



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-16-35
Meeting 16-07
March 23, 2016

AGENDA ITEM 4

AGENDA ITEM

Board Policy Titled “Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion”

GENERAL MANAGER’S RECOMMENDATION

Approve the “Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion” policy for inclusion in the Board Policy Manual.

SUMMARY

At the October 22, 2015 Board Retreat, the Board discussed several initiatives to promote diversity, including reaching out to diverse groups who visit and utilize the District’s preserves, and to instill value in the diversity of its employees and partners. The proposed policy recognizes the importance of promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion of all facets of society. The proposed draft policy has been reviewed by LFPAC and recommended for approval.

MEASURE AA

This is not a Measure AA project.

DISCUSSION

The District’s constituents represent many demographics and cultures. In order to best serve this wide ranging population, the District is implementing various initiatives to increase awareness and further promote inclusion of the diverse needs, desires, and perspectives of the larger community. Diversity in this discussion is all-inclusive and encompasses ethnic background, socio-economics, age, gender, physical ability, open space awareness, and preserve user groups. To emphasize the value of diversity and expand the District’s own diversity awareness, the District has begun several initiatives and plans others for the coming fiscal year and beyond (pending Board approval), including a visitor usage survey, expansion of the Visitor Services Division, expanded employee training and broader recruitment outreach, and creation of a Board policy on diversity. Establishing Board policy on diversity allows the Board to specify its intent to embrace diversity to the larger public, including staff and external partners.

In preparation for the October 2015 retreat, staff researched numerous partner and government agencies to learn about best practices related to diversity policies. Staff incorporated many of the principles presented at that meeting into the proposed draft policy (see Attachment 1). The draft policy reflects the need to value and celebrate the rich diversity of our surrounding community and broad perspectives and many cultures that make this area a great place to live, work, and play.

While accomplishing the above objectives, the policy also poses some potential challenges. In the case of employee recruitment, the District is committed to selecting the most qualified candidate from the widest candidate pool possible. The draft policy has been written as broadly as possible to encourage inclusion and equality while not limiting the District's ability to select qualified applicants. The District also encourages diversity and outreach in recruitment practices to produce a large pool of candidates, which more accurately represents the community we serve.

By focusing on equality and inclusion, the proposed draft policy reflects the District's larger effort to address the diverse needs, desires, and perspectives of the District's community and population it serves.

FISCAL IMPACT

Approval of the "Equality, Diversity and Inclusion" policy does not have a fiscal impact.

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.

BOARD COMMITTEE REVIEW

The Legislative, Funding, and Public Affairs Committee reviewed and discussed the "Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion" policy at its meeting on March 15, 2016 and suggested several edits for inclusion in the final draft. The revised policy is recommended for approval by the Board of Directors.

NEXT STEPS

If approved by the Board of Directors, the "Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion" policy would be included in the Board Policy Manual.

Attachment

1. Draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy

Responsible Department Head:
Steve Abbors, General Manager

Prepared by:
Jennifer Woodworth, District Clerk

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Board Policy Manual

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| <p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</p> | <p>Policy 6.____ Chapter 6 – General</p> |
| <p>Effective Date:</p> | <p>Revised Date:</p> |
| <p>Prior Versions: N/A</p> | |

Policy

The District is committed to supporting equality, diversity, and inclusion of all facets of society, the principles of which include fairness of treatment, recognition of rights, acceptance of responsibilities, commitment to equality, and dedication to expanding opportunities for all. Valuing diversity is a core District principle that will be practiced and communicated at all levels of the organization.

Purpose

Members of our community face opportunities and challenges related to diversity pertaining to race, religion, gender, ethnicity, language, age, sexual orientation and gender identity, socioeconomic background, diverse abilities, and disabilities. It is important for members of our community and the District as a whole to assume the responsibility of seizing the opportunities and facing the challenges created by diversity.

Inclusion and equality is not about ‘treating everyone the same’, but recognizing that everyone is different, that there are strengths inherent in those differences, and that people’s needs are met in different ways. This can be as a constituent, District visitor, District Board Director, or employee. Diversity awareness is about understanding that each individual is unique, which then engenders recognition, respect, and celebration of the added value that differences bring.

District Board, Staff, and Volunteers

We want our workforce culture to promote and embrace equality, diversity, and inclusion, and we recognize that each individual adds value to a team. We know our strength comes from building on and valuing our staff and visitors’ differences and similarities. By practicing inclusion, we encourage staff from all backgrounds to bring and share their own unique perspectives to their work here at the District. We recognize that we need to draw on talent from the entire population to be innovative, creative, and effective in service delivery. We are committed to supporting our workforce to develop and to commission or deliver high quality services.

Nothing in this policy is intended to supplant, replace or supersede existing local, state or federal law, or District policies in conformance with those laws.