



Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District

## ACTION PLAN AND BUDGET COMMITTEE

R-17-80  
May 31, 2017

### AGENDA ITEM 2

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Status update on 2017 grant-related priorities for the District.

#### GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

No action required.

#### SUMMARY

This overview details the District's initial goals for a grants program, outlines grant applications likely to be submitted this calendar year, and describes key policy and process needs that will be prioritized.

#### DISCUSSION

The District is dedicated to leveraging General and Measure AA funds through grants and partnership funding. The purpose of the newly created Grants Specialist position is to identify, evaluate, and coordinate potential grant opportunities in order to maximize the impact of District funds, as well as ensure grants compliance and reporting.

Since the position was filled at the beginning of the year, the focus has been on:

- A. Evaluating potential immediate and future grant opportunities, while transitioning management of existing grants; and
- B. Evaluating and formalizing the policies and processes necessary to ensure a streamlined, transparent, and effective grant-seeking program within the District.

Longer-term, the aim is to develop a robust grants program responsive to the District's needs with focused objectives. District staff will achieve this in part by deepening partner relationships to leverage community-wide strengths, both through co-applying for grants as well as through the District's grant-making program.

#### A. Grant-seeking

Historically, the District has generally focused on applying for state and local grants. However, with increased investment in a grants program, future opportunities can span federal, state, local, and private sources. Table 1 below denotes the anticipated grant applications for 2017, with the understanding that the majority of these opportunities are competitive sources of funding and have not yet been secured.

*Table 1: 2017 grant applications planned or in process. Additional opportunities beyond Fall 2017 have been identified but are conceptual at this stage.*

<b>Grant Opportunity</b>	<b>Grant Purpose</b>	<b>Min-Max Award Amount</b>	<b>Application Status</b>
Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD) MOU	To remove non-native, invasive plants in Bear Creek Redwoods	Up to \$200,000/yr for up to 10 years	MOU to be reviewed by Board June 28
California Fire Safe Council	Hazardous fuel reduction; fire planning; prevention and mitigation through outreach	Up to \$200,000	Application submitted by Santa Clara Fire Safe Council– District funds were used as a match
Ridge Trail Council - Ridge Trail Grant	Acquisition, planning, and construction related to Ridge Trail	Up to \$300,000	Preparing application; will be reviewed when CEQA is complete in 2018
SCVWD – Grants and Partnerships to Restore Wildlife Habitat	Access to trails	Minimum \$75,000, no maximum	Application window opens mid-June
Priority Conservation Area grant	To improve pedestrian or bike infrastructure and visual, habitat or environmental enhancements	\$100,000 - \$1,000,000	Applications due end of July
Outdoor Environmental Education Facilities Grant	Development of public outdoor structures that facilitate Outdoor Environmental Education	Up to \$500,000	Applications due Sept. 1

At the June 28, 2017 Board meeting, the Board will review a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD). This opportunity is part of the SCVWD Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Program, a Measure passed in 2012. The MOU will fund the District up to \$200,000 a year for up to five years, with the possibility of extending another five years, for invasive species removal in Bear Creek Redwoods. This work will expand the current invasive species removal efforts within the Preserve to include riparian corridors.

The Board will also review a letter of commitment at the June 28 meeting, which will provide matching funds for a grant the Santa Clara County Fire Safe Council is pursuing, in part for Eucalyptus removal along Page Mill Road. District funds had already been budgeted for this work, with Santa Clara County Fire Safe Council as the likely contractor, so structuring these as matching funds instead will make their grant application more competitive while achieving the same objectives for the District.

### B. Grant Policies and Process

Beyond grant-seeking, additional focus has been on creating new and evaluating existing grant policies and processes, which includes ongoing conversations to articulate the District's grant program goals and objectives. This philosophy includes consideration for how the District evaluates and selects grant opportunities as they come up, including:

- Grant size;
- Alignment of grant objectives with District current priorities;
- Likelihood for success;
- Grant restrictions (short-term and long-term) and compliance procedures; and
- Other factors, such as opportunity to forge new partnerships

Being clear on how District staff evaluate opportunities as they arise will make vetting potential grants simpler while creating realistic grant program objectives will help accurately project the extent to which grant revenue may help augment project budgets now and as the grants program gains momentum.

Other policies and processes District staff will formalize this year include delineating a grants workflow, which will guide a process for evaluating for, applying, and managing grants, as well as updating internal controls to ensure that the District is able to comply with state and federal standards for grant reporting. As these types of processes are incrementally rolled out, they will be drafted with staff input by the Grants Specialist and evaluated by management. Part of this the policy development process will also include a Board level policy for grants applications and grants management.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Successful grant opportunities will have a positive fiscal impact, freeing up project funds for other District priorities. However, until individual grants are successfully obtained, the exact fiscal impact is unknown.

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

Public notice provided pursuant to 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 Grants Specialist will bring successful grant applications to the Board for review and acceptance and will periodically provide status updates of the grants program, including resulting policies and process formalization.

At the June 28 meeting, the Board will be briefed on the MOU with the SCVWD. This MOU will commit SCVWD to providing up to \$200,000 a year for at least five years, with the possibility to renew for another five years, for invasive species removal in Bear Creek Redwoods.

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