



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-25-134
Meeting 25-29
October 22, 2025

AGENDA ITEM 9

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Amendment to the Interim, Short-term Bear Creek Stables Services Agreement with the Friends of Bear Creek Stables and an Update on Phase 0 Site Improvements

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Amend the current short-term Stables Services Agreement with the Friends of Bear Creek Stables to extend the term for approximately seven months to June 30, 2026, and by an additional \$56,000, for a total not to exceed contract of \$156,000. This extension will provide the additional time necessary to finalize a long-term agreement that can be recommended to the Board of Directors for approval.

SUMMARY

The General Manager recommends extending the interim Stables Service Agreement to June 30, 2026, and increasing the not to exceed total to \$156,000 to cover the cost of horse care for the additional seven-month timeframe. Under the interim Stable Services Agreement, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) remains responsible for the overall maintenance and operation of the stables, while the Friends of Bear Creek Stables (Friends) are responsible for horse care, including feeding, daily mucking of the stalls, and ensuring each horse has clean water. Staff are actively negotiating a long-term agreement with the Friends to bring to the District Board of Directors (Board) for consideration. The expectation is that an agreement will be ready for Board review in January/February or earlier. However, if no agreement is reached by March 31, 2026, staff will return to the Board for further direction and clarity on how to proceed through the end of June. Most of the Phase 0 site improvements (site cleaning, minor improvements) have been completed and permitting for Phase 1 Improvements is underway.

BACKGROUND

On November 20, 2024, the Board selected a long-term use and management option for Bear Creek Stables management and directed staff to draft an operating contract with a non-profit entity that identifies clear roles, responsibilities and expectations, including onsite maintenance and repair responsibilities. ([R-24-142](#), [minutes](#)). The use and management option selected by the Board included (i) Phase 0 site improvements to be implemented prior to entering into a long-term stables management agreement with a nonprofit and (ii) Phase 1 major site improvements to be constructed after entering into a long-term stables agreement. Field staff have been implementing the Phase 0 improvements while Engineering and Construction staff are working with a consultant to obtain County permits for the Phase 1 improvements.

DISCUSSION

The Friends began providing stables services on January 6, 2025, stepping in to fill a crucial role when the previous operator ceased operations. On March 26, 2025, the Board extended the short-term Stable Service Agreement with the Friends to December 6, 2025, to provide horse care at Bear Creek Stables (Stables) and established milestones and a framework for entering into a long-term agreement for operating the Stables. Since then, District staff have been meeting with the Friends to develop a long-term stables agreement.

Given the complexity of building a unique agreement with a nonprofit that is based on the provision of public services rather than payment, it has taken longer than anticipated to reach a final agreement for Board consideration. Therefore, the General Manager recommends extending the interim Stable Services Agreement for seven more months while setting a deadline of March 31, 2026, to determine if a long-term agreement with the Friends is indeed feasible. It is likely that staff will be ready to bring an agreement to the Board in January/February 2026 since productive discussions have already worked through most elements of the agreement and the Friends have met almost all the milestones required by the District for entering into a long-term agreement. They have demonstrated the ability to meet the final fundraising and operating fund milestone of \$250,000 by accumulating ~\$200,000 in the bank for the operating fund and have commitments for the remaining \$50,000. Under the interim agreement extension, the District will continue to have overall responsibility for the stables and collect fees for the current 18 boarded horses. Friends will be responsible for all horse care such as feeding, cleaning stalls and ensuring watering systems are working.

Phase 0 Improvements Update

Completed

- Repair hillside drainage
- Shorten the paddocks above Briggs Creek to create a vegetative filter
- Remove paddocks and small ancillary structures outside the boarder area
- Replace water troughs
- Complete water line connections to paddocks
- One-time installation of panels to replace inadequate fencing
- Install railings on manure dump ramp
- Initial site-cleanup to remove debris from the previous caretaker
- Rental/service fees for a portable restroom until a vault restroom is constructed
- One time, mow the “dressage” area

To Be Completed

- Define the permit parking area with signage and other measures
- Designate and sign areas closed for restoration (Briggs Creek riparian area and hillside above boarder area)
- Install tree stumps for seating at the acorn meadow

Scope Changes

- One-time addition of sand to the arena and re-grading to improve drainage -- After the addition of sand to the arena, it was apparent that additional work is required on the underlying base. District staff will be seeking a contractor to improve the arena footing. Until repairs are made, the arena is closed to use.

- Install automated entrance gate with a 50-50 split of installation cost with the Friends responsible for maintenance -- With the development of plans for the Phase 1 improvements, it was apparent that an automated entry gate requires extensive grading, moving the permanent automated entry gate to become part of the Phase 1 improvements (requires grading permit review). Temporary solutions are being discussed for the interim.
- Install replacement paddocks, up to 50 total paddocks -- The Friends requested that the District hold off on reinstalling paddocks until a long-term agreement is in place to allow more site flexibility in the Boarder area.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is insufficient funding in Fiscal Year 2025-26 (FY26) to cover added expenditure for the agreement extension. The next quarterly budget update will include a reallocation of unspent funds from other unspent project budgets to cover this expenditure. The entire cost of the interim Stable Services Agreement will be offset by boarder fees so long as the current number of boarder horses stays the same. Future fiscal year budgets would include the necessary funds to carry out the long-term agreement for the stables.

PRIOR BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW

May 14, 2024: The Board received an update on the Repair Project and reviewed several long-term stables options. The Board voted to form an Ad Hoc Committee to work with community members to explore and develop potential additional options and return to the full Board in approximately four months. ([R-24-58](#), [meeting minutes](#))

November 20, 2024: The Board selected a long-term use and management option for Bear Creek Stables ([R-24-142](#), [minutes](#))

March 26, 2025: The Board approved milestones and the framework for a long-term agreement to manage the Stables and amended the Stable Service Agreement with the Friends to extend it until December 6, 2025. ([R-25-35](#), [minutes](#))

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act and provided to the Friends and to Stables Boarders.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

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

NEXT STEPS

If approved by the Board, the General Manager will amend the interim Stables Services Agreement to extend it by six (6) months and increase the not-to-exceed total to \$156,000. Pending reaching agreement with the Friends, staff will bring the final long-term agreement to the Board for consideration of approval.

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