



Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District

R-25-112  
Meeting 25-24  
August 27, 2025

### AGENDA ITEM 3

#### AGENDA ITEM

Authorization to apply for California Hazard Mitigation Grant Funding for the replacement and upsizing of the Bear Creek Redwoods Parking Lot Culvert Mitigation Project

#### GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

(57) *[Signature]*

Authorize the General Manager to sign the required local match commitment letter in the amount of \$381,250 to secure \$1,143,750 in grant funding from the California Office of Emergency Services Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for the Bear Creek Redwoods Parking Lot Culvert Mitigation project and to negotiate and execute the grant agreement.

#### SUMMARY

The General Manager recommends that the Board of Directors (Board) authorize the General Manager to sign the required local match commitment letter for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's (District's) application to the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). If awarded, the General Manager also recommends authorization to negotiate and execute the grant agreement with Cal OES.

The requested grant funding of \$1,143,750, with a District match of \$381,250, will replace and enlarge an existing 60-inch culvert beneath the Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve parking lot to realign it with Santa Clara County's connecting culvert infrastructure under Bear Creek Road. Following disaster-related flooding and the formation of a sinkhole in 2023, Santa Clara County (County) completed emergency repairs and upsized their adjacent road culvert from 60 inches to 72 inches. The District's proposed project will help mitigate future flooding emergencies and enhance overall storm resilience at this location.

#### DISCUSSION

During the severe winter storms of December 2022 and January 2023, the District sustained over \$8 million in damage to roads, trails, dams, ponds, culverts, and bridges across multiple preserves in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. To help offset the substantial repair costs, the Board authorized staff in August 2023 to pursue federal and state disaster assistance, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Public Assistance Program and the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) Disaster Assistance Act, available through the Presidential Disaster Declaration for the January 2023 storms (FEMA DR-4683-CA).

Among the 29 projects submitted under this declaration was the Bear Creek Redwoods Parking Lot Culvert Replacement. However, on February 6, 2025, FEMA issued a determination memo deeming this culvert project ineligible for funding under the disaster grant.

In response, staff identified the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) as an alternative funding source and successfully advanced the project to the full proposal stage with Cal OES.

Project Need:

The proposed project addresses the District's undersized 500-foot-long culvert beneath the Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve public parking lot, which connects directly to the County's culvert under Bear Creek Road. After the disaster-declared storms caused significant road collapse and a sinkhole in 2023, the County upsized its Bear Creek Road culvert from 60 inches to 72 inches as part of an emergency repair. The District's older 60-inch corrugated metal pipe culvert is not optimally aligned with the County's infrastructure and is no longer sufficient for current and future stormwater flows.

The inadequate culvert capacity during the major storms led to flooding, the collapse of Bear Creek Road, and a six-month closure, affecting more than 8,000 local residents of Lexington Hills and Boulder Creek, who had to use significantly longer alternate routes. The closure also prevented vehicle access to Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve, which typically welcomes nearly 60,000 visitors annually. The County's emergency repairs alone cost nearly \$1.4 million.

A geotechnical assessment completed by the District in April 2023 confirmed that the District's current culvert lacks adequate capacity. Further, a hydrologic and hydraulic analysis completed in August 2023 determined the culvert is undersized for a 25-year storm event and recommended upsizing to a 72-inch diameter to align with the County's repairs and minimize future failures.

As part of the HMGP process, Cal OES requires a minimum 25% non-federal match. The Board is being asked to authorize the General Manager or designee to sign the local match commitment letter, confirming the District's ability to meet this requirement. The commitment letter was generated by the HMGP online system, based on data entered by District staff.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

Upon review and approval of the HMGP application by the funding agency, CalOES, this funding opportunity would have a positive impact of up to \$1,143,750. The District's 25% matching contribution to complete the culvert repair and upgrade work is \$381,250.

## **PRIOR BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW**

None

## **PUBLIC NOTICE**

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act.

## **CEQA COMPLIANCE**

Submitting grant applications to secure funding is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The project has received a Notice of Determination that fulfills the necessary environmental requirements.

**NEXT STEPS**

If approved by the Board, the General Manager will 1) sign the letter of local match commitment to enable the completion and submission of a CalOES HMGP grant application for the replacement and upsizing of the Bear Creek Redwoods Parking Lot Culvert; and 2) if awarded the grant, review the final grant terms from Cal OES and, if in the District's and public's best interest, enter into a funding agreement and implement the project upon notice to proceed. Should the terms be unfavorable, the General Manager will update the Board on recommended next steps.

Responsible Department Head:

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