



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-21-176
Meeting 21-35
December 15, 2021

AGENDA ITEM 5

AGENDA ITEM

Resolution for Measure K Grant Funding from San Mateo County

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a resolution authorizing the General Manager to enter into a grant agreement for \$500,000 of San Mateo County Measure K grant funding for the proposed Cloverdale Ranch Land Conservation Project.

SUMMARY

The General Manager recommends that the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) Board of Directors (Board) adopt a resolution authorizing the General Manager to submit a grant application to and enter into a grant agreement with San Mateo County (County) for Measure K funding. The grant funds would be used to support the Cloverdale Ranch Land Conservation Project (Project). This report provides a description of San Mateo County's Measure K funding and the approval process for the use of the funds.

DISCUSSION

In November 2016, San Mateo County voters approved Measure K, a 20-year extension and rebranding of the existing Measure A, the half-cent local sales tax, through March 31, 2043. Also known as the "San Mateo County Critical Services Measure", Measure K provides local funds for local needs to meet critical service needs, address service gaps and save money by improving performance. Measure K is expected to provide approximately \$85M annually for 20 years for such facilities and services as addressing sea level rise, maintaining parks, safe schools and neighborhoods, providing support for affordable housing and low-income healthcare and enhancing public transit, among other priorities. The District has a strong history of partnership with San Mateo County, working together on land acquisition, restoration and public access projects such as the Ravenswood Bay Trail Design and Implementation Project, which was funded by a \$1M Measure K grant approved by the County Board of Supervisors in 2015.

On July 8, 2021, General Manager Ana Ruiz submitted a letter addressed to San Mateo County Manager Mike Callagy requesting \$500,000 in Measure K funding to support the Cloverdale Ranch Land Conservation Project. San Mateo County Supervisor Don Horsley and the County Board of Supervisors supported an allocation of \$500,000 for a portion of the acquisition of Cloverdale in the revised County Budget for FY22 on September 28, 2021. County Manager's Office staff will prepare a funding agreement for the District and the grant funding is anticipated to be approved by the County Board of Supervisors in January 2022.

In alignment with Measure K funding priorities, the acquisition of the 6,200-acre Cloverdale Ranch would enable the District to create a new, regionally significant coastal preserve in San Mateo County. This vast open space property offers extensive opportunities to protect critical watershed lands, native habitats, wildlife corridors, as well as support local agricultural production and offer new areas to expand outdoor recreation. The Cloverdale Ranch Land Conservation Project would result in the following benefits:

- A new open space preserve in the County.
- Expanded public access to coastal open spaces with views of the Pacific Ocean.
- Opportunities to support connections to the California Coastal Trail, Ohlone-Portola Heritage Trail and regional connections to County and State parks.
- Permanent protection of rare and declining habitats that support endangered and threatened species.
- Preservation of long stretches of the State's scenic corridor along Highway 1.
- Preservation of agriculture on coastal working lands and ranches.

District staff have provided the Board with annual Cloverdale Ranch project status memorandums in [December 2019](#), [December 2020](#), and on [November 10, 2021](#). Staff anticipate bringing a recommendation to the Board by late 2022 or early 2023 for consideration of the acquisition of Cloverdale Ranch from the Peninsula Open Space Trust with a proposed close of escrow in March 2023.

The resolution (Attachment 1) authorizes the General Manager or her designee to enter a grant funding agreement for up to \$500,000 in Measure K grant funds for the acquisition of a portion of the Cloverdale Ranch.

FISCAL IMPACT

Upon the anticipated approval of the grant funding by the County Board of Supervisors in January 2022, this funding opportunity would have a positive impact of up to \$500,000.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW

This report was not previously reviewed by the Board or a committee.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

Entering a grant funding agreement is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The District retains responsibility for compliance with the requirements of CEQA pertaining to the acquisition of the Cloverdale property.

NEXT STEPS

Upon the anticipated approval of the grant funding by the County Board of Supervisors in January 2022, the County would finalize a grant funding agreement working with District staff and the General Manager would execute the agreement.

Attachments

1. Resolution authorizing the General Manager to enter a grant funding agreement
2. Letter requesting San Mateo County Measure K Grant Program funding

Responsible Department Head:

Stefan Jaskulak, Chief Financial Officer, Administrative Services

Prepared by:

Deborah Hirst, Grants Program Manager, Administrative Services

RESOLUTION 21-XX**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MIDPENINSULA
REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL
MANAGER TO APPLY FOR AND EXECUTE A GRANT AGREEMENT FOR
MEASURE K FUNDS FROM THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO FOR THE
CLOVERDALE RANCH LAND CONSERVATION PROJECT**

WHEREAS, in November 2016 San Mateo County (County) voters approved Measure K, a countywide half-cent local sales tax to extend the existing half-cent local sales tax (Measure A) for an additional 20 years, to maintain the quality of life for all County residents by providing essential services and maintaining and/or replacing critical facilities; and

WHEREAS, San Mateo County Parks strives to preserve the County's natural and cultural treasures and provides for safe, accessible parks, as well as recreation and learning opportunities, to enhance the community's quality of life, with County Parks operating 24 separate parks, encompassing over 16,000 acres, and 190 miles of county and local trails, including three regional trails; and

WHEREAS, San Mateo County Parks will recommend to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors that \$500,000 of Measure K should be granted to the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) to complete the Cloverdale Ranch Land Conservation Project (Project); and

WHEREAS, the Project would result in a new open space preserve and would offer extensive opportunities to protect critical watershed lands, native habitats, wildlife corridors, as well as support local agricultural production and offer new areas to expand outdoor recreation; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District hereby:

1. Approves the submission of a request for Measure K funding; and
2. Certifies that the District has or will have available sufficient funds to complete, operate and maintain the funded project; and
3. To the extent permitted by law, agree to provide any funds needed beyond the grant requested to complete the project funded under this program; and
4. Assumes full responsibility for compliance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act pertaining to the acquisition of the identified property; and
5. Agrees to comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, ordinances, rules, regulations and guidelines; and

6. Agrees to the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement; and
7. Delegates the authority to the General Manager or designee to conduct all negotiations, sign and submit all documents, including, but not limited to applications, agreements, amendments, and payment requests, which may be necessary for the completion of the grant project and to comply with the County's grant requirements.

* * * * *

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Directors of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District on December 15, 2021, at a special meeting thereof, by the following roll call vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Larry Hassett, Secretary
 Board of Directors

Curt Riffle, President
 Board of Directors

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Hilary Stevenson, General Counsel

I, the District Clerk of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of a resolution duly adopted by the Board of Directors of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District by the above vote at a meeting thereof duly held and called on the above day.

Jennifer Woodworth, District Clerk



Midpeninsula Regional
OpenSpace

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

GENERAL MANAGER
Ana M. Ruiz

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Pete Siemens
Yoriko Kishimoto
Jed Cyr
Curt Riffle
Karen Holman
Larry Hassett
Zoe Kersteen-Tucker

July 8, 2021

Mike Callagy
County Manager
County of San Mateo
400 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063

Re: San Mateo County Measure K – Funding Request

Dear Mr. Callagy,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the **Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen)**, I am writing to request your consideration for a one-time Measure K-funded allocation of \$500,000 towards the acquisition of the Cloverdale Ranch property. This vast open space property is located on the south coast of San Mateo County and offers extensive opportunities to protect critical watershed lands, native habitats, wildlife corridors, as well as support local agricultural production and offer new areas to expand outdoor recreation.

Comprised of over 65,000 acres of acquired and protected open space on the San Francisco Peninsula, Midpen is one of the largest regional open space districts in California. Our braided mission is to acquire and preserve in perpetuity open space and agricultural land of regional significance, to protect and restore the natural environment, to preserve rural character and encourage viable agricultural use of land resources, and to provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education. Midpen has a strong history of partnership with San Mateo County, working together on land acquisition, restoration and public access projects like Ravenswood Bay Trail and most recently deploying our staff to support fire suppression efforts in Pescadero County Park during the CZU fire last year.

Midpen now has the unique opportunity of creating a new, regionally significant coastal preserve encompassing over 6,200 acres in San Mateo County through the acquisition of the Cloverdale Ranch. This project would result in:

- A new open space preserve that is larger than any of the state parks in the county
- Expanded public access to coastal open spaces with views of the Pacific Ocean
- Opportunities to support connections to the California Coastal Trail, Ohlone-Portola Heritage Trail and regional connections to upland parks
- Permanent protection of rare and declining habitats that support endangered and threatened species
- Preservation of long stretches of the State's scenic corridor along Highway 1
- Preservation of agriculture on coastal working lands and ranches.

Midpen's Vision Plan, which was developed with extensive public input, identifies priority actions to meet the community's expressed desires for outdoor recreation, viable working lands, healthy natural systems, and enjoyment of our natural, cultural and scenic landscapes. For the

southern San Mateo County coast, the Vision Plan specifically identifies the need for more access to protected lands and facilities to support visitor use.

Midpen is assembling the funding necessary to acquire the approximately 6,200-acre Cloverdale Ranch property from Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST). This will advance several of the Vision Plan's top priority actions for the region, produce the multitude of public benefits that are achieved from open space conservation, and complete a major step in preserving the scenic California coastline in an urbanizing county.

The acquisition of the Cloverdale Ranch property will enable Midpen to make a lasting commitment to actively manage regionally significant prairie habitats in the face of climate change. It will also establish Midpen's first stand-alone preserve on the south coast that we hope will serve the larger community with essential connections to nature for generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ana M. Ruiz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Ana M. Ruiz
General Manager

cc: Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Board of Directors

Attachment: Cloverdale Ranch overview and map

Attachment

CLOVERDALE RANCH OVERVIEW

The stunning Cloverdale Ranch stretches out across more than 6,200 acres between the town of Pescadero and the County’s southern border. With its rich agricultural heritage that persists to this day, Cloverdale Ranch is characterized by sweeping coastal vistas, coastal terrace prairies and scrub, secluded valleys, marshes and wet meadows, lakes, and streams. Cloverdale Ranch encompasses over 7 miles of State and County designated scenic corridors, and about 1.6 miles of ocean frontage.

Cloverdale Ranch is a likely route for future portions of the California Coastal Trail and the Ohlone-Portola Heritage Trail. An existing trail on the property, known as Wilbur’s Watch, traverses coastal grasslands from Highway 1 to a lookout point for viewing the coastline and Pigeon Point Lighthouse. Future extension of this trail could connect Butano State Park to Pigeon Point State Park across the southern portion of Cloverdale Ranch. This is one of many options for new trails and facilities that could be created to provide outstanding visitor experiences along the coast.



Cloverdale Ranch, looking east towards Butano State Park.

Cloverdale Ranch extends inland from Highway 1 to the forested slopes of the Santa Cruz Mountains. As the land rises in steps from the coast to coastal prairies and hills to the mountains, it constitutes an “ecological staircase” of diverse habitats. Three creeks – Gazos, Arroyo de Los Frijoles, and Butano – cross the property before flowing into the ocean. Gazos Creek, running along the southern boundary of the property, is one of only three streams in the Santa Cruz Mountains that maintains Coho salmon. Butano Creek supports steelhead trout.

Cloverdale Ranch has the largest intact coastal terrace prairie habitat in the county and third largest in the state. This prairie habitat is important for the federally and state endangered San Francisco garter snake. Other sensitive habitats found on Cloverdale Ranch include freshwater marshes and wetlands, perennial and seasonal ponds, riparian woodlands, and coastal scrub. Over 400 plant species have been catalogued on the property.



San Francisco Garter Snake on Cloverdale Ranch

Cloverdale Ranch’s diverse and plentiful landscape supports a wide range of wildlife, including songbirds, raptors, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and insects. Special status species include San Francisco garter snake, California red-legged frog, Northern harrier, Olive-sided flycatcher, Loggerhead shrike, Common yellowthroat, and Grasshopper

sparrow. Endangered Marbled murrelets are known to reproduce in the Gazos Creek watershed and have been observed flying over the Ranch.

Between 1997 and 2012, POST acquired multiple properties in this area totaling over 8,000 acres for a cost nearly \$58 million. Some lands have been transferred to the State Park system, including 890 acres to expand the adjacent Butano State Park and 56 acres of Pigeon Point Light Station Historic Park. Other public parklands surrounding Cloverdale Ranch include Pescadero Marsh State Natural Preserve, Pescadero and Bean Hollow State Beaches, and Año Nuevo State Reserve. Purchase of the 6,200-acre Cloverdale Ranch by Midpen will result in over 33,000 acres of this special coastal landscape under permanent protection.¹

Midpen will purchase Cloverdale Ranch from POST at a discounted price and manage it to protect the Highway 1 scenic corridor, enhance natural resources, support local agriculture, and develop facilities for public use and enjoyment including parking, restrooms, trails, and interpretive signs.

PROPOSED BUDGET

Total Cost	MIDPEN	POST	STATE	GAP
\$32,000,000	\$6,000,000	\$16,000,000	\$9,400,000	\$600,000

- Midpen – Midpen funds are secured and include funds provided through Measure AA, which was passed by the voters with a two-thirds majority in 2014.
- POST – POST is transferring Cloverdale Ranch at a discounted cost, well below a conservative fair market value.
- State Funds – Midpen has acquired state funding through a general fund allocation and is eligible for an allocation from the Prop 68 Recreational Infrastructure Revenue Enhancement (RIRE) program.
- Timeline to enter into a purchase and sale agreement is one year, with close of escrow within two years after.

¹ Includes acreage of Cloverdale Ranch (6,200), Butano State Park (4,700), Año Nuevo State Park (4,200), and Big Basin State Park (18,000).

