



SPECIAL MEETING

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

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

*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 Kersteen-Tucker called the special meeting of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to order at 9:30 a.m.

ROLL CALL

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

Members Absent: Jed Cyr

Staff Present: General Manager Ana Ruiz, General Counsel Hilary Stevenson, Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan, Assistant General Manager Brian Malone, Chief Financial Officer/Director of Administrative Services Stefan Jaskulak, District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Maria Soria, Executive Assistant/Deputy District Clerk Shaylynn Nelson, Executive Assistant/Deputy District Clerk Nalini Pillay, Real Property Manager Allen Ishibashi, Facilities & Fleet Manager Brandon Stewart, Human Resources Manager Candice Basnight, IST Manager Casey Hiatt, Planning Manager Jane Mark, Natural Resources Manager Kirk Lenington, Visitor Services Manager/Chief Ranger Matthew Anderson, Land Stewardship & Trails Manager Michael Gorman, Budget & Finance Manager Rafaela Ocegüera, Engineering & Construction Manager Scott Reeves, Grants Program Manager Carol Schimke, Procurement Program Manager Sarah Araya, Budget & Analysis Supervisor Elissa Martinez, Management Analyst I Jordan McDaniel, and Management Analyst I Samantha Powell

President Kersteen-Tucker announced that 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.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion: Director Gleason moved and Director Kishimoto seconded the motion to adopt the agenda.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 6-0-0 (Director Cyr absent)

BOARD BUSINESS

1. Preliminary Review of the Fiscal Year 2026-27 through Fiscal Year 2028-29 Capital Improvement and Action Plan (R-26-26)

Director Cyr arrived at 9:33 a.m.

General Manager Ana Ruiz provided opening remarks. Chief Financial Officer Stefan Jaskulak, Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan, and Assistant General Manager Brian Malone presented. Real Property Manager Allen Ishibashi, Grants Program Manager Carol Schimke, Natural Resources Manager Kirk Lenington, Planning Manager Jane Mark, Public Affairs Manager Lori Low, Engineering & Construction Manager Scott Reeves, and Budget & Analysis Supervisor Elissa Martinez assisted in answering questions.

Public comment opened at 10:06 a.m.

Charlie Krenz spoke in favor of prioritizing the realignment of the Spring Ridge trail for the next fiscal year and urged the Board to consider removing vehicular access up and down the face of Windy Hill.

Ed Dee, Vice President of the Silicon Valley Mountain Bikers, spoke in favor of advancing the development of trails and increasing public access for mountain biker and hiker communities.

Public comment closed at 10:10 a.m.

Ms. Ruiz stated that bicycle access remains a District priority and is addressed through several Capital Improvement and Action Plan (CIAP) projects. She added that the Spring Ridge Trail alignment is complex due to the terrain, elevation changes, and it lies within an active hillside, with significant drainage, creeks, and seeps, making it difficult to identify a new alignment. She also explained that the existing ranch road is the only vehicle access from the bottom to the top of Windy Hill and it is critical for emergency, medical, patrol and maintenance trucks to access other portions of the preserve and trails. She strongly urged that it should remain a drivable ranch road. She added that the approximately 1.5-mile trail would need to be evaluated, and it would be a challenging engineering project, involving several departments that are already carrying a number of construction projects next year. She noted that this would be a very high-profile alignment with significant public interest, particularly with the Town of Portola Valley. Lastly, she stated that if the Board wishes to consider the project further, staff would return with potential options, trade-offs, and possible impacts to departments and project schedules.

Director Riffle spoke on the transfer of upper Alpine Road from San Mateo County and expressed hope for the project to move forward and be completed, noting that the project has been under discussion for decades. He offered that the Board could assist by speaking with the San Mateo County elected officials to help advance the effort.

Director Kishimoto expressed support for Director Riffle's offer to speak with the elected.

Director Holman offered that the Board could speak with the elected officials to help secure funding for the Highway 17 Crossing project to help move the project forward.

Director Kishimoto noted that the Science and Stewardship Symposium (Symposium) was a success and asked if there will be any discussion on a future Symposium.

Mr. Malone stated that staff will return to the Board to discuss the level of funding and support the Board may wish to provide in the future. He also reminded the Board that the Science Advisory Board (SAB) was deferred to focus on the Symposium and noted that if the Board wishes that the Symposium become a recurring item, a decision will need to be made whether to continue to prioritize the Symposium or return to look at the SAB.

Ms. Ruiz added that there was an expectation that the Symposium would be handed off to another organization to serve as the lead. She noted that the District would have a reduced role for the next Symposium.

Director Riffle commented that he appreciated the science work the District was doing prior to the Symposium such as the SAB and expressed interest in continuing that work. He requested that when staff return to the Board with recommendations on a Symposium, they also present additional opportunities for the Board to consider with continuing its science leadership role.

President Kersteen-Tucker expressed that she would like to continue the momentum in the community that was started with the Symposiums and not allow too much time to pass.

Director Kishimoto inquired whether the wording in the project purpose for the Peters Creek Trail Reroute should be clarified to indicate that hiking will be preserved, and include to say, "realign the main trail away from the Jikoji pond."

Mr. Malone stated that if the majority of the Board would like staff to revise the wording before returning with the full CIAP budget, staff could do so. However, he noted that he did not want to presuppose whether there would be a hiking connection, as it would be determined as part of the project. He suggested clarifying the language that the project would realign the multi-use trail away from Jikoji pond. As there was no direction from a majority of the Board, he stated that staff would keep the language as it is and refine it prior to project implementation in FY29.

President Kersteen-Tucker called for a recess of the Board meeting at 11:45 a.m. and resumed the meeting at 12:17 p.m. with all Board members present.

Director Cyr left the dais at 12:51 p.m. and returned at 12:52 p.m.

Director Holman suggested that if the dog allowance at Cooley Landing were to increase, additional ranger presence would be needed.

President Kersteen-Tucker spoke about the Purisima-to-the-Sea parking project and said that Higgins Purisima Road has sustained significant damage in the last few months and advised staff to consider the tenuous nature of the area when developing the future shuttle program.

Director Holman suggested that once the historic evaluations of District-owned buildings and structures are completed, those identified as having high historic integrity be prioritized and brought to the Board for consideration.

Mr. Malone responded that staff would review the full list of structures and accelerate any historic evaluations where appropriate, noting that structures with potential historical value had already been prioritized and he believes there are no additional structures that have historic significance.

Ms. Ruiz stated that if the Board directs staff to conduct a historic evaluation of all structures, the project scope would change significantly and staff would not be able to move forward with disposition actions for the next grouping of structures, as efforts would instead shift to completing historical assessments.

Director Holman commented that perhaps a conversation could be had afterwards, noting that the approach she was suggesting was simpler.

President Kersteen-Tucker asked if any District grazing tenants have a need for farm labor housing, and if so, could that work be prioritized.

Mr. Malone responded that he could have a conversation with the grazing tenants to inquire and noted that in general grazing does not have much of a housing need.

Director Kishimoto expressed support for farm labor housing and suggested that the District consider providing additional funding for Puente.

Director Holman commented that, with respect to electrical vehicle charging stations, it is important to consider the associated costs, as installing the needed infrastructure could be significant.

Public comment opened at 1:39 p.m.

Ms. Soria reported there were no public speakers for this item.

Public comment closed at 1:39 p.m.

Director Kishimoto commented that several public comments received were in support of moving the Spring Ridge Trail project to the next fiscal year. She suggested there may be merit in moving the project sooner. She clarified that she was not proposing to displace any projects on the Big Rocks list but rather have a conversation about potentially advancing the project from FY33.

Director Riffle commented that his preference would be not to reprioritize the project.

Ms. Ruiz stated that staff would need to review the existing projects and schedule for FY28-29 and return to the Board with that information on how to potentially advance the project.

Director Gleason commented that the 20-year Measure AA plan provides a useful framework for anticipating timing of projects and it is expected to generate public feedback regarding project order. He noted that this is the beginning of a thought process rather than a point for the Board to make a decision. He suggested not making any changes to this year's CIAP and rather that the Board can keep in mind throughout the year on how to accelerate the project. Lastly, he noted that 2033 is several years away but there may be opportunities to accelerate the project.

Director Holman agreed with Director Gleason and noted that the project could come forward to the Board for evaluation in a future year.

Director Kishimoto reiterated that her intention was not to change the Big Rocks list, rather to have staff consider adding the project before 2033.

Ms. Ruiz stated that the CIAP is revisited and updated every year and there are always tweaks to the outer years. She suggested keeping Spring Ridge Trail realignment in mind for the next three-year CIAP (FY28-30) to determine if there is a place where the project can be added within one of those future three years.

Director MacNiven observed that FY29 is expected to be a busy year due to the funding budgeted for that year and the construction of two field offices. She noted that the Spring Ridge Trail project will likely take three years to complete all permitting and related work and stated she is fine with the project starting in FY30.

President Kersteen-Tucker referenced the staff's board report on page 2 and highlighted the strategic plan updates on evaluating trade-offs of new initiatives given capacity and funding constraints. She noted that the Board has learned to go a little slow when considering ideas. While acknowledging the great feedback received from the public and compelling arguments, she emphasized that the Board should take the time to do the appropriate planning and not derail existing Measure AA commitments.

Ms. Ruiz clarified that when the current CIAP is presented to the Action Plan and Budget Committee and then to the full Board for adoption, it will be presented as it is now. However, when staff begin to prepare for the next CIAP later this year, starting in November, they will keep the Spring Ridge Trail alignment in mind to identify a potential place for it in the new CIAP.

Motion: Director Kishimoto moved, and Director Cyr seconded the motion to adopt affirm the preliminary Fiscal Year 2026-27 through Fiscal Year 2028-29 Capital Improvement and Action Plan and affirm the proposed highest priority "Big Rocks" project list to further guide the organizational focus for the upcoming fiscal year.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 7-0-0

Director Riffle asked how staff would like the Board to accumulate suggested projects that are requested by constituents and should such projects be submitted for consideration at the December Board meeting for staff to consider integrating into the CIAP.

Mr. Jaskulak stated that the December timeframe would align well for incorporating any new suggestions.

Ms. Ruiz stated that most project ideas from the public are typically raised around this time, when the list is released. She suggested that the best approach is to consider new additions for the next planning cycle, as the current cycle is nearly finalized. She stated that on an ongoing basis staff can review project suggestions and, if deemed appropriate and supported by the Board, consider including them in the next three-year period of the CIAP.

Mr. Jaskulak suggested that as an addition, the 20-year Measure AA roadmap is likely where the majority of project adjustments would occur. He recommended including a review on the agenda in December so that both the Board and public are notified that staff will review the sequence of projects and then a determination can be made whether any adjustments are needed.

President Kersteen-Tucker commented that it is important for the Board to understand quickly what other projects would need to be deferred in order to accommodate a newly prioritized project. She emphasized that the public should be made aware of those tradeoffs. She added that there should be sufficient time in December for at least a preliminary analysis of what the cost and benefits would be.

Director Riffle requested staff to identify the Big Rock projects on Attachment 3.

Mr. Jaskulak responded that Big Rock project rows could be highlighted to identify them.

ADJOURNMENT

President Kersteen-Tucker adjourned the regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District meeting at 2:12 p.m.

Maria Soria, MMC
District Clerk