



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

November 8, 2023
Board Meeting 23-32

**REGULAR MEETING
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT**

Wednesday, November 8, 2023

*The Board of Directors conducted this meeting in accordance with
California Government Code section 54953.*

APPROVED MINUTES*

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MIDPENINSULA
REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT**

President Kishimoto called the regular meeting of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to order at 7:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Jed Cyr, Craig Gleason, Zoe Kersteen-Tucker, Yoriko Kishimoto, Margaret MacNiven, and Curt Riffle

Members Absent: Karen Holman

Staff Present: General Manager Ana Ruiz, General Counsel Hilary Stevenson, Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan, Chief Financial Officer/Director of Administrative Services Stefan Jaskulak, District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Maria Soria Executive Assistant/Deputy District Clerk Loana Lumina-Hsu, Budget & Finance Manager Rafaela Ocegueda, Accountant I Gregoria Barrera, Real Planner III Aaron Peth, Planner II Brittany Wheatman, Senior Capital Project Manager Scott Reeves, Senior Planner Gretchen Laustsen, Planning Manager Jane Mark, Area Superintendent Brad Pennington and Human Resources Manager Candice Basnight

President Kishimoto announced this meeting is being held in accordance with Government Code section 54953. The public has the opportunity to comment on the agenda, and the opportunity to listen to this meeting through the internet or via telephone. This information can be found on the meeting agenda, which was physically posted at the District's Administrative Office, and on the District website.

Director Karen Holman joined the Board Meeting at 7:04 p.m.

* Approved by the Board of Directors on December 13, 2023.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Public comment opened at 7:02 p.m.

District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Maria Soria reported there were no public speakers.

Public comment closed at 7:02 p.m.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion: Director Cyr moved, and Director MacNiven seconded the motion to adopt the agenda.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 6-0-0 (Director Holman absent)

SPECIAL ORDERS OF THE DAY

Introduction of Staff

- Gregoria Barrera, Accountant I

CONSENT CALENDAR

Public comment opened at 7:06 p.m.

Ms. Soria reported there were no public speakers for this item.

Public comment closed at 7:06 p.m.

Motion: Director Kersteen-Tucker moved, and Director Gleason seconded the motion to approve the Consent Calendar.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 7-0-0

1. **Approve the October 11, 2023 meeting minutes**
2. **Claims Report**
3. **Quarter 1 Proposed Budget Amendments for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2024 (R-23-132)**

General Manager's Recommendation: Adopt a resolution approving the proposed quarter 1 budget amendments for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024.

4. **Annual Dedication Report of Certain Lands of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (R-23-133)**

General Manager's Recommendations: Accept the annual report on the status of dedicated interests in lands of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District held for public open space purposes.

BOARD BUSINESS**5. Highway 35 Multi-use Trail Crossing and Parking Feasibility Study at Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (R-23-137)**

Planner II Brittany Wheatman provided the staff presentation on the Highway 35 Multi-use trail Crossing and Parking Feasibility Study (Project) at Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve. The Project aims to enhance regional connectivity through a multi-use trail crossing that will connect trails on both sides of Highway 35 and identify ways to reconfigure and increase parking capacity at the North Ridge parking area. Project goals and strategies are guiding the development of Project elements and will be used to evaluate Project success. Technical studies have evaluated four distinct project areas and include a traffic study to identify a feasible crossing location for connecting with the SFPUC trail extension. No resources of concern were identified, and all of the studies support expanding the parking into both the upper and lower areas.

Senior Capital Projects Manager Scott Reeves continued the staff presentation on the traffic study confirming the feasibility of an on-grade crossing across Skyline Boulevard, which adheres to the Caltrans Highway Design Manual and Caltrans Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Mr. Reeves stated that the consultant did a full evaluation of available data, including level of service, traffic volume, vehicle speed, collision history, and site distances. Mr. Reeves went on to review the process and results of each study. The consultant concluded their work with a series of recommendations, including maintaining the existing driveway entrance/exit, locating an on-grade crossing near the driveway exit with signage, utilizing a design speed of 55 mph, which is higher than 85% of recorded speeds, improving and maintaining clear lines of sight for 500 feet in each direction from the crossing location (this will likely result in tree limbing and removals), installing advance warning signage 325 feet away in each direction, and defining 140-feet of no-parking within the right-of-way. Mr. Reeves highlighted the Transportation Demand Strategies (TDMs) that the consultant recommends as part of the project, reviewed the existing conditions and each of the proposed design options.

Director Riffe inquired whether fog was considered in the traffic study and whether blinking lights or other mechanisms would be installed at the crosswalk in the event of fog.

Mr. Reeves stated that fog was discussed and considered by the traffic engineers. They believe that a flashing beacon ahead of the crossing would be an effective mitigation.

Director Riffe inquired whether the beacon would be activated by pressing a button.

Mr. Reeves explained that the flashing beacon would be a constant flash, but ultimately it will be determined by Caltrans.

Director Riffe asked for clarification on the management of equestrian parking and if the equestrian parking spots will be flexed and used for other purposes.

Mr. Reeves explained that the policy is still in development but may be based on allowing equestrians and passenger vehicles to park on specific days of the week.

Director Gleason asked if a push-button would be feasible rather than having a constant flashing beacon.

Mr. Reeves stated that a push-button activated beacon is a feasible alternative as well, however the consultant had proposed a permanent flashing beacon.

Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested a push button beacon such as one that is located on Highway 1 in Moss Beach, the lights are visible in foggy environments and allows a driver to see them well in advance to slow down. The lights are high enough that so that the constant flash is not jarring to the driver.

Director Kersteen-Tucker inquired whether the beacon would be a decision of Caltrans or the District.

Mr. Reeves stated that it is Caltrans decision and noted that the District will present recommendations to Caltrans.

Director Kersteen-Tucker acknowledged the parking challenges for equestrians and stated that communication efforts should be prioritized to inform them on whether there are available parking spaces for trailers in the short term rather than waiting on the TDM strategies.

President Kishimoto asked when the TDMs would be presented to the Board for discussion.

Senior Planner Gretchen Laustsen explained that, within the CEQA process for this project, staff will conduct a comprehensive examination of Purisima, including Highway 35 and Purisima-to-the-Sea, along with various other components. Currently, there is an ongoing solicitation for additional transportation planning services to gather more information on specific questions regarding the programming, infrastructure, and technology necessary for implementing TDMs. Staff will develop a comprehensive project description encompassing all aspects of the work, and subsequently present the draft project description to the full Board for consideration.

Director MacNiven urged the staff to consider alternative options instead of a continuous flashing beacon, expressing a preference for solutions that impose less intrusion on the highway.

Director Riffle commented that he supports the recommendation but given the convergence of various trails in this area, he anticipates a growing demand in the future and suggests adapting the parking needs for the future.

Director Gleason suggested creating a comparison chart of parking lot surface options, similar to the Design Concept Comparison chart, emphasizing its potential benefits in assisting the Board with reviewing the differences between the options.

Director Holman proposed that the District should develop design guidelines for parking areas. She commented that urban elements were introduced into a natural setting in the current area and expressed a preference for other approaches that blend better with the natural setting, including other options for delineating parking spots.

Director Riffle inquired if there is a way to open the parking lot earlier than 2027 to address the parking need. He suggested providing options that outline potential trade-offs for a project to

exceed on an accelerated schedule, including budget implications, and potential adjustments to the project scope.

Director Kersteen-Tucker requested providing amenities for e-bike parking.

Director Kersteen-Tucker expressed the importance of the “No Parking” signage along Highway 35 and emphasized the importance of adding signage now rather than to have people start parking illegally and then try to change their behavior later.

Assistant General Manager Brian Malone explained that there is a strong sentiment about aesthetics by local residents concerning limited "no parking" signage and preference for minimal signage for visual reasons. He stated that if parking was prohibited adjacent to the parking lot, it would need to be signed to be enforceable.

Director Gleason inquired if combining the CEQA process with other projects would artificially delay the schedule of this project if the goal is to accelerate the project.

Planning Manager Jane Mark explained that the CEQA process is being conducted for three projects: Purisima-to-the-Sea, Highway 35, and Purisima Multimodal Access. From a CEQA approach, it makes sense to evaluate these projects at the same time as part of an environmental review process. Avoiding a fragmented CEQA process is critical because they are all interrelated in terms of supporting different amenities and uses for the same preserve. Furthermore, a Comprehensive Use and Management Plan for Purisima Creek Redwoods that captures all of these projects will also refer for the same CEQA document.

General Manager Ana Ruiz stated if there is interest from the Board in accelerating the project, she proposes going back to evaluate the process with staff to assess the feasibility of an acceleration and identify the potential implications and trade-offs, and then bring this information back to the Board in a memo or for a subsequent discussion.

Director Holman requested that if the feasibility of accelerating the process is determined, the information should also include a proposed timeline and details regarding the CEQA portion of the project.

Director Kersteen-Tucker supports the idea of the General Manager providing the Board with additional information on the feasibility of an accelerated timeline while acknowledging that it does not necessarily commit the Board to the proposed action.

Director Holman inquired what direction will be given to the landscape designer.

Mr. Reeves stated that the initial step would be to prepare the design to a point where it is ready for CEQA consideration. Subsequently, the intention is to continue developing the design further, progressing through the CEQA process and ultimately moving forward with the implementation phase.

Ms. Ruiz asked about the level of design that will be presented in the future to the Board for final review.

Mr. Reeves reported that a 65% design set would be presented to the Board for final review, which would include the proposed paving and striping solutions.

Ms. Ruiz suggested working with the design consultant so that at a 65% design set, there is enough specificity to address the aesthetic concerns raised by the Board.

Director Gleason echoed Director Holman stating that before the 65% design sets are prepared, aesthetic design goals be communicated to the consultant.

President Kishimoto commented that the goals were given and are listed on page two of the report.

Director Gleason pointed out a distinction between ecologically sensitive design and the visual aspects discussed earlier, emphasizing the need to recognize the difference.

Mr. Reeves commented that he appreciates the shared priorities and mentioned that when soliciting for a design consultant, staff seek consultants who understand the sense of place and rural character of District.

Director Holman commented that when it comes to the parking area itself, there is an opportunity to significantly elevate standards in terms of creating a sense of place and being more sensitive to the environment in the setting.

Public comment opened at 8:49 p.m.

Ms. Soria reported there were no public speakers for this item.

Public comment closed at 8:49 p.m.

Director Cyr moved, and Director Riffle seconded the General Manager's recommendation (conceptual parking design Option A.2 (upper and lower parking area expansion with two-way circulation and the associated multi-use trail crossing location and design). Director Holman suggested an amendment to the motion, to direct staff to explore the feasibility of separating and advancing the Highway 35 Parking Area and Trail Crossing project ahead of the other Purisima Creek Redwoods projects and provide a recommendation to the Board. Director Gleason supported this suggested amendment.

Director Kersteen-Tucker expressed that while she finds Director Holman's suggestion reasonable, she has questions about the cost, opportunities, and constraints associated with the proposed changes, and whether expediting this project might come at the expense of other projects in the pipeline.

President Kishimoto expressed her intention to vote against the amendment and stated that she believes that in this specific case, the projects are intertwined, and that it does not make sense to separate them.

Amendment to the Motion: Director Holman moved, and Director Gleason seconded the amendment to the motion for staff to return with the feasibility of separating and advancing the

Highway 35 Parking Area and Trail Crossing project ahead of the other Purisima Creek Redwoods projects.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 4-3-0 (Directors Kishimoto, MacNiven, Cyr voted No.)

Motion: Director Cyr moved, and Director Riffle seconded the motion to accept conceptual parking design Option A.2 (upper and lower parking area expansion with two-way circulation and the associated multi-use trail crossing location and design) as the project description and scope to initiate environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act for the Highway 35 Multi-use Trail Crossing and Parking Project.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 7-0-0

President Kishimoto called for a recess at 9:06 p.m.

President Kishimoto resumed the meeting at 9:12 p.m. with all Board members present.

6. Carpool Pilot Program at Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve (R-23-138)

Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan presented an overview of the project background of the Carpool Pilot Program at Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve (Rancho). She stated that Rancho is the most popular preserve, resulting in parking and congestion challenges. In 2020, the District initiated the Rancho San Antonio Multimodal Access Study to explore non-motorized and transit options, along with parking alternatives, aiming to address the parking and congestion issues. Through an extensive public engagement process, 15 Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies were identified and prioritized into three sets of recommendations. In 2021, the Board approved the first set of strategies, which included the launch of a carpool restricted parking lot. The goal of the carpool restricted parking lot is to incentivize visitors to shift from single occupancy vehicles to high occupancy vehicles so that overall, the parking demand is reduced. Ms. Chan reviewed how the carpool pilot program was implemented and shared the lessons learned. She recommends concluding the pilot program as the District has collected sufficient data to evaluate next steps and adding a new project to the upcoming fiscal year to evaluate long-term carpool program implementation options.

Public comment opened at 9:37 p.m.

Ms. Soria stated there are no public comments.

Public comment closed at 9:37 p.m.

Director Gleason thanked staff for implementing the pilot program and is interested to see the outcomes of further studies because Rancho is particularly important to many people and is a unique place for the District, and it is worth exploring creative solutions and looks forward to the results of these efforts.

President Kishimoto commented that she supports the recommendation and that, while it is unfortunate that it will be temporarily removed, she believes that when the carpool lot is reinstated, it will be a better and stronger version.

Director Kersteen-Tucker expressed her admiration for how people's behavior has changed and suggested that staff use social media to thank the public for participating in the pilot program, thanking them for their assistance, stating what was learned and what the next steps will be.

Director Cyr suggested staff should reach out to East Bay Regional Park District as they may have information on carpool lots.

Motion: Director Gleason moved, and Director Riffle seconded the motion to:

1. Conclude the carpool pilot program as the pilot program has reached its project objectives.
2. Direct the General Manager to add a new project to the upcoming fiscal year to evaluate long-term carpool program implementation options based on lessons learned from the pilot program.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 7-0-0

- 7. Approval of Salary Adjustments and Amended Classification and Compensation Plan for Board Appointee Controller (R-23-134)**
- 8. Approval of Salary Adjustments and Classification and Compensation Plan for Board Appointee General Counsel (R-23-135)**
- 9. Approval of Salary Adjustments and Amended Classification and Compensation Plan for Board Appointee General Manager (R-23-136)**

President Kishimoto reported that agenda items 7, 8, and 9 will be heard concurrently.

Director Riffle, the Chair of the Board Appointee Evaluation (BAE) Committee, provided an overview of the BAE Committee's activities from June to October. This year's committee included President Kishimoto and Vice-President MacNiven. Director Riffle mentioned that check-in meetings with the Board Appointees are planned for January and April. He expressed gratitude to the BAE Committee, Human Resources Manager Candice Basnight, Human Resources Supervisor Rebecca Wolfe, and District Clerk Soria for their support during the evaluation period. Director Riffle concluded by praising the District's appointees, expressing that they had a remarkable year, and is in support of their salary adjustments.

Director MacNiven and Director Cyr expressed gratitude to Director Riffle for his dedicated work as the BAE Committee Chair and for effectively steering the BAE process.

President Kishimoto conveyed appreciation to Director Riffle for his role as the BAE Committee chair, and extended thanks to the appointees for all their dedicated work and leadership.

Public comment opened at 9:47 p.m.

Ms. Soria stated there are no public comments.

Public comment closed at 9:47 p.m.

Motion: Director Kishimoto moved agenda items 7, 8, and 9, and Director Cyr seconded the motion to:

1. Adjust the Controller's base salary upward to \$52,760, plus a one-time merit pay bonus of \$1,583.
2. Adjust the General Counsel's base salary upward to \$274,070, plus a one-time merit pay bonus of \$13,704.
3. Adjust the General Manager's base salary upward to \$306,351, plus a one-time merit pay bonus of \$15,318.
4. Adopt a resolution approving the salary adjustments. The Board Appointee salary changes will be adopted through the Board approved Classification and Compensation Plan.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 7-0-0

INFORMATIONAL REPORTS

A. Committee Reports

Directors MacNiven and Cyr reported on the Legislative, Funding and Public Affairs Committee meeting that was held November 7, 2023, regarding the Grantmaking Program and stated she was impressed with the recommended grant awardees.

B. Staff Reports

Chief Financial Officer/Director of Administrative Services Stefan Jaskulak spoke on the Grants Program and Highway 17 tour held with the Wildlife Conservation Board.

C. Director Reports

Director MacNiven reported she along with staff held a meet-and-greet meeting with Portola Valley Town Manager Sharif Etman. She also attended the Board Briefing of the Event Center with staff and attended the Farm Bureau meeting.

Director Holman participated in Supervisor Joe Simitian's annual brunch on Sunday. She provided a summary of this year's topic and noted that Governmental Affairs Specialist Josh Hugg was present at the event, representing the District.

Director Riffle expressed appreciation to the staff who assisted with the logistics of having the Special Board meeting in Half Moon Bay, and to the staff who delivered a great presentation on the Agriculture Policy. He also reported that he attended a panel at Stanford on Monday, and that the panel included Jane Fonda, Bill McKibben, and Tom Steyer and they discussed climate activism and clean energy.

Director Gleason reported that he reached out to Alex Hapke, President of the MRPOA, to propose a debrief on the negotiations. He met with Alex and Jeff to discuss the negotiation process, and the overall feedback was positive.

President Kishimoto reported she attended a Bay Conservation and Development Commission meeting on November 2.

ADJOURNMENT

President Kishimoto adjourned the regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District meeting at 9:58 p.m.

Maria Soria, MMC
District Clerk