



Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District

R-26-17  
Meeting 26-05  
February 11, 2026

**AGENDA ITEM 6**

**AGENDA ITEM**

Public Signature Event

**GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION** *den*

Review the concept and initial planning for a Public Signature Event to increase in-person outreach and deepen community connections, with a budget not to exceed \$30,000.

**COMMITTEE**

- ☐ Action Plan & Budget
- ☒ Legislative, Funding & Public Affairs
- ☐ Planning & Natural Resources
- ☐ Real Property
- ☐ Ad-Hoc Committee

**MEMBERS**

- ☒ Ward 1 – Craig Gleason
- ☐ Ward 2 – Yoriko Kishimoto
- ☐ Ward 3 – Jed Cyr
- ☐ Ward 4 – Curt Riffle
- ☒ Ward 5 – Karen Holman
- ☒ Ward 6 – Margaret MacNiven
- ☐ Ward 7 – Zoe Kersteen-Tucker

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

**Date:** November 4, 2025

**Action:** Committee provided feedback on the concept of a Public Signature Event. No vote required.

**Item:** R-25-137

**COMMENTS**

The Committee reviewed the proposal and requested staff find ways to make the event(s) unique, immersive and interactive.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Committee reports and draft minutes will be attached rather than linked.

- A. November 4, 2025 LFPAC Report R-25-137
- B. November 4, 2025 LFPAC Presentation

Prepared by / Contact person:

Eleanor Raab, Public Affairs Specialist I, Public Affairs Department

Natalie Jolly, Public Affairs Specialist III, Public Affairs Department



Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District

## LEGISLATIVE, FUNDING, AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

R-25-137  
November 4, 2025

### AGENDA ITEM 3

#### AGENDA ITEM

Public Signature Event

#### GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

Review and provide feedback on the concept and initial planning of a Public Signature Event to increase in-person outreach and deepen community connections.

#### SUMMARY

To engage new audiences, foster stronger community ties, align the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) with peer agencies and help position the District as a regional leader in conservation and education, Public Affairs is proposing a public signature event—an event hosted by the District and focused on District priorities—to be hosted beginning in FY27.

The conceptual plan for the event includes a rich blend of interactive, educational and community-centered experiences that have proven to be valuable in engaging the public and are based on previous Public Affairs-hosted community events and participation in successful partner events. Following the inaugural event, staff would conduct an evaluation to assess effectiveness, community reach and impact on staff time. This information would help establish a sustainable event cadence that continues to foster meaningful relationships with the communities that the District serves without overextending the available resources.

#### DISCUSSION

##### Background

Many peer agencies and non-profit organizations host mission-driven, community-oriented, reoccurring events. These public events demonstrate how a consistent, mission-aligned celebration or festival can elevate brand identity and deepen public connection.

Event Name	Agency	Timing	Estimated Attendance
Wild and Scenic Film Festival	Peninsula Open Space Trust	Spring	500+ in person 1000+ virtual
Coastal Wildflower Day	California State Parks	Spring	300-500 in person
Summerfest	San Mateo County Parks	Summer	3,000+ in person

Fall Festival	Santa Clara County Parks	Fall	1000+ in person
Fall Fest	San Mateo County Parks	Fall	300-500 in person
Day on the Bay	Santa Clara County Parks	Fall	1000+ in person

In the past, the District has hosted several different types of educational and celebratory community events, including WingDing Family Fest (hosted at Skyline Open Space Preserve between 2013 and 2017), various trail and preserve opening events (e.g. El Corte de Madera Opening Event, Mindego Gateway Opening Event, Bear Creek Redwoods Grand Opening and La Honda Creek Grand Opening), partner appreciation events (e.g. legislative lunches and partner mixers), and other commemorative or anniversary events (e.g. the 40th Anniversary Founders' Day celebration, the 50th Anniversary Bayside Family Festival and the 50th Anniversary Coastside Community Celebration).

The two events hosted in honor of the District's 50th Anniversary were large-scale, post-COVID public events. The outcomes and performance of those events are the best indicators of the current climate for community events. The positive performance of those events indicates people's willingness and desire to attend more in-person events in their communities post-COVID.

These two events targeted younger audiences, families and the Coastside and Bayside communities through connections with local vendors and partner organizations, as well as programming focused on engagement and education: wildlife and nature demonstrations and educational talks. These elements proved to be successful and would be replicated in the plans for a signature event.

Over 800 people attended the Bayside Family Festival, and over 1,200 people attended the Coastside Community Celebration. In post event surveys, over 95% of participants rated the events to be "good" to "excellent," and over 90% of respondents indicated that they would "likely" or "definitely" visit a District preserve in the future.

The 50th Anniversary events were also successful in creating new partner relationships, reinvigorating lapsed relationships, and cementing long-standing ones. More than 60 partners participated in both the Bayside and Coastside 50th Anniversary community events, with approximately 15% of these partners being new relationships for the District.

### **Conceptual Event Plans**

The proposed public signature event is intended to be welcoming to and engaging for a broad cross-section of the community with intentional outreach to families, young adults and students, local leaders and elected officials, underserved communities, Coastside and Bayside communities and partner organizations.

Building on past success, the signature event would offer a dynamic mix of interactive and educational experiences designed to deepen community connection. Programming could include items such as District information booths, partner booths and tables, educational and interactive activities (e.g. scavenger hunts, live wildlife presentations, demonstrations), stage presentations

from staff and partners, local food and beverage vendors, local agricultural displays, cultural elements of celebration (e.g. local live music, folklorico dancing, youth performances) and more. While these components represent a broad menu of potential offerings, each signature event would be tailored to reflect the unique characteristics of the community in which it is hosted, and to align with community priorities and District goals.

The proposed signature events should be visible and accessible to target audiences, ideally located nearer to population centers on the Coastsides and/or Baysides. Organizational priorities should also be considered in site selection for the event (e.g. Coastsides outreach needs, new preserve or trail openings, community outreach goals). Final site selection would take into consideration the ease of parking and transportation, ease of site setup and Committee feedback. Due to current agency priorities, it is recommended that the first signature event take place on the Coastsides.

Like many peer agencies' events—such as State Parks' Coastal Wildflower Day, Santa Clara County Parks' Fall Festival, and local Earth Day celebrations — a signature event can be tied to seasonal or ecological phenomena, as well as awareness dates or holidays. These themes provide opportunities to highlight the District's mission through engaging, seasonally relevant storytelling that connects with the public's interests and values.

Potential Event Site	Region	Notes
Johnston Ranch (Half Moon Bay)	Coastsides	High visibility; aligns with Coastsides outreach goals; staff have prior experience hosting events at this location. This site is recommended for the inaugural event.
Ravenswood / Cooley Landing (East Palo Alto)	Baysides	Strong diverse outreach potential; accessible urban location; staff have prior experience hosting events at this location.
Pescadero I.D.E.S. Grounds	Coastsides	Community-centered venue; supports agricultural and cultural programming; staff have prior experience attending events at this location. There would likely be a fee to gain access to this site.
Portola Valley Town Center	Peninsula	Centrally located near I-280 with easy parking availability; next to Windy Hill; good for civic and partner engagement. Not easily accessible by public transit.
Skyline Ridge / Windy Hill / Rancho San Antonio	Peninsula	Showcases District lands and habitats; ideal for possible rotating event model. However, transportation to these sites can be difficult.
Appropriate partner sites, e.g.: PIE Ranch / Harley Farms / State Parks	Coastsides	Bolsters relationships with partners; supports agricultural and cultural programming. However, hosting events at partner sites can dilute the District-focused message intended for the signature events.

Following the event, staff would evaluate success and organizational impact of the event based on community attendance and participations, outreach and media impressions, participant and partner feedback and satisfaction, cost-effectiveness and budget adherence and resources dedicated to the event. This information will be used to help establish a sustainable event



cadence that continues to foster meaningful relationships with the communities that the District serves, without overextending District resources.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The recommended action has no immediate fiscal impact. If approved, funding for the Signature Event will be recommended in future fiscal year budgets during the annual Budget and Action Plan process. The budget for the event is planned not to exceed \$30,000.

**PRIOR BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW**

This item has not been previously reviewed by a Board Committee.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act.

**CEQA COMPLINACE**

This item is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act.

**NEXT STEPS**

Public Affairs staff will take into account feedback from the Committee and, if supported, move forward with solidifying plans for a Signature Event and present the proposal to the full Board.

Responsible Department Head:

Lori Low, Public Affairs Manager, Public Affairs Department

Prepared by / Contact person:

Eleanor Raab, Public Affairs Specialist I, Public Affairs Department

Natalie Jolly, Public Affairs Specialist III, Public Affairs Department



# Midpen Signature Event

11/04/2025

Monte Bello, Jonathon Chang

**PRESERVE**



**PROTECT**



**RESTORE**



**EDUCATE**



**ENJOY**





# What is a Signature Event?

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# Midpen Signature Event Goals

- Position Midpen as a leader in regional conservation and education
- Increase public awareness of Midpen's role in the community
- Engage new and diverse audiences
- Strengthen relationships with partners
- Provide staff with opportunities for public interaction
- Highlight priority projects







# Why An Event?





# Deeper Connections

- **In-person connection** allows for a greater depth of touch
- Events also allow us to reach audiences that are otherwise difficult to connect with through our other channels





# Midpen Event History

Midpen has hosted a number of public events throughout the District's history

- WingDing Family Fest
- 50th Anniversary events
- Preserve openings
- Partner events







# 50th Anniversary Events

- **Bayside Family Festival**
  - Over 800 attendees
  - Over 30% of surveyed attendees were previously unfamiliar with Midpen
  - Over 90% indicated they would “likely” or “definitely” visit a Midpen preserve again
- **Coastside Community Celebration**
  - Over 1,200 attendees
  - Approximately 20% of surveyed attendees were previously unfamiliar with Midpen
  - 99% of survey respondents rated the event “good” or “excellent”







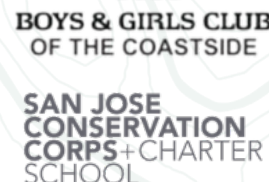
# Alignment With Peer Organizations

Event Name	Agency	Timing	Estimated Attendance
<b>Wild and Scenic Film Festival</b>	POST	Spring	500+ in person
<b>Coastal Wildflower Day</b>	California State Parks	Spring	300-500 in person
<b>Summerfest</b>	San Mateo County Parks	Summer	3,000+ in person
<b>Fall Festival</b>	Santa Clara County Parks	Fall	1000+ in person
<b>Fall Fest</b>	San Mateo County Parks	Fall	300-500 in person
<b>Day on the Bay</b>	Santa Clara County Parks	Fall	1000+ in person

# Partner Relations

Midpen's 50th Anniversary events were successful in creating new partner relationships and reinvigorating lapsed ones

- 60+ partners participated
- 15% of partners were new to the District







# Proposed Scope





# Target Audiences

- The signature event is intended for a broad cross-section of Midpen's community, with intentional outreach to:
  - Families
  - Young adults and students
  - Local leaders and elected officials
  - Underserved communities
  - Coastside and Bayside communities
  - Partner organizations







# Location

- Accessible and visible
  - Near population centers
  - Ease of parking and transportation
- Alignment with agency priorities
- Possibility of rotating event site
- Example sites:
  - Johnston Ranch, Ravenswood Preserve/Cooley Landing, Pescadero IDES Grounds, Portola Valley Town Center, Rancho San Antonio Preserve, other appropriate partner sites.







# Timing and Cadence

- Possible timing:
  - Late Fall or
  - Early Spring
- Event cadence will be determined based on staff capacity and organizational priorities







# Programming and Activities

- Educational experiences
- Midpen information booths
- Partner booths
- Stage presentations and panels
- Community and cultural elements







# Programming and Activities







# Event Management

Long Ridge. Charles Tu





# Project Management/Staff Roles

- Core planning team:
  - PA I, PA III, PA Intern
- Other departments support with:
  - Informational booth staffing
  - Expert panels and speaking opportunities
  - Site preparation if needed
  - Other limited support







# Budget

- The event budget is not to exceed \$30,000
- The event budget will primarily go toward event rentals
  - Tents, tables and chairs
- Other expenses may include:
  - Transportation and shuttles
  - Permits
  - Giveaways
  - Printing (brochures, programs, etc.)
  - Food truck minimums
  - Honoraria
  - Marketing and advertising







# Outreach and Marketing

- Leveraging existing outreach channels
- Partner amplification
- Media relations
- Advertising
- Other community outreach
- Keep messaging warm, inclusive and educational





# Metrics of Success

- Attendance and participation
  - Attendee count
  - Volunteer, staff and partner participation levels
  - Activity booth engagement
- Engagement and outreach impact
  - Social media reach
  - Press mentions
- Partner and attendee feedback
- Operational success
  - Budget adherence
  - Enhancements for future events







# Feedback and Questions

## Questions for the Committee:

- Are there particular outcomes or metrics you'd be most interested in seeing from this event?
- Are there additional target audiences you'd like us to prioritize in our outreach efforts?
- Are there any other things that you think we haven't thought of, or that we should consider as part of an event like this?





# Thank you!

