



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

**MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT
PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Administrative Office
5050 El Camino Real
Los Altos, CA 94022

Tuesday, July 11, 2023

DRAFT MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Cyr called the meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee to order at 1:10 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members present: Jed Cyr, Craig Gleason, Karen Holman

Members absent: None

Staff present: General Manager Ana M. Ruiz, Assistant General Counsel II Egan Hill, Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan, Assistant General Manager Brian Malone, Chief Financial Officer/Director of Administrative Services Stefan Jaskulak, Executive Assistant/Deputy District Clerk Loana Lumina-Hsu, Executive Assistant/Legal Secretary Irma Mora, Planning Manager Jane Mark, Senior Planner Tina Hugg, Planner II Tyler Smith, Planner II Brittany Wheatman, Management Analyst II Marion Shaw, Supervising Ranger Alysha Carabetta, Public Affairs Manager Korrine Skinner, Public Affairs Specialist II Natalie Jolly

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion: Director Gleason moved, and Director Holman seconded the motion to adopt the agenda.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Public comment opened at 1:12 p.m.

Daniel Shane spoke on rapid loss of highway vegetation barriers due to increased housing developments, expressing that there should be a higher value placed on enhancing vegetation barriers for the health of neighborhoods. Mr. Shane encouraged the District to advocate for the protection of highway vegetation barriers.

Public comment closed at 1:16 p.m.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

1. Approve the April 4, 2023 Planning and Natural Resources Committee Meeting Minutes.

Motion: Director Gleason moved, and Director Holman seconded the motion to approve the April 4, 2023 Planning and Natural Resources Committee meeting minutes.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

2. Background Information, Proposed Performance Measures and Service Design Concepts, and First Go-No Go Consideration for a Potential Shuttle Program and/or Ride Hail Program at Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve (R-23-86)

General Manager Ana Ruiz provided opening remarks regarding high visitation at the Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve that increased during the COVID-19 pandemic and remains higher today as compared to pre-pandemic levels. A Multimodal Access Study was conducted for Rancho San Antonio, which identified priority Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies to address parking congestion and demand at this preserve, including consideration to explore shuttle and ride-hail programs. To move effectively forward with shuttle and ride hail programs, companion TDM measures will likely be needed as part of implementation. Ms. Ruiz requested the Committee members to consider the challenges and opportunities, and likelihood of success, when determining whether the District should move forward with the programs and clarified that the proposed routes for either program are solely focused along the Cristo Rey Drive main entrance.

Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan provided a background presentation of the Rancho San Antonio Multimodal Access Study and the implementation of Priority 1 TDM Strategies, including the addition of new bike facilities, parking sensors and the accompanying dynamic sign system, the pilot carpool lot, and upcoming bike lane improvements on Cristo Rey Drive in partnership with the City of Cupertino.

Planner II Tyler Smith provided the staff presentation on the potential shuttle and ride hail programs, including design parameters, stakeholder engagement, and public surveys. Mr. Smith spoke on the design parameters that were considered to guide the development of the shuttle and ride hail programs. He then described stakeholder engagement efforts to further inform this work, including meetings with Foothill College, City of Cupertino, and a Joint-Stakeholder Workshop with Santa Clara County Parks, Town of Los Altos Hills, City of Los Altos, City of Cupertino, Cupertino Union School District, City of Sunnyvale and City of Mountain View. He also discussed discussions with transit agencies related to the potential shared use of transit

centers and stops and discussions with partner agencies on potential partnerships and on lessons learned with other shuttle or ride hail programs.

Director Holman requested and received additional information on the benefits gained from the TDM measures that have been implemented to date at Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve.

Ms. Chan explained the carpool program is still in the pilot phase and data is being collected to measure its effects, and additional information on the carpool program will be presented to the Board of Directors when the pilot is complete. Ms. Chan stated staff has observed use of the installed bike racks and received positive feedback from cyclist for the bicycle repair station. Additionally, staff has received positive feedback from visitors on the dynamic parking signs and the online tool that tracks parking availability, which is being highly used by visitors.

Director Holman asked for additional explanation of the baseline prior to the implementation of additional multimodal access improvements.

Ms. Chan explained the most recent available baseline data was collected in Fall 2022.

Director Holman expressed the importance of comparing baseline data with post-implementation data of recently completed TDM strategies to inform decisions on whether to proceed with a shuttle and/or ride hail program(s).

Ms. Ruiz explained the baseline changes based on the progression of the different implemented strategies. Ms. Ruiz provided additional comments on the dynamic signage and carpool lot requirement of three persons or more. Staff have observed visitors with three or more people are choosing to park closer to the main trailhead rather than at the carpool lot because of a preference to be closer to the main trailhead.

Director Holman expressed the carpool lot may not be in a good location and perhaps the carpool lot should be located at the most desired lot.

Director Gleason also expressed the carpool lot is likely at the wrong location.

Ms. Chan explained the current carpool lot location was selected for the pilot program due to the need to control egress and ingress without requiring significant infrastructure improvements. The location is close to another popular trail.

Director Holman suggested two smaller carpool lots to serve various preserve users that want to access the various main trailhead facilities.

Ms. Chan explained today's meeting is focused on the potential shuttle program and ride hail program, and the companion measures, including the carpool program, will be brought before the Planning and Natural Resources Committee at the July 18, 2023 meeting.

Director Gleason asked and received confirmation the parking sensors are in working order.

Director Gleason asked if clear, defined goals and priorities were set at the beginning of the project.

Ms. Chan explained staff balanced the different interest with input from the community, Planning and Natural Resources Committee, and the Board, and staff developed robust evaluation criteria for the TDM strategies. Each area was rated and evaluated. The consultant identified fifteen TDM strategies that met the goals that were approved by the Board for implementation.

Ms. Ruiz explained the overall project was first initiated to address congestion issues at Rancho San Antonio, excess parking and overflow in neighborhoods, negative interactions in parking lots, and visitor frustrations, all while maintaining equity of access, promoting green modes to visit the preserve, while balancing the need to avoid visitation impacts to natural resources and the land.

Ms. Chan explained that those TDM strategies that balanced the overarching goals rose to the top as the priority TDMs to pursue.

Director Gleason expressed appreciation for the explanation and stated that having clearly defined priorities would help focus the decision-making process and next steps.

Ms. Chan explained that if the Board approves moving forward with the shuttle program and ride hail program, companion measures and the benefits and trade off the different programs will be further fleshed out to help the Board make a final informed decision on each program.

Director Holman stated the District does not have carrying capacity information for the preserves and understanding the carrying capacity can aid in making well informed decisions for these programs.

Ms. Chan explained, based on field staff observations, the front areas of preserves are the busiest, especially on weekends and holidays, and the backcountry areas of the preserve experience less use. The proposed shuttle and ride hail programs may serve to regulate visitation during peak periods by spreading out visitors across different days and times. Ms. Chan stated the District plans to explore carrying capacity through a separate project in the next 2 years.

Mead & Hunt consultant Brian Laverty continued the presentation, explained results from the public survey of October 2020 to November 2020, and shared questions and responses related to the potential shuttle and potential ride-hail services. Mr. Laverty provided information on survey demographics and informative data points showing the following: the main entrance on Cristo Rey Drive is the preferred entrance; preferred visitation time is spread out throughout the week with weekday mornings seeing the most parking congestion and overflow onto nearby roads. Mr. Laverty shared when survey responders would or might use an off-site shuttle service, circumstances that would influence visitors to use a shuttle, reasons respondents would most likely not use a shuttle, and respondent preferences for short wait times and short riding times. Mr. Laverty also shared case studies and common themes of other shuttle programs.

Mr. Laverty explained four potential performance measures for a shuttle program: ridership, comparison of empty parking spaces during shuttle service, timeliness of service, and ridership from more than ten zip codes.

Mr. Lavery provided additional information on the routes that best match criteria and may have the largest impact to preserve users:

- Route B – Foothill Community College parking lot, which offers ample parking. However, the location is far from the main preserve entrance.
- Route C – Mountain View Transit Center - serves Mountain View Rail Station, which has commuter and light rail services and Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) bus routes. The site is associated with the longest shuttle route but includes a secondary stop at the Lucky Supermarket Shopping Center.
- Route E – De Anza Community College, which offers ample parking. De Anza currently has more transit servicing the campus than Foothill Community College, including a VTA bus stop, and De Anza is closer to Rancho San Antonio.
- Route I – Lucky Supermarket to the Main Entrance: shortest shuttle route in distance and time.

Director Gleason asked if visitors are already using the Lucky Supermarket parking lot.

Mr. Lavery stated there is no data available to indicate current use of the Lucky Supermarket parking lot by preserve visitors.

Director Gleason asked if there is information on visitor behavior once parking lots are full such as how many people are waiting for parking spots, parking in local neighborhoods, or going home or to another location.

Mr. Lavery saw from direct observation that visitors are waiting in the parking lot for a person to leave, and visitors are parking in neighborhoods, on Cristo Rey Drive, and on other streets. Since Fall 2022, the data from the vehicle counter may provide some additional information.

Supervising Ranger Alysha Carabetta stated that a ranger has been assigned to do traffic control for several months at Rancho San Antonio with 10 to 15 cars waiting at any time, with visitors stopping in the driving lane of the parking lot waiting for a parking spot to become available. Rangers are also observing visitors parking on Cristo Rey Drive and in neighborhoods.

Director Gleason asked if rangers noticed if the parking behavior is occurring during the week.

Ms. Carabetta stated no, the parking behavior is observed only on weekends and holidays during peak times.

Mr. Lavery stated it was noted there are a few visitors already parking at Foothill Community College and walking to Rhus Ridge Trail.

Director Holman asked why visitors should not park in the parking lot while waiting for a spot rather than have visitors circle because it creates greenhouse gas emissions.

Ms. Ruiz explained stopping in driving lanes can block emergency access.

Ms. Carabetta explained visitors are stopping at the beginning of entrances and into the driving lane of the road, blocking circulation.

Director Holman asked how a survey question was posed such that respondents opted to not take a shuttle because they would be unable to take their bikes, yet a shuttle could have bike racks.

Mr. Lavery explained the question posed is as shown on the slide: “What circumstances would prevent you from using a shuttle to access Rancho San Antonio?”

Director Holman asked about the largest market for potential shuttle users.

Mr. Lavery stated those who arrive by motor vehicle are the starting market for the shuttle program. Those arriving on foot or by bike most likely have short travel routes and would not be the main users of a shuttle. Mr. Lavery explained the bike rack on shuttle vehicle scored low as part of the proposed service parameters.

Director Gleason stated there are not many trails which allow bicycles in Rancho San Antonio.

Director Gleason asked about data on how many visitors arrive separately and meet at Rancho San Antonio to hike together.

Ms. Ruiz stated staff will look into the preserve user survey if there is information.

Director Gleason supported providing incentives to visitors that arrive in a group during high visitation times.

Mr. Smith explained the average number of Rancho San Antonio occupants per vehicle is over 2 thus the reason why carpool was set to three people.

Chair Cyr called for a recess at 2:36 p.m.

Chair Cyr resumed the meeting at 2:44 p.m with all committee members present.

Arcadis-IBI consultant Steve Wilks continued the presentation explaining the ride hail survey results. The survey indicated that almost 80% of respondents are familiar with ride hail apps; the top three characteristics that would encourage ride hail use would be availability of an app, pick up from home, and a wait time of less than 20 minutes; marketing and other TDM strategies may increase the number of people interested in using this service; and over 60% of respondents would like to travel less than 5 miles using ride hail.

Mr. Wilks explained ride hail service typically includes a third-party platform to mediate service between driver and passenger. A Concept of Operations provides a high-level description of actions needed to develop a ride hail service and how to develop a Request For Proposals for ride hail services, including functional and technical requirements.

Mr. Wilks explained service design options to consider: 1. Independent ride hail program; 2. Collaborate with City of Cupertino on expanding the Silicon Valley (SV) Hopper service, which already serves Rancho San Antonio and can be included as a specific stop; and 3. Integrate a ride hail program with a shuttle program to complement service times (the ride hail program could

provide service during hours after shuttle service ends for the day to ensure visitors have another option for the return trip).

Mr. Wilks explained important considerations: providing options for folks without a smart device; an option for those who are unbanked with pre-loaded cards; options for those with mobility devices; geofence capabilities to set boundaries for service; and customer-centric capabilities (amenities).

Mr. Wilks explained the cost and ridership model, which includes ridership estimates, costs, subsidy options. Mr. Wilks presented three alternate fare scenarios in the model: \$1.50, \$2.50, and \$3.50. Mr. Wilks explained the parameters can be adjusted for each of the three service models to identify costs and revenues from different fare scenarios.

Mr. Wilks explained the use of performance measurements to monitor how performance is helping achieve program goals, which includes Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The District would select metrics for establishing a baseline and then evaluate the ride hail program.

Mr. Smith explained the next steps for the project, including information to be presented at the next Planning and Natural Resources Committee on July 18.

Director Gleason asked and received confirmation that the SV Hopper serves limited hours on Saturday and no hours on Sunday.

Mr. Smith confirmed a collaboration with the City of Cupertino would include an ask to expand service hours.

Director Gleason stated other cities have similar services and asked if the programs are servicing travel centers that the District identified as potential shuttle stops.

Mr. Smith confirmed city shuttle services often serve transit hubs.

Mr. Wilks stated the SV Hopper technology platform has geofencing capabilities and the possibility to collect real-time customer information.

Director Holman asked if City of Cupertino is open to sharing the cost for expanding SV Hopper weekend service.

Mr. Smith explained the City of Cupertino expressed interested in collaborating, however, conversations are still preliminary. Staff would have to evaluate cost sharing for expanding the SV Hopper weekend services.

Ms. Ruiz stated the cost and revenue estimate slides of the presentation only represents partial costs and does not include staffing and other operational costs. If directed to develop the programs further, cost numbers would be further defined.

Director Holman asked roughly how much higher the cost numbers would increase.

Ms. Ruiz stated preliminarily the numbers would be more than 20%.

Director Holman expressed having accurate numbers is crucial information to making a decision.

Director Gleason asked about the effects on the existing parking problem based on the preliminary estimates.

Mr. Wilks explained baseline data would need to be establish to determine demand and impact of the ride hail services, the reduction of vehicles, and how shuttle ridership will also impact use of ride-hail services.

Director Gleason asked about the impact on the parking issue with a potential ride hail program in place without a shuttle program.

Mr. Wilks explained there is not a calculation of reduction of private vehicular parking but expressed a calculation of reduction of vehicles can be extracted from the model.

Director Gleason requested information on the reduction of vehicles.

Chair Cyr stated the next part of the presentation will be provided at the Tuesday, July 18, 2023 Planning and Natural Resources Committee meeting.

Director Holman asked about the feasibility of receiving responses to Committee questions by the next Committee meeting.

Mr. Smith stated staff will work with consultants to provide answers to questions.

Public comment opened at 3:14 p.m.

Steve Flynn spoke on in support of the potential shuttle and ride hail programs that focuses access on Cristo Rey Drive, rather than St. Joseph's Avenue. Mr. Flynn spoke on the incentives to encourage visitors to use services, including carpool spots at main trailheads. Mr. Flynn spoke in support of subsidizing existing shuttle and ride hail programs.

Elizabeth Montgomery spoke on the St. Joseph's Avenue entrance and access into the preserve. Ms. Montgomery stated that the St. Joseph's Avenue offers no turn around for potential shuttles or ride hails vehicles, and there are no amenities such as restroom or garbage collection in that area. Mr. Montgomery spoke in favor of using existing parking spaces more efficiently.

Marlene Zimmerman expressed concerned for additional vehicles from ride hails using St. Joseph's Avenue and encouraged the use of Cristo Rey Drive. Ms. Zimmerman expressed support for educating visitors to use preserves closest to them and to improve the existing parking area. Ms. Zimmerman expressed a preference for a no-go on both the potential shuttle and ride-hail programs.

Judy Dahl expressed concerned of additional vehicles and traffic from ride hails using St. Joseph's Avenue and encouraged the use of Cristo Rey Drive.

Cyndel Podich spoke on cars waiting for a parking spot and the effects of pollution. Ms. Podich asked if adding 15 to 20 additional parking spots would solve the waiting-for-a-spot problem. Ms. Podich asked for consideration of pollution contributed from shuttle and ride hail vehicles.

Wayne Whitlock expressed the opinion that the preserve is full if the parking lot is full and requested consideration of preserve capacity. Mr. Whitlock encouraged the consideration of additional visitor use and the effects on the preserve and impact to visitor enjoyment.

Public comment closed at 3:31 p.m.

Director Gleason asked if the preserve users who responded to the public survey live closer to other preserves.

Mr. Smith explained 25 to 30% of respondents live within one zip code.

Ms. Ruiz explained the majority of visitors do live near the preserve and Rancho San Antonio is a regional preserve that draws visitors from other areas. Ms. Ruiz further explained aspects that make the preserve attractive, including accessibility via highways (I-280), no travel up rural or windy roads, Deer Hollow Farm, and trail routes that can accommodate different abilities.

Director Holmen asked if the District has encouraged people to visit other preserves.

Ms. Ruiz stated staff promotes other District preserves at community events and outreach booths. However, Rancho San Antonio is very popular and well known.

Director Holman stated not noticing an encouragement on the public website for users to visit other District preserves.

Public Affairs Manager Kori Skinner explained staff is developing a preserve guide for outreach material that lists all preserves and includes a “if you like this, go here” page.

Director Holman asked when the guide would be launched.

Ms. Skinner stated the guide is scheduled to be available in Fall 2023, and explained the guide is currently in design and will move to final design and printing.

Director Holman asked if the guide will be posted or shared at Rancho San Antonio.

Ms. Skinner stated staff will explore distribution options.

Ms. Skinner shared the parking counter online webpage received 45,000 visits a year, while the District’s public website received approximately 50,000 web visits. In June 2023, the Parking Counter webpage was the fourth most visited page on the District website.

Director Gleason asked if there is consideration to extend the SV Hopper service area to the entrance of Fremont Older Open Space Preserve to help address parking issues at the preserve.

Mr. Smith stated extending the SV Hopper service area to the Fremont Older entrance was not considered but will discuss with the City of Cupertino.

Chair Cyr expressed support for extending the SV Hopper service to Fremont Older Open Space Preserve as the parking lot is impacted on weekends and holidays as well.

Chair Cyr continued Committee Item 2 to the July 18 meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Cyr adjourned the meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee at 3:40 p.m.

Loana Lumina-Hsu
Deputy District Clerk