Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

LEGISLATIVE, FUNDING, AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

R-26-156
October 27, 2026

AGENDA ITEM 2

AGENDA ITEM

Draft 2027 Legislative Program

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Review and provide input on the Draft 2027 Legislative Program, which outlines the proposed legislative priorities and policies for Calendar Year 2027.

2. Forward a recommendation to the Board of Directors for approval of the 2027 Legislative Program, with any changes as requested by the committee.

SUMMARY

Each year, staff reviews numerous legislative proposals at the local, state and federal levels to identify opportunities that further the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's (District) mission, strategic goals, action plan priorities and key projects. Though most bills are considered on a case-by-case basis, the annual Board-approved Legislative Program provides a publicly accessible, transparent and proactive summary of issues to guide legislative activities for each coming session. The Legislative, Funding, and Public Affairs Committee (LFPAC) will receive an overview of the Draft 2027 Legislative Program (Attachment 1) and have an opportunity to comment on the priority legislative policy proposals. Staff will incorporate LFPAC comments into the draft documents before presenting the final 2027 Legislative Program for full Board consideration.

DISCUSSION

Annual Legislative Program
The Legislative Program serves as the touchstone for all legislative activities during the session, guiding this work to reflect the priorities of the Board of Directors, consistent with *Board Policy 1.11: Positions on Ballot Measures and Legislative Advocacy* (Attachment 2). It also provides an opportunity for District staff to think about its programs and projects in policy terms, beyond strictly execution, thus promoting interdepartmental coordination and a culture of continuous improvement.

Legislative Program Structure

The Draft 2027 Legislative Program is broken into several sections:

- **Legislative Priorities** – These are the District's top state and local legislative priorities, grouped by key strategic areas. These priorities are consistent with the Board's Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives, reinforcing organizational alignment with Board priorities. (Attachment 1, Appendix A). Annual priority setting is informed by Board-approved projects and initiatives, opportunities to support or oppose state legislative initiatives sponsored by others that affect the District's mission, and other issues identified by the Board as particularly significant. Bond measures and actions to allocate existing funding sources or create new ones are the most common of these priorities.

- **Legislative Policy Positions** – The District's ability to deliver on its mission and remain a sustainable organization can be impacted by legislation proposed at the local, state, or federal level. To effectively respond to legislative developments, proactive Board-approved policy positions that respond to a variety of issues can help crystalize thinking among Board members and staff to ensure consistent and timely advocacy. These policy positions are first organized by the Board's Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives and then grouped into key themes.

- **Regional and Federal Legislative Priorities** – These are the top regional and federal legislative priorities for the District. Participation in these items is considered on a case-by-case basis and subject to staff capacity.

Legislative Priorities

The 2027 Draft Legislative Program focuses on the following proposed policy positions and priorities, grouped according to the Board's Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives, and reflects recent input from District departments and legislative consultants:

State-Level Priorities:

Goal 1: Promote, establish, and implement a regional environmental protection vision with partners

- **Santa Cruz Mountains Resource of Statewide Significance:** The passage of SB 949 (Becker, 2026) designates the Santa Cruz Mountains as a "resource of statewide significance" in statute. In addition to leveraging this status to gain priority for competitive current grant applications, the District will work with Santa Cruz Mountains-focused conservation partners to promote the inclusion of directed funding for conservation and public access projects within the purview of SB 949.
- **Environmentally Sensitive Vegetation Management (ESVM):** Promote implementation of statutorily defined ESVM standards under District-sponsored SB 653 (Cortese, 2025) into new and existing state vegetation management plans, like the California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP) and vegetation management funding sources to better maintain ecological health and strengthen biodiversity while mitigating wildfire risk.
- **Habitat Connectivity:** Enable greater funding opportunities, permit streamlining, and intentional public roadway infrastructure design to preserve and enhance wildlife corridors; promote wildlife permeability and reduce overall wildlife-vehicle collisions.

Goal 2: Protect the positive environmental values of open space and agricultural lands

- **CEQA Streamlining and Statutory Exemptions:** Work with District partners to evaluate the feasibility of CEQA streamlining opportunities for public park agencies similar to those created by the passage of budget trailer bill SB 131 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, 2025), but without having to apply for Proposition 4 grants.

- **Sustainable Patterns of Development:** Monitor state-level opportunities and advocate when appropriate to state agencies to align regional growth mandates with landscape-scale climate resilience and open space land protection. Specifically, support legislation and administrative guidelines that integrate wildfire hazard mitigation directly into the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) planning process and local General Plan Safety Elements. Support policies that disincentivize or restrict residential and commercial expansion within Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ) and the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI).

Goal 3: Connect people to open space and a regional environmental protection vision

- **Natural Surface Recreation Trails:** Support the creation of additional funding sources and permit streamlining opportunities to produce more natural surface recreation trails to facilitate more ecologically sensitive public access opportunities.

- **Equitable Public Access:** Enhance funding resources that support expanding access to open space and nature opportunities and a sense of belonging and inclusion for under-resourced communities and individuals with disabilities.

- **South Coast Traffic Advisory Panel Recommendations for Traffic Safety Measures and Enhancements in San Mateo County**: Stay apprised of any legislative and funding actions that the District can support for the implementation of the highway safety recommendations. District staff and its state legislative consultants will remain available to support opportunities that may arise from San Mateo County to further voice support for such measures with the legislature and with state and regional agencies.

Goal 4: Strengthen organizational capacity and long-term financial sustainability to fulfill the mission

- **Self-Permitting for Local Permits**: Explore with other PRC 5500 agency partners potential legislation to clarify exemptions available to regional park and open space districts from certain local city and county regulations and permitting processes, pursuant to its broad authority under Public Resources Code (PRC) 5541 to "plan, adopt, lay out, plant, develop, and improve, extend, control, operate, and maintain" District facilities and projects, including Measure-AA funded projects.

Regional and Local Priorities:

Plan Bay Area 2050+

Monitor to ensure that the implementation of Plan Bay Area 2050+'s environmental strategy, *Expand Access to Parks and Open Space*, continues to pursue urban growth boundaries, protect and manage high-value conservation and agricultural lands, and expand parks, trails and recreation facilities. In addition, monitor developments regarding subsequent revisions of Plan Bay Area (Plan Bay Area 2060) to ensure the District's interests are maintained.

Planning Guidelines Update
Monitor and participate in the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation's comprehensive update process of the state's General Plan and Tribal Guidelines (collectively known as LCI's Planning Guidelines) to advance the mission of the District and current tribal relations efforts.

General Plan Updates
Monitor and participate in upcoming updates to the Open Space and Conservation Elements of General Plans for local and county jurisdictions. Local jurisdictions are required to make updates to satisfy SB 1425 (Stern, 2022): Open Space Elements and AB 1889 (Friedman, 2024): Habitat Connectivity to address wildlife movement and habitat connectivity in their local general plans.

Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA)
Collaborate with local and regional partners to monitor the RHNA Cycle 7 housing allocation methodology processes and participate when necessary to protect natural and working lands from overdevelopment through overallocations of required housing in undeveloped rural areas and areas with high wildland fire risk. Ensure housing mandates do not disproportionately burden rural areas containing critical, essential habitats and high-climate risk areas. Also, encourage compliance with AB 1445 (Levine, 2022), for integration of climate risk into the regional housing allocation methodology.

Regional Funding
Monitor and engage with regional bodies pursuing funding sources that benefit the District's mission.

Federal-Level Priorities:
While federal priorities may be specific to federal initiatives, the broader policy positions contained in the legislative program apply to all levels of government. In general, federal priorities complement the state priorities identified above. Delegation member Community Project Funding (CPF) and Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) requests will also be considered on a case-by-case basis.

FISCAL IMPACT

None beyond the annual legislative budget as approved by the Board.

PRIOR BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW

None

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act. No additional notice is required.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

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

NEXT STEPS

The General Manager will forward LFPAC's recommendation for consideration and approval of the 2027 Legislative Program, with any edits from the Committee, to the full Board of Directors for consideration in January 2027.

Attachments:
1. Draft 2027 Legislative Session Program
2. Board Policy 1.11: Positions on Ballot Measures and Legislative Advocacy

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Prepared by/contact person:
Joshua Hugg, Governmental Affairs Program Manager, Public Affairs Department

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
Legislative Program
2027

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Adopted: XXXXX

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Introduction

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's (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.*

As part of the Coastside Protection Area Service Plan, a Coastside mission was adopted in 2004:

> *To acquire and preserve in perpetuity open space land and agricultural land of regional significance, protect and restore the natural environment, preserve rural character, encourage viable agricultural use of land resources, and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.*

To further these missions, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) annually reviews opportunities and challenges and establishes legislative priorities and policy statements to guide its advocacy activities at the regional, state and federal levels.

Advocacy of the District's Interests

While this document attempts to cover a wide variety of legislative issues that may impact the District, it is not comprehensive, complete or final. Throughout the state and federal legislative sessions, the District will review and act on various proposed policies and state or federal budget items. In instances where time is so short that neither the full Board, nor LFPAC, can be convened to consider a particular legislative position, the General Manager will take action and report back to the Board through Board Policy 1.11 utilizing appropriate due diligence and consideration of public sensitivity, which may include consultation with the Board President.

Per Section 2.0 of Board Policy 1.11, legislative advocacy is considered in the following manner:

Section 2.0: Local, State, and Federal Legislative Advocacy

a. The Legislative, Funding, and Public Affairs Committee (LFPAC) receives periodic updates throughout the year regarding the District's legislative program. When LFPAC determines that proposed legislation may affect District business, it may direct the General Manager to prepare a recommendation for consideration by the full Board or may direct the General Manager to take action to support or oppose the legislation without full Board approval when there is not adequate time to convene the full Board. In such cases, the General Manager or designee shall report to the Board any actions taken to support or oppose legislation at or before the next Board meeting.

b. When time is so short that neither the full Board nor LFPAC can be convened to consider positions to support or oppose local, state or federal legislation, the General Manager is authorized to take a position on behalf of the District if the legislation:
    i. Is related to the District's mission; AND

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ii. Would directly impact the District's business, such as project delivery, operations, finances, legal authority, or other District responsibilities; AND
iii. The position being taken is consistent/inconsistent with existing District policy, past action, or the District's annual Strategic Plan ; OR
iv. The legislation carries other considerations that make it contrary to the District's interests.

In such instances, the General Manager or designee shall report to the Board any actions taken to support or oppose the legislation at or before the next Board meeting.

c. Full Board action is required regarding legislation that is not clearly within the criteria listed above under Section 2.b. or guided by direction previously given by LFPAC.

All legislation on which the District takes a position will be closely tracked by the General Manager's Office (GMO) and reported to the Board of Directors. Public Affairs staff will be responsible for reporting similar information to key departments. Contracted state and federal legislative consultants will represent District interests based upon the policies contained in this Legislative Program. In addition to District position letters, Board members and District staff may be asked to testify before or meet with relevant legislators or members of the executive branch to discuss issues requiring heightened advocacy. If this is the case, District staff must first notify and/or confirm approval from the GMO to ensure that positions taken are consistent with the Board-approved Legislative Program.

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State Legislative Priorities

The following are the legislative priorities for the District during the first year of the 2027-28 State Legislative Session. Annual priority-setting considers a combination of issues that relate directly to important District-led projects or initiatives, opportunities to support or oppose state legislative initiatives sponsored by others that affect the District's mission, and any issues that are identified by the Board as particularly significant. Funding measures are the most common of these priorities and are generally tied to the creation of new funding sources or the processes that prescribe the allocation of existing funding sources. The 2027 legislative priorities are listed and grouped below, consistent with the Board's annual Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives (See Appendix A) to provide a clear connection to agency priorities:

Goal 1: Promote, establish, and implement a regional environmental protection vision with partners

- **Santa Cruz Mountains Resource of Statewide Significance:** The passage of SB 949 (Becker, 2026) designates the Santa Cruz Mountains as a "resource of statewide significance" in statute. In addition to leveraging this status to gain priority for competitive current grant applications, the District will work with Santa Cruz Mountains-focused conservation partners to promote the inclusion of directed funding for conservation and public access projects within the purview of SB 949.
- **Environmentally Sensitive Vegetation Management (ESVM):** Promote implementation of statutorily defined ESVM standards under District-sponsored SB 653 (Cortese, 2025) into new and existing state vegetation management plans, like the California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP) and vegetation management funding sources to better maintain ecological health and strengthen biodiversity while mitigating wildfire risk.
- **Habitat Connectivity:** Enable greater funding opportunities, permit streamlining, and intentional public roadway infrastructure design to preserve and enhance wildlife corridors; promote wildlife permeability and reduce overall wildlife-vehicle collisions.

Goal 2: Protect the positive environmental values of open space and agricultural lands

- **CEQA Streamlining and Statutory Exemptions:** Work with District partners to evaluate the feasibility of CEQA streamlining opportunities for public park agencies similar to those created by the passage of budget trailer bill SB 131 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, 2025), but without having to apply for Proposition 4 grants.

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- **Sustainable Patterns of Development:** Monitor state-level opportunities and advocate when appropriate to state agencies to align regional growth mandates with landscape-scale climate resilience and open space land protection. Specifically, support legislation and administrative guidelines that integrate wildfire hazard mitigation directly into the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) planning process and local General Plan Safety Elements. Support policies that disincentivize or restrict residential and commercial expansion within Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ) and the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI).

Goal 3: Connect people to open space and a regional environmental protection vision

- **Natural Surface Recreation Trails:** Support the creation of additional funding sources and permit streamlining opportunities to produce more natural surface recreation trails to facilitate more ecologically sensitive public access opportunities.
- **Equitable Public Access:** Enhance funding resources that support expanding access to open space and nature opportunities and a sense of belonging and inclusion for under-resourced communities and individuals with disabilities.
- **South Coast Traffic Advisory Panel Recommendations for Traffic Safety Measures and Enhancements in San Mateo County:** Stay apprised of any legislative and funding actions that the District can support for the implementation of the highway safety recommendations. District staff and its state legislative consultants will remain available to support opportunities that may arise from San Mateo County to further voice support for such measures with the legislature and with state and regional agencies.

Goal 4: Strengthen organizational capacity and long-term financial sustainability to fulfill the mission

- **Self-Permitting for Local Permits**: Explore with other PRC 5500 agency partners potential legislation to clarify exemptions available to regional park and open space districts from certain local city and county regulations and permitting processes, pursuant to its broad authority under Public Resources Code (PRC) 5541 to "plan, adopt, lay out, plant, develop, and improve, extend, control, operate, and maintain" District facilities and projects, including Measure-AA funded projects.

Legislative Policy Positions

The ability of the District to deliver its mission and remain a sustainable organization can be impacted by legislation proposed at the local, state or federal level. To this end, proactive policy positions taken by the District on a variety of relevant issue areas help to ensure consistency in advocacy. District policy positions are grouped by Board-approved strategic plan goals. The District supports policy that:

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Goal 1: Promote, establish, and implement a regional environmental protection vision with partners:

1. Promotes and enhances the ability to acquire open space and agricultural lands consistent with District policies and goals, as well as supports land protection and biodiversity goals set forth by Executive Order N-82-20, 2020. This order elevates the role of natural and working lands and the advancement of biodiversity conservation in the fight against climate change as an administration priority. It also commits California to the goal of conserving 30 percent of statewide lands and coastal waters by 2030.
2. Protects public open space and associated property rights, interests and easements.
3. Enhances or funds regional collaboration and coordination of conservation efforts.
4. Promotes urban infill and urban growth boundaries to prevent sprawl and the further encroachment of development in the wildland-urban interface, riparian areas, working lands, open space buffers and high-climate risk areas.
5. Ensures that the zoning of permanently protected lands supports activities that further the District's mission (preservation, natural resource protection, public access and education, agriculture).
6. Expands and restores protected open space lands to enhance biodiversity, climate change resilience, and scenic, rural character.
7. Promotes the use of green infrastructure and natural solutions in promoting climate resiliency and combating the effects of climate change.

Goal 2: Protect the positive environmental values of open space and agricultural lands:

1. Ensures reasonable setback requirements that allow minimum defensible space clearances on private property to prevent catastrophic fires that damage habitats and pose a high public safety hazard.
2. Furthers implementation of state greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals, such as Senate Bill 32 (Pavley, 2016), the Global Warming Solutions Act that establishes a GHG emissions target of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030, and Assembly Bill 1279 (2022), that establishes a target to reach statewide net carbon neutrality no later than 2045. Maintains an emphasis on emissions reduction and nature-based sequestration over capture and storage technologies.
3. Furthers the implementation of Assembly Bill 1757 (Garcia, 2022), which recognizes the importance of natural and working lands for the purpose of carbon sequestration and

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storage and requires the California Natural Resources Agency to establish a range of targets for natural carbon sequestration for 2030, 2038, and 2045.

4. Supports effective and comprehensive measures that respond to sea level rise and other effects of climate change and enhance ecological and community-wide climate resilience.
5. Encourages and enhances/streamlines the integration of safe pedestrian and wildlife crossings into transportation infrastructure planning and construction projects; promotes the protection, installation, and maintenance of such infrastructure.
6. Promotes advance mitigation programs to enhance wildlife corridor networks.
7. Connects habitats that support a diverse array of native plants and animals.
8. Encourages the control of invasive plant populations..
9. Eliminates the use of first- and second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides.
10. Supports increased knowledge, management and ultimately the eradication of Sudden Oak Death disease.
11. Provides permit exemptions and streamlining for natural resources protection and restoration projects and minor trail reroutes and small trail improvements that avoid sensitive resource areas, resolve erosion and sedimentation issues and improve the health of the watershed.
12. Supports maintaining state and federal lists of endangered species justified through conclusive biological evidence.
13. Helps efforts to protect, conserve, restore and enhance the natural resources of the District, its coast, and connecting waters for environmentally sustainable and prudent use by current and future generations.
14. Engages Native American communities in cultural and land management practices to restore and protect natural and cultural resources and enhance landscape resilience; supports existing and future Native American-led conservation and climate resilience initiatives.
15. Protects and restores watersheds, water quality, natural water courses, wetlands and hydrologic processes consistent with the District's Resource Management Policies.
16. Promotes expedited removal of select trees and brush by public agencies for fire protection, public safety and enhanced climate resilience, while protecting rare and endangered species and avoiding the spread of invasive species.
17. Removes barriers to carrying out prescribed fires and cultural burns as a natural component of a healthy ecosystem, such as prohibitive liability standards.

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18. Supports working farms and ranches on public open space land, including farm labor housing and other critical agricultural infrastructure, that aid in furthering conservation and climate resilience goals.
19. Incentivizes agricultural operations to invest in energy-efficient and water-efficient irrigation technologies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and water use.
20. Provides economic support for agricultural infrastructure maintenance and improvements.
21. Protects natural lands from the destruction caused by illegal marijuana grows, prohibits marijuana cultivation on public lands, and restores damaged habitats.
22. Supports efforts to create and make available more complete sets of data for managing natural and working lands.
23. Promotes access to and use of peer-reviewed data and modeling of climate change impacts to California's natural and working landscapes for prioritizing landscape resilience work.

Goal 3: Connect people to open space and a regional environmental protection vision

1. Expands awareness and access to open space programs and activities for under-resourced communities, non-English speaking residents, and people with disabilities about the natural resources and benefits of open space and increases public appreciation for the environment; supports measures for addressing language, physical and transportation barriers.
2. Promotes volunteer involvement and engagement of diverse communities in ongoing conservation, restoration, enhancement and interpretation of the District's natural and cultural resources.
3. Engages children and parents in the enjoyment and appreciation of outdoor open spaces to inspire the next generation of conservation champions.
4. Creates, funds and enables programs that hire youth to work in parks and open space and encourages them to consider careers in conservation.
5. Preserves healthy, safe, clean, accessible and inviting for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.
6. Protects cultural resources located on natural open space and working lands.
7. Helps fund and streamline emergency repairs to District infrastructure, including trails and public access amenities.

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8. Supports federal, state and regional programs that provide local mobility/multi-modal transportation alternatives for all residents.
9. Facilitates linkages between preserve trails and regional trails and ultimately to the places where people live, recreate and work.
10. Improves local transportation and promotes cleaner transportation options to enable better connectivity between communities and open space preserves.
11. Limits public use of drones (unmanned aerial vehicles) consistent with Board policies, ordinances or District permitting to preserve the tranquility of outdoor experiences, prevent disruptions and impacts to the natural resources and minimize wildfire risk.
12. Supports advances in broadband and telecommunications technology that provide cell phone reception and internet access in open space.
13. Supports electric vehicle charging infrastructure that facilitates the Governor's Executive Order N-79-20, which directs agencies to require that, by 2035, all new cars and passenger trucks sold in California be zero-emission vehicles. In addition, support the California Air Resources Board's (CARB) effort to convert all government fleets to 100% zero-emission by 2035.
14. Supports policies that facilitate meaningful engagement of tribal communities in stewardship actions and opportunities for incorporating cultural land practices.
15. Supports Native American communities' ability to access to public lands for cultural practice and revitalization, especially for Native American youth.

Goal 4: Strengthen organizational capacity and long-term financial sustainability to fulfill the mission

1. Preserves existing tax revenues and tax authority.
2. Lowers the voter threshold for locally imposed special taxes from two-thirds to 55%.
3. Preserves tax-exempt status for municipal bonds on a state and federal level.
4. Expands state and federal incentives that promote the issuance of green bonds.
5. Preserves and promotes managerial discretion in effective and productive recruiting, hiring, onboarding, professional development, firing and day-to-day oversight of staff at all levels.
6. Preserves and promotes open, transparent, accountable government administrative practices that enable efficient and timely delivery of public services, facilitate public involvement, and support effective and timely decision-making.
7. Maintains prevailing wage and workers compensation exemptions for volunteers.

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8. Preserves and promotes streamlined, cost-effective, fair, and efficient contracting practices that give taxpayers the best value for their dollar and attracts greater contractor and vendor competition, particularly among local providers.
9. Enables contracting methods that aid greenhouse gas emission reductions and support the implementation of the Board-adopted Climate Action Plan.
10. Provides funding and funding flexibility, like block grants, to achieve mission-related goals, including, but not limited to:
    a. District operations and infrastructure.
    b. Integrated Pest Management and ecologically sensitive vegetation management, including approaches like conservation grazing.
    c. Wildfire prevention and fuel reduction and prescribed fire implementation.
    d. Research and action on climate change impacts, carbon sequestration and carbon storage on natural and working lands.
    e. Programs that hire youth to work in parks and open space and encourages them to consider careers in conservation.
    f. Environmental education partnerships and public outreach efforts at local, regional and state levels.
    g. Improvements that meet the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) and other accessibility standards in District preserves.
    h. Protection of prime and sustainable agricultural lands, including investments in agricultural-support infrastructure.
    i. Technical support for agriculture and natural resources enhancements.
    j. Wildlife corridors and crossing infrastructure.
    k. Low-intensity, ecologically sensitive public access opportunities.
    l. Public interpretation of natural, cultural and historic resources.
    m. Public outreach and engagement planning of equitable public access opportunities for diverse communities.
11. Promotes closer collaboration and coordination between regulatory agencies to enhance permit processing efficiencies and reduce overall project costs.
12. Improves and streamlines permitting, CEQA and NEPA review and compliance processes for emergency repairs, routine maintenance, habitat restoration, and public access projects.
13. Builds organizational capacities of regulatory/resource agencies from whom the District needs permitting approvals for our projects

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14. Provides open space districts the authority to utilize a variety of contracting methods to construct projects.
15. Promotes implementation of and education about sustainable design and construction, including, but not limited to LEED buildings, stormwater treatment and runoff reduction, local (within 50-mile radius of a project) contractor/consultant hiring, construction material reuse/recycling, and use of green/energy efficient materials and equipment.

2027 Regional and Local Priorities

Though there is a growing recognition of the importance of regional planning and coordination, local land use authority dominates California planning processes in both the built and natural environments.

In 2027, the District will focus on the following regional topics:

Plan Bay Area 2050+

Monitor to ensure that the implementation of Plan Bay Area 2050+'s environmental strategy, *Expand Access to Parks and Open Space*, continues to pursue urban growth boundaries, protect and manage high-value conservation and agricultural lands, and expand parks, trails and recreation facilities. In addition, monitor developments regarding subsequent revisions of Plan Bay Area (Plan Bay Area 2060) to ensure the District's interests are maintained.

Planning Guidelines Update

Monitor and participate in the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation's comprehensive update process of the state's General Plan and Tribal Guidelines (collectively known as LCI's Planning Guidelines) to advance the mission of the District and current tribal relations efforts.

General Plan Updates

Monitor and participate in upcoming updates to the Open Space and Conservation Elements of General Plans for local and county jurisdictions. Local jurisdictions are required to make updates **to satisfy** SB 1425 (Stern, 2022)**: Open Space Elements and** AB 1889 (Friedman, 2024): Habitat Connectivity to address wildlife movement and habitat connectivity in their local general plans.

Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA)

Collaborate with local and regional partners to monitor the RHNA Cycle 7 housing allocation methodology processes and participate when necessary to protect natural and working lands from overdevelopment through overallocations of required housing in undeveloped rural areas and areas with high wildland fire risk. Ensure housing mandates do not disproportionately burden rural areas containing critical, essential habitats and high-climate risk areas. Also,

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encourage compliance with AB 1445 (Levine, 2022), for integration of climate risk into the regional housing allocation methodology.

Regional Funding

Monitor and engage with regional bodies pursuing funding sources that benefit the District's mission.

2027 Federal Policy and Funding Priorities

Significant uncertainty exists at the federal level across both the federal legislature and administration. Reductions in conservation funding and deregulation of environmental protections increase the focus on state level relationships, funding and policy for the foreseeable future. Participation in federal focus areas are considered on a case-by-case basis and subject to staff capacity. Delegation member Community Project Funding (CPF) and Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) requests will also be considered on a case-by-case basis.

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Appendix A: Midpeninsula Regional Open Space Strategic Plan for FY2026-27

Online at: https://www.openspace.org/sites/default/files/Strategic-Plan-FY27.pdf

Goal 1 – Promote, establish, and implement a regional environmental protection vision with partners

- **Objective 1** – Continue implementation of the District's Vision Plan, with an increased focus on Measure AA-funded projects, and communicate progress on projects through reporting results and building partner relationships
- **Objective 2** – Build and strengthen diverse partnerships to implement and communicate a collaborative and science-based approach to regional environmental protection
- **Objective 3** – Take a leadership role in advocating for environmental protection goals by building and strengthening relationships with legislators and other elected officials
- **Objective 4** – Preserve and connect open space and agricultural lands of local and regional significance

Goal 2 – Protect the positive environmental and biodiversity values of open space and agricultural lands

- **Objective 1** – Take a regional leadership role in promoting the benefits of open space and a land management approach that provides ecologically sensitive public access while prioritizing natural resource protection
- **Objective 2** – Protect and restore the natural environment and maximize intact core habitat that is connected by wildlife corridors to preserve healthy natural systems and biodiversity
- **Objective 3** – Lead by example to reduce the impacts of climate change in order to protect viable populations of local native species; implement the Climate Action Plan to reduce operational emissions; establish the Strategic Plan for Adaptation and Resilience to Climate Change in order to expand resilience of District operations and regional landscapes
- **Objective 4** – Work with fire agencies and surrounding communities to strengthen the prevention of, preparation for and response to wildland fires for enhanced ecosystem resiliency and public safety through ecologically sensitive vegetation management and prescribed fire
- **Objective 5** – Support the viability of sustainable agriculture and protect the character of rural communities

Goal 3 – Connect people to open space and agricultural lands, and a regional environmental protection vision

- **Objective 1** – Engage the public in realizing the benefits and responsibilities of a regional environmental protection vision to further the District's achievements in protecting open space and agricultural lands

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- **Objective 2** – Implement diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) strategies to build and strengthen partnerships, increase broad and inclusive public outreach and engagement, engage tribal groups in the District's work, and instill DEI values across all levels of the organization
- **Objective 3** – Expand opportunities, including multimodal options and ADA/easy access trails and facilities, to equitably connect people to their public open space preserves and enhance the visitor experience while prioritizing the protection of natural resources
- **Objective 4** – Develop strategies to reflect the diverse communities we serve in the District's visitors, staff, volunteers, and partners.

Goal 4 – Strengthen organizational capacity and long-term financial sustainability to fulfill the mission

- **Objective 1** – Provide the necessary resources, tools, training, staff facilities, and infrastructure, including technology upgrades, capacity building and safeguards to address cybersecurity threats and future natural disasters and to support organizational effectiveness
- **Objective 2** – Effectively and efficiently deliver Vision Plan projects and priority initiatives by implementing recommendations in the updated 2023 financial and operational sustainability model to guide operational growth and areas of focus, and facilitate project momentum
- **Objective 3** – Evaluate new initiatives against the District's mission, strategic goals and objectives, as well as internal capacity/workplan to confirm alignment, state of readiness, and trade-offs
- **Objective 4** – Remain financially sustainable by preparing for, pursuing, and ensuring discretionary funding opportunities and partnerships
- **Objective 5** – Ensure large operational and capital expenses, including land acquisitions, associated public access and land management costs, are evaluated within the long-term financial model and remain financially sustainable
- **Objective 6** – Ensure the District remains competitive in the labor market and able to recruit, develop, and retain diverse and talented staff to implement the mission. Pursue opportunities to enhance professional development training and career ladders to strengthen our organizational capacity and succession planning efforts

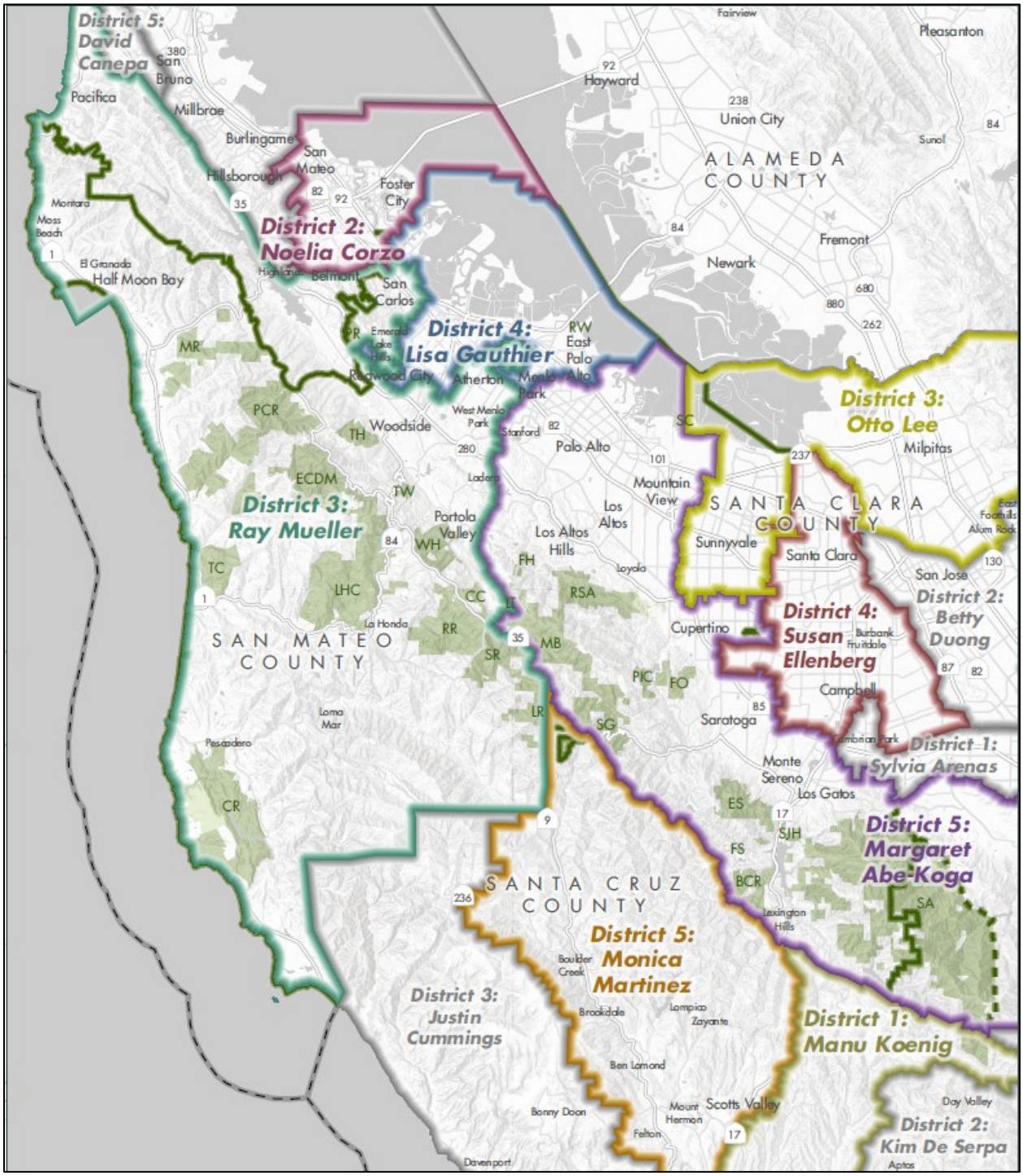
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Appendix B: District County, State and Federal Delegation Maps

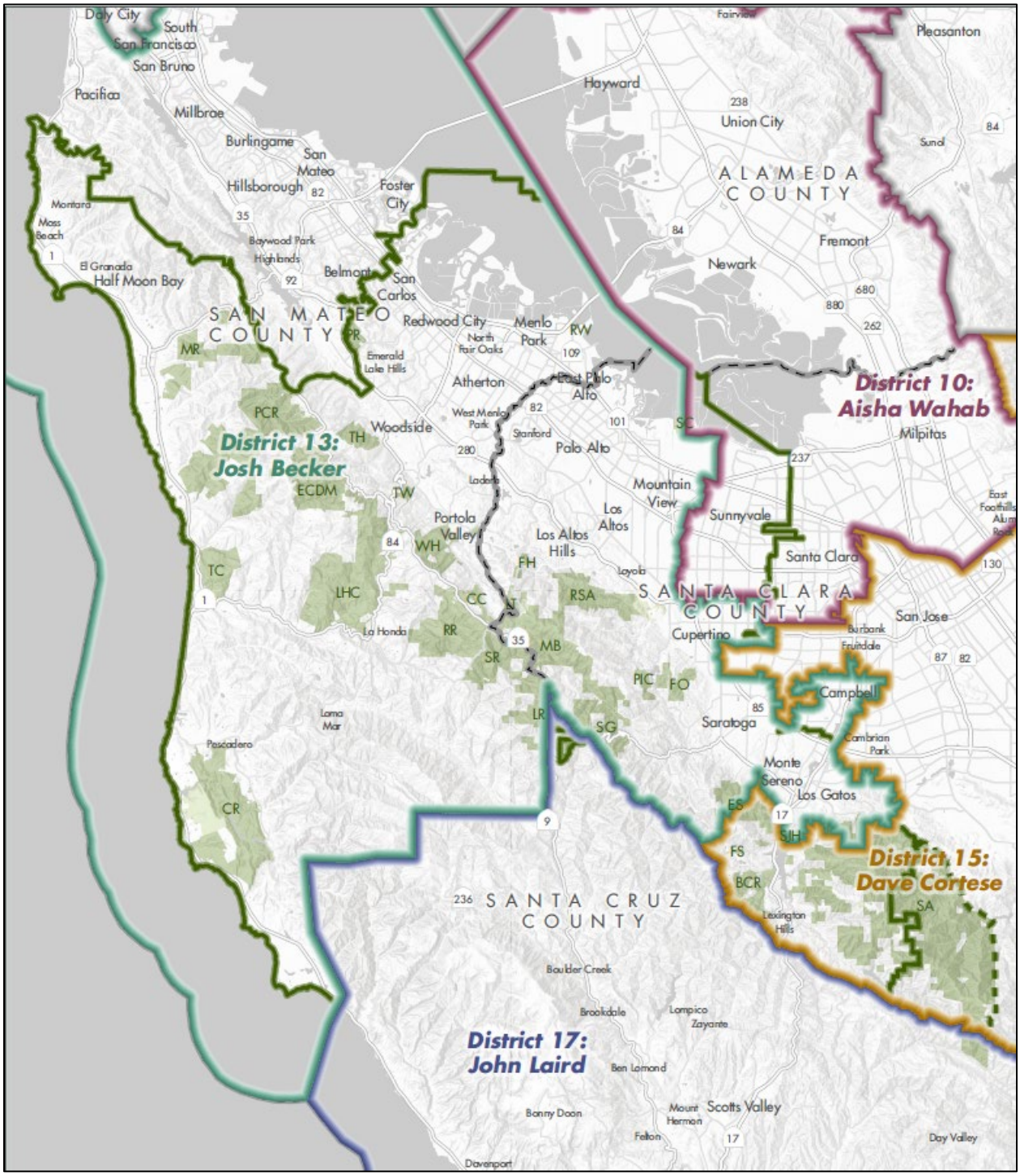
Within the 550-square mile boundary of the District, it overlaps with a variety of jurisdictions that comprise its legislative delegation. Seventeen cities reside within the District – eight in San Mateo County and nine in Santa Clara County. At the county level, the District intersects three counties, each with five board supervisors. The County of San Mateo also has three appointed "community councils" for their North Fair Oaks, Midcoast and Pescadero unincorporated areas. At the state level, the District intersects with four Senate and four Assembly districts. And then at the federal level, the District has four members of the House of Representatives and two United State Senators as part of its delegation. Maps for these legislative districts can be found below.

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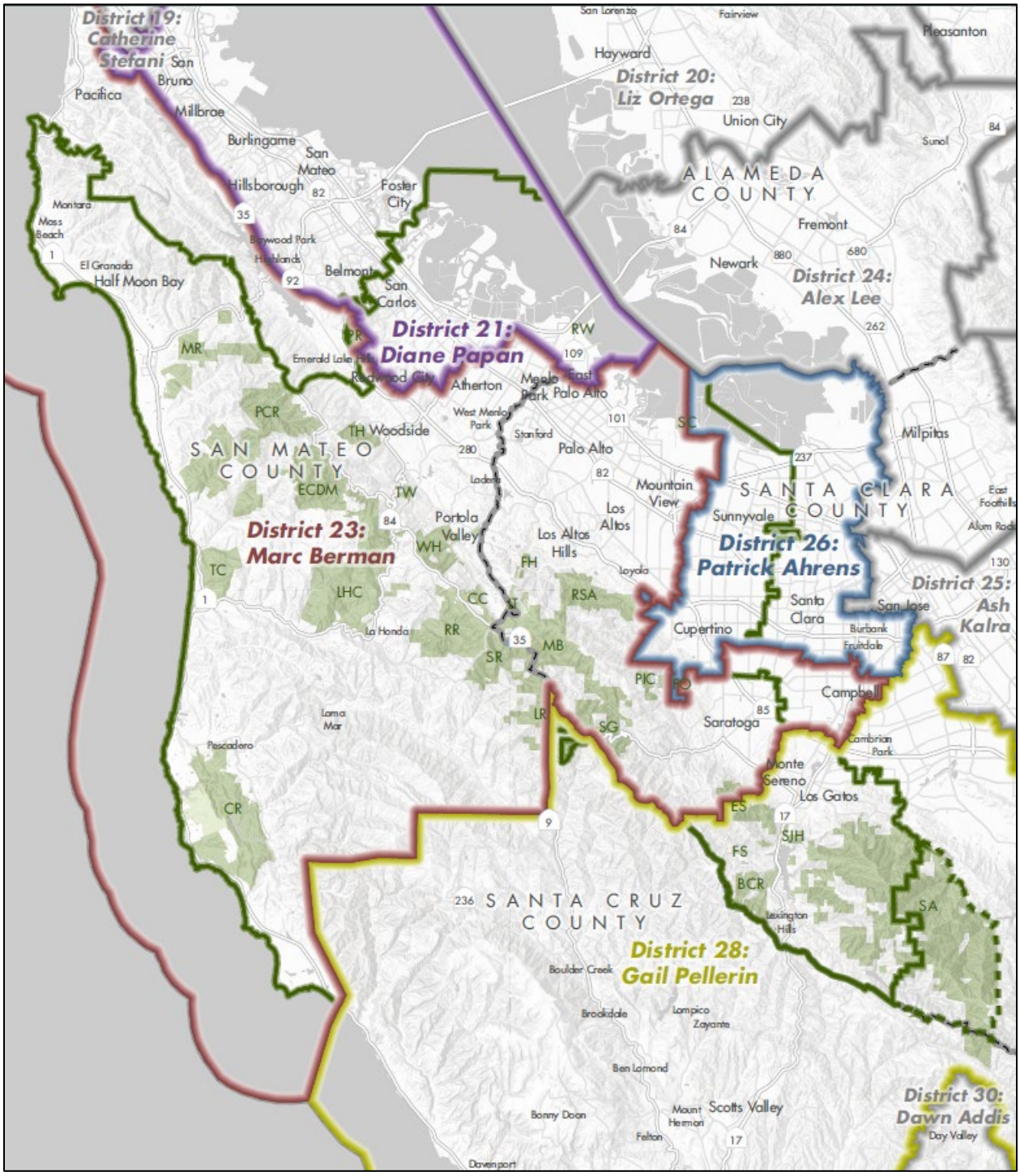
County Delegation – San Mateo, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz Counties



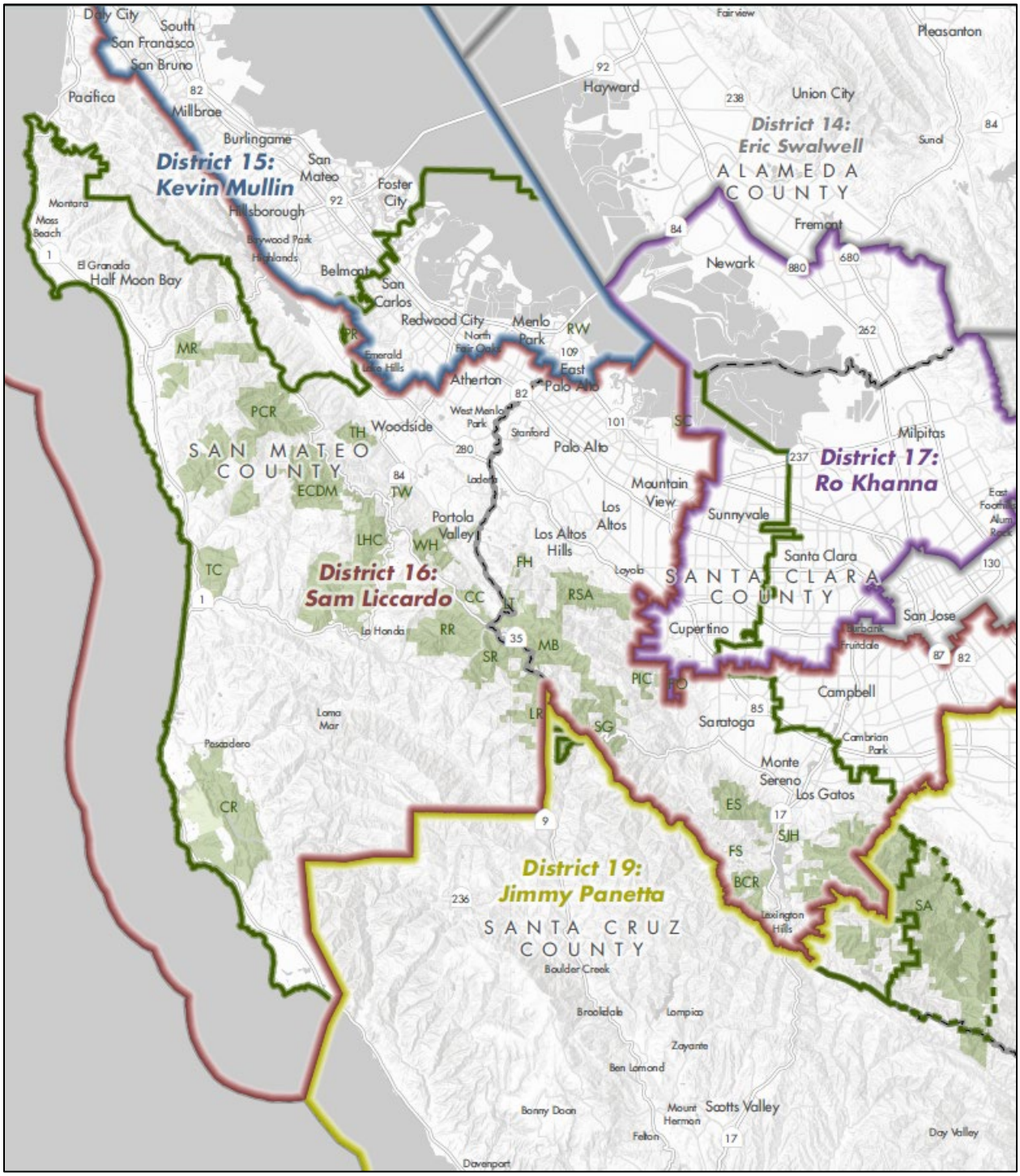
State Delegation - Senate



State Delegation - Assembly



Federal Delegation – House of Representatives



Appendix C: 2027 State Legislative Calendar

To be included once it is available.

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Appendix D: 2027 Federal Legislative Calendar

To be included once it is available.

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Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Board Policy Manual

Positions on Ballot Measures and Legislative Advocacy	**Policy 1.11** **Chapter 1 – Administration and Government**
Effective Date: 4/13/16	Revised Date: N/A
Prior Versions: N/A	

Purpose

To establish a policy governing positions on local and state ballot measures/propositions and state and federal legislative advocacy. It is intended to cover all matters before the Legislature and the voters.

Definitions

For the purposes of the *Positions on Ballot Measures and Legislative Advocacy* policy, the following terms and definitions shall be used:

Measure – may be included on a municipal, county, or district ballot and includes ordinances, initiatives, referenda, advisory measures, issuance or refunding of bonds, city or county charter amendments, or any other measure or proposition a legislative body may submit to the voters within the body's jurisdiction.

Ballot Proposition – can be a referendum or an initiative measure that is submitted to the electorate for a direct decision or direct vote. Propositions may be placed on the ballot by the California State Legislature or by a qualifying petition signed by registered voters.

Initiative – power of the electors to propose legislation, and to adopt or reject them. Any proposed ordinance may be submitted to the legislative body by means of a petition.

Referendum – applies to the process for repealing newly enacted legislation. Within specified time limits, the electors may file a petition protesting the adoption of that legislation.

Local Legislation – typically ordinances, which are the laws of a city, charter, or district, often having the force of law, but only within the local jurisdiction.

State or Federal Legislation – bills or proposed legislation under consideration by the legislature at the state or federal level.

Policy

1. Positions on Matters Before the Voters
    a. From time to time the Board of Directors may be asked or may desire to take a position on local or state measures. The Board may consider taking a position on the measure/proposition if the measure/proposition:
        i. Would directly impact the District's finances, responsibilities, legal authority, or operations; AND
        ii. Is in line with or inconsistent with the District's mission and/or commitment to preserve open space within its boundaries and sphere of influence.

    The Board, by majority vote, may direct the General Manager to research the measure/proposition and return to the Board at a future meeting with information and a General Manager recommendation. At that time, the Board may vote to take a position on a measure/proposition.
    b. Measures/propositions determined to not impact District business may nonetheless be analyzed by the General Manager when directed by a majority vote of the Board, of which the analysis report would include possible alternatives for Board action, but no position recommendation.

2. Local, State, and Federal Legislative Advocacy
    a. The Legislative, Funding, and Public Affairs Committee (LFPAC) receives periodic updates regarding the District's legislative program. When LFPAC determines that proposed legislation may affect District business, it may direct the General Manager to prepare a recommendation for consideration by the full Board or where there is not adequate time to convene the full Board, may direct the General Manager to take action to support or oppose the legislation without full Board approval. In such cases, the General Manager or designee shall report to the Board any actions taken to support or oppose legislation at or before the next Board meeting.
    b. When time is so short that neither the full Board nor LFPAC can be convened to consider positions to support or oppose local, state or federal legislation, the General Manager is authorized to take a position on behalf of the District if the legislation:
        i. Is related to the District's mission; AND
        ii. Would directly impact the District's business, such as project delivery, operations, finances, legal authority, or other District responsibilities; AND
        iii. The position being taken is consistent/inconsistent with existing District policy, past action, or District Strategic Plan; OR
        iv. The legislation carries other considerations that make it contrary to the District's interests.

        In such instances, the General Manager or designee shall report to the Board any actions taken to support or oppose the legislation at or before the next Board meeting.

    c. Full Board action is required regarding legislation that is not clearly within the criteria listed above under Section 2.b. or guided by direction previously given by LFPAC.

3. Full Board action is required to support or oppose any type of grassroots advocacy action, such as social, political, or economic movements, that are not legislation.

4. Board members representing the District in their official capacity on regional or other bodies may, at his or her discretion, take actions based on the principles above consistent with previously approved Board positions and policies.

5. This policy is not intended to limit the prerogative of individual Board members from expressing their individual support for or opposition to any local ballot measure, State proposition, State or Federal legislation, or grassroots advocacy actions. However, in doing so, the member should clearly state they are speaking for themselves, and not in an official capacity on behalf of the Board or the District. Individual Board Members who take a position in support or opposition to ballot measure or legislation for which the Board has not previously taken a position are encouraged as a professional courtesy to include the language *for identification purposes only* parenthetically following their signature referencing their position on the Board.