



Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District

R-25-71  
Meeting 25-15  
May 28, 2025

## AGENDA ITEM 5

### AGENDA ITEM

Public Hearing to Comply with New Legal Obligation to Report on Vacancies and Recruitment and Retention Efforts (Assembly Bill 2561/Government Code Section 3502.3)

### GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

(5) *[Signature]*

Hold a public hearing to comply with new legal obligations to report on vacancies and recruitment and retention efforts (Assembly Bill 2561/Government Code Section 3502.3). No formal Board action is required.

### SUMMARY

AB 2561 requires public agencies, including Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District), to hold at least one public hearing per fiscal year to discuss vacancies and recruitment and retention efforts. This report describes vacancies and vacancy rates for calendar year 2024 and briefly summarizes recruitment and retention efforts. Review of this report is being presented at the same meeting as the first public hearing on the Budget and Action Plan given its direct correlation to staff capacity and productivity.

### DISCUSSION

AB 2561, effective January 1, 2025, was signed into law to address the issue of job vacancies in local government, which can adversely affect the delivery of public services and employee workload. Among other requirements, the bill requires public agencies to present the status of vacancies and recruitment and retention efforts during a public hearing before the agency's governing body at least once per fiscal year. If the governing board adopts an annual or multiyear budget during the fiscal year, the presentation must be made prior to the adoption of the final budget.

During the hearing, the District is also required to identify whether there are any necessary changes to District policies, procedures, or recruitment activities (for example, budgetary changes), that may lead to obstacles in the hiring process.

The new legislation also provides recognized employee organizations for each bargaining unit the opportunity to make presentations during the public hearing concerning vacancies and recruitment and retention efforts. There are two recognized bargaining units at the District, the Field Employees Association (FEA) and the Midpeninsula Rangers Peace Officers Association (POA). Additionally, if the vacancy rate in a bargaining unit is at least 20% of the total number

of authorized full-time positions, the employee organization that represents the bargaining unit may request that the agency present additional information at the public hearing.

#### **Vacancy Information – One-Day Snapshot of December 31, 2024**

The law does not specify a timeframe for measuring vacancy rates. To ensure consistency year-over-year, the District reports this data as a one-day snapshot on December 31 each year. This method provides a precise, point-in-time measure of unfilled positions, ensuring comparability across reporting periods. This metric is provided as a standard practice by public agencies to effectively track the data over time. In contrast, the overall turnover rate reflects staff changes over the entire year, capturing the total number of departures and replacements. While turnover rates offer a broader view of workforce stability, vacancy rates serve as a focused indicator of staffing levels at a specific moment.

On December 31, 2024 (i.e., a one-day snapshot at the end of Calendar Year 2024), the District had 18 vacancies, equating to an overall 8.6% vacancy rate. The vacancy rate is calculated as the number of vacancies divided by the number of budgeted full-time equivalent positions (FTEs). The vacancy rate was calculated based on a total of 210 budgeted FTEs, which includes regular and limited term positions, as well as the Board-appointed General Manager and General Counsel, and excludes seasonals, interns, temporary employees and the Board-appointed part-time Controller. Of the 18 vacancies, six were in the FEA (four newly budgeted positions and two vacancies due to internal promotion), five were in the POA (three newly budgeted positions and two vacancies due to internal promotion) and the remaining seven were unrepresented positions (two newly budgeted positions, three vacancies due to internal promotion, one voluntary separation, and one involuntary separation). The vacancy rate for FEA positions was 14%, for POA positions was 14.3%, and for unrepresented positions was 5.3%.

#### **Recruitment and Retention Information for Calendar Year 2024**

The total number of vacancies created during Calendar Year 2024 was 49, of which 24 (or 49%) were created by newly budgeted positions as recommended by the 2023 Financial and Operational Sustainability Model (FOSM) refresh. Additionally, 13 of the 49 vacancies (or 27%) were created by existing employees promoting to other positions within the District. The remaining 12 vacancies (or 24%) were created as a result of one retirement, eight voluntary separations, and three involuntary separations. Turnover is calculated as the number of vacancies created by voluntary separation divided by the number of budgeted FTEs. Based on the eight vacancies due to voluntary separations (three POA positions and five unrepresented positions), the annual overall turnover rate was 3.81%. The annual turnover rate for POA positions was 8.8% and 3.7% for unrepresented positions with FEA experiencing no turnover based on voluntary separations.

#### **Recruitment and Retention Efforts and Strategies**

There are currently nine Human Resources staff, three of who are dedicated to recruiting, filling 33 vacancies in 2024 (not including interns and seasonal employees). The District employs various recruitment strategies, including posting vacancies on the District's website and recruitment portal (CalOpps.org) as well as industry-specific job boards; and advertising open positions on the District's social media platforms. The District has been successful in filling positions, including Open Space Technician and Ranger, from the pipeline of viable candidates employed by the District as seasonal employees. Also, many positions within the Administrative Office have been filled by individuals who have completed an internship with the District.

As part of its ongoing efforts to enhance recruitment and retention, the District is working on developing the details of the new salary schedule based on the recent Board-approved changes to the compensation philosophy. The new salary schedule will be brought to the full Board for review and consideration of approval in June. Next fiscal year, the District will shift to identify new career ladders for the different classification series. Additionally, the District will be hosting a Conservation Career Fair in March 2026, to promote conservation careers, connect job seekers with employers, and foster partnerships with regional conservation organizations and local educational institutions.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no direct fiscal impact associated with conducting the annual public hearing required for compliance with Government Code section 3205.3. However, addressing recruitment and retention issues may involve future budget and bargaining considerations, which will be presented to the Board of Directors as necessary.

### **PRIOR BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW**

None

### **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**

To comply with AB2561, the District will return to the Board in 2026 prior to budget adoption with an update on vacancies and recruitment and retention efforts to keep the Board, staff, and public apprised of vacancy rates and recruitment efforts.

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