hopper program, narrowing options for potential shuttle programs that have a higher chance of success even if it may be more expensive, and promoting other District preserves even if RSA is the visitor’s closest preserve.

Director Riffle spoke in support of completing the study for potential data use at other preserves.

Director Riffle commented that he knows that the St. Joseph’s Avenue neighborhood will not be used as an entrance but, asked for clarification as a few public members insinuated that St. Joseph is going to be part of the solution.

Ms. Chan reiterated that the Board has been presented with all the options for consideration and none of them utilize St. Joseph’s Avenue as an entrance nor is staff proposing any changes to the street signage.

Director Riffle spoke in support of completing the study, especially since it is 90% complete, but would like to reduce the scope and incorporate the suggestions provided by President Kishimoto and confirmed that the Board is only making the decision to complete the study and not to implement any programs at this time. Director Riffle recommends the General Manager's Recommendation as it is and mentioned that the only thing that is missing is the impact the programs would have on neighbors and requested that this additional information be provided when staff returns with a recommendation.

Mr. Smith explained that as part of the General Manager's recommendation #3c staff is looking to refine the list of companion measures.

Ms. Chan confirmed staff will return with additional information about the specific recommended options and the potential impacts, if any, to the adjacent neighborhoods.

Director Riffle requested confirmation on the General Manager's recommendation #4, that the Board is not voting whether to implement the visitor capacity study, but rather that staff will return to the Board with additional information with a refined proposal for a visitor capacity study and what that would entail, and then at that time the Board will decide whether or not to proceed with the visitor capacity study.

Ms. Chan confirmed and commented that the Committee's recommendation was to conduct the study before considering implementing a shuttle and/or ride-hail program.

Director Riffle recommends the General Manager's recommendations.

Director Kersteen-Tucker spoke in favor of the General Manager's Recommendations 3, 4, and 5.

Director Kersteen-Tucker asked for clarification if the Board was narrowing the service design concepts to only the Lucky's supermarket shuttle stop, to also consider the De Anza College option as it does have regional transit connections. Specifically, considering the proximity of Half Moon Bay to the Verde parking lot if this information can be applied to Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve.

President Kishimoto asked if the consultant funds would be better spent on an actual study of the Purisima-to-the-Sea-Trail rather than doing an in-depth case of De Anza College.

Ms. Ruiz stated that if the Board did consider pursuing a shuttle for Purisima Creek Redwoods, that it would be more beneficial to conduct a study specific to the City of Half Moon Bay for a potential park-and-ride spot.

Director Kersteen-Tucker supported only limiting the study to the Lucky's parking lot.

Director Kersteen-Tucker spoke on the General Manager's recommendation #4 and suggested also adding the visitor experience at RSA to understand more about the visitor experience and perceptions of RSA. She also stated that she is in favor of the General Manager's recommendations #4 and #5.



President Kishimoto stated that what she heard from the various Directors comments in regard to the General Manager's recommendation #3 is that the consultants will look at the service plans, which include long and short rides every 10 and 15 minutes versus every 25 minutes, and the implications for how much more it would potentially cost to have a successful program.

President Kishimoto asked if staff required more direction to narrow the scope or if the Board's feedback will be considered.

Mr. Smith explained that the consultant will only review the one shuttle service design concept of Lucky's supermarket in its entirety, including the 15, 20, and 30-minute headway, and determine the full operational costs for only this one concept.

President Kishimoto asked that the 30-minute headway be removed as a consideration since it has been indicated that the public does not want to wait 30 minutes for a shuttle.

General Manager Ruiz confirmed if the direction is to further refine the individual scenarios to optimize the potential for success, which likely means an additional cost, and to be up front about what it would take to make the scenario as successful as possible.

President Kishimoto confirmed the direction.

President Kishimoto spoke on the General Manager's recommendation #4 and stated that there is still a lot of confusion about carrying capacity, which is a focus just on the natural environment, whereas the visitor experience is a human experience, and suggested that when the item is brought back to the Board to further explain the options.

Mr. Malone explained that visitor capacity is not solely about the visitor experience. It can certainly look at natural resource impacts but, staff does not anticipate that at RSA, we will be able to measure and see them given the existing conditions, which will be explained along with the workload required to arrive at meaningful natural carrying capacity findings.

President Kishimoto stated that with the changes made, she seconds the entirety of the General Manager's recommendations.

Mr. Smith inquired if the Board had any refinements on the General Manager's recommendation #3c - whether staff should further evaluate all TDMs or eliminate any of the TDMs.

President Kishimoto confirmed the Board would like to evaluate all four TDMs.

Director Holman stated that the Committee discussed the relocation of the carpool parking, but it was not mentioned in today's meeting.

General Manager Ruiz stated that this topic would fall under General Manager's recommendation #5, with staff returning at a later date with the recommended measures for implementation for the preserve.

Director Holman inquired if the amendments from President Kishimoto should be added to the motion.

Director Riffle stated that he accepts President's Kishimoto's input but is fine with the motion as presented. Staff is taking notes of the Board feedback and input and wants to allow staff and the consultant to return with what was captured today and come up with the most efficient and flexible way to staff to incorporate the feedback.

Director Gleason expressed his concern about only reviewing the Lucky's supermarket and suggested that he would leave the option to extend that to the Mountain View transit; if this option is ruled out, there is a possibility of losing connection to a part of the District that does not have such close access to preserves.

Mr. Smith reported that if the Lucky's supermarket is successful, a stop at the Mountain View transit center could be phased in at a later date.

President Kishimoto confirmed that Director Gleason supports Director Riffle's proposal of not proposing any specific wording, but the staff would use their best judgement to reduce the scope of work using Board input from today's meeting.

Director Gleason confirmed that his preference for staff is to use their best judgement and to have a little more leeway.

**Motion:** Director Riffle moved, and President Kishimoto seconded the motion to direct the General Manager to:

1. Receive an overview of the data collection, background analyses, and public and stakeholder engagement that has been informing the development of a potential Shuttle Program and Ride Hail Program for Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve, some of which may be applicable at other preserves.
2. Review and provide feedback on the following draft elements:
  - a. Service Design Concepts
  - b. Performance Measures
  - c. Companion Measures
3. Based on the information received and the Planning and Natural Resources Committee recommendation, direct the General Manager to complete the final 10% consultant scopes of work to finalize the Shuttle and Ride Hail Program Reports to inform potential future implementation at Rancho San Antonio Preserve or other more appropriate open space preserve(s). This work includes:
  - a. Further developing the shuttle and ride hail programs options, focusing on opportunities that best leverage similar existing programs;
  - b. Exploring the availability of grant programs to cover upfront program implementation costs and, if possible, on-going operating expenses; and
  - c. Refining and selecting the recommended companion measure(s) that will be necessary to reach successful program outcomes.
4. Prior to taking action on a proposed shuttle and/or ride hail program, return to the Board with information on the potential scope of work, timeline, cost, and indication of the type of findings that are expected for a visitor capacity study to confirm whether such a study would

indeed be informative and desired prior to confirming subsequent program implementation steps.

5. Direct the General Manager to return with final implementation recommendations for Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve and consideration of application of the program(s) at other appropriate Preserve sites.

**ROLL CALL VOTE: 7-0-0**

**ADJOURNMENT**

President Kishimoto adjourned the special meeting of the Board of Directors of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District at 8:44 p.m.

Maria Soria, MMC  
District Clerk