

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
Board Director Elections
November 4, 2014
Ward 1

To all MROSD Board candidates:

The intent of this questionnaire is to allow candidates for Board seats an opportunity to address areas of interest for the members of Silicon Valley Mountain Bikers (SVMTB).

We thank you for your willingness to serve the community in this very important role and thank you for your time answering these questions. We would appreciate a reply by October 22, 2014 so that we can share this information with our membership before the election.

Best regards, SVMTB Board of Directors

1. What sort of roles have you had in land management agencies or similar organizations that would speak to your ability to carry out the role as a Director of MROSD?

Siemens: Past service on MidPen's Board; Ex-councilman and mayor in Los Gatos

Buncic: In my mind the role that qualifies me most highly for this position is simply that I have spent thousands of hours within the lands of MROSD, travelling virtually every trail. I am highly familiar with the lands and issues related. These areas have a deep personal connection to me. As an educator my students have enjoyed the same. I have also been involved with many of the major planning processes in the past 15 years. As an employee of the Santa Clara Unified School District, I have worked within two campaigns to pass, plan and implement two major bond issues, one of these for approximately 150 million dollars and the other for 300 million. Within the two issues I had direct responsibility within two major projects as to planning and implementation, the construction of a new science facility and the renovation of an athletic facility. I have seen these things done well and I have seen them done poorly. In addition within my career as a teacher I have had many opportunities to interact with the governing board of a governmental agency, I have seen this go well and I have also seen it go poorly, to say the least. This a skill I see as highly relevant to my role within MROSD.

2. What do you see as the best new opportunities for MTB riders to enjoy MROSD lands in the coming years?

Siemens: Opportunities for members to participate in public planning meetings where we discuss policies and trails as part of our Vision Plan implementation.

Buncic: My thoughts here are very simple. In the vast majority of cases trails and lands should be open to all users. Only when a significant ecological or safety situation occurs should any other situation be considered. These are rare. Hiker's, cyclists and equestrian are all welcome, and I would consider expanding the opportunities for a number of other low impact recreational opportunities. If you speak to the general public, the rangers, field staff and others, the issue of user conflict is nearly non-existent. This has been shown to be largely perception forwarded by land management agencies for a number of invalid reasons. A few incidents that may occur over a number of years either between user groups or among them, cannot be used to prejudice thousands of other open-minded, considerate and well educated citizens. These policies can only breed resentment among the public and bring the district into low approval. This cannot be allowed in an agency which is beholden to the citizens. Such policies are the source of conflict themselves, not any of the vast majority of the public we are obligated to serve

3. There are currently few trails that allow MTB riders access to the Bay Area Ridge Trail from the urban areas to the East of Skyline Blvd. Thus many of our membership drive to trailheads on Skyline but express interest in being able to do loops on singletrack starting much closer to their homes. Do you see opportunities to develop new trails that would allow this?

Siemens: Absolutely yes; elements in the Vision Plan projects include trails from the Santa Clara Valley up to Skyline (and beyond). Most of our constraints come from adjacent agencies. I see off roadway access to Skyline as a critical need.

Buncic: I refer to these types of trails as "regional connector trails" From what I have seen, this concept has largely not been considered in land planning at MROSD. Not only does it provide for a rich user experience, but it has the additional benefit of reducing both bicycle and car travel along narrow roads as well as being environmentally sound. The opportunities are many, and many of these locations will be considered under planning process related to Measure AA. I could not vote in approval of any plan that does not take multi-user trail improvement into consideration. Ill list a few; Razorback Ridge, Hamms Gulch and the Lost Trails at Windy Hill, Page Mill Trail at Los Trancos, Black Mountain Trail at Monte Bello, a planned extension of the Stevens Creek Trail into Monte Bello, the combination of John Nichols trail (SC County Parks) and an eventual through trail at El Sereno to Lexington Reservoir, Lexington Reservoir to Skyline via Bear Creek Redwoods. Sierra Azul through trail from Los Gatos to Highland Way via Loma Prieta. and more....

4. The outdoor experience that Mountain Bikers seek is not that different from other trail users. We want to enjoy a close connection to nature that singletrack trails allow as well as the challenge inherent in navigating such trails. Other park districts have made efforts to develop these multi-use trails. A local example is the Emma McCrary trail in Santa Cruz. Are you supportive of efforts to develop trails within MROSD preserves that have similar features?

Siemens: I am not familiar with the Emma Trail; however I think single-track trails are a good addition to some of our preserves so long as they are environmentally sound and are treated with respect.

Buncic: I am absolutely supportive. In addition to the user experience you mention, these trails have the added benefit of being more ecologically sound in terms of habitat impact and erosion control. Having worked a good number of hours in trail maintenance and building I am well familiar with these types of trails. MROSD has made some effort recently in providing trail opportunities in this realm. White Oak Trail, A near open Ancient Oaks Trail (Russian Ridge) and Oljon Trail (ECDM) show they have begun to take these into planning. Any future planning should look to include increased number of such opportunities

5. What is the best way to work with you to better understand the interests of mountain bikers? How will you balance the needs of the various trail users?

Siemens: See #2 above; also the 'needs' of various users involve mutual respect. I have and will continue to support our education efforts to accomplish this.

Buncic: The key concept here is simply communication. I feel strongly it is the responsibility of a board director to go well beyond the usual public commentary process and to be familiar with the thoughts of the public he or she serves. They must actively pursue it. I will be sure to be easily available, not to mention regularly out on the trail myself. In addition to my previous comments on multi-use issues, education is a key component of trail use. That can only occur if user groups are brought together to participate in the outdoors cooperatively rather than segregated. But that goes for me as well. I must be as experienced with the needs of user groups as they of each other.

6. Is there anything else you would like to tell our members before they cast their votes?

Siemens: I am encouraged that national bicycle organizations recognize our extensive provision of trails for bicycles; I am also thankful for the thousands of hours of trail projects the various clubs have given to the District.

Buncic: I can assure you I will make every effort to move MROSD into a more diverse user environment, and increase the public's awareness of, and participation in the preserves. I would like to see a much larger segment of the population experience the settings that I have been fortunate enough to.