



DATE: November 8, 2013

MEMO TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Stephen E. Abbors, General Manager

SUBJECT: Strategic Plan Review for Special Board Meeting of November 8, 2013

Purpose of Strategic Plan Review Meeting

Review and reaffirm, or adjust as necessary, the goals and objectives of the 2011 Strategic Plan to guide the District's focus for FY2014-15.

Background

In 2011 the District developed and the Board adopted a comprehensive Strategic Plan (R-11-96). In 2012 a summary of the Strategic Plan was developed and published (Attachment 1), the objective of which is to distill the Strategic Plan's comprehensive logic model (Attachment 2) into a concise listing of Goals and Objectives that could be articulated to the public and District partners. The Strategic Plan provides a high-level framework to guide the District's focus on achieving all components of its mission statement. As stated under "Next Steps" in the Strategic Plan Summary, the Strategic Plan is "intended to be a dynamic document and will be re-evaluated by the Board and staff annually prior to the development of the annual Action Plan and Budget" (p. 4).

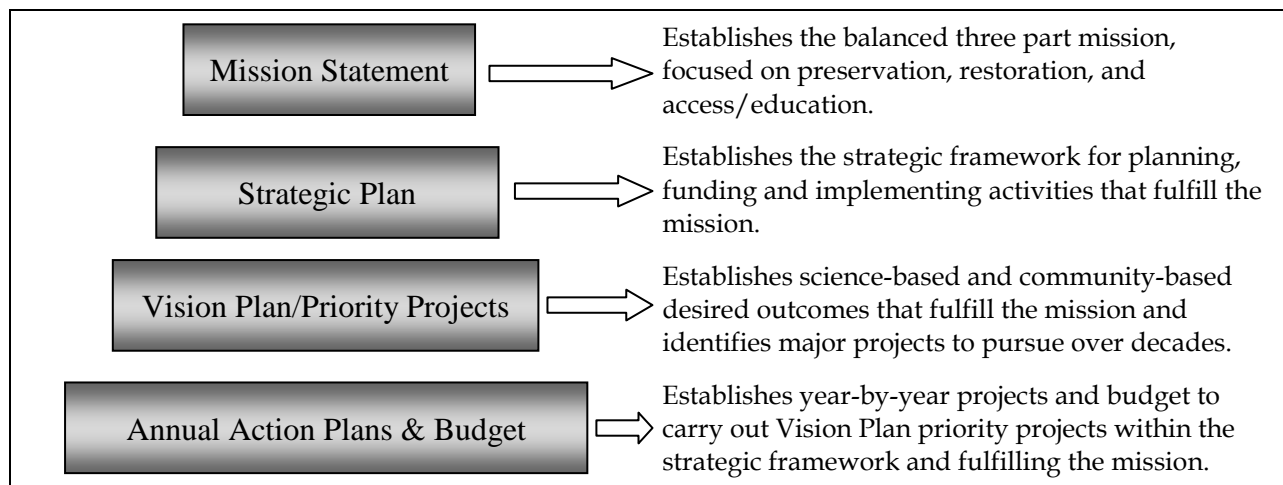
The Special Board Meeting on November 8, 2013, is an opportunity for the Board to review and provide input on the strategic framework of goals and objectives the District has been and will continue to follow for decades to come to preserve a regional open space greenbelt in perpetuity, protect and restore the natural environmental, and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.

Professional facilitator Marilyn Manning (The Consulting Team) will be on hand to assist the process for the Board's review and input. Information provided in this memorandum and staff presentations during the meeting will summarize the District's progress on its Strategic Plan goals and objectives since September 2011, results of an environmental scan concerning significant changes in the last two years or forecasted for the coming years, and a recommendation from the General Manager on potential adjustments for the Strategic Plan for FY2014-15.

Progress Report

As the Board is aware, District staff is currently focused on completing the Vision Planning process (Strategic Plan Goal 1-Objective 3) by the end of FY2013-14. In order to assist with this process, a Community Advisory Committee was established (Goal 2-Objective 1) as well as a larger emphasis on increasing public outreach across all socio-economic sectors of the surrounding communities (Goal 2-Objective 2) and involving all District departments in public outreach and communication (Goal 2-Objective 3). Adoption of the Vision Plan and its list of Priority Actions to fulfill the vision, anticipated in early 2014 for Board consideration, will provide a general implementation plan for the coming decades. Each year's Action Plan and Budget will provide specificity for project planning, funding, and implementation on a year by year basis.

The Vision Planning process has been a work in progress with significant input from the public, the Community Advisory Committee, and the Board. To facilitate the Board's discussion regarding the Strategic Plan, staff has developed the following conceptual model to illustrate the relationship between the Mission, the Strategic Plan, the Vision Plan and Priority Actions, and the annual Action Plan and Budget:



Staff is also focused on evaluating options for increased funding in order to meet the mission priorities (Goal 3-Objectives 1 and 2). Staff's evaluation has focused on the possibility of a General Obligation Bond (GO) measure secured by an increase in property taxes within the District. At this retreat, staff will provide more information about the status of their evaluation.

Overall, significant progress has been made on all three priority goals/strategies outlined in the Strategic Plan and on most of the objectives within those goals. In order to assess whether these goals and objectives need to be adjusted to capture the District's focus for the coming fiscal year, the results of an environmental scan of changing social, economic, and political factors should be considered.

Environmental Scan Results

As a reminder, the Strategic Planning Cycle includes a periodic Environmental Scan that analyzes and evaluates the internal and external conditions, data, and factors that affect the organization to understand whether any strategic adjustments are needed to be better poised to respond to future challenges and/or opportunities.

At the retreat, staff will summarize information from the Environmental Scan results provided in Attachment 3, including the following main take aways:

1. Focus on completing projects that are underway or are partially completed; to the extent possible, refrain from launching new projects or initiatives in the near term, unless current workload is reprioritized or additional staff resources are identified.
2. Focus on developing a Vision Plan implementation strategy with timelines, and establish the mechanisms and systems needed to seamlessly and efficiently proceed with implementation.
3. In order to make significant progress on Vision Plan projects, new sources of funding and additional staffing will be needed.
4. Pay close attention to labor market changes and staff retention to identify important trends early and respond accordingly; work to become employer of choice to attract strong talent.
5. Create flexibility in the annual District Action Plan to allow District staff to act on new, unplanned opportunities (grants, legislation, partnerships) when they arise. (Note: Once the District embarks on such items, the District becomes subject to the timelines imposed by outside forces, making flexibility even more important.)
6. Develop more detailed project scopes, realistic timelines, and more robust cost estimates to account for greater project complexity.
7. Importance of getting the District's message out and raising its profile across the entire demographic spectrum and in collaboration with other agencies/organizations.
8. Consider whether adjustments are needed to current policies, communication and outreach, and/or management and operations moving forward to ensure that the District remains relevant to the changing demographics and rise in technology use.

Potential Strategic Plan Adjustments

Based on Strategic Plan progress to date, the status of current FY2013-14 Action Plan projects, the demands related to the Vision Planning process, the possibility of a General Obligation Bond measure in 2014, and the results of the environmental scan, staff has identified the following draft list of key categories of work items for FY 2014-15:

- *Capital Finance Funding Measure:* Preparation for, and follow-up to, a potential GO Bond ballot measure.

- *Continuation of Existing Projects:* Continue implementation of projects already underway or reengage projects that were previously deferred.
- *Planning Phase 1 of Vision Plan Implementation:* Develop detailed workplans, budgets, and staffing resources to begin implementing new priority actions.
- *Flexibility Bandwidth:* Prioritize Action Plan projects to identify lower-priority projects that can be deferred if necessary to allow for pursuit of opportunistic projects that surface and are higher priority under the District's mission.

This draft list of work item categories is provided to assist the Board's discussion of whether or not to adjust any particular goals or objectives of the Strategic Plan. The goal is for the Strategic Plan goals and objectives to encompass the FY2014-15 work item categories. At the meeting, the Board and staff will discuss and as necessary revise the above general work item categories and the Strategic Plan goals and objectives, or the Board may determine that the existing goals and objectives sufficiently encompass the work item categories and therefore reaffirm the existing Strategic Plan for another year.

Conclusion

Adjustments to the Strategic Plan will help guide staff's development of the Action Plan and Budget for FY2014-15, for future Board consideration. In addition, the Board's further consideration of the Vision Plan in early 2014 will also guide the Action Plan and Budget for FY2014-15. As mentioned earlier in this memorandum, staff has been evaluating the feasibility of a GO Bond measure for 2014. The General Manager recommends that the Board consider the formation of a three member ad hoc committee of Board members to provide input into this evaluation as it progresses.

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District



Strategic Plan Summary Report



Board of Directors

Pete Siemens | Ward 1

Cupertino, Los Gatos,
Monte Sereno, Saratoga

Yoriko Kishimoto | Ward 2

Cupertino, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills,
Palo Alto, Stanford, Sunnyvale

Jed Cyr | Ward 3

Sunnyvale

Curt Riffle | Ward 4

Los Altos, Mountain View

Nonette G. Hanks | Ward 5

East Palo Alto, Menlo Park,
Palo Alto, Stanford

Larry Hassett | Ward 6

Atherton, Menlo Park, Pescadero,
Portola Valley, Redwood City,
San Gregorio, Woodside

Cecily Harris | Ward 7

El Granada, Half Moon Bay,
Montara, Moss Beach, Redwood
City, San Carlos, Woodside

The Midpeninsula Regional Open
Space District Strategic Plan was
adopted by its Board of Directors
in September 2011.

Contents

Letter from the General Manager	1
Purpose of the Strategic Plan	2
Our Plan for the Future of Open Space	2
Regional Open Space Greenbelt Preservation	2
Protect and Restore the Natural Environment	2
Public Access and Education	2
Goals/Strategies to Achieve Our Plan for the Future	3
History	3
Our Relationship with POST	3
Next Steps: How Will the District Use the Strategic Plan?	4
Mission	4
About Us	4

Letter from the General Manager

We are thrilled to be celebrating both the 40th Anniversary of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District and the release of our Strategic Plan. We have accomplished much during our first 40 years, preserving over 60,000 acres of open space on 26 preserves in Santa Clara, San Mateo, and Santa Cruz counties. The result is a regional open space system that offers diverse and unparalleled beauty in one of the largest metropolitan areas in the country.

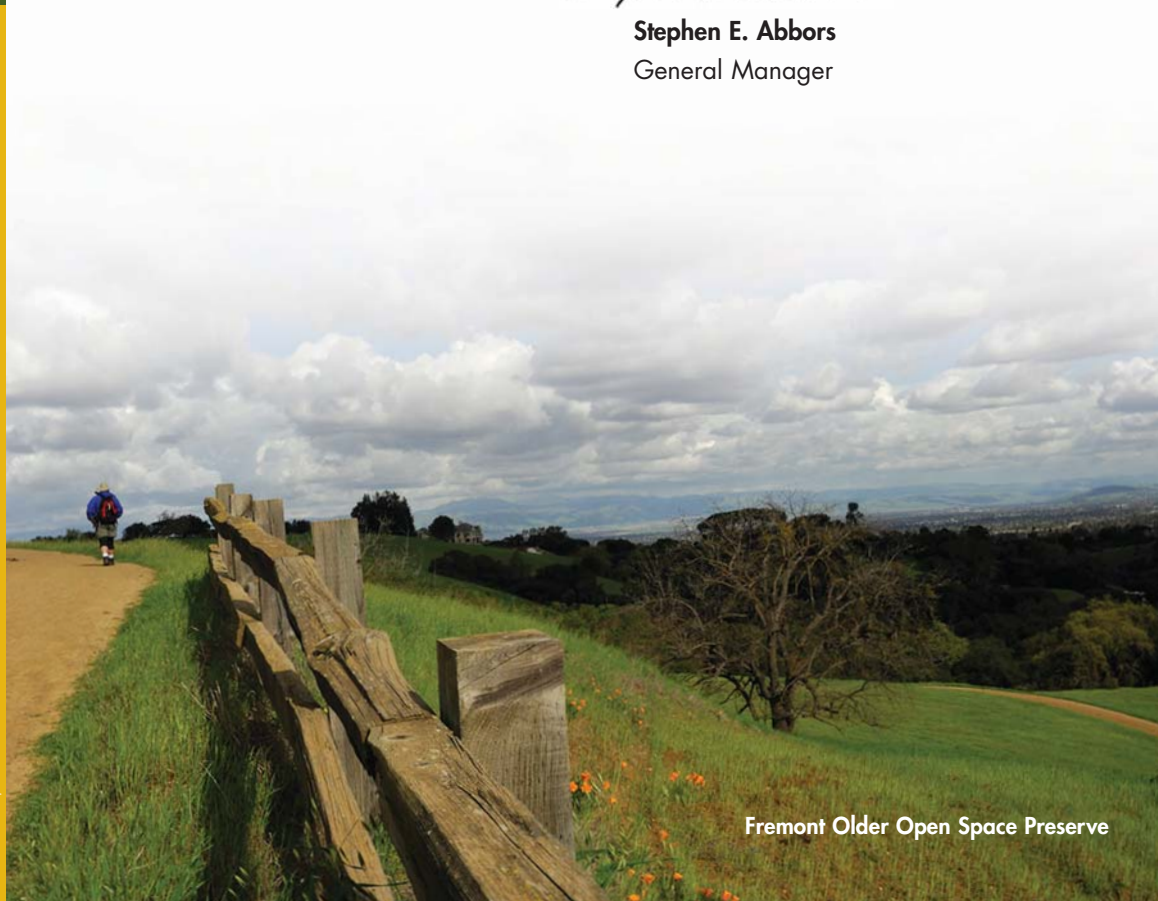
The District was established by the voters in 1972 to preserve the regional greenbelt, and, in effect, save the scenic beauty and cultural history of the area, provide a place for wildlife to survive, and offer opportunities for people to enjoy the outdoors close to home. With the rapid development of the San Francisco Peninsula, and especially Silicon Valley over the past several decades, the preservation of available land became increasingly imperative to us.

Now, we are entering a new phase. While we will continue to preserve land, we understand that this preservation and linking of open space and trail connections can only be done on a regional planning level with many partners working cooperatively. At the same time, we must respond to the changing demographics of our communities and better understand their awareness of and desire to visit open space.

For the next 15 to 20 years and beyond we imagine a future that equally balances the three components of our mission: preserving open space, protecting and restoring the natural environment, and providing public access and education. The following pages are a summary of our adopted strategic plan that will guide our decisions to achieve the most beneficial impact with the resources available to us.



Stephen E. Abbors
General Manager





Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve

Sue Gale



Windy Hill Open Space Preserve

Robert Evans



Coal Creek Open Space Preserve

Staff

Purpose of the Strategic Plan

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District’s Strategic Plan provides the framework to guide the District in its planning process and in evaluating District-wide needs. The Strategic Plan is not intended to list all projects and activities of the District, but instead focuses on the broad view of what the District would look like if all components of its mission statement were equally balanced, supported, and funded. It finishes with desired goals and objectives to achieve that plan. The full Strategic Plan was adopted by the Board of Directors in September 2011.

Our Plan for the Future of Open Space

The District understands that the future of a successful network of open space preserves depends on the success of both public and private partnerships at a regional level, as well as the enthusiastic support of the public who live and work here. Our goal is to work collaboratively with all of our partners to address regional land conservation, stewardship, and public access challenges. At the same time, we will place our energies on connecting and understanding our communities, which have experienced a major shift in demographics and interests in the last decade. The District’s long-range plan for the future of open space is grounded in our original mission of preservation, restoration, public access and education, but it also focuses on a rapidly changing tomorrow that requires foresight, flexibility, and the means to succeed. Below is our hope for what the District will accomplish in the next 15-20 years:

Regional Open Space Greenbelt Preservation

1. Expand protected land, to enhance biodiversity, climate change resilience and scenic, rural character
2. Protect and carefully steward watershed lands
3. Link preserved lands for habitat and people
4. Support working farms and ranches

Protect and Restore the Natural Environment

1. Manage water quality for all priority watersheds
2. Benefit sensitive species and their habitats with District management practices
3. Manage wildfire to become a more natural component of the ecosystem, and minimize negative effects on the community and environment
4. Connect habitats that support a diverse array of native plants and animals
5. Protect cultural resources

Public Access and Education

1. Increase public access to preserved land region-wide
2. Link preserve trails to other regional trails and ultimately to the places where people live and work
3. Educate preserve visitors about natural and cultural resources and the benefits of open space
4. Keep preserves safe, clean, and inviting for healthy exercise and enjoyment
5. Involve and engage communities in ongoing conservation



Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve

Don Wieden



Long Ridge Open Space Preserve

Carolyn Genirberg



Picchetti Ranch Open Space Preserve

Charles Tu



Monte Bello Open Space Preserve

Jack Owicki

Goals/Strategies to Achieve Our Plan for the Future

Goal 1 – Promote and establish a common conservation vision with partner agencies

- Objective 1 – Enhance collaboration between partners
- Objective 2 – Determine an integrated approach to conservation on the Peninsula, South Bay and San Mateo Coast
- Objective 3 – Develop a Regional Open Space Vision Plan

Goal 2 – Connect people to open space and a regional vision

- Objective 1 – Establish a Community Advisory Committee
- Objective 2 – Increase public outreach across all socio-economic sectors of the surrounding communities
- Objective 3 – Involve all District departments in public outreach and communication

Goal 3 – Strengthen financial and staffing resources to fulfill the mission

- Objective 1 – Develop options for increasing funding to meet acquisition, land protection and restoration, and public access priorities
- Objective 2 – Evaluate additional revenue opportunities
- Objective 3 – Identify efficiencies in staffing and re-evaluate current business and funding model

History

Through the determined and heartfelt efforts of local conservationists, the District was created to preserve the regional greenbelt. A 1972 voter initiative titled Measure R passed by more than a two-thirds vote, and the District was formed in northwestern Santa Clara County. The voters expanded the District in 1976 to include southern San Mateo County, and in 1992, further expanded it by adding a small portion of Santa Cruz County. With the final approval of the Coastside Protection Program in 2004, the District’s boundary was extended to the Pacific Ocean in San Mateo County, from the southern border of Pacifica to the Santa Cruz County line and now encompasses 550 square miles.

Our Relationship with POST

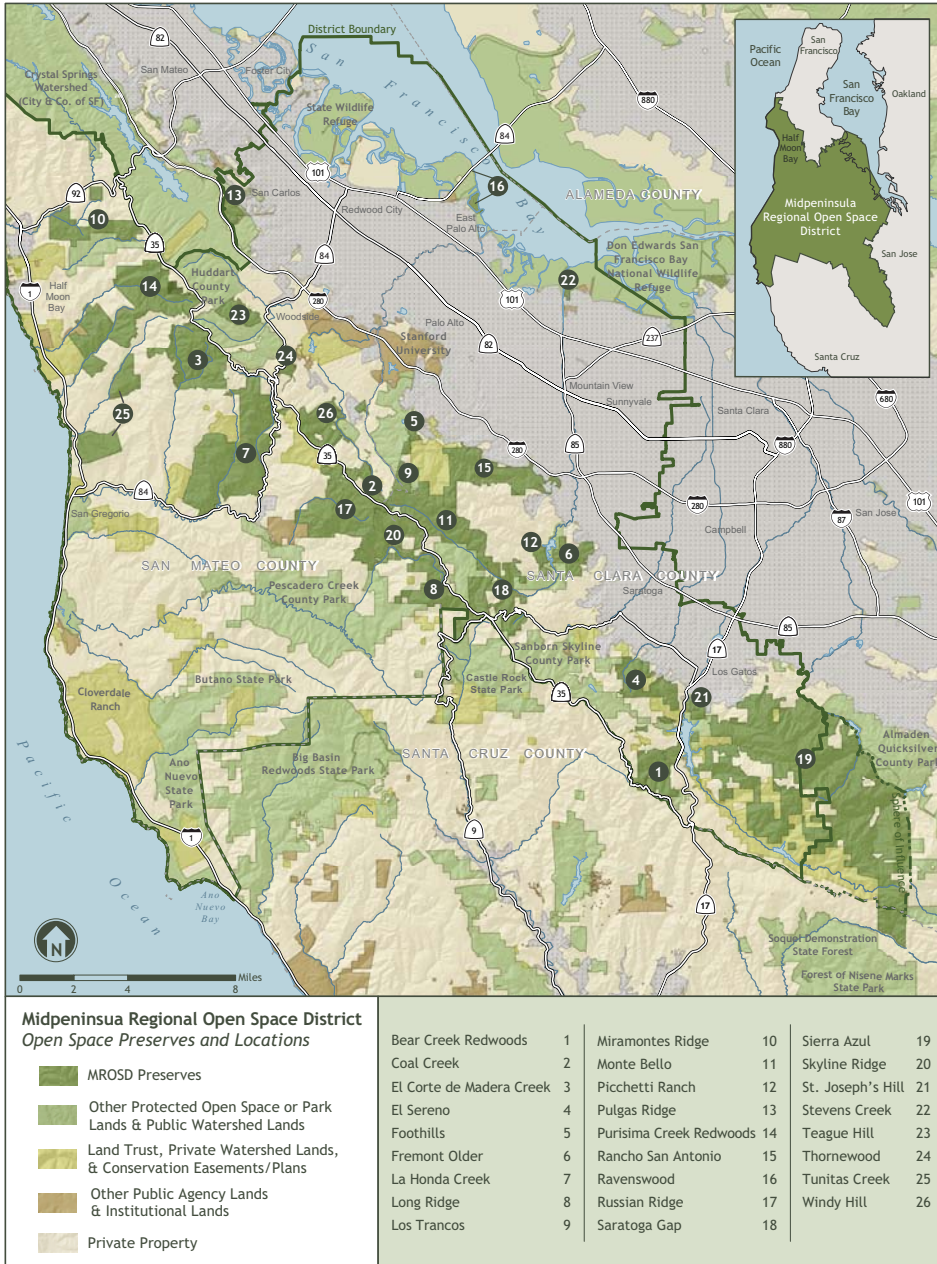
The District helped found the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) in 1977, and since then POST has been responsible for saving more than 70,000 acres as permanent open space and parkland in San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz counties. The two organizations have complementary strengths: as a private nonprofit organization, POST can negotiate quickly and privately with sellers, as opportunities arise, to purchase critical open space lands. The District purchases new lands, and also has the capacity to manage properties.



Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve

Charles Tu

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District



Mission

To acquire and preserve a regional greenbelt of open space land in perpetuity, protect and restore the natural environment, and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.

About Us

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's 26 preserves have diverse ecosystems that include redwood, oak, and fir forests, chaparral-covered hillsides, riparian corridors, grasslands, and wetlands along San Francisco Bay. Preserves range from 55 to over 18,000 acres and are open to the public free of charge, 365 days a year. Visitors will find over 220 miles of trails, ranging from easy to challenging terrain.

Covering an area of 550 square miles, the District includes the following cities and unincorporated areas: Atherton, Cupertino, East Palo Alto, El Granada, Half Moon Bay, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Los Gatos, Menlo Park, Montara, Monte Sereno, Moss Beach, Mountain View, Palo Alto, Pescadero, Portola Valley, Redwood City, San Carlos, San Gregorio, Saratoga, Stanford, Sunnyvale, and Woodside.

Next Steps: How Will the District Use the Strategic Plan?

The District Strategic Plan is intended to be a dynamic document and will be re-evaluated by the Board and staff annually prior to development of the annual Action Plan and Budget.



Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

330 Distel Circle

Los Altos, California 94022-1404

Phone: 650-691-1200 • Fax: 650-691-0485

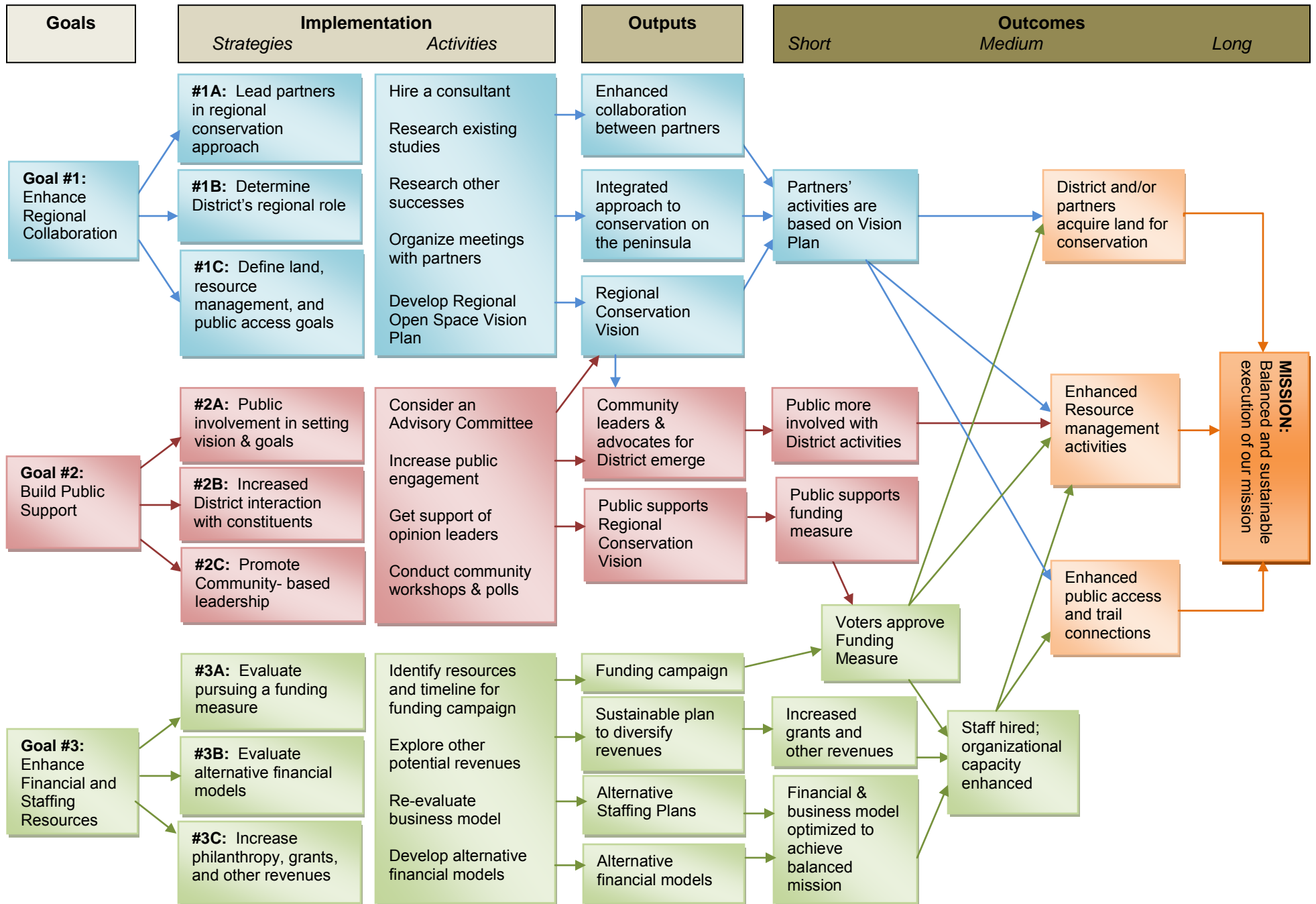
E-mail: info@openspace.org

Web site: www.openspace.org

*Photos above from left: El Corte de Madera Creek Open Space Preserve by Rob Holcomb;
Windy Hill Open Space Preserve by Vaibhav Tripathi; Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve by Sue Gale.*

Photos on front cover from left: Monte Bello Open Space Preserve by Stretcher Smith; Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve by Karl Gohl; Windy Hill Open Space Preserve by Vaibhav Tripathi, large photo: Long Ridge Open Space Preserve by Matthew Findling.

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Strategic Plan 2011



ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN ANALYSIS

What has changed over the last two years (2011-2013) as of adoption of the Strategic Plan?

1. Intense Focus on the Vision Plan and Capital Finance Project

a. Results:

- i. Staying on an aggressive schedule to meet Vision Plan deliverables*
- ii. Ramped up public and partner outreach efforts; increased District profile*
- iii. Established a strong, thoughtful, well-represented Community Advisory Committee*

b. Impacts:

- i. Critical deadlines have been met to date*
- ii. Deferrals and delays of numerous Priority 1 and 2 department projects*
- iii. At capacity on ability to take on unanticipated issues, take advantage of new opportunities, or address added scope (without major impacts to existing key projects)*
- iv. Running from one major deadline to another (i.e. periods of intense activity) with no “recovery” for the next sprint*
- v. Greater public awareness and scrutiny; increased participation at public meetings and workshops; increased public input; additional staff time and focus on being responsive*
- vi. Increased District support by community leaders and larger public*
- vii. Setting the course for the District’s future*

2. Strong Economic Growth

a. Results:

- i. Property assessments up by an average of 8.35 percent in Silicon Valley*
- ii. Second highest dollar increase in county assessment roll, leading to \$260M in additional tax revenue for Santa Clara County*
- iii. San Mateo County’s combined secured and unsecured property value assessment roll increased by \$8.8 billion, to \$156 billion*
- iv. Declining unemployment*
- v. Dramatic reduction in office and apartment vacancies*
- vi. Surge in the NASDAQ*
- vii. Housing values commanding multiple offers and sales above asking price*
- viii. Increased traffic*
- ix. Surge in construction projects, including large public works projects*
- x. Strong entrepreneurial engine, creating much local wealth*

- b. *Impacts:*
 - i. *Increased activity and higher prices in residential and commercial real estate; higher prices also seen in rural markets (not in line with actual appreciation)*
 - ii. *Higher bid prices for construction projects; receiving fewer bids; reduced interest in District projects (smaller scale, more remote, difficult access, specialized); less overall competition for District work*
 - iii. *High housing costs and traffic are two key issues for the public*
3. *Changing Pressures in the Labor Market/Employment*
- a. *Results*
 - i. *More employment opportunities; strong labor market*
 - ii. *Higher competition for talent, especially in lines of work that transfer easily to tech/private/city markets*
 - iii. *Baby Boom generation now of retirement age*
 - iv. *Changing work culture with advances in new mobile technology, cloud/remote systems, video conferencing*
 - b. *Impacts*
 - i. *Likely to experience significant numbers of employee retirements in the near future and new job openings/opportunities in upper/senior ranks*
4. *Political Landscape*
- a. *Results*
 - i. *Two other conservation agencies seeking funding in the same region*
 - 1. *San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority (same voter pool)*
 - 2. *Santa Clara County Open Space Authority (different voter pool, but substantial overlap in supporters; however messaging and image may affect District if there is voter confusion)*
 - b. *Impacts*
 - i. *Greater competition for voter approval*
 - ii. *Greater competition for additional public funds*
 - iii. *Importance of key messaging*
5. *Funding Resources and Needs*
- a. *Status*
 - i. *Significant decline in available grant funding opportunities*
 - ii. *Increased tax revenues*
 - b. *Impacts*
 - i. *Greater competition for remaining grant funds*

- ii. *Even with additional tax revenues, District is only able to make gradual progress on completing capital project list with current funding/staffing*

6. Demographics (SM = San Mateo County, SC = Santa Clara County)

a. *Change between 2000 and 2010 census*

- i. *Increase in Asian (SM = 20% v. 24.8%, SC = 25.6% v. 32%) and Latino (SM = 21.9% v. 25.4%, SC = 24% v. 26.9%) populations*
- ii. *Drop in total & percentage of White population (SM = 352,355 [49.8%] vs 303,609 [42.3%], SC = 905,660 [53.8%] vs 836,616 [47%])*
- iii. *Increase in percentage of renter-occupied (SM = 38.6% vs 40.6%, SC = 40.2% vs 42.4%) vs. owner-occupied households (SM = 61.4% vs 59.4%, SC = 59.8% vs 57.6%)*
- iv. *Increase in foreign born residents (SM = 32.3% vs 34%, SC = 34.1% vs 37%)*
- v. *Increase in naturalized citizens (SM = 15.8% vs 18.6%, SC= 14% vs 18.6%)*

b. *Other changes*

- i. *Large influx of highly educated, particularly young, talent given high-tech magnet*

c. *Impacts*

- i. *Ongoing shift in demographic makeup of voter pool*
- ii. *Groups that are increasing in population numbers may hold different in core values, or priorities compared to population of 1972 (District formation); populations may seek to use open space lands somewhat differently and the District needs to be sensitive and respond to those needs*

KEY TAKE AWAYS FOR COMING YEAR

- 1. *Focus on completing projects that are underway or are partially completed; to the extent possible, refrain from launching new projects or initiatives in the near term, unless current workload is reprioritized or additional staff resources are identified.***
- 2. *Focus on developing a Vision Plan implementation strategy with timelines and establish the mechanisms and systems needed to seamlessly and efficiently proceed with implementation.***
- 3. *In order to make significant progress on Vision Plan projects, new sources of funding and additional staffing will be needed.***
- 4. *Pay close attention to labor market and staff retention to identify important trends early and respond accordingly; work to become employer of choice to attract strong talent.***

5. ***Create flexibility in the annual District Action Plan to allow District staff to act on new, unplanned opportunities (grants, legislation, partnerships) when they arise. (Note: Once we embark on such items, the District becomes subject to the timelines imposed by outside forces, making flexibility even more important.)***
6. ***Develop more detailed project scopes, longer timelines, and more robust cost estimates to account for greater project complexity***
7. ***Importance of getting the District's message out and raising its profile across the entire demographic spectrum and in collaboration with other agencies/organizations***
8. ***Consider whether adjustments are needed to current policies, communication and outreach, and/or management and operations moving forward to ensure that the District remains relevant to the changing demographics and rise in technology use.***