



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT
LEGISLATIVE, FUNDING, AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Administrative Office
5050 El Camino Real
Los Altos, CA 94022

Tuesday, November 4, 2025

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

DRAFT MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Gleason called the meeting of the Legislative, Funding, and Public Affairs Committee to order at 10:30 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Members present: Craig Gleason, Karen Holman, Margaret MacNiven

Members absent: None

Staff present: General Manager Ana Ruiz, General Counsel Hilary Stevenson, Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan, Assistant General Manager Brian Malone, Chief Financial Officer Stefan Jaskulak, District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Maria Soria, Executive Assistant/Deputy District Clerk Shaylynn Nelson, Governmental Affairs Program Manager Joshua Hugg, Public Affairs Specialist I Eleanor Raab, Public Affairs Specialist III Natalie Jolly, and Public Affairs Manager Lori Low

Chair Gleason 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 Holman moved, and Director MacNiven seconded the motion to adopt the agenda.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Public comment opened at 10:31 a.m.

Deputy District Clerk Shaylynn Nelson reported there were no public speakers for this item.

Public comment closed at 10:31 a.m.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

1. Approve the revised May 20, 2025 and July 15, 2025 Legislative, Funding, And Public Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

Public comment opened at 10:31 a.m.

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

Public comment closed at 10:31 a.m.

Motion: Director MacNiven moved, and Director Holman seconded the motion to approve the revised May 20, 2025 and July 15, 2025 Legislative, Funding, and Public Affairs committee meeting minutes.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

2. Draft 2026 Legislative Program (R-25-136)

Governmental Affairs Program Manager Joshua Hugg presented. General Counsel Hilary Stevenson, General Manager Ana Ruiz, and Public Affairs Manager Lori Low assisted with answering questions.

Director Holman inquired what the definition is for the term “statewide significance” in Goal 1.

Mr. Hugg stated it is not a detailed definition, but it is the recognition of the conservation value and importance to biodiversity of the specified area. He explained Assembly Bill (AB) 948 that is focused on Coyote Valley was the first area of statewide significance created in the state of California.

Director Holman asked whether the District should pursue a definition for the term “statewide significance” to provide clarity for agencies seeking funding.

Mr. Hugg responded that it would be a long and political process to obtain a definition. In the meantime, the District is proceeding in the same manner as the District’s counterparts in highlighting the significance of the local region for conservation and biodiversity to leverage future funding.

Chair Gleason inquired if there are potential downsides to a formal definition in terms of regulation and oversight.

General Counsel Hilary Stevenson stated it is difficult to predict the unintended consequences but there is the potential that areas deemed to be of “statewide significance” could be regulated differently in the future.

Mr. Hugg suggested that there may be less regulation for natural resource restoration and enhancement projects in areas of “statewide significance” since the state’s current trajectory is to reduce permitting barriers for restoration and climate resilience work.

Director Holman expressed concern that Goal 2 regarding CEQA streamlining and statutory exemptions does not include language to address the misuse or abuse of CEQA. She expressed her preference for stronger language to this section.

Mr. Hugg asked and received confirmation that Director Holman’s request was directed towards the first portion of Goal 2 to restore the Senate Bill (SB) 35 language back into SB 131.

Chair Gleason asked and received confirmation that Director Holman was requesting the reintroduction of the environmental protections which were removed from the bill as well as ensuring the District continues to make conscientious decisions about CEQA exemptions.

Mr. Hugg stated that the District can prioritize Assemblymember Connolly’s bill, which seeks to remedy the issues found in SB 131. Mr. Hugg will return in the spring with a list of recommended bills to support, including Assemblymember Connolly’s bill.

Chair Gleason stressed the importance of the District having a clear understanding of how to navigate projects when a CEQA exemption applies given high levels of scrutiny.

Ms. Ruiz stated that she, along with the General Counsel and Mr. Hugg, will clarify the CEQA streamlining and statutory exemptions language when the report is presented to the Board of Directors.

Director Holman requested that the legislation for Goal 3 to promote equitable public access incorporate access for people with varying physical abilities.

Mr. Hugg stated that the District works with a statewide coalition to provide equitable public access. He noted the efforts are targeted towards both capital projects and programmatic funding.

Public comment opened at 11:21 a.m.

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

Public comment closed at 11:21 a.m.

Director Holman provided additions to the motion to include clarifying language on the statewide significance regarding SB 131 and the General Manager’s suggestion of including the CEQA streamlining and statutory exemptions language to the report that will be presented to the full Board.

Motion: Director Holman moved, and Director MacNiven seconded the motion to forward the recommendation to the Board of Directors for approval of the 2026 Legislative Program, with the following additions:

- 1) Clarify SB 131 CEQA streamlining and statutory exemptions language in the Board report.
- 2) Clarify language in the Board report regarding the term “statewide significance.”

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

3. Midpen Signature Event (R-25-137)

Public Affairs Specialist I Eleanor Raab presented. General Manager Ana Ruiz and Public Affairs Specialist III Natalie Jolly assisted with answering questions.

Director MacNiven suggested that children should be the target audience and promoted the idea of organizing a simple event.

Director Holman inquired whether \$30,000 is sufficient for the event planned. She expressed a preference for an event that is experiential. She discouraged tabling events, panel discussions, and booths, which appeal more to people with an existing interest rather than drawing in a new audience. She suggested a focus on immersive experiences, such as showing a film, followed by a hike or visit to a certain area of a preserve. Additionally, she suggested that a signature event occur each year, if possible, with the event rotating between bayside, coastside, and Skyline locations.

Public comment opened at 11:52 a.m.

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

Public comment closed at 11:52 a.m.

Chair Gleason suggested collaborating with docents to create engaging activities for the event. He suggested poster sessions where members of the public could engage with staff who work on or design programs, including the trail crew. He recommended working with partners, such as the Newt Patrol, to design an activity rather than a table event. He suggested a shuttle from Johnston Ranch to Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve for a docent-led hike if feasible.

Public Affairs Specialist III Natalie Jolly stated the District previously held the Coastside Family Festival, which included a hike at a nearby preserve. She explained it was immensely successful and staff can consider ways to connect attendees to a nearby preserve. She noted that booths are a great resource and give a platform to the District’s partners, but staff would consider how to make the booths experiential. Additionally, she noted that staff does believe that \$30,000 is a sufficient budget.

Director MacNiven suggested including an educational component with information specific to the event location, such as the name of native plants. She further suggested that staff can recommend applications for the public to download to help identify plants on their own.

No vote required.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Gleason adjourned the meeting of the Legislative, Funding, and Public Affairs Committee at 12:00 p.m.

Shaylynn Nelson, Deputy District Clerk