



Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District

## LEGISLATIVE, FUNDING, AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

R-20-131

November 17, 2020

### AGENDA ITEM 2

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Consideration of a Plaque Recognizing Significant Funding Contributions made toward the Mount Umunhum Radar Tower Repairs at Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve

#### GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

Forward to the full Board of Directors the consideration of a funder recognition plaque and associated language for significant funding contributions toward the Mount Umunhum Radar Tower repairs.

#### SUMMARY

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) Board of Directors (Board) selected the Long-Term Repair option to complete the remaining repairs to the Mount Umunhum Radar Tower (Repair Project). A contracted design firm has prepared the construction/repair documents and staff have prepared permit applications to submit to Santa Clara County. The Repair Project is estimated to cost approximately \$1.86 million. Two partners have offered to donate significant funding toward the completion of the repairs. The General Manager recommends reviewing, amending if desired, and forwarding to the Board the consideration of a plaque and draft language, as supported by the Committee, to recognize significant funding contributors.

#### BACKGROUND

The Almaden Air Force Station (Almaden AFS) ceased operations in 1980. In 1986 the District purchased the Almaden AFS property. The District conducted a significant site cleanup of the summit and retained the Mount Umunhum Radar Tower (Radar Tower). The Radar Tower previously housed the primary radar, Radar AN/FPS-24-Building 102 for the Almaden AFS.

In January 2014, the District set partnership guidelines for potential funding, setting a funding threshold for when the District would consider entering into a formal funding agreement to preserve the Radar Tower (R-14-11). The Umunhum Conservancy (Conservancy) formed in 2012 for the specific purpose of preserving the Radar Tower and quickly began working on soliciting individual donations for the preservation work. In 2016, Santa Clara County listed the Radar Tower on its Heritage Resource Inventory and soon after, the Board approved a Retain and Seal option for the Radar Tower (R-16-75). At the same meeting the Board rescinded the partnership guidelines and approved the receipt of outside funds as donations to support repairs

to the Radar Tower. District staff subsequently began to prepare repair options that aligned with Board direction.

On November 20, 2019, the Board approved the Basis of Design for the Long Term Repairs of the Radar Tower (R-19-155). These repairs are intended to last 30 to 50 years with periodic maintenance. On February 12, 2020 the Board approved a contract amendment to complete the construction documents, construction administration, and as-built drawings for the Mount Umunhum Radar Tower Repair Project (R-20-19). Staff is now preparing to submit building permit applications to Santa Clara County for the repair work.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Radar Tower Funding Contributions**

Sam Drake the president of the Conservancy has agreed that the Repair Project meets the goal of the Conservancy to preserve the Radar Tower. The Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation dedicated to preserving the historic Radar Tower atop Mount Umunhum. The Conservancy is interested in contributing \$100,000 to the Repair Project that they raised from individual contributions. He has requested that the Conservancy be recognized with a plaque on the radar tower for its contribution to the Repair Project.

Mr. Stephen Schott, a philanthropist and local resident, has offered a generous individual donation spread across three years for a total of \$200,000. Mr. Schott was part of a two-person survey crew that helped build the Almaden AFS when he was 17 years old. Mr. Schott has also requested a similar recognition with a plaque on the Radar Tower for his contribution to the Repair Project.

The District separately has also received approximately \$650 in public donations for the Radar Tower through the District website. The remainder of the funding for the Repair Project will be from the District's General Fund, which is generated through tax contributions of local property taxpayers within District boundaries.

### **Alignment with Board Policy**

A section of the District's *Site Naming, Gift, and Special Recognition* policy pertains to the recommended recognition:

- Section VI. Partner Recognition Signboard, "*Partner recognition signboards provide an opportunity for the District to recognize and acknowledge significant partners who have made conspicuous or noteworthy contributions of cash, land, and/or time that were instrumental to the conservation, restoration, management, and/or public opening of a preserve.*" The potential donations qualify as a significant cash contribution.

Given the extensive signage at the summit, rather than posting a partner recognition signboard at the site, the General Manager recommends installing a plaque that can be placed on or adjacent to the Radar Tower. The proposed draft plaque language to recognize these funding partners is attached. (Attachment 1)

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This funding opportunity has a positive impact of \$300,000 toward funding the Mount Umunhum Radar Tower Repair Project. The plaque itself would be budgeted in a future fiscal year and is estimated to cost \$2,000 to \$4,000 depending on size and design.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act.

**CEQA COMPLIANCE**

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

**NEXT STEPS**

If supported by the Legislative, Funding, and Public Affairs Committee, the recommended language for a recognition plaque will be forwarded to the full Board for approval. If approved by the full Board, the funding partners, at their discretion, will make donations to the District. Once the Repair Project is complete and if full funding has been received from the funders, the plaque will be ordered and affixed to the Radar Tower. The Radar Tower Repair project is currently anticipated to be completed in fiscal year 2023.

Attachment:

1. Draft Language for Recognition Plaque

Responsible Department Head:  
Brian Malone, Assistant General Manager

Prepared by:  
Brian Malone, Assistant General Manager

DRAFT Radar Tower Donor Recognition Plaque

**Almaden Air Force Station Radar Tower at Mount Umunhum**

**USAF 682<sup>nd</sup> Radar Squadron**

**General Electric AN/FPS-24 Radar Tower**

**Constructed 1959-1961**

**The repair of this radar tower, which is listed on the Santa Clara County Historic Heritage Resource Inventory, was made possible by**

**local taxpayers through taxes paid on property located within the boundaries of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District**

**and the generous contributions of**

**Stephen C. Schott, who takes pride in working as half of a two-person survey crew that helped build the station and radar tower when he was just 17 years old**

**The Umunhum Conservancy, a non-profit, formed exclusively for the purpose of preserving the radar tower which collected over 350 individual donations**

**and**

**Individual donors who made contributions directly to the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District**

**Dedicated 20XX**