



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

REVISED ATTACHMENTS

R-26-19
Meeting 26-05
February 11, 2026

AGENDA ITEM 8

AGENDA ITEM

Revisions to Board Policy 1.05 *Board Correspondence*

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

Review and approve revisions to Board Policy 1.05 *Board Correspondence*.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

At the Board Workshop held on March 25, 2025, the Board of Directors (Board) discussed the handling of Board correspondence. The discussion identified a need to review the policy guidelines by which Board correspondence is handled; this includes correspondence directed to an individual Director, multiple Directors, or the full Board. In particular, the Board expressed interest in clarifying whether certain correspondence can be treated as personal communication versus official District business, and how staff coordinate with and keep Board members informed on a response.

On November 12, 2025, the Board received an informational presentation during which staff provided a detailed review of Board Policy 1.05 *Board Correspondence* (Board Policy 1.05) and responded to clarifying questions from the Board. As part of the presentation, staff identified several considerations intended to improve timely and responsive replies to communications from the public. At the meeting, the Board provided feedback and guidance on subsequent revisions, focused on the handling of individual Board Director correspondence.

Since November 2025, staff have reviewed Board Policy 1.05 and are proposing policy revisions and other minor edits as presented in Attachment 1 for Board consideration. The proposed edits would continue to ensure that members of the public receive timely responses to inquiries while providing the option for individual Board members to opt into or out of having staff respond directly on their behalf.

Other edits to the policy clarify the purpose of the policy, adjust subsequent protocols in light of the new opt in/opt out provision for individual Director correspondence, and rearrange sections to enhance policy flow.

FISCAL IMPACT

None

PRIOR BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW

The Board of Directors discussed Board Policy 1.05 at the Board Governance Workshop on March 25, 2025, and on November 11, 2025. ([R-25-146](#), [Minutes](#))

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

The District Clerk will include the Board-adopted policy update in the Board Policy Manual, and the policy will take effect as of the date of approval.

Attachments

1. Proposed Revisions to Board Policy 1.05 *Board Correspondence* - Redline version
2. Proposed Revisions to Board Policy 1.05 *Board Correspondence* - Clean version

Responsible Department Head:

Ana Ruiz, General Manager

Prepared by/contact person:

Maria Soria, District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager, General Manager's Office

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Board Policy Manual

REVISED: PLEASE
SEE HIGHLIGHTED
SECTION

Board Correspondence	Policy 1.05 Chapter 1 – Administration & Government
Effective Date:	Revised Date: <u>8/11/21</u> <u>11/2026</u>
Prior Versions: 11/13/13; 9/23/15, <u>8/11/21</u>	

Purpose

~~So that the public may perceive that any correspondence or forms of recognition from the Board President or Board of Directors has the support of a majority of the Board of Directors, it is necessary to establish guidelines for the issuance of correspondence and forms of recognition.~~

This policy establishes guidelines and standards for various forms of Board correspondence, including guidelines to ensure that correspondence directed to the full Board of Directors (Board) reflects the position of a majority of the Board of Directors.

Policy**Correspondence as a Representative of the Board or District**

Any written correspondence (email or letter) addressed to the full Board of Directors, Board President, or an individual Director representing the Board or District is considered public correspondence. Since the Board of Directors acts as a body (meaning that they act on the will of the majority as opposed to individual members), when a Director is asked for the District's or the Board's position on an issue, the response will reflect the position of the majority of the Board.

Correspondence as an Individual, not representing the Board or District

Any written or oral communication from a Director to the public, other agencies or organizations that is provided as an individual, and not as a representative of the Board or District, will be made only with a statement that the communication is the opinion of the Director as an individual and that the statement is not made in the Director's capacity as a member representing the Board.

Procedures for Handling Correspondence

The District Clerk is authorized to receive and open all mail (including email) addressed to the Board of Directors from members of the public. Any such written communication addressed to the full Board shall be provided to all Board members. Written communications (and any other public records) are provided ~~and~~ to members of the press and public upon who have requested supporting materials as soon as possible. Any correspondence addressed to an individual Director will be provided directly to that Director.

Correspondence to the full Board of Directors

The General Manager or their designee will determine the appropriate handling of correspondence directed to the full Board of Directors, and whether it is related to Board policy or general administration of the District. -The following procedures will be used to process correspondence directed to the full Board of Directors.

1. When a correspondence involves the general administration of the District, the correspondence will be forwarded to the full Board of Directors. An acknowledgement of receipt will be made. If a more extensive response is required, staff will respond to the commentor, and the full Board will receive a copy of both the correspondence and response.
2. When a correspondence involves the enforcement of previously set Board policy or an established Board-approved procedure of the District, the correspondence will be directed to the appropriate department for response by staff. The full Board will receive a copy of both the correspondence and response.
3. When a correspondence involves a request to change Board policy or a consideration for a new policy direction, the General Manager will determine whether a detailed response is needed beyond acknowledgement of receipt and/or consult with the Board President to determine an appropriate response. The full Board will receive a copy of both the correspondence and response.
4. When a correspondence involves a future Board action, it will be referred to the appropriate department. -A copy of the correspondence will be added to the appropriate project file. The General Manager in consultation with the department, will determine the level of response and minimally acknowledge receipt with confirmation that a copy of the correspondence will be provided to the full Board to inform their upcoming deliberations. -The full Board will receive a copy of the correspondence packaged with other comments when the item is agendized for future Board action.

Option for Staff to Respond on Behalf of Individual Directors, including the Board President

Directors may elect to authorize staff to respond to individual correspondences on their behalf. Authorization will be provided in writing to the District Clerk. -When authorized, staff will respond directly to the commentor without first consulting the Director. Staff will provide the Director with a copy of the original correspondence and response. The Director retains the discretion to provide additional feedback or follow-up as they deem necessary.

Alternative Option for Directors to Respond to Individual Correspondence

For Directors who opt out of authorizing District staff to respond on their behalf, correspondence directed to an individual Director will be forwarded to that Director upon receipt. The Director is responsible for the following:

- If staff assistance is needed in drafting a response or providing background information, the Director will notify staff no later than five days following receipt of the correspondence to ensure that the commentor receives a timely response.
- The General Manager may independently forward pertinent information to the Director about the topic as background information.
- The responding Director will provide a courtesy copy to clerk staff of their response using the Clerk@openspace.org email so that the inquiry can be marked as closed.
- Clerk staff will reach out to the Director twice to confirm a response has been sent to the commentor. If a Director does not respond, the inquiry will be assumed completed and marked as closed with no further follow-up.
- Directors should notify the District Clerk when on vacation for more than five days so that staff may automatically respond to inquiries during the period that the Director is unavailable; any known, extended absences will prompt staff to proactively prepare and send a response on behalf of the Director, if one is needed.;

Personal Correspondence not Related to District Business

Any correspondence deemed personal will be forwarded to the appropriate Director. Staff will otherwise not follow up on such inquiries.

Correspondence Placed on Board Agenda

~~District staff shall respond to the member of the public submitting a correspondence, and the Board of Directors will be copied on the response.~~ The General Manager, or a majority of the Board of Directors may request that a draft Board response to written ~~correspondence~~ communication be placed on the agenda for consideration and Board approval prior to issuing a response. ~~that is addressed by the Board and~~ The response will be sent ~~directly by either the Board President, their designee, or the Board member~~ Director who was directly contacted by the recipient.

~~A written communication addressed to an individual Director may, at the discretion of the individual Director, be considered a personal letter, a written communication or may be relayed to the members of the Board as an informational item.~~

Procedures for Handling Board Correspondence

Board President Signing on Behalf of the Board

The Board President will sign all letters sent on behalf of the Board of Directors. ~~Routine letters from the Board President, or designee in his/her absence, do not need to be listed as consent items on the Board agenda. Such letters shall include: Thank you letters to individuals or organizations for involvement in events or activities that benefit the District.~~

~~Letters of recognition or appreciation in honor of distinctive service to the District, such as those sent to District volunteers or staff and letters of recognition for donations given to the District.~~

Written Correspondence Related to Agenda Items

Correspondence related to an item on the agenda may be distributed with the agenda and supporting materials and considered by the full Board at the forthcoming meeting. Correspondence received after distribution of the agenda packet will shall be provided to Board members and be available for the members of the public to review at the Board meeting. Acknowledgement or response is optional. Staff may respond orally, if necessary, to clarify information or District policy, but will not typically provide a written response unless requested by a majority of the Board. Written ~~correspondence~~communications related to agenda items shall be maintained with the official records of the District for that Board or Committee meeting. ~~Copies of the public comments and responses shall also be added to the appropriate project file.~~

Written Correspondence ~~forat~~ Board Meetings

Written communications received forat a Board meetings shall be maintained with the official records of the District for that Board meeting.

Distribution of Written Correspondence

Written communications ~~submitted by at or before 3:00 p.m. the day of the a~~ Board meeting will be which are distributed to the Board prior to the Board meeting and will be available for public review in the public meeting binder. Written communication received after the deadline will be distributed the following day. at a time other than a regular mailing shall be distributed to members of the press who have requested supporting materials.

Written Correspondence with Large Attachments

Written communications accompanied by an extraordinary quantity of attachments may, at the discretion of the General Manager or designee, be duplicated and distributed with some or all the attachments excluded. The General Manager or designee shall note on the written communication or in an accompanying memorandum that the entire written communication, including attachments is available at the District office for public review. Copies of the excluded attachments will be made available on the same basis as any other public record.

Communications to the Public from Individual Directors

~~Any written or oral communication from a Director to the public or Board, or other agencies or organizations in any way related to the Director's capacity as an elected District official shall be distributed to the Board as a public informational item by the Director unless it is made clear in the communication that the communication is the opinion of the individual Director and not the opinion of the District or Board of Directors as a whole, unless the Board has approved the communication in advance.~~

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Board Policy Manual

Board Correspondence	Policy 1.05 Chapter 1 – Administration & Government
Effective Date:	Revised Date: 2/11/2026
Prior Versions: 11/13/13; 9/23/15, 8/11/21	

Purpose

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