



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

ACTION PLAN AND BUDGET COMMITTEE

R-25-87
July 8, 2025

AGENDA ITEM 2

AGENDA ITEM

Amendments to the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's Classification and Compensation Plan Reflecting Compensation Study Adjustments Based on the Updated Compensation Philosophy and Comparator Agencies List

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

(51) *deux*

Forward the proposed amendments to the Classification and Compensation Plan reflecting Compensation Study Adjustments based on the updated and Board-approved Compensation Philosophy and Comparator Agencies List to the full Board of Directors for their consideration and approval.

SUMMARY

This report identifies the proposed amendments to the Classification and Compensation Plan reflecting the salary range adjustments to each classification that align with the recent update to the Compensation Philosophy, which was approved by the Board of Directors (Board) in January 2025. The updated Compensation Philosophy defines a competitive salary as median plus 10 percent of similar positions from the approved list of comparator agencies. The comparator list of agencies was updated and approved by the Board in January and is composed of 15 public agencies from the nine local Bay Area counties plus Santa Cruz County. These recent changes reflect the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's (District) focused efforts in maintaining competitive employee compensation to support strong recruitment and retention and the necessary staffing resources to deliver projects, programs, and further the District's overall mission. If the proposed adjustments to the Classification and Compensation Plan are affirmed by the Action Plan and Budget Committee (ABC), these recommendations will next be forwarded to the full Board for approval.

DISCUSSION

Background

The District's mission is to acquire and preserve a regional greenbelt of open space land in perpetuity, protect and restore the natural environment, and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education. On the coastside, this mission is expanded to include the preservation of agricultural lands of significance, protection of rural character, and encouragement of agricultural use of land resources. The District relies on a dedicated professional staff to fulfill this mission and recognizes the importance of offering competitive compensation and benefits to attract and retain top talent.

In March of 2015, the Board first adopted the *Employee Compensation Guiding Principles* ([R-15-43](#), [minutes](#)) and established a philosophy to maintain “competitive compensation” as a tool to attract and retain high-quality employees. A key element of the policy includes a Board-directed definition of what constitutes competitive public sector compensation for each classification.

In response to more recent recruitment and retention struggles affecting turnover, the success of filling new positions, and the number of qualified applicants received per recruitment cycle, the Board in January 2025 approved revisions to the *Employee Compensation Guiding Principles* ([R-25-18](#), [minutes](#)). Key elements of the policy update include:

- When comparing to comparator agencies using “top-range salary”, define a competitive salary as median plus 10 percent.
- Granting the General Manager the authority to adjust base wages for classifications to allow for appropriate internal alignment between classifications so long as those wages are not below median plus ten percent of the comparator agencies.

Additionally, the Board set the District’s updated comparator agencies list to include the following 15 agencies, which are all located within the nine Bay Area counties plus Santa Cruz County.

- | | |
|---|---|
| • City and County of San Francisco (Park and Rec & PUC) | • County of Sonoma |
| • City of Mountain View | • East Bay Municipal Utility District |
| • City of Palo Alto | • East Bay Regional Park District |
| • City of San Jose | • Hayward Area Recreation District |
| • City of Santa Cruz | • Marin Municipal Water District |
| • County of Marin | • Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority |
| • County of San Mateo | • Santa Clara Valley Water District |
| • County of Santa Clara | |

Compensation Studies to Establish the New Classification and Compensation Schedule

The human resources firm, Gallagher, was selected through a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process to conduct a compensation study on all benchmark positions based on the recently updated compensation philosophy and new comparator agencies list to then establish the new, revised Classification and Compensation Plan. The Classification and Compensation Plan outlines the salary range for each classification, with information on hourly, monthly, and annual pay for the minimum (starting) and maximum (ending) range of each classification.

A compensation study is the process of thoroughly reviewing comparator agencies’ compensation (salary and benefits) for the same or similar classifications (positions) and comparing this information against the current salary ranges and internal compensation policies for District classifications. To maintain the overall credibility of the compensation studies, Gallagher relied on the District’s classification descriptions as the foundation for comparison.

When Gallagher researches and collects data from the comparator agencies to identify possible matches for each of the benchmark classifications, there is an assumption that comparable

matches may not always be made that are 100% equivalent to the classifications at the District. Therefore, Gallagher does not match based upon job titles, which can often be misleading, but rather analyzes class (job) descriptions before a comparable match is determined. Gallagher's methodology is to analyze each class description and the whole position by evaluating factors such as:

- Definition and typical job functions;
- Distinguishing characteristics;
- Level within a class series (i.e., entry, experienced, journey, specialist, lead, etc.);
- Reporting relationship structure;
- Education and experience requirements;
- Knowledge, abilities, and skills required to perform the work;
- Scope and complexity of the work;
- Independence of action/responsibility and level of accountability;
- Authority delegated to make decisions and take action;
- Responsibility for the work of others, program administration, and for budget dollars;
- Level of decision-making in personnel management, hiring, and recruitment;
- Lead management of specific program areas;
- Number of supervisees;
- Problem solving/ingenuity;
- Contacts with others (both inside and outside of the organization);
- Consequences of action and decisions/delegated level of risk management; and
- Working conditions.

In order for a match to be included, Gallagher requires that a classification's "likeness" be at approximately 70% of the matched classification.

When an appropriate match is not identified for one classification, Gallagher often uses "hybrids", which can be functional or represent a span in scope of responsibility. A functional hybrid means that the job of one classification at the District is performed by two or more classifications at a comparator agency. A "hybrid" representing a span in scope means that the comparator agency has one class that is "bigger" in scope and responsibility and one class that is "smaller," where the District's class falls in the middle.

If an appropriate match is not found, then a "no match" is reported as non-comparable (N/C).

In order to calculate median salary, Gallagher requires that there be a minimum of four comparator agencies with matching classifications to the benchmark classification. The reason for requiring a minimum of four matches is so that no one classification has undue influence on the calculations.

Gallagher conducted compensation studies for 60 (benchmarks) of the District's 95 classifications, including classifications represented by the Field Employees Association and by the Midpeninsula Rangers Peace Officers Association. All other classifications are internally aligned to these 60 classifications. Excluded from the studies were the Board-appointed positions of General Manager, General Counsel, and Controller as they have individual contracts. The results of the compensation studies for the 60 benchmark classifications are as follows:

- 51 classifications came in below the new competitive salary definition of median plus 10 percent
- 3 classifications came in above median plus 10 percent
- 3 classifications had insufficient data (less than four matches with comparator agencies)
- 3 classifications are new, and as of the study, did not yet have a defined District compensation salary range to compare to the market:
 - Land Stewardship & Trails Manager
 - Facilities and Fleet Manager
 - Fleet Services Specialist
- For the 54 classifications with results (excluding those with insufficient data and new classifications), the average was 11.5 percent below median plus 10 percent

Additionally, Gallagher provided appropriate salary range placement recommendations based on the market studies. Internal equity between certain levels of classifications is a fundamental factor to consider when making compensation decisions. When conducting a labor market compensation survey, results from the comparator agencies for a specific classification can be misaligned when comparing this result against the larger suite of classification families at the District. As such, careful consideration was given to these internal alignments to maintain a proper separation between classifications within job families. The most common internal percentage differentials applied and recommended by Gallagher as standard practice are:

- 10% between entry and journey level positions and Leads (such as I/II/III and Lead).
- 15% between levels when the higher level supervises multiple employees and/or manages a discreet program (such as Senior and Supervisor)
- 15-20% between the highest level supervised and the management level.

Staff spent significant time reviewing the individual study results with Gallagher and analyzing the data. Based on the study results and adjustments to maintain appropriate internal alignment, the range placement recommendations resulted in the following for all 95 classifications:

- 87 classifications (of 92, excluding 3 new classifications – or 95% of classifications) are recommended for a salary range increase, including intern and seasonal classifications, either because they fell below the median plus 10 percent target and/or to ensure proper internal alignment within classification families
- Five classifications would remain status quo, staying at their current range.
 - One benchmark is at median plus 10, Property Management Specialist II
 - One position is not in use and will be studied through an upcoming classification study to confirm its function and salary range, Data Administrator
 - Two benchmarks above median plus 10 are recommended to be studied once vacant to determine if they need to be adjusted down at that time.
 - Environmental Education Specialist
 - Interpretive Specialist
 - One internally aligned classification, Senior Property Management Specialist, is recommended to be adjusted down two ranges once vacant (position is currently filled with a limited term employee), so that it is 15% above the benchmark position of Property Management Specialist II rather than the current 20%.
- The average increase of these 87 classifications is 10.8%

Implementation

It is important to note that updates to the District's classification and compensation plan for compensation study adjustments based on the updated compensation philosophy will not result in an automatic increase to an individual employee's compensation. The compensation survey results will be used to reassign a classification to a new salary range in the classification and compensation plan. How these changes apply to individual employees are explained in the following two outcomes:

- When the salary survey shows compensation is **at or above the new compensation philosophy target** – no equity adjustment is needed, and no Y-rating will be made to an *individual employee*. Instead, active employees will continue to be eligible for all applicable pay practices (base wage adjustments, merit (step) increases, longevity, etc.)
- When the salary survey shows compensation is **below the new compensation philosophy target** – an equity adjustment will be applied to the classification (the classification will be assigned a new salary range, for example, move from range 30 to range 32). Individual employees will be moved to the step in the new range closest to, but not less than, their current hourly rate. Employees continue to be eligible for base wage adjustments & merit (step) increases (which are normally 2.5% to 5% for employees who meet performance standards). An employee who is currently eligible for longevity pay or meritorious pay and is moved from step 10 to a lower step in the new range will once again be eligible for longevity pay or meritorious pay once they reach step 10 as the top step of their salary range. As a reminder, both longevity pay and meritorious pay serve as retention tools that provide eligible employees with a one-time, lump sum amount once they reach top step, recognizing that these employees can no longer receive annual merit (step) increases.

Both the Field Employees Association (FEA) and the Peace Officers Association (POA) have been notified of the recommended adjustments to compensation. The current MOU between the District and FEA was approved by the Board in June 2024 (effective July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2027) and the current MOU between the District and the POA was approved by the Board in October 2023 (effective July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2027). The FEA has the following language in their MOU under Article 7 – Compensation and Benefits: “The District shall initiate meet and confer with the FEA for the purpose of negotiating a possible salary increase if the District changes its compensation policy during the term of this agreement (July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2027).” The POA does not have any language in their MOU regarding a possible compensation increase as a result of the updated compensation philosophy. The General Manager proposes applying the proposed salary increases to the FEA and POA as shown in Attachment A.

Pending review and affirmation from the ABC, staff intends to present the General Manager's recommendations with any requested changes from the ABC to the full Board on July 23, 2025. If the Board approves the updates to the classification and compensation plan in July, staff will apply the updates effective the first full pay period after Board approval, or pay period 25-17, with an effective date of August 4, 2025 and pay date of August 22, 2025.

FISCAL IMPACT

The first-year fiscal impact is estimated at \$1.35 million, with the second-year estimate at \$2.2 million after which it levels off at approximately \$3 million per year. At this time, a budget adjustment will not be requested since the impact is less than what the annual salary savings has been for the past several years.

The information presented in this report was shared and discussed with the Controller during early phases of the salary survey evaluations and cost projections, who did not raise a concern regarding the fiscal affordability of the changes. Moreover, the salary changes are now built into the District's 30-year fiscal model and are financially sustainable over the long-term.

PRIOR BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW

- **September 25, 2024:** Board Received a Compensation Philosophy Informational Presentation ([R-24-120](#), [minutes](#))
- **December 10, 2024:** Action Plan and Budget Committee Received Additional Information and Analysis for, and Recommended Amendments to, The Compensation Philosophy ([R-24-145](#), [minutes](#))
- **January 22, 2025:** Board Adoption of the revised Board Policy 2.03 *Employee Compensation Guiding Principles*, also referred to as the “compensation philosophy” ([R-25-18](#), [minutes](#))

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

This item is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act.

NEXT STEPS

Following this presentation to the ABC, staff will collate ABC input on the General Manager's recommendation. Staff will present the General Manager's final recommendations, with any input from the ABC to the full board on July 23, 2025.

Attachment(s)

- A. Draft Classification and Compensation plan Effective August 4, 2025

Responsible Department Head:

Stefan Jaskulak, Chief Financial Officer/ Director of Administrative Services

Prepared by:

Rebecca Wolfe, Human Resources Supervisor

Contact person:

Candice Basnight, Human Resources Manager

DRAFT**Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District - CLASSIFICATION & COMPENSATION PLAN****Fiscal Year 2025/2026 - Effective August 4, 2025 (Pay Period 25-17)**

Last revised: 07/23/2025, 06/11/2025, 04/09/2025, 10/23/2024, 07/10/2024, 06/26/2024, 04/10/2024, 11/08/2023, 10/11/2023, 06/28/2023

Classification Title	Step Range #	Hourly Range \$		Monthly Range \$		Annual Range \$		Full/Part Time
		Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	
Intern	7	27.1341	33.8835	4,703	5,873	56,439	70,478	PT
Seasonal Ranger Aide	11	29.9160	37.3647	5,185	6,477	62,225	77,719	PT
Seasonal Open Space Technician	15	32.9867	41.1877	5,718	7,139	68,612	85,670	PT
Seasonal Ranger	17	34.6285	43.2552	6,002	7,498	72,027	89,971	PT
Administrative Assistant	22	39.1127	48.8416	6,780	8,466	81,354	101,591	FT
Accounting Technician	26	43.1184	53.8505	7,474	9,334	89,686	112,009	FT
Senior Administrative Assistant	26	43.1184	53.8505	7,474	9,334	89,686	112,009	FT
Farm Maintenance Worker	27	44.1976	55.2033	7,661	9,569	91,931	114,823	FT
Human Resources Technician	27	44.1976	55.2033	7,661	9,569	91,931	114,823	FT
Open Space Technician*	27	44.1976	55.2033	7,661	9,569	91,931	114,823	FT
Ranger Recruit	28	45.2846	56.5409	7,849	9,800	94,192	117,605	FT
Visitor Services Program Coordinator	28	45.2846	56.5409	7,849	9,800	94,192	117,605	FT
Ranger	29	46.4171	57.9547	8,046	10,045	96,548	120,546	FT
Executive Assistant	30	47.5495	59.3759	8,242	10,292	98,903	123,502	FT
Information Technology Technician I	30	47.5495	59.3759	8,242	10,292	98,903	123,502	FT
Senior Finance & Accounting Technician	30	47.5495	59.3759	8,242	10,292	98,903	123,502	FT
Volunteer Program Lead	30	47.5495	59.3759	8,242	10,292	98,903	123,502	FT
Environmental Education Specialist	31	48.7354	60.8504	8,447	10,547	101,370	126,569	FT
Interpretive Specialist	31	48.7354	60.8504	8,447	10,547	101,370	126,569	FT
Property Management Specialist I	31	48.7354	60.8504	8,447	10,547	101,370	126,569	FT
Lead Ranger	32	49.9209	62.3479	8,653	10,807	103,835	129,684	FT
Resource Management Specialist I	32	49.9209	62.3479	8,653	10,807	103,835	129,684	FT
Facilities Maintenance Specialist	33	51.1598	63.9061	8,868	11,077	106,412	132,925	FT
Lead Open Space Technician*	33	51.1598	63.9061	8,868	11,077	106,412	132,925	FT
Planner I	33	51.1598	63.9061	8,868	11,077	106,412	132,925	FT
Public Affairs Specialist I	33	51.1598	63.9061	8,868	11,077	106,412	132,925	FT
Accountant I	34	52.4138	65.4641	9,085	11,347	109,021	136,165	FT
Executive Assistant/Deputy District Clerk	34	52.4138	65.4641	9,085	11,347	109,021	136,165	FT
Executive Assistant/Legal Secretary	34	52.4138	65.4641	9,085	11,347	109,021	136,165	FT
GIS Technician	34	52.4138	65.4641	9,085	11,347	109,021	136,165	FT
Information Technology Technician II	34	52.4138	65.4641	9,085	11,347	109,021	136,165	FT
Real Property Specialist I	34	52.4138	65.4641	9,085	11,347	109,021	136,165	FT
Equipment Mechanic/Operator*	35	53.7211	67.0907	9,312	11,629	111,740	139,549	FT
Fleet Services Specialist <i>(NEW)</i>	35	53.7211	67.0907	9,312	11,629	111,740	139,549	FT
Property Management Specialist II	35	53.7211	67.0907	9,312	11,629	111,740	139,549	FT
Capital Project Manager I	36	55.0437	68.7325	9,541	11,914	114,491	142,964	FT
Resource Management Specialist II	36	55.0437	68.7325	9,541	11,914	114,491	142,964	FT
Management Analyst I	37	56.4195	70.4504	9,779	12,211	117,353	146,537	FT
Planner II	37	56.4195	70.4504	9,779	12,211	117,353	146,537	FT
Public Affairs Specialist II	37	56.4195	70.4504	9,779	12,211	117,353	146,537	FT
Accountant II	38	57.7875	72.1830	10,017	12,512	120,198	150,141	FT
Data Administrator	38	57.7875	72.1830	10,017	12,512	120,198	150,141	FT
Data Analyst I	38	57.7875	72.1830	10,017	12,512	120,198	150,141	FT
Real Property Specialist II	38	57.7875	72.1830	10,017	12,512	120,198	150,141	FT
Supervising Ranger	39	59.2317	73.9617	10,267	12,820	123,202	153,840	FT
Capital Project Manager II	40	60.6834	75.7781	10,518	13,135	126,221	157,618	FT
Resource Management Specialist III	40	60.6834	75.7781	10,518	13,135	126,221	157,618	FT
Field Resource Specialist	41	62.1884	77.6785	10,779	13,464	129,352	161,571	FT

DRAFT

Classification Title	Step Range #	Hourly Range \$		Monthly Range \$		Annual Range \$		Full/Part Time
		Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	
Interpretation & Education Program Manager	41	62.1884	77.6785	10,779	13,464	129,352	161,571	FT
Management Analyst II	41	62.1884	77.6785	10,779	13,464	129,352	161,571	FT
Planner III	41	62.1884	77.6785	10,779	13,464	129,352	161,571	FT
Volunteer Program Manager	41	62.1884	77.6785	10,779	13,464	129,352	161,571	FT
Data Analyst II	42	63.7085	79.5635	11,043	13,791	132,514	165,492	FT
Facilities Maintenance Supervisor	42	63.7085	79.5635	11,043	13,791	132,514	165,492	FT
Maintenance, Construction & Resource Supv.	42	63.7085	79.5635	11,043	13,791	132,514	165,492	FT
Senior Accountant	42	63.7085	79.5635	11,043	13,791	132,514	165,492	FT
Training & Safety Specialist	42	63.7085	79.5635	11,043	13,791	132,514	165,492	FT
Governmental Affairs Specialist	43	65.3046	81.5622	11,319	14,137	135,834	169,649	FT
Procurement Specialist	43	65.3046	81.5622	11,319	14,137	135,834	169,649	FT
Public Affairs Specialist III	43	65.3046	81.5622	11,319	14,137	135,834	169,649	FT
Senior Property Management Specialist	43	65.3046	81.5622	11,319	14,137	135,834	169,649	FT
Applications Engineer	44	66.9007	83.5459	11,596	14,481	139,153	173,775	FT
Capital Project Manager III	44	66.9007	83.5459	11,596	14,481	139,153	173,775	FT
Senior Real Property Specialist	44	66.9007	83.5459	11,596	14,481	139,153	173,775	FT
Senior Resource Management Specialist	46	70.2373	87.7264	12,174	15,206	146,094	182,471	FT
Senior Technologist	46	70.2373	87.7264	12,174	15,206	146,094	182,471	FT
Area Superintendent	47	71.9930	89.9229	12,479	15,587	149,745	187,040	FT
Budget & Analysis Supervisor	47	71.9930	89.9229	12,479	15,587	149,745	187,040	FT
Finance Supervisor	47	71.9930	89.9229	12,479	15,587	149,745	187,040	FT
Grants Program Manager	47	71.9930	89.9229	12,479	15,587	149,745	187,040	FT
Human Resources Supervisor	47	71.9930	89.9229	12,479	15,587	149,745	187,040	FT
Senior Management Analyst	47	71.9930	89.9229	12,479	15,587	149,745	187,040	FT
Senior Planner	47	71.9930	89.9229	12,479	15,587	149,745	187,040	FT
Area Manager	48	73.7564	92.1119	12,784	15,966	153,413	191,593	FT
Capital Projects Field Manager	48	73.7564	92.1119	12,784	15,966	153,413	191,593	FT
District Clerk/Assistant to General Manager	48	73.7564	92.1119	12,784	15,966	153,413	191,593	FT
Senior Capital Project Manager	50	77.4118	96.7179	13,418	16,764	161,017	201,173	FT
GIS Program Administrator	52	81.3192	101.5519	14,095	17,602	169,144	211,228	FT
Information Technology Program Administrator	52	81.3192	101.5519	14,095	17,602	169,144	211,228	FT
IST Application Program Manager	52	81.3192	101.5519	14,095	17,602	169,144	211,228	FT
Budget & Finance Manager	55	87.5135	109.2969	15,169	18,945	182,028	227,338	FT
Facilities and Fleet Manager <i>(NEW)</i>	55	87.5135	109.2969	15,169	18,945	182,028	227,338	FT
Human Resources Manager	55	87.5135	109.2969	15,169	18,945	182,028	227,338	FT
Natural Resources Manager	55	87.5135	109.2969	15,169	18,945	182,028	227,338	FT
Public Affairs Manager	55	87.5135	109.2969	15,169	18,945	182,028	227,338	FT
Real Property Manager	55	87.5135	109.2969	15,169	18,945	182,028	227,338	FT
Visitor Services Manager	55	87.5135	109.2969	15,169	18,945	182,028	227,338	FT
Assistant General Counsel I	56	89.6571	111.9647	15,541	19,407	186,487	232,887	FT
Information Systems & Technology Manager	56	89.6571	111.9647	15,541	19,407	186,487	232,887	FT
Planning Manager	56	89.6571	111.9647	15,541	19,407	186,487	232,887	FT
Engineering & Construction Manager	57	91.8915	114.7618	15,928	19,892	191,134	238,705	FT
Land Stewardship and Trails Manager <i>(NEW)</i>	57	91.8915	114.7618	15,928	19,892	191,134	238,705	FT
Assistant General Counsel II	60	98.8461	123.4341	17,133	21,395	205,600	256,743	FT
Assistant General Manager	65	111.6987	139.4942	19,361	24,179	232,333	290,148	FT
Chief Financial Officer/Director Administrative Services	67	113.6987	141.4942	19,708	24,526	236,493	294,308	FT

* OST, LOST, EMO will receive an additional 2% stipend for Class A license

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Field Employees Association

Midpeninsula Rangers Peace Officers Association

Board Appointee Group Compensation	Hourly	Monthly	Annual	Effective	Last Revised
------------------------------------	--------	---------	--------	-----------	--------------

DRAFT

Classification Title	Step Range #	Hourly Range \$		Monthly Range \$		Annual Range \$		Full/Part Time
		Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	
General Manager	\$153.1740	\$26,550	\$318,602	7/1/2024	10/23/2024			
Controller - <i>Part-time position</i>	\$108.5638	\$6,280	\$75,365	7/1/2024	4/9/2025			
General Counsel	\$140.3279	\$24,324	\$291,882	7/1/2024	10/23/2024			
Elected Officials Compensation	Per Meeting		Monthly Maximum		Effective Date			
Board Director		\$121.28		\$727.68	6/9/2024			