




Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

Memorandum

DATE: May 15, 2019

MEMO TO: Board of Directors

THROUGH: Ana Ruiz, General Manager 

FROM: Susanna Chan, Assistant General Manager

SUBJECT: Santa Clara County Master Permit

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) has been evaluating options to streamline local and county permits for minor site development and restoration work on District lands. Options under consideration include the potential for a future legislative proposal to streamline or exempt specific permitting processes and working directly with local jurisdictions to identify ways to streamline the permitting process.

On March 28, 2019, staff met with San Mateo County (County) Planning and Building Department representatives, including the Community Development Director, the Planning Services Manager, and a staff planner to discuss permit streamlining approaches. We discussed the needs for permit streamlining and shared permit streamlining examples such as the Santa Clara County grading permit exemption and the District's current effort to obtain a programmatic permit from federal and state regulatory agencies for routine maintenance activities. County staff recognized the benefits of permit streamlining to both parties and indicated that the best approach would be a master permit. Similar to the programmatic permit that the District is actively pursuing with the federal and state agencies, the master permit would cover a group of projects routinely performed on District lands. The master permit, once in place, could provide a streamlined County approval process for covered activities.

Staff has created a new operating project in Fiscal Year (FY) 2019-20 for resource allocation to support the master permit effort. The General Manager's Office will lead the effort with support from various departments. Given the similar nature of the two permits (programmatic permit with federal and state agencies and master permit with the County), staff anticipates leveraging information generated from the programmatic permit work to support negotiations with the County. The master permit approval process is estimated to be approximately 18 months. The FY2019-20 project scope will include working with the County to define covered activities and clarify the approval process for the master permit, and preparing the permit application. Final permit approval is anticipated in FY2020-21.