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December 16, 2014

Board of Directors  
Marin County Open Space District  
Marin County Civic Center  
San Rafael, California 94903

**SUBJECT: ROAD AND TRAIL MANAGEMENT PLAN: REQUEST TO AUTHORIZE THE PRESIDENT TO EXECUTE A RESOLUTION CERTIFYING THE TIERED PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT AND ADOPT THE PLAN**

Dear Board Members:

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. Authorize the President to execute a resolution certifying the Tiered Program Environmental Impact Report for the Road and Trail Management Plan
2. Adopt the Road and Trail Management Plan

**SUMMARY:**

Approximately four years ago, staff initiated a process to develop a Road and Trail Management Plan (RTMP) for all 34 open space preserves. The process began with an evaluation of the physical conditions of the existing roads and trails and a survey of users within various preserves, both of which were completed in November 2011. The plan development process included 15 public workshops and meetings to allow interested parties to participate. The public was also given the opportunity to review and comment on a preliminary draft and public draft of the plan.

The RTMP does not prescribe a list of road and trail projects in specific locations. Rather, it presents a framework and process for making decisions in an inclusive, transparent, and fair process. The RTMP includes the following elements: (1) a description of the road and trail evaluation and visitor use surveys; (2) visitor use goals and management areas; (3) existing and new policies for the management and use of roads and trails; (4) a decision making process for designation of the road and trail system and approval of road and trail projects; (5) best management practices (BMPs) related to the protection of biological, geological, and cultural resources; protection of air and water quality; and noise; and (6) road and trail design and construction standards in use by the County of Los Angeles, Midpeninsula Open Space District, Mendocino County Resource Conservation District, and the US Forest Service.

The Draft RTMP notes that the MCOSD inherited most of its roads and trails when it acquired the various preserves. This network consists of many heavily used existing

roads and trails, with almost half of them in poor to fair condition. The existing conditions of the road and trail system are as follows:

- The existing network was primarily built by previous landowners for purposes other than recreation, or arose from the actions of users.
- The level by recreational use is high and increasing over time. These high levels of human activity have adversely affected the distribution and species composition of wildlife, adversely affected native plant populations, and encouraged the spread of invasive plants.
- Some roads in the preserves are encumbered with access easements associated with utilities (e.g. water tanks and utility lines), and are used year-round.

Currently, the MCOSD maintains, constructs, and manages the existing network without a comprehensive strategy to enhance the recreational experience and reduce adverse environmental effects. The Draft RTMP provides the organized framework to address this circumstance and remediate the effects of past and ongoing actions and uses.

The MCOSD released the Draft RTMP and its companion Draft Tiered Program Environmental Impact Report (TPEIR) for public review and comment on September 26, 2013. Staff received several hundred comments on the draft TPEIR. However, most of these comments raised concerns with the policies, BMPs, and decision making process described in the RTMP. Based on these concerns, staff revised the RTMP and recirculated the draft TPEIR on August 8, 2014. The MCOSD received approximately 130 comment letters in response to the recirculated draft TPEIR. Staff has prepared a Final TPEIR, which includes the following: (1) all the comment letters and responses; (2) an errata chapter showing changes to the Draft TPEIR in response to comments; and (3) an example of a checklist to track implementation of all reconstruction, rerouting, active decommissioning, active road-to-trail conversion, new construction, and planned maintenance projects consistent with the RTMP.

In addition to the public comments on the adequacy of the recirculated draft TPEIR, the MCOSD received many comments on the merits of the policies, BMPs, design standards, and decision making process in the draft RTMP. Staff has prepared an evaluation of these comments that is attached to this letter. Comments on neither the TPEIR nor RTMP resulted in any changes to the RTMP or significant changes to the TPEIR.

At its regular meeting on November 20, 2014, the Marin County Parks and Open Space Commission considered the draft RTMP and the Final TPEIR. The commission heard testimony and discussed several issues with respect to the merits of the plan and the adequacy of the TPEIR. In particular, it considered the adequacy of the plan in addressing resource, safety, and recreational issues. The commission voted unanimously to recommend that your board certify the Final TPEIR and adopt the RTMP. In response to some public comments, the commission also recommended that your board make one modification to RTMP policy SW 13 by deleting the reference to "mountain bikes". The Commission unanimously recommends that the new policy read as follows:

**Policy SW.13: Prohibition on Dangerous Activities.** *Activities that exceed the established speed limit, are reckless, or pose a danger to the user or to other road and trail users, are prohibited.*

Staff has evaluated the proposed change and concluded that the proposed modification is a minor clarification of the policy that does not affect the intent of the policy or result in any new or significantly different environmental effects beyond those considered in the final TPEIR. Additionally, the modification would not result in new cumulative effects beyond those considered in the Final TPEIR. Therefore, the policy change would not affect the conclusions in the TPEIR and no further environmental analysis is necessary.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

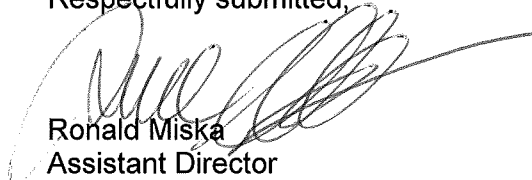
Adoption of the plan has no direct fiscal impact. Indirectly, adoption of the plan will result in costs associated with implementation of the plan, including costs associated with the road and trail designation process, and the planning, environmental review, permitting, and construction of road and trail improvements consistent with the plan. These costs cannot be accurately estimated at this time, but could amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars annually, and millions of dollars over the life of the plan. The MCOSD would use its own budget, Measure A funds, and grants, when available, to cover these costs.

**REVIEWED BY:**

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|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dept. of Finance          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> County Counsel | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A |

Senior Open Space Planner James Raives is the principal author of this report.

Respectfully submitted,



Ronald Miska  
Assistant Director  
Marin County Open Space District