



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

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

13130 Skyline Blvd, Woodside, CA 94062
Purissima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve
North Ridge Parking Area

Tuesday, July 25, 2023

DRAFT MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Cyr called the meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee to order at 1:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members present: Jed Cyr, Craig Gleason, Karen Holman

Members absent: None

Staff present: Assistant General Counsel II Egan Hill, Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan, Assistant General Manager Brian Malone, District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Maria Soria, Executive Assistant/Deputy District Clerk Loana Lumina-Hsu, Planner II Brittany Wheatman, Senior Capital Projects Manager Scott Reeves, Planning Manager Jane Mark, Senior Planner Gretchen Laustsen

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 1:00 p.m.

District Clerk Maria Soria reported there were no public speakers for this item.

Public comment closed at 1:01 p.m.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

1. Approve the July 18 and the revised July 11, 2023 Planning and Natural Resources Committee Meeting Minutes.

Public comment opened at 1:01 p.m.

Ms. Soria reported there were no public speakers for this item.

Public comment closed at 1:01 p.m.

Motion: Director Gleason moved, and Director Holman seconded the motion to approve the July 18 and the revised July 11, 2023 Planning and Natural Resources Committee meeting minutes.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

2. Highway 35 Multi-use Trail Crossing and Parking Feasibility Study at Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve – Conceptual Parking Design Alternatives and Trail Crossing Location at the North Ridge Parking Area (R-23-68)

Planner II Brittany Wheatman provided the staff presentation and stated that this is the second meeting with the Planning and Natural Resources Committee to discuss the Highway 35 Multi-use Trail Crossing and Parking Feasibility Study (Project). The first meeting was held on April 4, 2023. Ms. Wheatman stated that this Project is a partnership between the District, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), Bay Area Ridge Trail Council (Ridge Trail Council) and Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST). The Project is evaluating a multi-use trail crossing location and connector trail in the northeastern reaches of Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve, as well as the potential expansion of the existing North Ridge parking area. The District is conducting a feasibility study to identify a trail crossing location from the Purisima North Ridge parking area across Skyline Boulevard (Highway 35) to connect the Bay Area Ridge Trail alignment. Ms. Wheatman commented that the project goals include supporting the connectivity of the regional Bay Area Ridge Trail and improving public access at the North Ridge trailhead and the overall visitor experience at the preserve.

Ms. Wheatman stated that the results of the technical studies were presented at the April 4 meeting, and some of those studies included field scouting boundary and topography surveys, biological, cultural, and historic resource surveys, and a traffic study. Also, geotechnical recommendations are in the process being wrapped up. All of the studies essentially support the expansion of the parking area, and the traffic study identified a feasible crossing location on Highway 35.

Senior Capital Projects Manager Scott Reeves continued the staff presentation on the traffic study confirming the feasibility of an on-grade crossing is feasible across Skyline Boulevard. TJKM Engineering (TJKM) is the traffic engineer for this project. Starting in early 2022, they conducted a site analysis and collected traffic speed and volumes and evaluated those against the Caltrans standards to confirm whether or not this project would be feasible for an on-grade crossing. TJKM did confirm that a feasible location is available and recommend a few items as part of that on-grade crossing. The first would be to locate the on-grade crossing near the

existing north exit to the parking area and to keep the entrance and exits as they exist now, entering from the south and exiting from the north for vehicles. The crossing would be next to the northern exit location and requires improvements to meet sight distances in either direction. Tree management is required in both directions to maintain the required sight distances. In addition, Mr. Reeves continued to show a conceptual drawing of the on-grade crossing and the proposed crossing signage, including advance warning signage in both directions and signage to establish a clear zone restricting parking on the shoulder. Mr. Reeves stated that there have been questions whether there would be additional features provided for the on-grade crossing and certainly those are a possibility, such as flashing beacons or striping, all of which will be resolved through the encroachment process with Caltrans and require Caltrans approval.

Mr. Reeves went on to provide a review of the existing conditions and reviewed each of the proposed design options and stated that in all options three small trees have been identified to be removed, one tree is located next to the exit and two trees are in the area of the restroom. Each option will meet or exceed accessibility requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Furthermore, each design option includes the recommendations of the traffic engineering study to maintain existing entrance and exit driveways, locate an on-grade crossing adjacent to the exit driveway, establish a no-parking zone along the western side of Skyline Boulevard and formalize shoulder parking at designated spaces.

Director Holman inquired as to why equestrian parking is not permitted or reservable so that equestrians do not arrive at the parking lot and find themselves without a space to park, hence avoiding wasted time, effort, energy, and hassle.

Mr. Reeves noted that it is an operational option that can be considered.

Mr. Reeves mentioned that there is a District employee residence at the lower expansion area that would remain; no changes other than the accessway to the house may change based on final driveway configurations, and any additional buffer, screening, or privacy that may be added between the residence and parking area improvements.

Public comment opened at 1:18 p.m.

Jan Ruby commented that based on her observations, there aren't many equestrians who use the parking lot, and inquired how the District will police the parking area if equestrian parking is permitted so that others don't utilize the permitted spaced.

Public comment closed at 1:19 p.m.

Assistant General Manager Brian Malone used Rancho San Antonio County Park and Open Space Preserve as an example of where equestrian parking is permitted, stating that signage and education has been effective. Mr. Malone stated that staff may monitor how the space is used to determine if a reservation system should be implemented.

Mr. Reeves said that the lack of use of equestrian parking may be due to the fact that there is no certainty of equestrian parking space availability.

Mr. Reeves resumed the staff presentation with Option A-2 and addressed the reasons why staff is recommending this option to the full Board of Directors, which is also the option with the most public support.

Director Gleason questioned as to what the current peak overflow for the parking lot may be.

Chair Cyr stated that this PNR meeting will be more informal and invited the public to ask questions throughout.

Jan Ruby suggested that the six additional shoulder parking spaces proposed for Skyline Boulevard be eliminated. According to Ms. Ruby, many residents watch people getting out of their cars with strollers while paying no attention to the speeding cars.

Dennis Ruby suggested adding a loop around Skyline Boulevard instead of adding the proposed six parking spaces.

Mr. Reeves stated that it would be very challenging, but he could certainly continue discussions with Caltrans about how this could be accomplished.

Ms. Mark answered Director Gleason's earlier question based on information gathered from the Purisima Creek Redwoods Multi-modal Study stating that the number of overflow vehicles is 20 cars parked along the road.

Senior Planner Gretchen Laustsen provided additional information about the parking counts that were done and the recommended parking capacity for the site. Based on the Purisima Multimodal Access Study, the consultant recommends expanding the lot to 100 passenger vehicles.

Director Holman requested more information about the three parking spaces outside the entrance, and why, given public comments, those three spaces are still under consideration.

Mr. Reeves explained that based on the site conditions, the three roadside spaces appear to be feasible.

Chair Cyr stated that he prefers not to have the three parking spaces on the shoulder of Skyline Boulevard because it would require drivers to turn around and continue south if they tried to park and missed the space. Additionally, he added that the best site for the restroom should be found before it is reallocated.

Director Holman commented that it would be preferable to avoid looping.

Mike Bushue with Equestrian Trail Riders' Action Committee commented that occasionally there have been no equestrian spaces available. Also, that the trails are going down the hill which has limited riding. However, with the new route opening, there will be a focus on encouraging riders to undertake single-direction rides, and he is looking forward to that. Mr. Bushue expressed his support for Option A-2 because it would be the least intrusive to the nearby resident and has a loop capability so that anyone who misses a parking space can loop around. In addition, he inquired if having two restroom locations have been considered.

Mr. Reeves stated that the proposed restroom is a two-vault restroom, and it can accommodate a double stall, and it is anticipated to accommodate the amount of usership. If there is a need to expand in the future, staff would look to enlarge the footprint of the restroom, which can be expanded up to three stalls.

Cathy Cohn expressed her concern about unsafe parking on Skyline Boulevard and commented that people often park on the shoulder regardless of the hazard. She encourages the retention of the three parking spaces in order to discourage people from parking further down the road on the shoulder. Additionally, she spoke in favor of Option A-2, and commented that the more parking spaces available, the better because the demand will increase.

Ms. Ruby believes that Ms. Cohn's comments have a double impact since she believes that by adding the three spaces, it will appear as though parking is permitted along Skyline once you pass the entrance. Therefore, the lack of parking would deter people from continuing to park further down the road.

Jim Smolinski from Fisher Investments spoke in support of Option A-2 and is glad to see the addition of parking because it is dangerous to park on the shoulder. While Mr. Smolinski feels that he has a clear line of sight, he occasionally feels that he can't cross quickly enough and expressed his concerns that people crossing Skyline Boulevard hauling an equestrian trailer may find it difficult to get across. He went on to say that people are exceeding the legal speed limit on weekends, especially when car and motorcycle groups are utilizing Skyline, and invited the Board to observe this on a weekend.

Director Gleason inquired about the lower expansion area, and that staff mentioned there are conservatively two spaces for equestrian parking, he inquired if potentially more parking can be added.

Mr. Reeves stated that there may be a potential to fit three equestrian parking at the lower expansion area, while feedback was received from the equestrians that having pairs of parking is preferable.

Director Holman inquired as to when staff would know whether three equestrian parking spaces would fit, rather than just two, and whether staff had any further thoughts on considering implementing an equestrian reservation system.

Mr. Reeves stated that staff is seeking guidance from the Committee regarding the equestrian spaces in order to present a proposal to the full Board. He added that as the designer, he knows that three spaces will fit if that is the direction and preference. Also, if there is a desire for the Committee to evaluate a reservation system, that can be done prior to implementation.

Director Holman clarified that she did not mean to suggest changing the east exit but rather that it would only be used to exit and not for looping.

Mr. Bushue commented on the equestrian reservation parking and provided instances of where equestrian parking is utilized at other preserves. According to him, equestrians usually ride on the weekday for two to three hours versus the weekends. He provided his opinion that whether there are two or three equestrian parking spaces will depend on how big the vehicle is since their

length varies. Mr. Bushue stated that it might be better to wait and see whether there is a problem before implementing a reservation system.

Director Gleason stated his support for Option A-2 and noted that the public is also in support of this option.

Director Holman complimented the staff for a well-organized agenda report and supports Option A-2 as the best option with widespread support from the public.

Motion: Chair Cyr moved, and Director Gleason seconded the motion to forward the option A-2 (upper and lower parking area expansion with two-way circulation and the associated multi-use trail crossing location and design) to the board of directors for consideration as the project description and scope to initiate environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Cyr adjourned the meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee at 2:10 p.m.

Maria Soria, MMC
District Clerk