



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-21-52
Meeting 21-12
April 28, 2021

AGENDA ITEM 3

AGENDA ITEM

Partnership Agreement with San Jose Conservation Corps and Charter School to Complete Resource Management, Vegetation Management, and Maintenance Projects

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION *den*

1. Authorize the General Manager to enter into a Partnership Agreement with the San Jose Conservation Corps and Charter School for a not-to-exceed amount of \$150,000 in Fiscal Year 2021-22.
2. Authorize the General Manager to extend the agreement for three additional consecutive years, if the program achieves specific success criteria, at an annual cost of up to \$200,000 for a total not-to-exceed contract amount of \$750,000 over four years.

SUMMARY

The General Manager recommends entering into a Partnership Agreement with the San Jose Conservation Corps and Charter School (SJCC) in Fiscal Year 2021-22 (FY22) that is renewable for up to three additional years. SJCC is a regional leader in environmental career technical education and an organization that brings youth onto Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) preserves for service projects. Working with the SJCC is consistent with the District's policy goals to engage youth in meaningful open space projects such as vegetation management, invasive and exotic plant removal, fuel break installation, fuel reduction, along with maintenance and construction projects, including fence repairs and zero waste recycling. The General Manager recommends entering into a Partnership Agreement for an amount not-to-exceed \$150,000 through the end of Fiscal Year 2021-22. If the contracted work achieves specific success criteria, the General Manager recommends authorization to extend the agreement up to three additional years at an annual cost of \$200,000. Over a four-year period, the total cost of the Partnership Agreement would not exceed \$750,000. These funds would be recommended in future fiscal year budgets as part of the annual Budget and Action Plan process.

DISCUSSION

Project Delivery

The recommended Partnership Agreement will help meet District goals and objectives for vegetation management, as well as complete routine maintenance work in an efficient and timely manner. The District has been improving and streamlining various aspects of the project delivery process and seeking opportunities to engage youth and service-oriented organizations

that can assist in expanding the District's outreach to engage the community in meaningful open space projects.

The proposed Partnership Agreement with the SJCC would provide District project managers with an expanded qualified workforce to complete a select group of projects. The SJCC would be immediately available to take on assignments that have already undergone environmental review and permitting, including vegetation management projects.

The SJCC's program model is to train young adults in land and water conservation skills. Trainees are professionally supervised and assist public agencies with conservation service projects. The SJCC's mission is strongly aligned with many District goals:

"The San Jose Conservation Corps + Charter School (SJCC+CS) is a non-profit organization that provides opportunity youth from the ages of 17 ½ - 27 with a quality high school education and teaches valuable work and life skills that empower them to become responsible, productive, and caring citizens."

As a non-profit organization that focuses on natural resource management, invasive plant removal, fuel reduction/wildfire prevention, roadside safety clearance, and zero waste recycling, the SJCC is a uniquely structured partner for achieving District strategic goals such as:

- Protect and restore the natural environment to preserve healthy natural systems.
- Implement the Climate Action Plan, expand regional resiliency, and implement climate change adaptation strategies.
- Work with fire agencies and surrounding communities to strengthen the prevention of, preparation for and response to wildland fires for enhanced ecosystem resiliency and public safety.
- Reflect the diverse communities we serve in the District's visitors, staff, volunteers, and partners.

The District maintains a well-established, strong working relationship with the SJCC. In the past three years, SJCC has worked on a variety of District projects totaling \$147,330, with an additional \$30,000 already expensed or allocated for this fiscal year (Attachment 1). Entering into a Partnership Agreement and increasing the total amount of contracted work within a given year will provide maximum flexibility and allow the District to engage the SJCC in expanding the amount of vegetation and fuels management work that is completed each year. The SJCC is well equipped and prepared to provide the additional resources required to successfully implement this partnership and assist the District in meeting its fuel management goals. While there is no guarantee that the full contract amount would be used in a given year, it would allow for up to \$150,000 to be expensed in the first year of the Partnership Agreement and up to \$200,000 per year in the last three years of the Partnership Agreement.

As vegetation management work ramps up starting next fiscal year, the District will need additional resources. SJCC is uniquely prepared to help the District best implement this program in a cost-effective manner. A typical crew consists of 10 members and two supervisors. The daily crew cost when they report from their San Jose headquarters is \$3,714.72. Depending upon the project scope and location, in-preserve spike (temporary) camps can be organized to improve operational efficiency and production. Both the Black Mountain Backpack Camp at Monte Bello Preserve and the Event Center in the La Honda Preserve have served as spike camps for past

projects. Projects for which SJCC is a good fit to implement or assist with are included in Attachment 2.

There is and will continue to be more work than can be completed by District staff alone. Along with accomplishing planned projects, having a Partnership Agreement with SJCC will allow staff to also bring in additional resources for expediting the response to unanticipated work as needed. This includes dispatching resources to conduct a rapid response and removal of newly discovered patches of invasive weeds to prevent further spread, or to remove old fence lines on newly acquired property that can entrap wildlife. The Partnership Agreement would incorporate District review of work plans and a determination of which projects are best suited for the SJCC to ensure that the right types, sizes, and complexity of projects can be properly assigned.

Success criteria that will be used to determine whether to annually extend the contract include: adherence to the District's Best Management Practices for protecting and restoring the natural environment; ability to treat target species within the time allotted by District staff for species with highly specific treatment time windows; adherence to safe, judicious, work practices, including proper use of PPE and equipment; and timely communication of project milestones and/or issues.

FISCAL IMPACT

If approved, funds will be included in future fiscal year budgets as a part of the annual Budget and Action Plan process, starting with an allocation of \$150,000 in FY22.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW

There was no prior Board or committee review of this item.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act. No additional notice is required.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

This proposed action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act. Individual projects will undergo the appropriate level of environmental review.

NEXT STEPS

Pending Board approval, the General Manager will execute the Partnership Agreement with SJCC. After the first year of work, the General Manager will annually evaluate whether to extend the Agreement, for up to three subsequent fiscal years.

Attachments:

1. Previous SJCC projects
2. Examples of Potential San Jose Conservation Corps Projects

Responsible Department Head:

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Prepared by:
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Previous SJCC projects, locations and managing department:

Fiscal Year	Type of Work	Location	Managing Department
2017/18	Debris removal	Sierra Azul	Natural Resources
2017/18	Native vegetation planting	La Honda Creek (Sears Ranch)	Engineering and Construction
2017/18	Defensible space and trail maintenance	La Honda Creek (Dyer) and Purisima Creek	Land and Facilities
2018/19	Invasive Plant Management	Purisima Creek Redwoods	Natural Resources
2018/19	Vegetation Management	Fremont Older	Land and Facilities
2018/19	Shaded Fuel Break/Defensible Space/Fence Repair	Windy Hill (Hawthorns)	Land and Facilities
2019/20	Defensible Space	Bear Creek Redwoods (Stables)	Land and Facilities
2019/20	Vegetation Removal	Rancho San Antonio	Land and Facilities
2019/20	Invasive Plant Management	Purisima Creek Redwoods	Land and Facilities
2020/21	Vegetation Removal	Rancho San Antonio	Land and Facilities
2020/21	Goat Trail Fuel Break Installation	Bear Creek Redwoods	Land and Facilities

Attachment 2

Examples of Potential San Jose Conservation Corps Projects

Skyline Area 2021 Projects	Cost
1. Windy Hill Preserve near Sequoia's Retirement Complex <i>Defensible space clearing</i>	\$12,000
2. Thornewood Preserve escape route from Espinosa to Hwy 84 <i>Escape Route Improvement</i>	\$20,000
3. All major parking lots as staging areas and/or temporary refuge areas – MB, LT, CM, SR, RR, WH. <i>Create Staging and Temporary Refuge</i>	\$25,000
4. Thornewood Preserve Dennis Martin Creek entrance <i>Wildland Fire Fuel Reduction Project</i>	\$4,000
5. Saratoga Gap <i>Escape Route Improvement</i>	\$8,000
Total	\$69,000

Foothills Area 2021 Projects	Cost
1. Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve <i>Defensible space clearing around Alma College and invasive weed removal (Broom)</i>	\$20,000
2. Pulgas Ridge Preserve, Hassler Loop and East Property Line (Fuel Reduction Area) <i>Wildland Fire Fuel Reduction Project</i>	\$20,000
3. Rancho San Antonio Preserve and County Park <i>Wildland Fire Fuel Reduction Project</i>	\$12,000
4. Rancho San Antonio Preserve, Deer Hollow Farm <i>Defensible space clearing around historical farm buildings</i>	\$15,000
5. Picchetti Ranch Preserve <i>Defensible space clearing around historical winery infrastructure</i>	\$12,000
Total	\$79,000