



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-22-107
Meeting 22-23
September 28, 2022

AGENDA ITEM 4

AGENDA ITEM

Cooley Landing Airboat Ramp Agreement

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the General Manager to enter into an agreement with the City of East Palo Alto and Menlo Park Fire Protection District for the use and maintenance of an emergency airboat ramp in Cooley Landing Park.

SUMMARY

The General Manager recommends approval of an agreement for use of an airboat ramp at Cooley Landing Park. The City of East Palo Alto (City) manages a portion of Ravenswood Open Space Preserve, as part of Cooley Landing Park, through a management agreement with the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District). As part of the development and improvement of the site into a bayfront city park, an existing beach area was developed into an airboat ramp for use by the Menlo Fire Protection District (Menlo Fire) as emergency access to perform rescues of people stranded on the San Francisco Bay. The proposed agreement formalizes the allowed uses and responsibilities for maintenance associated with the airboat ramp.

DISCUSSION

Cooley Landing is located on a peninsula at the eastern end of Bay Road in the City of East Palo Alto. Operated by the City, the park was created in partnership with the District, which owns portions of the peninsula as part of Ravenswood Open Space Preserve. Cooley Landing Park (Park) opened to the public in July 2012. Final park improvements, including an outdoor classroom, restroom, picnic area, extension of main pathways, secondary trails, seating areas, interpretive signs, and lighting, were completed in early 2019. One of the improvements that was part of the development of the park was an airboat ramp to allow Menlo Fire access to the San Francisco Bay (Bay). Menlo Fire responds to approximately 12 to 14 emergency calls per year for stranded boaters, kayakers, hunters, hikers, and medical calls on the Bay as well as calls associated with the Dumbarton Bridge. Due to the shallow nature of the Bay, people get stuck in mudflats that are inaccessible by boat but accessible by airboat. The Cooley Landing access point provides much quicker access to the area around Cooley Landing than the Redwood City airboat launch ramp.

The airboat ramp lies on District property and is managed by the City. The term of the agreement is for 5 years with an automatic additional 5-year term extension unless any party gives notice not to extend the agreement. Staff at all three agencies have reviewed the agreement and Menlo

Fire has signed the agreement. The City requires that the agreement be brought to their City Council for review and approval for final execution.

The proposed agreement key points are:

- Limited to use by Menlo Fire for emergencies, training, and maintenance.
- Emergency use at any time, 365 days a year.
- Training and maintenance only during September 1 to January 31, to ensure rare species protection.
- Notification to the District and City seven days in advance of maintenance or training.
- Notification to US Fish and Wildlife Service seven days in advance of training.
- A 200-foot buffer from the marsh while operating an air boat around Cooley Landing.
- Menlo Fire responsibility for airboat ramp maintenance and any damage caused by their activities.
- City responsibility for routine maintenance of the access road and trail.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with the recommendation.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW

- February 24, 2010 – Approval of the Cooley Landing Partnership Agreement with East Palo Alto and the Ravenswood Open Space Preserve Use and Management Amendment ([R-10-29 minutes](#))
- July 14, 2010 – Confirmation of the City’s Cooley Landing Vision Plan as the project description for the purpose of environmental review (R-10-85, [minutes](#))
- July 27, 2011 – Adoption of a Comprehensive Use and Management Plan for Ravenswood Open Space Preserve and an Amendment of the Cooley Landing Partnership Agreement with the City of East Palo Alto ([R-11-62, minutes](#))
- August 28, 2013 – Approval of a Second Amendment to the Cooley Landing Partnership Agreement with the City of East Palo Alto ([R-13-73, minutes](#))
- March 22, 2017 – Approval for allocating Measure AA funding to cover partial costs of the Cooley Landing Park construction ([R-17-40, minutes](#))
- August 9, 2017 – Approval of a Third Amendment to the Cooley Landing Partnership Agreement with the City of East Palo Alto ([R-17-98, minutes](#))

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

This agreement is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act. The airboat launch was previously evaluated by the City as part of the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Report Plan prepared for the Cooley Landing Vision Plan, certified by the City on February 15, 2011. The Board concurred as a Responsible Agency with the City’s findings on July 27, 2011.

NEXT STEPS

If approved by the Board and pending City Council approval, the agreement would be executed and signed by all parties.

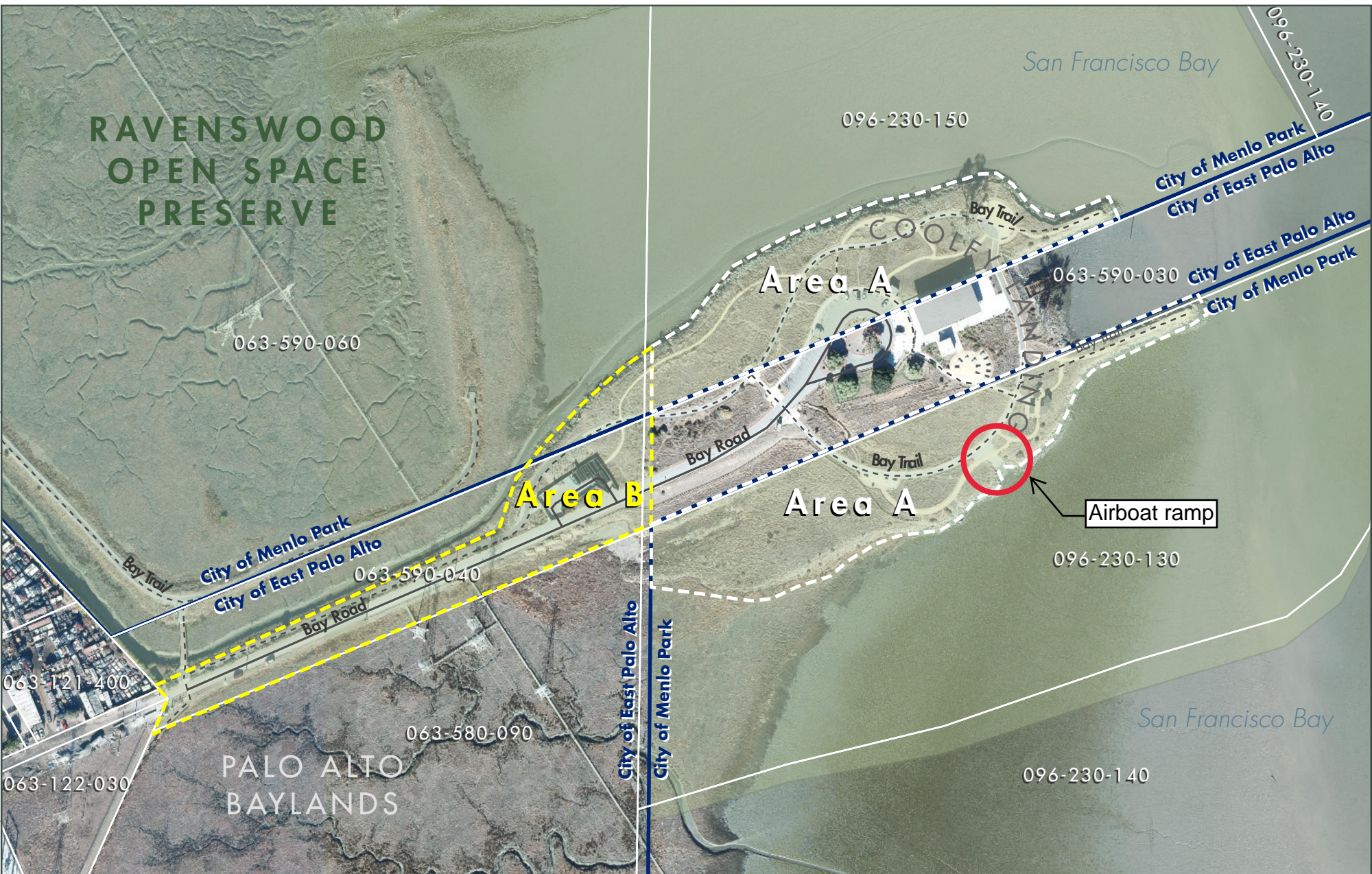
Attachment

1. Site Map

Responsible Department Head:
Ana Ruiz, General Manager

Prepared by:
Brian Malone, Assistant General Manager

Path: G:\Projects\Ravenswood\Coolley Landing\AreaA_AreaB_20220607.mxd
Created By: acostanza



Attachment 1: Cooley Landing Area, Ravenswood Open Space Preserve Airboat Ramp

- Midpen preserve
- Paved Road
- Trail
- County parcel boundary
- City boundary
- Area B
- Area A

Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District
(Midpen)
6/7/2022



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.