



## **SPECIAL MEETING**

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

**Wednesday, December 1, 2021**

*The Board of Directors conducted this meeting in accordance with California Government Code section 54953(e) and Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Resolution 21-33. All Board members and staff participated via teleconference.*

## **DRAFT MINUTES**

### **SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT**

President Riffle called the special meeting of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to order at 5:00 p.m.

President Riffle announced this meeting is being held in accordance with Government Code section 54953(e) and Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Resolution 21-33, allowing Board members to participate remotely. The District has done its best to conduct a meeting where everyone has an opportunity to listen to the meeting and to provide comment. 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. President Riffle described the process and protocols for the meeting.

### **ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Jed Cyr, Larry Hassett, Yoriko Kishimoto, Zoe Kersteen-Tucker, Curt Riffle, and Pete Siemens

Members Absent: Karen Holman

Staff Present: General Manager Ana Ruiz, General Counsel Hilary Stevenson, Assistant General Manager Brian Malone, Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan, District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Jennifer Woodworth, Planning Manager Jane Mark, Senior Planner Gretchen Laustsen, Senior Planner Tina Hugg, Capital Projects Field Manager Bryan Apple,

### **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

District Clerk Jennifer Woodworth read the submitted comments into the record.

Rebecca Holland submitted comments in support of providing adequate equestrian parking, specifically along Verde Road.

Anne Uecker expressed concern regarding high newt mortality near District preserves and stated the District needs to take more action to protect against newt mortality.

## **BOARD BUSINESS**

### **1. Purisima-to-the-Sea Regional Trail and Parking Area Feasibility Study – Opportunities and Constraints Analysis and Project Vision and Goals (R-21-147)**

Senior Planner Gretchen Laustsen provided the staff presentation describing the conceptual Purisima to the Sea Trail and the specific area included as part of the current projects, including public access and parking area. Ms. Laustsen described the project timeline, including the deadline to receive grant funds from the Coastal Conservancy.

Mark Brandi with District consultant SWCA presented information regarding the multimodal access study, including an analysis of opportunities and constraints for the project. Mr. Brandi reviewed public comments and concerns that are guiding and being addressed = as part of the analysis. Mr. Brandi described the various physical, cultural, biological, and safety attributes and considerations of the project that are being studied as part of the analysis.

Ms. Laustsen reported District staff scouted various trail options to address multiple concerns and factors, such as grazing operations, cost of building, elevation, etc. Ms. Laustsen reviewed the proposed project vision and goals and proposed strategies for accomplishing the goals. Next steps for the project include completing technical assessments, continued further trail scouting, and development of a conceptual parking area.

Patrick Golier, transportation planner with the District's traffic consultant, described the remote location of the project, which leads to many visitors driving to the preserve and therefore parking shortages. Mr. Golier explained the purpose of the multimodal study seeks to evaluate existing parking resources and public access, understand visitor behavior and patterns, improve multimodal access, etc., and provided findings from the preserve visitor survey related to parking and modes of access. Potential improvements, such as transit or shuttle service, parking capacity enhancements, and education/outreach, can help address the parking concerns raised by visitors.

Director Kishimoto requested and received additional information related to the conceptual parking area. Additionally, Director Kishimoto spoke in support of a transit shuttle, especially on the weekends, but stated that the shuttle site may be comprised of smaller parking areas.

Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested multiple trail alignment options may be preferred to allow for a scenic and also a more direct trail route. Director Kersteen-Tucker stated multiple parking areas may be preferred to a single large parking lot.

Director Hassett expressed concern regarding the safety of pedestrians crossing Highway 1.

Director Siemens spoke in support of providing adequate parking for vehicles and equestrian trailers in the parking area.

Senior Planner Tina Hugg stated that based on traffic counts and data gathering, the demand for the parking area is high.

President Riffle stated the proposed trail is a regional connector trail, so visitor use may differ than at other preserves where visitors only stay a few hours.

At 6:20 p.m. the Board of Directors, District staff, and members of the public participated in a public workshop. The Board reconvened the special meeting at 6:47 p.m.

The project team summarized the feedback received from the public in each of the breakout groups. Feedback included:

- maximize parking to address public interest in the trail
- ensure riparian setbacks are adhered to and installation of tree screens for the parking area
- minimize impacts on agricultural operations
- ensure rail and roadway safety
- creation of a shuttle drop-off area
- enhance regional trail connections
- plan needed for emergency vehicle access
- desire for a longer trail ride experience

Public comment opened at 7:04 p.m.

Ric Barker spoke in support of expanding parking for the preserve and stated the regional trail connections will be helpful for commuting.

Henry Magnuski provided comments in support of camping sites to allow visitors to complete multi-day regional trail hikes, such as the Bay to the Sea Trail.

Ron Sturgeon spoke in support of protecting agricultural lands, and parking areas should not be located on land protected by a conservation easement. Additionally, Mr. Sturgeon stated there is already a large parking lot on the South Cowell property.

Thomas DeMeo spoke in support of continuous trail access for equestrian and bicycle use and spoke in support of regional trails to allow visitors to be off of roadways.

Ms. Woodworth read the submitted comments into the record.

Howard Higley provided comments suggesting the District partner with Peninsula Open Space Trust or Caltrans for funding, pursue a dual use underpass option to enhance wildlife crossing and pedestrian trail access, and install a camera to assess vehicle-wildlife mortality.

David Evans supported recreational bicycle access the full length of the proposed trail.

Teri Baron expressed support for equestrian parking in the area to allow equestrian access to the preserve and suggested the District ask users about this in any upcoming surveys.

Mike Liebhold inquired regarding additional parking near the Skyline end of the proposed trail, plans for increased visitor traffic and parking on Tunitas Creek next to Grabtown Gulch, and future plans for connecting to the San Francisco Bay Trail.

Director Holman joined the meeting at 7:15 pm.

John Boothroyd inquired if the District plans to convert the Bald Mountain Trail to bike and equestrian access.

Public comment closed at 7:17 p.m.

Director Cyr expressed concern regarding the carrying capacity of the parking area and potential negative impacts on those living in the area.

Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested the following edits to the project vision and goals.

**Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail and Parking Area Project Vision**

...Complete the multi-use Purisima-to-the-Sea trail connection and multi-modal access and parking area using ecologically sensitive design and management.

**Goal 1: Physical Attributes**

Develop the regional Purisima-to-the-Sea Regional Trail to accommodate low-intensity recreation by multiple user groups, provide ecologically sensitive public access to scenic viewpoints, and provide improved multi-modal Preserve access with access and multi-modal an appropriately sized and programmed parking area.

**Goal 3: Biological Attributes**

Manage, protect, and interpret natural resources, habitats, sensitive species, and connectivity, and provide public access in an ecologically sensitive manner.

President Riffle suggested the project vision should also address the District’s respect for its neighbors and its role as a member of the coastal community.

**Motion:** Director Kersteen-Tucker moved, and Director Cyr seconded the motion to

1. Direct staff to revise the project vision and goals in accordance with the Board’s suggestions and bring the language for Board approval at a future Board meeting.
2. Direct staff to move forward with developing a conceptual parking lot design in accordance with results of the multimodal access study and in conjunction with other multimodal access initiatives.

**ROLL CALL VOTE: 7-0-0**

**ADJOURNMENT**

President Riffle adjourned the special meeting of the Board of Directors of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District at 7:50 p.m.

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Jennifer Woodworth, MMC  
District Clerk