



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

PROCUREMENT AGENDA ITEM

R-26-23
Meeting 26-06
February 25, 2026

AGENDA ITEM 5

AGENDA ITEM

Award of Contract to Vishal Subramanian to provide Wildlife Photography and Videography at Various Preserves

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION *den*

Authorize the General Manager to enter into a two-year contract with wildlife photographer Vishal Subramanian in the amount of \$70,000, funded at \$35,000 per year, to support ongoing wildlife documentation and related communication needs.

DISCUSSION

Over the past year, the Public Affairs and Natural Resources departments partnered with wildlife photographer Vishal Subramanian to document wildlife across various open space preserves. Using specialized camera trap equipment—including high resolution cameras, infrared triggers and, where appropriate, lighting—Vishal Subramanian captured high quality photos and videos of species such as coyotes impacted by rodenticides at Rancho San Antonio, pallid bats at La Honda Creek's red barn, mountain lions near Highway 17, as well as gray foxes, spotted skunks, bobcats, and badgers. These images and recordings provided rare insights into animal behaviors that are otherwise difficult to observe in their natural habitat while adhering to strict protocols that protect natural resources and public privacy on Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) lands.

This work requires highly specialized trap camera setups, technical knowledge and field expertise to successfully capture animals in their natural spaces without disturbing them. Equipment was strategically placed, monitored and adjusted to maximize impact and variety, while adhering to wildlife recording protocols that safeguard both natural resources and public privacy.

The high-resolution videos and images acquired have significantly enhanced the District's ability to communicate the importance of wildlife conservation to the public through social media and other editorial content, while also contributing valuable scientific observations. Together, the District and Mr. Subramanian have collaborated on three (3) social media posts through Instagram and Facebook resulting in 617,086 impressions/views, 59,147 interactions in total. In addition, a public virtual presentation in partnership with the Natural Resources department will occur on February 19, 2026, where Mr. Subramanian will share his experiences and insights capturing images of local wildlife in the preserves.

Building on the success of the initial collaboration, the Public Affairs and Natural Resources departments have identified new opportunities for a subsequent contract with Vishal Subramanyan. Future projects would focus on species of special interest related to current habitat enhancement projects, such as snowy plovers, purple martins, beavers, and other species. Additional priorities include attempting to document peregrine falcons, as well as grassland sparrows, bumble bees, red-bellied newts and the Santa Cruz black salamander. Documenting these animals will provide both scientific value and compelling public communication materials that highlight the need to protect sensitive species habitats.

The original one-year contract with Vishal Subramanyan was in the amount of \$35,000. The General Manager is recommending a new two-year contract in the amount of \$70,000, funded at \$35,000 per year, to support ongoing wildlife documentation and related communication needs.

BUDGET/ FISCAL IMPACT

The tables below illustrate the historical costs of the prior agreement compared to the new agreement.

Prior Agreement Year	Cost
Year 1	\$35,297.86
\$35,297.86	

New Agreement	Cost
Year 1	\$35,000.00
Year 2	\$35,000.00
\$70,000.00	

There is sufficient funding in the current budget to cover the cost of the recommendation. Funds for future year costs will be recommended as part of the annual Budget and Action Plan process.

The current fiscal year budget contains:

- sufficient funds.
- insufficient funds; the next quarterly budget update will include a reallocation of unspent funds from other budgets to cover for this expenditure.
- insufficient funds; approval of this item requires a fiscal year budget augmentation.
- future fiscal year budgets will include additional funds to complete the contracted work.

Measure AA

- No, this contract is not part of a Measure AA project.
- Yes, this contract is part of a Measure AA project.

PROCUREMENT PROCESS AND SELECTION

Midpen conducted outreach to multiple Bay Area wildlife photographers prior to the initial contract and was unable to identify anyone other than Vishal Subramanyan with the specialized technical expertise, camera-trap capabilities and local availability required to produce consistent, high-quality wildlife documentation. Given his unique skillset, proven performance and ability to meet the District's ongoing needs, Vishal is the only consultant qualified and available to deliver these highly specialized services within the required timeframe.

PRIOR BOARD 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

If approved by the Board, the contract will be routed for final signatures with a contract start date of March 1, 2026.

Responsible Department Head:
Lori Low, Public Affairs

Prepared by / Contact person:
Natalie Jolly, Public Affairs Specialist III
Gabi Navarrete, Public Affairs Administrative Assistant