

Notice of Availability

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Redwood Cabin Removal Project

San Mateo County, California

Date: April 14, 2022

To: Agencies and Interested Parties

From: Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Subject: Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Proposed Redwood Cabin Removal Project (SCH#2021060146)

Review Period: April 14, 2022 to May 31, 2022 (5:00 p.m.)

Introduction

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen) is the Lead Agency, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), for the Redwood Cabin Removal Project (project) Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Adoption and implementation of the project by Midpen is considered a discretionary action and is, therefore, subject to CEQA. Midpen has prepared the Draft EIR for the project to satisfy the requirements of the CEQA (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.). The Draft EIR (SCH# 2021060146) is now available for review. Midpen will hold a public review meeting on April 27, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. Due to on-going safety precautions, **all Midpen board meetings will be held via Teleconference ONLY**. The meetings may be viewed online at <https://www.openspace.org/about-us/board-meetings>.

Project Location

The Redwood Cabin is situated within the upper portion of Midpen's La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve (Preserve). The Preserve encompasses 6,142 acres in the Santa Cruz Mountains within unincorporated San Mateo County, approximately 5 miles east of the Pacific Ocean. The Preserve is bounded by Highway 35 (Skyline Boulevard) to the north, by Highway 84 (La Honda Road) to the east and south, and by Bogess Creek to the west. The Redwood Cabin occupies a portion of Assessor's Parcel Number 075-330-260 and is located west of the community of Sky Londa, California. The Project site is designated for Forest/Timber Production land uses under the San Mateo County General Plan and is zoned as Timber Land Preserve District under the San Mateo County Zoning Ordinance. Access to the Redwood Cabin is provided via an unpaved road accessible from Skyline Boulevard, which travels through two locked gates. The final segment of this unpaved road requires a four-wheel drive vehicle or access by foot.

Description of Proposed Project

Purpose and Objectives

The Redwood Cabin is a large, side-gabled log cabin with a rectangular floor plan. The Redwood Cabin was constructed by W.B. Allen from 1927-1928 and served as a recreational retreat for Allen's family and guests, including the YMCA and Rotary Club. The Redwood Cabin was acquired by Midpen in 1988 and has since remained uninhabited. Today, the Redwood Cabin stands in a deteriorated state, posing a significant site safety hazard and has been the site of numerous trespassing and vandalism incidents (including fire ignitions) that raise concerns regarding overall public safety and fire risk within a very high fire severity zone.

In 2020, Page & Turnbull, Inc. prepared a Historic Resource Evaluation to assess the Redwood Cabin's eligibility for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR). The Historic Resource Evaluation determined that the Redwood Cabin is an historic resource per CEQA because it appears to be eligible for listing in the CRHR. The Redwood Cabin appears to be one of few remaining examples of a permanent recreational cabin in the Santa Cruz Mountains from the 1920s with a high degree of historic integrity—historic integrity refers to a building's original character and materials, not the physical condition of the building—and is representative of the peak of recreational development in the Santa Cruz Mountains in the nineteenth century (CRHR Criterion 1). It is also a unique example of a rustic recreational cabin in the surrounding area (CRHR Criterion 3).

On April 8, 2020, the Midpen Board of Directors directed the General Manager to evaluate the environmental effects that would result from removing the Redwood Cabin and implementing habitat enhancements to reflect native ecological conditions.

The primary objectives of the project include the following:

1. Remove physical hazards to ensure public safety.
2. Enhance habitat and natural ecological function at the Redwood Cabin site and immediate surroundings.
3. Reduce structure and wildland fire risk by removing a structure with a history of vandalism.
4. Improve the natural visual character and scenic open space qualities at the site.
5. Implement a fiscally sustainable project consistent with Midpen's mission as an open space district.

Project Overview

The project would entail demolition of the Redwood Cabin and removal of associated features onsite, including the stone retaining walls and barbeque and fire pits. Prior to demolition activities, lead-based paint present within the structure would be properly removed and disposed of.

While it is expected that excavation of posts and bases associated with the structure would be approximately 2 feet below grade, it is possible that maximum depth of excavation could reach up to 5 feet. During demolition of the structure, it is estimated that approximately 60 tons of material would be removed from the project site. Tree removal will not be required to facilitate demolition activities, although some brush clearing along the access road may be necessary.

Following completion of demolition activities, disturbed areas would be recontoured and erosion control applied to the site to ensure adequate site drainage. All demolition and recontoured areas would be compacted to 75 percent relative compaction. Native grass seed mix would be spread in the disturbed areas and weed free or native grass straw would be placed in the disturbed areas, on top of the native grass seed mix, to assist with soil stabilization and erosion control. Any wood chips or mulch generated from unsalvageable building materials may also be used to stabilize disturbed areas but will not be more than 3 inches in depth. Midpen may also conduct the following activities on the project site after demolition and recontouring:

- soil decompaction activities outside of critical rootzones,
- soil testing and, if needed, spot application of amendments such as fertilizers, lime, or organic materials, and
- revegetation or plantings.

Midpen also conducts early detection rapid response surveys for up to 3 years at revegetation sites and treats any invasive plant species on the early detection rapid response list. Other priority integrated pest management target species, including slender false brome may be treated prior to and after demolition. Slender false brome is an invasive weed of high concern at the project site; due to Midpen's mandatory quarantine of this weed, all slender false brome in the area will be treated prior to any work being completed.

Current activity at the project site consists of occasional visits from Midpen staff for inspections. Once removal of the structure and site recontouring/erosion control activities are complete, no additional maintenance or operational activities would be required at the project site except for invasive plant species treatment, if needed. The site would remain closed to the public.

Significant Environmental Impacts of the Project

The Draft EIR identifies potentially significant impacts from implementation of the project in the following CEQA environmental issue areas: biological resources; cultural resources; and cumulative effects. As described in the Draft EIR, many of these impacts can be mitigated to less than significant levels but some cannot. Significant impacts were identified for cultural resources for which further mitigation is not available and the impact remains significant and unavoidable. Specifically, the proposed project would result in demolition of a structure that has been recommended as eligible for listing in the CRHR. Although mitigation measures require documentation of the building before removal, because the building would be lost, the impact is considered significant and no additional feasible mitigation measures are available. This is also considered a significant contribution to a cumulative impact.

Documents Available for Public Review

Hard copies of the Draft EIR can be reviewed at the location listed below and an electronic version can be viewed online at <https://www.openspace.org/who-we-are/public-notice>. To view the hard copies at Midpen's Administrative Office, members of the public must first call or email ahead to schedule a review time.

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Administrative Office
330 Distel Circle
Los Altos, CA 94022-1404
(650) 691-1200
Typical office hours: 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday (except holidays)
Go here for directions to this office: http://www.openspace.org/contact_us.asp

The Draft Program EIR is also available at the following location for review:

- *Woodside Library*: 3140 Woodside Rd, Woodside, CA 94062

Opportunity for Public Comment

Interested individuals, groups, and agencies may provide Midpen with written comments on the Draft EIR. Comments on the Draft EIR should be made in writing before the end of the comment period (May 31, 2022 at 5:00 p.m.). Written comments should be mailed or e-mailed to the address provided below. After the close of the public comment period, responses to the comments received on the Draft EIR will be prepared and published, and this Draft EIR will be updated with any revisions based on the response to comments, which will constitute the Final EIR.

Please mail or e-mail comments on the Draft EIR by the **May 31, 2022** at 5:00 p.m. deadline to:

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
Attention: Jared Hart, Senior Planner
Mailing Address: 330 Distel Circle, Los Altos, CA 94022
Email: jhart@openspace.org

Comments provided by email should include “Redwood Cabin Removal Project EIR Comment” in the subject line, and the name and physical address of the commenter in the body of the email. All comments on environmental issues received during the public comment period will be considered and addressed in the Final EIR, which is anticipated for release in fall 2022.

Public Review Meeting on the Draft EIR

On March 17, 2020, the Governor issued Executive Order N-29-20 (recently extended by Executive Order N-15-21) suspending certain provisions of the Ralph M. Brown Act in order to allow for local legislative bodies to conduct their meetings telephonically or by other electronic means. A **Virtual Public Meeting** will be held on **Wednesday, April 27 at 7 p.m.** (as allowable by Executive Order N-15-21) during which the Midpen board of directors will receive public comments on the Redwood Cabin Removal Project Draft EIR. The agenda and report for this meeting will be available online no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, April 22, 2022. Information on how to participate and comment during the public meeting is available at [openspace.org/who-we-are/public-meetings](https://www.openspace.org/who-we-are/public-meetings).

Individuals needing special assistive devices will be accommodated to Midpen’s best ability. For more information, please contact the District Clerk at (650) 691-1200 or clerk@openspace.org at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.