



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-23-60
June 13, 2023

AGENDA ITEM 2

AGENDA ITEM

Basic Policy for the Coastside Protection Area – Review of the Policy Development Process

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATIONS *dem*

1. Review and provide feedback on the proposed process for incorporating the Coastside Protection Area into the Basic Policy in a manner consistent with the Coastal Service Plan and forward the proposed process to the full Board of Directors for their review and approval.
2. Forward a recommendation to the full Board of Directors to form an Ad Hoc Committee pursuant to Board Policy 1.04, *Board Committee*, to guide the process of incorporating the Coastside Protection Area into the Basic Policy.

SUMMARY

The Basic Policy of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) serves as the District's "constitution", providing the highest level of policy guidance on District purpose and governance. The Basic Policy references other policy documents that provide more detailed guidance on specific policy areas. The Basic Policy was originally adopted by the Board of Directors (Board) in 1974 and updated in 1999. In 2004, the District expanded its boundary to the San Mateo County Coastside, and the Board approved the San Mateo County Coastal Annexation Area Service Plan (Service Plan) and associated Environmental Impact Report (EIR) as part of the annexation. The Service Plan establishes detailed policies, guidelines, and commitments governing District activities and services within the coastal annexation area, an area also known as the Coastside Protection Area. One of the Service Plan commitments is to develop a Basic Policy for the Coastside Protection Area. After a careful review of the current Basic Policy, Service Plan Guiding Principles, and District practices over the last 18 years implementing the Service Plan, the General Manager is proposing an implementation plan to guide this work. Based on an early review of the existing Basic Policy and the Coastal Service Plan, it may be possible to accomplish the objective by amending the Basic Policy to incorporate the Coastside Protection Area.

BACKGROUND

Basic Policy

The District was created by voters in northwestern Santa Clara County in November 1972. In March 1974, the Board adopted its Basic Policy, which states the agency's primary purpose and strategic emphasis while also covering at a very high level the following five major policy areas:

- Open Space Land Preservation
- Open Space Management
- Inter-Agency Relationships
- Public Involvement
- Administration

Each policy area is accompanied by specific policy statements. The Basic Policy serves as the District's "constitution", providing the highest level of policy guidance on fulfilling the District's mission. Informed by and consistent with the Basic Policy, specific and more detailed Board policy documents, such as the Open Space Acquisition Policies, Resources Management Policies, Agricultural Policy (under development), and Good Neighbor Policy, provide more specific guidance.

In January 1996, the District initiated a multi-year stakeholder and public participation process to update the Basic Policy. No significant changes were identified through the robust public engagement process. The effort to update the Basic Policy was focused on clarifying existing policies and bringing them in line with current practices, conditions and priorities. The Board adopted the updated Basic Policy on March 10, 1999 (Attachment 1).

Service Plan for the San Mateo Coastal Annexation Area

In 2004, the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) approved the District's Coastside Protection Program, extending the District's boundaries to include San Mateo Coastside lands from Montara to the San Mateo-Santa Cruz county line. The Service Plan for the San Mateo County Coastal Annexation Area (Attachment 2) and associated EIR, certified as part of the Coastside Protection Program, establishes the Coastal Mission for the District and specifies the services, goals, permanent policies, guidelines and implementation actions for preserving open space and agricultural lands, protecting natural resources, providing ongoing land stewardship, encouraging agricultural use of land resources, and developing public access in the coastal areas of San Mateo County.

DISCUSSION

Service Plan Organization

The District's Coastal Mission is as follows (**bold** denotes additions to the basic Mission Statement):

*To acquire and preserve in perpetuity open space land **and agricultural land of regional significance**, protect and restore the natural environment, **preserve rural character**, **encourage viable agricultural use of land resources**, and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.*

During the annexation process, the Service Plan was developed to set policy guidance specifically for the San Mateo County Coastside Protection Area and agricultural lands acquired by the District. The Service Plan includes policies to meet the coastal mission of preserving agricultural lands, encouraging agricultural use and preserving the rural character, and establishes Guiding Principles for the following eight policy areas:

- Land Acquisition
- Services and Funding
- Agriculture
- Forestry
- Partnerships
- Representation
- Planning and Development
- Land Use

The Guiding Principles are organized into three categories:

- **Permanent Policies** — Policy statements that are critical for the District to operate effectively within the Coastside Protection Area. There are six (6) Permanent Policies in the Service Plan.
- **Guidelines** — Guidelines to inform decision-making and the formation and operation of District programs within the Coastside Protection Area. Guidelines indicate to the general public a clear commitment by the District. There are 51 Guidelines in the Service Plan.
- **Implementation Actions** — Explain how the District will operate within the Coastside Protection Area. These actions, procedures, programs, or techniques are the means by which the District carries out the Permanent Policies and Guidelines. There are 36 Implementation Actions in the Service Plan.

Policy Development Efforts for the Coastside Protection Area

Since 2004, the District has consistently followed the Service Plan Guiding Principles to implement its Coastside mission in all areas, such as coastal land acquisitions, public access planning for coastal properties, and operations and management of coastal properties. Recent examples of the District's implementation of the Service Plan guidelines include the acquisitions of Johnston Ranch, South Cowell, and Cloverdale Ranch properties and the planning and development of the Purisima-to-the-Sea trail and parking area.

To better guide its activities and services within the Coastside Protection Area, the District has devoted significant effort in developing and updating District policies and guidelines consistent with the Service Plan for key policy areas. Notable strategic initiatives and policy work include:

Vision Plan and Measure AA

In 2012, the District initiated an 18-month vision planning process to engage District partners, stakeholders, and the public in a process to determine a 40-year vision for land preservation, resource management, public recreation, and working lands. The District included representatives from the San Mateo County Coast to serve on the 32-member Community Advisory Committee (CAC) formed by the Board of Directors to inform the development of the Vision Plan. Focused outreach was conducted in San Mateo County coastal communities, such as Half Moon Bay and Pescadero, to solicit input on the vision for the future of open space. The Board approved 54 Vision Plan priority actions in January 2014, of which the top 25 priority actions informed the Capital Expenditure Plan for a future funding measure. Priority actions are groups of capital projects organized by geographic area within District boundaries. Six of the top 25 priority actions (also known as portfolios) are located in the coastside protection area. Additionally, two regional portfolios have a strong focus on the Coastside Protection Area.

In February 2014, the Board approved an ordinance regarding the District's specific intentions to fund as much of the top 25 Vision Plan Priority Actions as possible by placing a bond measure,

known as Measure AA, on the June 3, 2014 ballot. Over two-thirds of District voters approved the \$300 million general obligation bond in June 2014. The District issued its first portion of bonds, sized at \$45 million, in August 2015. These funds were used to implement the Measure AA Five-Year Project List first approved by the Board in October 2014, and subsequently updated in March 2018 and December 2021.

The Coastal Service Plan calls for the District to work cooperatively with its constituents to develop appropriate voter-approved funding measures to provide a higher level of services within the Coastsides Protection Area. The 2014 voter-approved Measure AA (MAA) provides \$120 million in funding for project portfolios on the San Mateo County Coast, with emphasis on redwood forest protection, fisheries restoration, conservation grazing infrastructure improvements, trail connections and staging areas, and acquisition and preservation of important coastal open space and agricultural lands.

Highlights of MAA-funded accomplishments and beneficial outcomes since 2014 within the Coastsides Protection Area include:

- 2,400 acres of open space land preserved*
- 9.1 miles of trail opened to the public
- 1,200 acres of additional acres included in the conservation grazing program
- Opened lower La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve to public access
- \$26.8 million invested on Coastsides projects

*An additional 5,100+ acres are expected to close escrow by the end of June 2023. Also, approximately 10,000 acres of other coastal lands have been acquired since 2004 (since the coastal annexation) using other funding sources.

Good Neighbor Policy Update

The Good Neighbor Policy, originally developed in 1988, demonstrates the District's commitment to building and maintaining good relationships with all its adjacent neighbors, defined in the policy as residents and property owners located adjacent or close to a District preserve who may be affected by maintenance or visitor activities on the preserves. In both the long-range planning and day-to-day management of the open space preserves, the District is committed to working closely with neighbors, to take into account their perspectives, address their concerns, and engage and involve them in the decision-making processes.

A specific LAFCo condition of the Service Plan required the District to amend its Good Neighbor policy to include the key Service Plan policies, guidelines and implementation actions that relate to the enjoyment of privacy on adjoining private lands and on public involvement in the development of policies and use and management plans for District lands. The District updated the Good Neighbor policy in 2007 to include 13 policy provisions that meet these requirements.

In 2009, the Board approved the Good Neighbor Brochure, "A Guide for Our Open Space Neighbors," which was updated in February 2014. The District is currently working on another update to the Good Neighbor Policy to ensure that the policy language remains relevant based on current needs and conditions. Staff anticipates presenting an updated Good Neighbor Policy in early 2024 for Board review and consideration.

Grazing Management Policy Amendment

In 2021, the Board approved an amendment to the Grazing Management Policy to add new policies and associated implementation measures that address conflicts between native predators and conservation grazing livestock in District preserves. The amended policy seeks to address livestock predation issues to protect native predators while supporting grassland management through conservation grazing by taking a science-based approach towards mitigating potential future conflicts. The policy amendment specifically included reimbursement for cattle loss due to predation, a reduced rental rate, and research of livestock and wildlife protection measures.

Agricultural Policy Update

In 2019, the District began working on the Agricultural (Ag) Policy, which is intended to outline the District's role in agriculture within the region and guide its agricultural conservation partnership work and management of agricultural lands. Through extensive stakeholder and public engagement, staff identified thirteen (13) policy areas that include agricultural housing, agricultural infrastructure, leases, recreation and others. All of these policies are consistent with the policies, guidelines, and implementation actions in the Coastal Service Plan, such as Permanent Policy PA.3, which emphasizes land protection through agricultural easements and leases with interested farmers and ranchers in the Coastside Protection Area. In addition, emergent and relevant themes, such as Diversity, Equity and Inclusion considerations, are also included in the policy updates to reflect the diversity and growing needs of the agricultural community. A final draft Ag Policy is currently being shared with stakeholders for additional input prior to its presentation to the Board for review and consideration in summer 2023.

Resource Management Policies Updates

The Board adopted the District's Resource Management Policies in 1994 and subsequently approved amendments to these policies in 2012, 2014, 2018, 2021 and 2022. The Resource Management Policies (RMPs) cover all District property, including lands located in the Coastside Protection Area. The RMPs serve as the principal policy governing resource management issues to guide the day-to-day work of staff and inform the public on District policies and priorities.

The 2012 update, among other broad changes, added water resources policies to improve watershed coordination, fisheries habitat, and ponds/wetlands management. At that time, the Board approved a Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Program for the Resource Management Policies applicable to all District owned and/or managed lands prior to approving the updated RMPs.

The 2014 revision included an update to policies affecting the Integrated Pest Management Program. The 2018 update incorporated additions to the water resources section of the policies pertaining to water diversions, and consumptive water use and management, as well as several revisions to improve clarity and the organization of the water resources section. The 2021 revision updated the Conservation Grazing Policies. Most recently, in 2022, the Board adopted a new Mitigation Policy and associated revisions to the Resource Management Policies to guide future decisions on outside agency mitigation requests and inform mitigation efforts for internal projects.

Coastal Management Plan

In April 2022, the Board reviewed a Coastal Management Plan (CMP), which identifies recommended actions to be undertaken by the District, phased in over the next five years, to build ongoing and sustainable organizational capacity to support expanding programs and responsibilities to care for and manage coastal preserves. Recommendations found in the CMP were based upon the result of an evaluation of duties, work plans, staff capacity, and organization within five of the District's key programs (Land Protection, Visitor Services, Land and Facilities Management, Resource Management, and Project Planning and Delivery for Public Access) that will be impacted by the anticipated increase in coastal preserve acreages and public access within the next five years. To address the needs of the coastal properties, the CMP recommended the following actions:

- Create a separate Visitor Services Coastal Field Unit
- Develop a new Coastal Office
- Provide staff housing on Cloverdale Ranch
- Update the Financial and Operational Sustainability Model (FOSM)
- Propose increased staffing in four departments (Visitor Services, Land and Facilities, Natural Resources, and Planning)

Development of Basic Policies for the Coastsides Protection Area

While significant progress has been made to meet Service Plan commitments, one Service Plan Guideline (G.6.1) remains outstanding, which states that the District will develop a Basic Policy for the Coastsides Protection Area. As the Service Plan has provided adequate policy guidance on the District's work over the past 18 years, the General Manager recommends using the Service Plan as the basis for developing the Basic Policy for the Coastsides Protection Area. Based on an early review of the existing Basic Policy, it may be possible to accomplish the objective by amending the current Basic Policy to incorporate the Coastsides Protection Area. This approach would be confirmed as staff proceeds further with this effort.

Staff proposes the following process to establish the Basic Policy for the Coastsides Protection Area and seeks LFPAC review and input:

1. Existing Policy Review and Development of Draft Basic Policies
 - Review the current Basic Policy and compare the Basic Policy with the Coastal Service Plan Guiding Principles and other coastsides policies to identify policy gaps
 - Develop draft Basic Policy language to address the gaps for the Coastsides Protection Area
2. Board Review of the Draft Basic Policy language/edits for the Coastsides Protection Area
 - Obtain Board initial feedback on the draft Basic Policy language
 - Incorporate feedback into a new revised Basic Policy to solicit broader public input
3. Public Outreach and Input on Draft Basic Policy Language/Edits
 - Solicit input in a variety of ways, including but not limited to:
 - One-on-one meetings with key stakeholders (examples could include city and county elected officials, advocates, local leaders)
 - Focused meetings with specific stakeholder groups (examples could include coastal community-serving nonprofits, community interest groups)

(English and Spanish-speaking), nonprofit land trusts, other conservation-oriented organizations, Farm Bureau and local farmworker community groups, Cuesta La Honda Guild)

- Presentations to governmental agencies and government-sponsored organizations within the Coastside Protection Area (examples could include City of Half Moon Bay, San Mateo County Agricultural Advisory Committee, Midcoast Community Council, Pescadero Municipal Advisory Council, San Mateo County Farm Worker Advisory Commission, San Mateo Resource Conservation District, San Mateo County)
 - Community meetings (both in person and virtual)
 - Website with comment form
 - Email and phone contacts
 - Mailing
- Initial postcard mailing will be provided to the coastal interested parties list and stakeholders identified above for the first policy development public meeting. This mailing notification will request that people interested in the development of these policies either sign up for email notifications (if their emails are not already in the District's system) or specifically request paper mailings for future public engagement events and public meetings. It is anticipated that future notifications beyond the initial mailing will largely be via email.

4. Incorporate Public Input into the Final Draft

5. Board review and approval of Final Basic Policy Language/Edits

Formation of an Ad Hoc Committee

Due to the complexity and importance of this work, the Board may want to consider forming a Coastside Protection Area Basic Policy Ad Hoc Committee (Ad Hoc Committee) to work with staff in developing policy language for subsequent public review and full Board approval. The Ad Hoc Committee would be composed of three Board members appointed by the Board President with the consent of the Board. Meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee would be compensable. Once the draft policies are prepared, the Ad Hoc Committee could also work with staff to present the draft policies to stakeholders and community members.

The Ad Hoc Committee, if formed, would provide guidance throughout the policy development process, reviewing policy gaps and proposed new language with staff, and finalizing initial edits before forwarding the draft Basic Policy language/edits for initial Board review. The Ad Hoc Committee may also work alongside staff in soliciting public input once the draft language is ready for public review, and in working with staff to incorporate final edits before the Basic Policy is presented to the Board for a second review and consideration of approval.

If the Board decides not to form an Ad Hoc Committee, staff will work with LFPAC to accomplish most of the tasks listed in the paragraph above.

FISCAL IMPACT

Review and update of the Basic Policy has no direct fiscal impact.

PRIOR BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW

The Basic Policy, other key policies referenced in the Basic Policy, and the Service Plan previously came before the full Board of Directors at the following public meetings:

- **March 10, 1999:** Board Final Review of Basic Policy ([R-99-41](#), [meeting minutes](#))
- **June 5, 2003:** Board certification of San Mateo Coastal Annexation Final Program Environmental Impact Report and related documents ([R-03-54](#), [meeting minutes](#))
- **May 24, 2017:** Board review of the San Mateo Coastal Annexation Area Service Plan and Commitments ([R-17-66](#), [meeting minutes](#))
- **November 1, 2017:** Coastside Service Plan Community Workshop
- **April 27, 2022:** Board review of Coastal Management Plan ([R-22-53](#), [meeting minutes](#))

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice of this meeting was provided as required by the Brown Act and included the Coastal interested parties list. The San Mateo County Farm Bureau was notified by District staff directly.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) COMPLIANCE

This item is not subject to CEQA.

NEXT STEPS

If the Board approves the proposed policy development process, the General Manager will work with the Board to establish the Ad Hoc Committee to proceed with the work as described in this report.

Attachments:

1. [Basic Policy Adopted on March 10, 1999](#)
2. [Service Plan for the San Mateo Coastal Annexation Area](#) (link only)
(https://www.openspace.org/sites/default/files/Coastal_Service_Plan_0.pdf)

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NOTE: The public may obtain policy documents by contacting the District office during regular business hours Monday through Friday 8:30 am to 5:00 pm.

These policies are intended solely for the guidance of the Board in the exercise of its discretion and are not intended to give rise to private rights or causes of action in individuals or other persons. The Board shall be the final arbiter as to any question of interpretation of these policies. It is not the purpose of these policies to adopt any legal requirements. Failure to comply with these policies shall not affect the validity of any action taken by the District.

BASIC POLICY OF THE MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

**Adopted by the Board of
Directors on March 10, 1999**



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**Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District**

INTRODUCTION

"...to try to save for everyone, for the hostile and indifferent as well as the committed, some of the health that flows down across the green ridges from the Skyline, and some of the beauty and refreshment of spirit that are still available to any resident of the valley who has a moment, and the wit, to lift up his eyes unto the hills."

-Wallace Stegner

OPEN SPACE:

- Is land area that is allowed to remain in or return to its natural state. Open space lands may include compatible agricultural uses.
- Protects areas of scenic beauty and preserves natural habitats necessary to sustain plant and animal life, especially native and endangered species.
- Offers opportunities to the public for education, recreation, and renewal of spirit.
- Enhances public safety by preventing development of areas prone to landslides, earthquake damage, flooding, and wildland fires.
- Establishes boundaries for urban growth, provides a respite from urban living, and enhances regional quality of life.

In short, open space is "room to breathe."¹

MISSION STATEMENT

The District's mission is:

To acquire and preserve a regional greenbelt of open space land in perpetuity; protect and restore the natural environment; and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.

OBJECTIVES

1. Open Space Land Preservation: The District seeks to purchase or otherwise acquire interest in the maximum feasible area of strategic² open space land within the District, including baylands and foothills. The District seeks to link its open space lands with federal, state, county, and city parklands and watershed lands.

Policies

District Purpose

- a. As an open space agency, the District's primary purpose is to preserve open space. Development of traditional park and recreation facilities is the responsibility of the cities and counties.³

Strategic Emphasis

- b. The District uses its available resources primarily to acquire or otherwise preserve land outside the Urban Service Area boundaries of cities that has regionally significant open space value and that might be lost to development if the District fails to act.⁴

The District's goal is to acquire lands within its own boundaries and Sphere of Influence. Acquisitions outside the District's boundaries will be considered only if exceptional purchase opportunities arise that clearly support the District's mission.⁵

Open Space Acquisition

- c. The District acquires land most often through fee simple interest (outright ownership). Options and installment purchases may be employed to this end. To conserve funding for preservation, the District may seek to preserve open space without outright ownership of the land. The District may act as a land bank through acquisition of less than fee interest to accomplish the same results with less immediate expenditure of the District's funds. Examples include acquisition of a remainder interest following a life tenancy; open space, conservation, or scenic easements; and purchase and leaseback arrangements. The District actively strives to acquire open space through gifts and matching grants. Gifts of land with life tenancy are encouraged. Other creative open space preservation techniques are explored and utilized when possible.⁶

The District desires to acquire open space from willing sellers. Eminent domain will be used only in strict compliance with the District's eminent domain policies:

*"The District does not want to use eminent domain as a means of purchasing land unless the property concerned is an open space parcel of critical importance or is under some dire emergency, such as immediate destruction of natural resources, or clearing for development purposes. Even under such urgent circumstances, however, eminent domain would still be used only as a last resort. The District would continue to use negotiations as its objective in purchasing the land."*⁷

Master Plan, Regional Open Space Study

- d. To guide the District's open space preservation efforts, the District produces a master plan and a regional open space study. The master plan sets forth guidelines for District acquisitions and shows the relative desirability of potential open space land acquisitions. The regional open space study shows the general extent of lands and public access

improvements existing and under consideration to complete the District's greenbelt mission.

Both documents are subject to periodic review and modification by the Board of Directors after public hearings. The regional open space study is subject to periodic technical updates. Both documents are submitted to the counties, cities, and other conservation-oriented local, state, and federal agencies and organizations for review and comment in order to encourage coordination with their planning and policies.

2. Open Space Management: The District follows management policies that ensure proper care of the land, that provide public access appropriate to the nature of the land, and that are consistent with ecological values and public safety.⁸

Policies

Resource Management

- a. The District protects and restores the natural diversity and integrity of its resources for their value to the environment, and the public, and provides for the use of the preserves consistent with resource protection.⁹

Public Access and Constraints

- b. The District provides public access to the open space lands for low-intensity recreational uses. The District's highest priority is acquiring land to complete the greenbelt and to protect natural resources on open space land. Public access will be provided gradually to ensure that the higher priorities of acquisition and resource protection are maintained.

Developing facilities and managing public use activities while protecting natural resources and providing for public safety may require limits on access to some open space lands. Areas found to be vital wildlife or plant habitats are designated as refuge areas, and in these areas access will be severely restricted. In addition to protection of sensitive natural resources, factors that may delay or limit access include the carrying capacity of the land, geologic features, restoration efforts, the ability to plan and implement trails, parking, restrooms, mapboards and signs, and identification and mitigation of potential safety hazards.¹⁰

Because of the District's commitment to maximum open space preservation efforts, expenditure guidelines will be established for the amount of funding available for recreational improvement projects and restoration activities.¹¹

Agricultural, residential, and other limited revenue producing uses of the land may limit public access in certain areas. Where appropriate, access may be provided on a permit basis.

The District strives to provide public access to its lands to everyone, regardless of place of residence, physical abilities, or economic status. (See Access Plan for Persons with Disabilities).

Recreational Use and Improvements

c. Improvements on District lands are generally limited to facilities (i.e. parking areas, trails and patrol roads, restrooms, mapboards, and signs) for low-intensity recreational uses. Low-intensity recreation avoids concentration of use, significant alteration of the land, and significant impact on the natural resources or on the appreciation of nature.^{12, 13}

The timing and level of access for low intensity public recreational use of District open space land will be evaluated for each type of use in terms of four basic criteria:

1. Protection of natural resources;
2. Preservation of the opportunity for tranquil nature study and observation;
3. Avoidance of significant user conflicts;
4. Availability of Board and staff time, funding, and/or other means, to plan and manage the use.

The District will plan for low intensity public access to ensure that these criteria will be met before use is provided, and will control use that does not meet the criteria, as interpreted by the Board. To protect open space qualities, the District will use a high standard in applying the criteria.

Access for hiking is typically unrestricted on District trails and lands. Wheelchair accessible trails and other reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities are provided to ensure access to a range of open space settings with wide geographic distribution. Safe and enjoyable access for hiking and for persons with disabilities may be given priority over other types of uses where significant conflicts are evident.¹⁴

The District is committed to working with different trail user groups to find practical solutions to recreational use issues with the understanding that some trails or preserves may not be open to all uses.

Special Use facilities, (i.e. nature centers, historic structures, picnic tables, or backpack camps), and Special Use activities (i.e. large recreation events, hang gliding, or off-leash dog areas), are considered on a case by case basis. In some cases Special Use activities may require a permit. These types of uses may be allowed when they do not monopolize significant areas of natural land, do not significantly impact natural or aesthetic resources, and provide benefits such as environmental education, heritage resource protection, or public enjoyment and appreciation of

nature. The cost of management and exposure to liability of these types of facilities and activities may be a factor in deciding whether to permit them on District lands.

Public Safety

d. The District monitors and manages its preserves to provide a safe environment for visitors and neighbors.¹⁵

Cultural Resources

e. Historic structures and sites will be considered for protection by the District where they are associated with lands acquired for overall open space values. Due to the high cost of evaluating, managing, and restoring such facilities, the District depends on grant assistance, public-private partnerships, and outside assistance to support these activities. Sites are evaluated for archaeological resources prior to any new use or improvement which might impact the site. Archaeological resources are evaluated, protected, and made known to the public as appropriate to ensure their preservation.¹⁶

Agriculture and Revenue-Producing Use

f. The District supports the continued agricultural use of land acquired for open space as an economic and cultural resource, including, but not limited to, grazing, orchards, row crops, and vineyards. The District does not consider commercial logging as agriculture. The District requires sound agricultural management practices on land it manages or monitors, in accordance with its Resource Management Policies.¹⁷

g. Revenue-producing use of District land, such as rental residences, communications antennas, or special commercial use such as filming, may be allowed when it does not utilize significant areas of natural land, does not unduly impact natural or aesthetic resources, does not unreasonably restrict public access, and provides benefits or income to the District.

3. Inter-Agency Relationships: The District works with and encourages private and other public agencies to preserve, maintain, and enhance open space.

Policies

Cooperation

a. The District cooperates with and encourages cooperation between governmental agencies, community organizations, and individuals to preserve open space.¹⁸

The District works cooperatively with other governmental agencies and community organizations to facilitate development and management of recreation facilities and of public use. The District ensures that such development is consistent with protection of important natural values of the open space.

Participation

b. The District participates in the public review processes of land use plans of other agencies and development proposals that affect the District's mission.

Joint Projects

c. The District explores and engages in joint projects to maximize the opportunities for preservation of open space. Examples include inter-agency land management agreements, joint planning or research studies, and joint acquisition, improvement, or resource management projects.

Research

d. The District supports the development of scientific knowledge about natural and cultural resources and management techniques through cooperative arrangements with educational and scientific institutions, and by supporting research on which to base its management and improvement decisions. Such studies shall not unreasonably restrict public access or significantly impact the environment.

Advocacy

e. In order to better plan, acquire, and operate a regional greenbelt of open space preserves and trails, and to further cooperate in this effort with other jurisdictions, the District may encourage and advocate preservation of open space by other governmental agencies. The District may support and encourage community groups, non-profits, and other conservation-oriented groups in their efforts to urge other agencies to take actions which will help accomplish the purposes and goals of the District.

4. Public Involvement: The District educates and makes clearly visible to the public the purposes and actions of the District, and actively encourages public input and involvement in the District's decision-making process and other activities.

Policies

Public Information

a. The District works through a variety of means and media to inform the public of the District's goals and objectives, its short and long-term plans, the critical need for open space preservation, and the appropriate use of District lands. This information is disseminated as widely as possible throughout the District. Land-owners and potential donors are adequately informed of the District's purpose and goals, and of the possible methods of preserving land as open space.

Meeting Procedures

b. The District diligently follows the provisions of the Ralph M. Brown Act regarding open meeting procedures, and will be guided by its enabling legislation under the state Public Resources Code, Article 3, Division 5, Chapter 3, Section 5500. The District encourages and welcomes public participation at its meetings and make its actions, intents, and decisions clearly visible to the public.

Public Input

c. The District encourages and welcomes communication from the public by being as accessible to the public as possible and by regularly soliciting public comments about what the District should be accomplishing and how it should proceed.²⁰

Neighbor Relations

d. In both the day-to-day conduct of its business and in the long-range planning for public open space preserves, the District makes every effort to cooperate with preserve neighbors, to take into account their perspectives, to fully address their concerns, and to engage and involve them in the process of making decisions regarding the preserves of which they are neighbors. Active management, patrol, maintenance, and public education are provided to minimize threats to public safety, fire hazards, litter, noise, erosion, unsound use of the land, disturbance of wildlife and vegetation, and trespassing.²¹

Participation

e. The District seeks to involve the public in the operation and decision-making of the District and in general planning for acquisition and future use of open space lands through special workshops, committees and task forces, and public outreach activities. Through staff and volunteer programs, the District provides ecological and environmental education and fosters public appreciation of open space values.

Volunteerism

f. Through its volunteer programs, the District encourages active public participation in the maintenance, restoration, and protection of its natural resources. In addition, volunteers assist the District in scientific research, and providing cultural, historical, and environmental education opportunities to the public.

5. Administration: The staff administers the affairs of the District on behalf of the public so as to maximize accomplishment of the goals and objectives of the District within existing financial constraints.

Policies

Cost Constraints

a. Because the District is committed to maximum preservation efforts, administrative expense growth is limited by following an average annual operating expenses growth guideline, and by utilizing the help of other governmental agencies, private entities, contractual services, and volunteers.²²

Professional Organization

b. The District employs a highly capable and professional staff and provides them with the facilities and resources needed to run an efficient and responsible organization.

Board of Directors

c. The Board of Directors is the governing body of the District and determines all questions of policy. The District is divided into seven geographic wards of approximately equal populations, each represented by an elected Board member.²³

FOOTNOTES:

1. Open Space Acquisition Policies, Pg. 3
2. Open Space Acquisition Policies, Pgs. 2-6
3. Master Plan/Open Space Acquisition Policies, Pg. 3; Land Acquisition Policies, Pg. 3, Par. F
4. Master Plan/Open Space Acquisition Policies, Pg. 6
5. Land Acquisition Policies, Pg. 3
6. Land Acquisition Policies, Pgs. 5 - 10
7. Polices Regarding Use of Eminent Domain, Ordinance No. 86-1
8. Resource Management Policies
9. Resource Management Mission Statement
10. Resource Management Policies
11. Average Seven Percent Growth Guideline for District Operating Expenses and Annual Budget
12. Resource Management Policies
13. Land Acquisition Policies, Pg. 3, Par. F
14. Trail Use Policies
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17. Resource Management Policies, Goals 10 and 11
18. Open Space Acquisition Policies, Pgs. 9, 10
19. Rules of Procedure, Notification Policies, Land Acquisition Policies, Pgs. 15, 16
20. Public Notification and Good Neighbor Policies
21. Good Neighbor Policy, Public Notification Policies, District Land Use Regulations
22. Average Seven Percent Growth Guideline for District Operating Expenses and Annual Budget
23. Public Resources Code, Section 5537