

Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District



Strategic Plan Summary Report



Board of Directors

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

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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

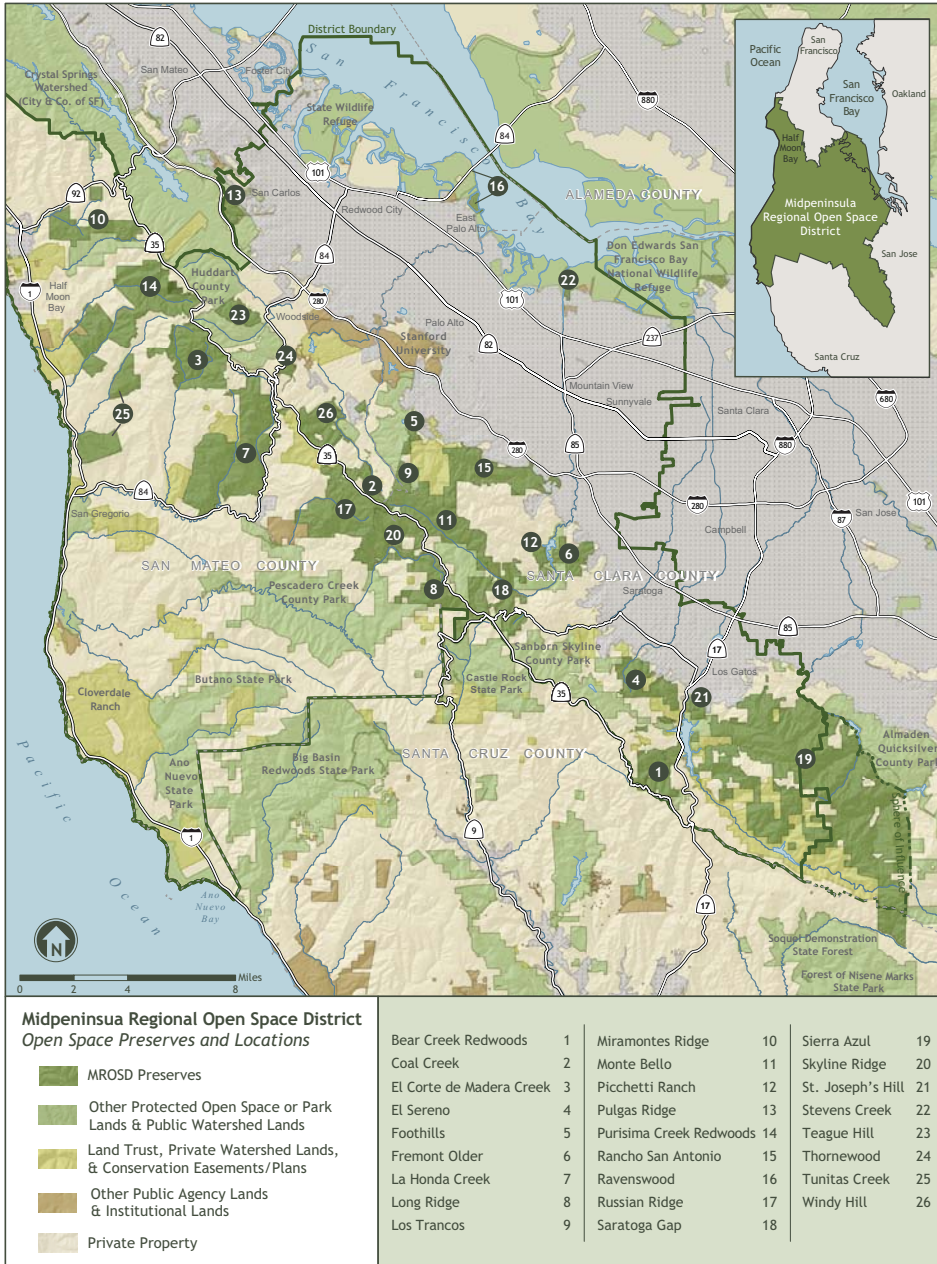
The District helped found the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) in 1977, and since then POST has been responsible for saving more than 70,000 acres as permanent open space and parkland in San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz counties. The two organizations have complementary strengths: as a private 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.