



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

PROCUREMENT AGENDA ITEM

R-26-31
Meeting 26-08
March 11, 2026

AGENDA ITEM 5

AGENDA ITEM

Amendment to Partnership Agreement with San Mateo Resource Conservation District for Implementation of the Johnston Ranch Habitat and Agricultural Water Supply Improvement Project

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

Authorize an amendment to the Partnership Agreement with San Mateo Resource Conservation District in the amount of \$2,371,000 to fund a portion of the construction costs for the Johnston Ranch Habitat and Agricultural Water Supply Improvement Project, bringing the total not-to-exceed contract amount to \$2,658,270.

DISCUSSION

In June 2025, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) entered into a Partnership Agreement with the San Mateo Resource Conservation District (RCD) for the RCD to lead the design and permitting phase of the Johnston Ranch Habitat and Agricultural Water Supply Improvement Project (Project). As part of the original agreement, the District made an initial contribution to the Project in the amount of \$287,270, comprised of \$240,000 for administration (expensed in Fund 10 – General Fund Operating) and \$47,270 for design fees (Fund 30 – Measure AA Capital eligible), with funding for future construction costs being recommended for Board approval following completion of the design. The proposed amendment would add \$2.371 million as the District's contribution to cover a portion of the construction costs to implement the Project with the remaining costs covered by an external \$2.779 million grant awarded to the RCD. The Project will construct an agricultural reservoir providing 15 to 20 acre-feet of new off-stream water storage, depending on final bids, and expand the existing stock pond to provide an additional five acre-feet of storage.

These improvements benefit both District lands (Johnston Uplands) and the adjacent Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST)-owned portion of Johnston Ranch by enhancing sensitive aquatic habitat for special status species, maintaining sufficient water supply to support the District's conservation grazing program, and restoring agricultural water supply for row crops on POST lands. The original water supply in the area was reduced dramatically in the early 2000s when the National Marine Fisheries Service required that dams on Arroyo Leon Creek, which flows through both properties, be decommissioned as a result of coho and steelhead being listed under the Endangered Species Act. The Project incorporates instream and riparian corridor improvements, supporting breeding habitat for the federally threatened California red-legged frog, and potential habitat for the federally endangered San Francisco garter snake.

Furthermore, the Project will minimize future summer stream diversions, protecting summer flows in Arroyo Leon Creek for salmonids and other aquatic species, and will add soil stabilization measures along onsite drainage channels and at the existing stock pond to reduce erosion, thereby improving overall ecological health and resilience.

The District’s proposed contribution for construction fees is Measure AA eligible and will leverage an existing \$2.779 million grant secured by the RCD, ensuring that the District meets both conservation and agricultural objectives under MAA portfolio #1 Miramontes Ridge: Partner to enhance water availability for agriculture and fish while addressing a critical funding gap for Project implementation.

BUDGET / FISCAL IMPACT

The current fiscal year budget and project budget for MAA01-008 Johnston Ranch Habitat and Agricultural Water Supply 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.

The following table outlines the *Measure AA Portfolio #01: Miramontes Ridge — Gateway to the Coast Public Access, Stream Restoration and Agriculture Enhancement* allocation, costs-to-date, projected life-to-date project expenditures and projected portfolio balance remaining.

| Measure AA Portfolio #01: Miramontes Ridge — Gateway to the Coast Public Access, Stream Restoration and Agriculture Enhancement | |
|--|-----------------------|
| Portfolio Allocation: | \$27,774,000 |
| Grant Income (through FY29): | \$738,925 |
| Total Portfolio Allocation: | \$28,512,925 |
| 01-004 Remediation Plan and Ranch Debris Cleanup, Madonna Creek Ranch | (\$419,791) |
| 01-005 Johnston Ranch Land Acquisition | (\$4,942,101) |
| 01-006 Madonna Creek Habitat Enhancement, Water Supply and Bridge Replacement | (\$1,707,800) |
| 01-007 Alves Property Open Space Acquisitions | (\$1,745) |
| 01-008 Johnston Ranch Habitat and Agricultural Water Supply Improvements | (\$2,427,615) |
| 01-009 Arroyo Leon Creek Fish Passage Improvements | (\$1,779,305) |
| Total Projected Expenditures (life of project): | (\$11,278,357) |

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| Portfolio Balance Remaining (proposed): | \$17,234,568 |
|--|---------------------|

PROCUREMENT PROCESS AND SELECTION

RCD is a longstanding partner agency with extensive experience implementing agricultural water supply and habitat improvement projects in coastal San Mateo County. Their history of work at Johnston Ranch, along with their expertise in securing and managing grant funding for this and similar projects, makes the RCD a key collaborator in ensuring the success of the Project. As with similar past partnership projects between the District and RCD, RCD will be responsible for conducting a public bidding process to procure a contractor, as well as procuring any consultants and other entities necessary to carry out the work. RCD also will oversee and manage all aspects of the work and be responsible for all payments to its contractors and consultants. Finally, RCD will be responsible for arranging any necessary permits, permissions or clearances necessary for the work.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION SUPPORTING THE PROJECT

- An FYI describing the project and implementation funding gap was provided to the Board of Directors on October 23, 2024 ([R-24-28, Minutes](#)).
- The Board of Directors authorized the General Manager to enter a Partnership Agreement with the San Mateo Resource Conservation District for design and permitting services on May 14, 2025 ([R-25-14, Minutes](#)).

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

Approval of the amendment to the Partnership Agreement is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). RCD will prepare the environmental document as the CEQA lead agency prior to initiating any on-the-ground construction work.

NEXT STEPS

If approved, the General Manager will execute an amendment to the Partnership Agreement to provide the additional District contribution to cover construction costs for the Johnston Ranch Habitat and Agricultural Water Supply Improvement Project.

Attachment(s)

1. Project site map.

Responsible Department Head:

Kirk Lenington, Natural Resources Department Manager

Prepared by/Contact person:

David Liefert, Sr. Resource Management Specialist, Natural Resources Department



Data Source(s): Esri, Airbus DS, USGS, NGA, NASA, CDMG, N Robinson, NCEAS, NLS, OS, NMA, GeoBlast, FEMA, Intermap and the GIS user community, Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy and San Mateo County

Johnston Ranch Uplands, Miramontes Ridge Preserve

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Trail (classes) | Abandoned / Unmaintained Trail |
| Paved Road | Road Centerline (major) |
| Unpaved All-Season Road | Arterial |
| Unpaved Seasonal Road | Highway |
| Trail | Preserve Boundary (fill) |
| Abandoned / Unmaintained Road | |

Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District
(MROSD)
8/27/2024

