



Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District

R-22-22  
Meeting 22-05  
February 16, 2022

## AGENDA ITEM 1

### AGENDA ITEM

Discussions on the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's Expanding Regional Role as it Relates to (1) Advocacy and (2) Baylands Conservation and Resiliency Work

### GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION *den*

Receive information and discuss the role and involvement of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District in (1) advocacy work and (2) baylands conservation and resiliency. No action required.

### SUMMARY

The purpose of the retreat is to offer an opportunity for the Board of Directors (Board) to discuss and explore the following two topics of interest:

1. Is the District's regional role in advocacy evolving? Given the District's emergence as an important regional presence, what level and type of engagement should the District have in "non-traditional" issues that directly or indirectly affect District goals and interests such as:
  - a. Emerging regional housing trends, e.g., effects of Senate Bill (SB) 9
  - b. Regional transportation and transit plans, including Transit-to-Trails
  - c. Sea level rise
2. Should the District further expand its role/focus in baylands protection/preservation/resiliency?

### BACKGROUND

Typically, the Board holds two retreats as part of the annual budget process. The annual Board Retreat Meeting 1 (Strategic Planning) provides the Board with an early opportunity to set the overall course for the coming year at a broad policy level. It also provides the framework for Board Retreat Meeting 2 (Priority Setting). For the budget development cycle ending June 30, 2023 (FY23), the first retreat was held on December 9, 2021, and the second retreat is scheduled for March 3, 2022.

As part of the preparation for Retreat Meeting #1 in December 2021, the Board President conducted a survey of fellow Board members to gauge interest for a half-day working session to discuss topics of interest that may affect the District's work over the next 5-10 years. The Board supported this suggestion and appointed an Ad Hoc Committee at Retreat Meeting #1 to review and select topics for the working session. The Board also directed staff to suggest additional

topics for Board consideration. The Ad Hoc Committee met in January 2022 to review the suggested topics and selected the following two for discussion at this February 16, 2022 Board retreat:

- **Is the District’s regional role in advocacy evolving? Given the District’s emergence as an important regional presence, what level and type of engagement should the District have in “non-traditional” issues that directly or indirectly affect District goals and interests such as:**
  - Emerging regional housing trends, e.g., effects of Senate Bill (SB) 9
  - Regional transportation and transit plans including Transit-to-Trails
  - Sea level rise
  
- **Should the District further expand its role/focus in Baylands protection/preservation/resiliency?**

## DISCUSSION

In preparation for the February 16 Retreat, District staff have assembled this report with contextual information for the two topics listed above. This background information focuses on the following:

1. Type and level of current work, activities, and partnerships that the District engages in to address each topic (advocacy and Baylands conservation).
2. The work and activities led by partners to address each topic.
3. Implications to District staffing and other resources for expanding the District’s level of effort on each topic.

### *Topic 1 - District’s Regional Advocacy Role in Non-Traditional Issues*

#### *Regional Housing Issues*

For the most part, the District has focused on development proposals adjacent to District lands that have the potential to impact the visitor experience, natural resources, and other public interests affecting District preserves. Examples include development proposals that may result in substantial downslope erosion onto District lands and/or lack sufficient defensible space on the adjacent private property to address an increase in fire risk and protect newly proposed development. The District has also tracked and provided comments to inform revisions to General Plan Housing Elements and related ordinances for cities and towns whose jurisdiction includes lands along the Wildland-Urban Interface to highlight the need for sufficient defensible space setbacks on private properties bordering open space lands and avoid new development on lands with high conservation values and sensitive species habitats and within high fire hazard severity zones.

Most recently, the District has also been following the recent Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) numbers generated by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG). Our focus has been specifically on the proposed substantial increases in residential units within rural, unincorporated, undeveloped lands that hold high natural resource and open space value. The District has submitted numerous comments raising concerns about the negative impacts from additional development on habitat fragmentation, loss of sensitive wildlife habitat, barriers to wildlife corridors and movement, reduced permeability of watershed lands, loss of carbon-sequestering vegetation, etc. These concerns have been raised directly with ABAG and also

shared with land management partners and local jurisdictions who express similar concerns (e.g., Santa Clara County, San Mateo County, Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority). To date, the District has not engaged directly on the effects of Senate Bill 9 enacted as the California Home Act. In theory, this act will promote higher density development in developed urban/suburban areas, rather than add development pressure in open space and natural resource sensitive lands.

Depending on the housing issue, the District often works closely with Green Foothills and Greenbelt Alliance to communicate specific concerns to local jurisdictions. Many times, our partners take the lead, with the District submitting a supporting comment letter. There are also times when we alert our partners about new issues that may be of interest and concern to them. When feasible, we share information that may be of help to partners, including GIS-generated analysis of viewshed impacts, relevant geotechnical and biological reports, etc.

Currently, staff from the Planning, Real Property, Public Affairs, Natural Resources and GIS departments dedicate 2% to 4% of their time monitoring, reviewing, and analyzing proposed plans and policies, attending workshops, engaging and collaborating with partners, information-sharing with the Board and key stakeholders, and communicating concerns/preparing comment letters on housing related issues (see Attachment 1).

#### Partner Engagement in Regional Housing Issues

Our partners, **Green Foothills** and **Greenbelt Alliance**, take a much more broader advocacy role as compared to the District and will solicit comment letters and oral comments from their membership for submittal to Planning Commission and City Council/Board of Supervisor meetings on development proposals and policies. They also often take a position on various housing related issues, such as supporting affordable infill and transit-oriented development, seeking the closure of Reid-Hillview Airport to protect residents from toxic lead exposure, raising concerns on the level of proposed development near baylands habitat and its potential for gentrification, objecting to development proposals on lands that offer open space/restoration opportunities, and supporting climate adaptation planning and nature based infrastructure solutions within urban/suburban communities (e.g., transitional levees, green stormwater retention basins).

#### *Regional Transportation and Transit Issues*

Over the past several years, the District's work on regional trails has closely interfaced with efforts focused on enhancing regional transportation and transit systems. The District has also been exploring new ideas and opportunities that promote multimodal access to its open space preserves for numerous reasons: encourage green modes of transit that reduce greenhouse gas emissions; reduce parking demands and associated impacts to surrounding neighborhoods and roadways; and improve equitable access to preserves and trails. Given the recent priority focus on multi-modal solutions, District Planning staff have been dedicating 5 to 7% of their time to monitor, review, analyze, attend workshops, engage with partners, information-share with the Board, and communicate priority interests, concerns, and needs on a variety of transportation and transit plans and proposals. In the last two years, these include: *Reimagine SamTrans* project that is evaluating and refreshing the entire SamTrans bus system, the San Mateo County City/County Association of Government's (C/CAG) Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update, the Caltrans District 4 Pedestrian Plan, San Mateo County's Active Transportation Plan, and the Dumbarton Rail Corridor Bicycle-Pedestrian Path.

The District is also working with the Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network trails team to assess the regional Santa Cruz Mountains trail system and evaluate potential connections to link regional park and preserve trails with urban trails and transit systems.

#### Partner Engagement in Regional Transportation and Transit Issues

Agencies and organizations that are closely tracking and engaging in transportation and transit related issues are often also engaged in housing and equity needs within local cities and counties. At times, the District will notify our traditional partners and engage new partners about specific transportation items that may be of interest. For example, the District collaborated with the **Friends of Caltrain, MenloSpark, Rails to Trails Conservancy, Green Foothills, Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition, Facebook, and Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST)** on the Dumbarton Rail Corridor Bicycle-Pedestrian Path to collectively voice the goals of trail connectivity between urban areas and open space. The larger Dumbarton Rail transportation project presented an opportunity to support a potential extension of the envisioned Bay-to-Sea Regional Trail (POST priority) and connect local neighborhoods to key destinations, such transit stops and bayfront open space (SVBC, Green Foothills, MenloSpark, Friends, Rails to Trail priority). The District's contribution included providing technical data confirming the feasibility of incorporating a bike-ped path along the rail corridor, as well as the submittal of numerous comment letters supporting this idea. With *Reimagine Samtrans*, we met with the **San Mateo County** transportation planner to discuss microtransit solutions for the coast that could provide service to parks and open space lands. For the Caltrans District 4 Pedestrian Plan, we worked closely with POST to submit similar comments; POST coordinated with the Peninsula Working Group (who included **San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, San Mateo County Parks, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and Coastal Conservancy**) to assemble a multi-agency signed comment letter with our proposal for pedestrian improvements within the Caltrans right-of-way.

#### *Sea Level Rise*

Sea level rise resilience planning along shoreline areas is an area of critical concern to communities and stakeholders located along the bay and coastal edges. District work on sea level rise issues has focused on protecting the natural habitats and recreational infrastructure located at the District's two bayfront properties: Ravenswood Open Space Preserve and Stevens Creek Shoreline Nature Area. Along with designing newly built facilities and habitat improvements to withstand rising tides, the District also carefully monitors proposed development proposals for adjacent lands to ensure that these avoid impacts to District resources. For example, the District recently provided comments on the Ravenswood Business District/4 Corners Specific Plan requesting that the adjacent shoreline levee and flood protection measures be addressed in the plan. Staff has met previously with the San Francisco Bay Area Joint Powers Authority (JPA) about their future levee plans to express the importance of protecting, and if possible, enhancing the surrounding natural resources and recreation facilities as part of their planning work. Overall, sea level rise issues account for less than 1% of District staff time (excluding capital projects on District lands)

The District does not actively engage in sea level rise issues on the coastline since the District does not own or manage any lands west of Highway 1. In prior discussions over potential management of the Cowell Purisima Coastal Trail, one of the reasons for declining a role in managing and maintaining this trail corridor was the ongoing coastal bluff erosion that will eventually force the trail to move onto active agricultural fields/prime farmlands, which are lands that the District is prohibited in converting to trail use per the Coastal Service Plan.

### Partner Engagement in Sea Level Rise Issues

Numerous local agencies and organizations who focus on land use and environmental equity are highly engaged in Sea Level Rise discussions, particularly related to flooding/flood control measures and erosion/damage to existing infrastructure and communities. These include numerous cities and counties (nine within District boundaries), as well as flood protection/water districts (e.g., Valley Water, San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District), harbor districts, regional agencies (e.g., ABAG, California Coastal Commission, Bay Conservation and Development Commission), and numerous joint agency and non-profit organizations (e.g., San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority).

### District Capacity and Requirements for Expanding Work in Non-Traditional Issue Areas

Across the entire organization, the current capacity is highly limited and in many ways is oversubscribed to maintain, over the long-term, the current level of effort in addressing non-traditional issues. Additional staffing would be required in multiple departments (Planning, Public Affairs/Government Affairs Program, and Natural Resources) to avoid impacting Board-approved Capital Improvement and Action priorities, including Measure AA projects and core functions. Depending on the areas of growth, additional expertise may also be needed to effectively evaluate and respond to issues (i.e., expertise in sea level resilience, transportation planning, etc.).

### ***Topic 2 – District’s Role in Bayland Protection, Preservation, Resiliency***

In pre-colonial times, the San Francisco Bay once flourished with nearly 200,000 acres of healthy tidal marsh. Since then, 85 to 95% of the tidal marsh and mudflats have been filled, diked, or drained to create farms, ports, salt ponds, rail lines, roads, housing, and other urban development. The native tidal marsh was once highly ecologically productive and protected upland areas from storm and flood events, filtered runoff water before entering the bay, and sequestered high amounts of carbon in the soil and vegetation. The loss of these areas has also threatened native baylands species, like Ridgway’s rail and salt marsh harvest mouse. Actions to restore the salt marsh habitats to protect both species and infrastructure has resulted in many counties, cities, agencies and organizations rallying to meet this need (Attachment 2).

### *Ravenswood Open Space Preserve*

The District purchased Ravenswood Open Space Preserve from the Leslie Salt Company in 1981 and opened Ravenswood Preserve to public access in 1989. Restoration of the marsh began in 2000 as part of a mitigation project to address nearby contamination issues caused by an outside entity. Through this work, the District approved and oversaw the tidal marsh restoration activities, including breaching the former salt pond levee to return tidal flow and reviewing 10 years of monitoring reports to ensure performance metrics were met.

Foothills Field Office staff are assigned to provide patrol and maintenance services for Ravenswood Preserve. This property is located at quite a distance from the core operational areas (for the Foothills Area this encompasses lands from the foothills to the ridgeline between San Carlos and Los Gatos). As a result, ranger patrols are typically two (2) to three (3) times a week, with weekends being a priority. Regular maintenance is limited to weekly visits on the weekend for trash pickup and inspection. Vegetation mowing occurs annually with subsequent spot checks, and mowing is complicated by the need for bio-monitors given the highly sensitive habitat and the presence of numerous endangered species. With the recent Bay Trail improvements, the District is responsible for maintaining numerous infrastructure, including: a

board walk, bridge, two miles of trail, two observation platforms, parking area and signage. Restoration activities have included native vegetation planting and the removal of invasive exotics.

Grassroots Ecology has been an important partner in helping engage the community with the installation and upkeep of new native plantings to restore the site. East Palo Alto is also a key partner for Ravenswood Preserve, whereby they help service trashcans, maintain the entry gate, and are responsible for the Cooley Landing peninsula. Other partners include the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, which owns portions of the trail, PG&E, which maintains transmission towers that run through the preserve, and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) who has collaborated on habitat improvements and prior predator management activities.

Ravenswood Preserve and the adjacent baylands properties are highly complex sites with multiple jurisdictions, extensive regulatory oversight, and complicated land ownership. These areas are also highly regulated with numerous endangered species requirements and trail easement obligations. The proximity to denser populations also generates more urban-related enforcement issues, including vandalism, dogs in prohibited areas, motorcycle use, unlawful camping, encroachments, and illegal dumping.

#### *Partnership with East Palo Alto to Establish Cooley Landing Park and Education Center*

In 2010, the District entered into a [partnership](#) with the City of East Palo Alto to help turn the local community's vision of developing a former dump site into a bayfront park. The City of East Palo Alto implemented five phases of the Cooley Landing Vision Plan over seven years, working in the months outside the nesting season of the Ridgway's rail. The first phase of work involved capping the entire 9-acre site with clean fill, building a segment of the Bay Trail, and opening the park to the public. The remaining phases focused on extensive site and infrastructure improvements, including additional trails and seating areas, an outdoor classroom, and a new \$5 million education center. To help fulfill the vision for Cooley Landing, the District granted use of its lands within the Cooley Landing Peninsula as part of the park and provided significant funds for design and implementation (>\$1.5M in Measure AA funds). In addition, the District had spent significant resources and was prepared to contribute an additional \$200k toward identifying and securing an operator for the Education Center. City staffing constraints and other higher pressing City priorities have required that this item be deferred.

#### *San Francisco Bay Trail*

In 2006, the District secured two segments of easements of the San Francisco Bay Trail (Bay Trail) along the levee bank south of Bay Road and Ravenswood Preserve. These Bay Trail easements were transferred to the City of Palo Alto and made a part of the Palo Alto Baylands. One segment of the Bay Trail just to the south of Ravenswood Preserve at Weeks Road is not protected at this time with a trail easement; however, it is used by the public and provides a critical Bay Trail connection. District staff worked with the City of East Palo Alto to ensure that the city require the dedication of this trail segment for the Bay Trail when and if the property owner proposes development of the property. In 2018, the Ravenswood Bay Trail was recorded across City and County of San Francisco property connecting the Ravenswood Preserve to University Avenue. In 2020, the District completed a 0.6-mile boardwalk and trail segment, closing a critical gap in the Bay Trail that now creates 80 contiguous miles of Bay Trail access, with access points for neighborhoods within East Palo Alto. To satisfy project mitigation requirements, the District constructed two high-tide refuge islands within the marsh and enhanced 2,000 linear feet of transitional zone habitat along the marsh-trail edge. These actions

were taken to provide refuge habitat for sensitive wildlife like the Ridgway's rail and salt marsh harvest mouse during high-tide events. To inform this work, the District consulted with regional agencies to emulate enhancements methods that have been successfully implemented in other bayfront locations (e.g., transitional zones at Bair Island Ecological Reserve).

*The Ravenswood Baylands (Ravenswood Triangle)*

The 77-acre Ravenswood Triangle property is located in the City of Menlo Park along Highway 84 between Willow Road to the west and University Avenue to the east and bordered by the SamTrans Dumbarton Rail to the south. The Facebook campus is located on the north side of Highway 84. Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge is located north, west and east of the Ravenswood Triangle property (see attached map). The property includes the mouth of the Ravenswood Slough and was acquired by Caltrans in 1978 and 1979 as mitigation for the construction of the western approach to the Dumbarton Bridge along Highway 84. Under a mitigation agreement, Caltrans was to partially restore tidal flow to the property. Under a 1979 Agreement between Caltrans and the District, once tidal flow is restored to the property, Caltrans would transfer the Ravenswood Triangle property to the District subject to California Transportation Commission approval. Partial tidal flow has not yet been restored to the property. Restoration and transfer of the property would make a natural addition to the Don Edwards Wildlife Refuge, and the property is located in the USFWS wildlife recovery area for the protected salt marsh harvest mouse and the Ridgway's rail. There have been numerous high-level discussions at different times between the District, USFWS, City of Menlo Park and Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge to identify opportunities that may kickoff movement on this item – to date there has not yet been a desire or willingness for Caltrans to take this on.

*Stevens Creek Shoreline Nature Study Area Restoration*

The District purchased the Stevens Creek Shoreline Nature Study Area (SCSNSA) from POST in 1980. It is located in unincorporated Santa Clara County adjacent to Mountain View along the San Francisco Bay (Bay) shoreline between Stevens Creek and Moffett Field. The District's original intent was to provide bayfront access and education opportunities at the site; however, it currently functions as a contained, open water pond that is part of a larger stormwater retention basin for Moffett Field under the management of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). There has historically been minimal active management of the site and engagement with neighboring bayfront stakeholders. The SCSNSA opportunistically provides habitat for breeding western snowy plovers and allows for multi-use recreational opportunities along a levee-top segment of the Bay Trail.

In prior years (2000s), the District extensively engaged over numerous years on the design and oversight of remediation activities at the SCSNSA that were conducted by NASA to address contamination originating from past activities and surface runoff at Moffett Field. The District has also monitored and commented on neighboring development proposals that posed significant potential impacts to District land, many of which never materialized.

Most recently, District staff distilled results of a 2020 Feasibility Study, participated in the multi-agency Sunnyvale Shoreline Resilience Vision, discussed restoration goals with key stakeholders and advocacy groups, and considered the parcel's position amid the larger U.S. Army Corp's South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Study. In 2021, Board re-evaluated and established management priorities and plans for the SCSNSA that align with regional bayfront restoration initiatives and ecological productivity. These priorities will incorporate site-specific objectives, ongoing bayfront restoration efforts for natural resources, partner and stakeholder input, and

future public access opportunities. The phased implementation approach will begin with low-intensity site enhancements to support breeding plovers, followed by habitat enhancements to provide managed habitat for all waterbirds. Based on ongoing implementation of long-term shoreline resiliency plans across the bay, the District would determine at a later date whether to restore the parcel to tidal marsh habitat. This effort will require increased staff time for site monitoring, patrol, management, and enhancement actions. Currently, the District does not maintain the levee trails adjacent to the SCSNA and minimally manages visitor use; therefore, the impact to patrol and maintenance is limited. Ranger patrols are stepped up on occasion in response to reports of disturbance (such as entry into to snowy plover nesting habitat).

#### *Other Relevant District Work*

As time allows, staff have engaged in numerous external reviews of other shoreline area projects, again with a focus on protecting District lands and interests. These include:

- SAFER -- Strategy to Advance Flood protection, Ecosystems and Recreation (SAFER) along the San Francisco Bay -- led by the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority
- South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project
- East Palo Alto's Ravenswood Business District/4 Corners Specific Plan Update

District staff time allocations to baylands activities have ranged over time. When it is associated with a capital District project, dedicated staff time is high (10-15%) from Planning, Natural Resources, Real Property, Land & Facilities, Visitor Services, Public Affairs, Engineering & Construction, Grants, and the General Manager's Office. When the work is related to an outside project review, the time set aside is closer to 2-4%.

#### Partner Engagement in Baylands Preservation, Restoration, and Resilience

##### *Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge*

A part of the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex (which includes other refuges such as the Farallon Islands and San Pablo Bay) was created in 1972 and now comprises a 30,000-acre refuge at the southern end of San Francisco Bay managed by the **United States Fish and Wildlife Service**. Congressman Don Edwards, responding to local citizens who made up the South San Francisco Baylands Planning, Conservation and National Wildlife Refuge Committee, worked with Congress to create the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge. This group later became the **Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge**, which continues to be highly active today. The organization has deep institutional knowledge in bayfront activities, a high level of baylands science expertise, and are well organized and active in advocating for baylands preservation, restoration, and resiliency work.

The refuge was later renamed to Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge in 1995 to honor Congressman Edwards' dedication to the refuge and its mission, which is to: preserve and enhance wildlife habitat; protect migratory birds and threatened and endangered species; and provide opportunities for wildlife-oriented recreation and nature study for the surrounding communities. The USFWS remains active in managing these lands and in conducting ongoing restoration and monitoring activities.

##### *California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Ecological Reserves*

Bair Island Ecological Reserve and Redwood Shores Ecological Reserve are baylands salt marsh habitats owned and managed by the **California Department of Fish and Wildlife** totaling 3,268 acres located south of Highway 92 in Redwood City. Bair Island is composed of three islands



that were former salt ponds once owned by Cargill. A large portion of the islands have been restored to tidal wetlands. The 268-acre Redwood Shores Ecological Reserve surrounds the Redwood Shores proposed development site in Redwood City. Both Reserves are surrounded by the Don Edwards Refuge.

#### *South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project*

The South Bay Salt Ponds were acquired in 2003 from Cargill with funds provided by federal and state resource agencies and several private foundations. The 15,100-acre property transfer represents the largest single acquisition in a larger campaign to restore 40,000 acres of lost tidal wetlands to San Francisco Bay. The South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project (SBSRP) is the largest tidal wetland restoration project on the West Coast. When complete, the project will restore up to 15,100 acres of industrial salt ponds to a rich mosaic of tidal wetlands and other habitats. The Restoration Plan serves as a blueprint for habitat restoration, flood risk management, and the construction of new trails, viewing platforms and other public access along the Bay. The plan was adopted in 2008, after four years of work by a broad range of stakeholders, agency representatives, scientists, and members of the public. The SBSRP is administered by an Executive Project Manager reporting to an executive leadership group comprised of representatives from the **State Coastal Conservancy, USFWS, CDFW, Valley Water,** and the **Alameda County Flood Control District.**

#### *Redwood City Cargill Salt Ponds*

The 1,400-acre Redwood City Cargill Salt Ponds are located in proximity to the Bay Trail and bordered by the Bair Island Ecological Reserve (CDFW) and the Port of Redwood City to the north, Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge (USFWS) to the east and south, and the **City of Menlo Park's** Bidwell Bayfront Park Recreation Area to the south. The Cargill Salt Ponds are the largest holding of remaining private land in the area with the potential for salt marsh or baylands habitat restoration. In 2009, Cargill proposed development of the site with 12,000 housing units as well as one million square feet of commercial buildings. The project faced significant public opposition and through the advocacy efforts of environmental groups such as **Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge, San Francisco Baykeeper, Save The Bay, Audubon California, the Sierra Club, and the West Bay Sanitary District** and strong opposition from Congresswoman Jackie Speier, Cargill withdrew their application in 2012. The future protection and restoration of the Cargill Salt Ponds would provide a natural connection between the Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge and the Bair Island Ecological Reserve, expand habitat for endangered species, and further strengthen shoreline resiliency against sea level rise. As a reminder, on June 9, 2010, the Board of Directors adopted a [resolution](#) stating their opposition to the proposed Cargill development project, highlighting the importance of restoring the salt ponds to tidal marsh as essential natural shoreline infrastructure for flood protection and as high value wildlife habitat for endangered species.

#### District Capacity and Requirements for Expanding Work in Baylands Activities

Increased engagement beyond current levels would require significant staff resources. For example, effective engagement on the SAFER Shoreline Levee where it directly affects District preserves would require staff from Natural Resources, Planning, and Real Property as well as outside consultant expertise. The preservation and restoration of the Redwood City Cargill Salt Ponds would require creating an entirely new program akin to the level of effort that has been set aside for the potential Cloverdale acquisition (~10% commitment from Real Property, Natural Resources, Planning, Public Affairs, Land & Facilities, Visitor Services, Grants, and GMO Departments/Programs) to: engage with environmental partners, local communities, and

stakeholders; engage with legislative officials; secure funding; conduct property assessments/surveys/due diligence; develop concept proposals; establish potential take-out partners and/or restoration partnerships; develop and implement a communications and media plan; etc. Baylands preservation and restoration work is highly complex with polarizing political sensitivities and complicated land ownership, as well as unique challenges that are less familiar to the District. Operational challenges would also need to be considered for the District, given the remoteness to core operational areas, extreme regulatory oversight, and insufficient staff expertise in baylands issues.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

None

### **BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW**

Review of the topics and logistics preparation for the retreat was conducted with guidance and support from the Ad Hoc Committee, who was assigned to return to the full Board with select topics for discussion.

### **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.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Next steps are dependent on Board discussion and direction for the two selected topics and may require adding a project and/or funding to a future fiscal year budget and action plan.

Attachment(s)

1. Broad Overview of District Engagement in Regional Non-Traditional Issues
2. Bayland Preserves and Projects

Responsible Department Head:  
Ana Ruiz, General Manager

Prepared by:  
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Ana Ruiz, General Manager

## Attachment 1: Broad Overview of District Engagement in Regional Non-Traditional Issues

TOPICS	MIDPEN DEPARTMENTS	PARTNERS
Plan Bay Area (PBA) 2050 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority Conservation Area 2.0 (PCA)</li> <li>• Priority Development Area (PDA)</li> <li>• PBA Implementation Plan</li> </ul>	Planning Public Affairs (Gov Affairs) Real Property GIS	MTC/ABAG Greenbelt Alliance Together Bay Area (TBA) The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
Regional Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SB9</li> <li>• Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA)</li> <li>• Housing Element Updates – review for proposed housing sites that may be located in Wildland Urban Interface, Sensitive Habitat Areas (High Conservation Values lands), Fire Hazard Severity Zones, etc.</li> </ul>	Planning Public Affairs (Gov Affairs) GIS (new app)	Local Jurisdictions (Counties, Cities, Towns; 20 total) Green Foothills SCVOSA TNC Sierra Club
Regional Transportation and Transit Plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caltrans District 4 Bicycle Plan</li> <li>• Caltrans D4 Pedestrian Plan</li> <li>• Unincorporated San Mateo County Active Transportation Plan</li> <li>• San Mateo County Connect the Coastside</li> <li>• C/CAG San Mateo County Bicycle Pedestrian Plan</li> <li>• Reimagine SamTrans</li> <li>• Dumbarton Rail Corridor Bicycle-Pedestrian Trail</li> <li>• East Palo Alto Mobility Study</li> <li>• Half Moon Bay Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan</li> <li>• Bay Area Trails Collaborative Regional Trails Network</li> </ul>	Planning Real Property	Caltrans SamTrans County of San Mateo Facebook/SamTrans POST City of East Palo Alto City of Half Moon Bay Bay Area Trails Collaborative (BATC) Rails to Trails Conservancy Bay Area Ridge Trail Council
Multimodal Access Plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Shuttle Exploration for Santa Cruz Mountains (SCMSN)</li> <li>• Reimagining Big Basin – Visioning</li> </ul>	Planning Public Affairs (Gov Affairs)	Santa Cruz Mtns Stewardship Network (SCMSN) Peninsula Working Group/Trails Team (POST, Midpen, San Mateo County Parks, SFPUC, GGNRA, Bay Area Ridge Trail, California Coastal Conservancy) California State Parks
Shoreline Resiliency and Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SAFER Bay Feasibility Report</li> <li>• South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project</li> <li>• East Palo Alto’s Ravenswood Business District Specific Plan Update</li> <li>• Multiple development proposals submitted to City of East Palo Alto (2020 Bay Road, Emerson Collective, Harvest Properties The Landing, etc.)</li> <li>• OneShoreline</li> <li>• Redwood City Cargill Properties</li> <li>• US Army Corps’ San Francisco Bay Shoreline Flood Risk Project</li> <li>• Sunnyvale Shoreline Resilience Vision</li> </ul>	Planning Real Property Public Affairs (Gov Affairs) Natural Resources	City of East Palo Alto City of Menlo Park City of Palo Alto OneShoreline (San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District) Santa Clara Valley Water District San Francisquito Creek US Fish & Wildlife Service Joint Powers Authority (SFCJPA) SFBRA U.S. Army Corps of Engineers City of Sunnyvale

Coastal Area Plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• California Coastal Conservancy Strategic Plan Updates</li> <li>• City of Half Moon Bay Local Coastal Plan Updates</li> </ul>	Planning Real Property Public Affairs (Gov Affairs) Grants	California Coastal Conservancy City of Half Moon Bay
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Created By: flopez



### Baylands

- MROSD Preserves
- Other Protected Lands
- Private Property
- Other Public Agency
- Proposed Cargill Development Area
- Existing Bay Trail

Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District  
(Midpen)  
2/3/2022



While the District strives to use the best available digital data, these data do not represent a legal survey and are merely a graphic illustration of geographic features.