



Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District

## PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

R-25-110  
August 26, 2025

### AGENDA ITEM 2

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Overview of the Proposed Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve - Comprehensive Use and Management Plan, Including New Public Access and Restoration Projects

#### GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Receive a presentation on the proposed Comprehensive Use and Management Plan (Plan, CUMP).
2. Provide staff with any feedback regarding the proposed Plan and forward the Plan components to the Board of Directors for consideration as the project description and scope to initiate environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

#### SUMMARY

Comprehensive Use and Management Plans (Plan, CUMP) are detailed plans addressing all aspects of use and management for Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) preserves. CUMPs guide the long-term land management, operations and public access actions and activities in balance with the goals of protecting and enhancing the natural resources and sustaining existing agricultural uses on the San Mateo County Coastside. A new CUMP for Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (Purisima, Preserve) is under development with management prescriptions for the land's natural resources; historic, cultural, and tribal resources; aesthetic resources; public use and access; and operations and maintenance activities. The new CUMP also incorporates multiple planned Measure AA-funded public access projects and natural resource restoration projects, including the Purisima-to-the-Sea (Verde Road) Parking Area, Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail, Highway 35 Multi-use Crossing and North Ridge Parking Expansion, Purisima Multimodal Access Implementation, and Irish Ridge Restoration, while consolidating and documenting ongoing use and management activities at Purisima. The purpose of this meeting is to present an overview of the Plan elements and structure as well as the draft implementation action table to receive feedback and prepare the material for Board of Directors' (Board) review and consideration as the basis for the CUMP CEQA project description.

#### BACKGROUND

Purisima is located on the western slopes of the Santa Cruz Mountains overlooking Half Moon Bay and the Pacific Ocean. Purisima has become a popular recreational destination among residents of San Mateo County, neighboring areas, and the broader San Francisco Bay Area

region who are drawn to its lush redwood forests and cascading perennial creek. Currently, 2,838 acres of the 5,412-acre Preserve are open to the public, with over 20 miles of hiking, bicycling and/or equestrian trails and four trailhead entrances.

The Preserve was first established in 1982 (previously named the Whittemore Gulch Redwoods Open Space Preserve), and preliminary use and management plans (PUMPs) were developed as part of each new land acquisition to designate initial public access, natural resource management, operations, and maintenance requirements. The PUMPs were amended as needed over the years, with a CUMP last completed for Purisima in 1989.

The 1989 CUMP identifies a range of public access, natural resource protection, and safety/security recommendations that govern the Preserve's current use and management. The 1989 CUMP led to the development of formal parking areas at the North Ridge (previously known as Whittemore Gulch) and Purisima Creek trailheads, 15 miles of new trails and converted ranch roads, establishment of a ranger residence at the North Ridge trailhead, and watershed enhancements through creek restoration and bridge improvements along Purisima Creek.

Since 1989, the Preserve has more than doubled in size, growing by approximately 2,893 acres. Although the subsequent acquisitions have individual PUMPs or other interim use and management plans, these property additions have not yet been incorporated into a new CUMP. Moreover, the District is in the planning phases for multiple new public access and restoration projects at the Preserve. For these reasons, it is timely for the District to prepare a new CUMP that consolidates all existing Preserve programs and operations and incorporates the newly planned public access and restoration projects. The new CUMP will bring the Preserve up to date and serve to streamline the planning and environmental review process for planned projects.

## **DISCUSSION**

### Comprehensive Use and Management Plan Structure

The Plan includes an implementation action table for the Preserve that encompasses the following (refer to Attachment 1):

- New projects, including new public access and restoration projects;
- Ongoing operations, such as recurring patrol and maintenance work; and
- Programmatic activities, including actions consistent with the Wildland Fire Resiliency Program, Integrated Pest Management Program, Conservation Grazing Program, and Water Quality Monitoring Plan.

The implementation action table organizes the recommended actions into the following five main Plan elements, followed by their focus areas:

1. Natural Resources Management

*Focus areas: Vegetation, wildlife, watershed resources and aquatic habitat, conservation grazing, wildfire resiliency, habitat integrity, sensitive area management, and climate resiliency*

2. Historic, Cultural, and Tribal Cultural Resources Management  
*Focus areas: Tribal resources and historic/cultural resources*
3. Aesthetic Resources  
*Focus areas: Viewshed and scenic corridor*
4. Public Access  
*Focus areas: Public use, trails, parking and trailheads, multimodal access, site amenities, signage, interpretation and education, and conservation management unit*
5. Operations and Maintenance  
*Focus areas: Road and trail maintenance, safety and security, utilities and infrastructure, environmental hazards, legal agreements, and partnerships*

Each recommended action includes the following descriptive and background information:

- Purpose – an explanation for the purpose of the action
- Actions – a narrative description of the scope of work to be completed
- Phasing – timeframe for implementation with three discreet phases identified plus “ongoing”
- Priority – level of importance in fulfilling the CUMP goals
- Action type – descriptor of the type of action, project, or program
- Potential partners – list of potential partners for implementation
- Costs – approximate implementation cost based on 2025 dollars or dollars in the year construction is anticipated for large public access improvements – *to be included with the full plan draft for public review*

#### Comprehensive Use and Management Plan Goals

The new CUMP includes the following proposed goals for the Preserve:

##### Goal 1: Natural Resources

- Protect and manage natural resources, habitats, native and sensitive species, and open space connectivity.
- Restore ecologically damaged and disturbed areas.
- Protect waterways and associated natural lands to maintain water quality, watershed function, and healthy aquatic habitats.
- Continue conservation grazing to maintain and enhance native grassland communities.

##### Goal 2: Public Access

- Enhance and expand ecologically sensitive, low intensity trail use.
- Provide access opportunities for people of diverse physical abilities.
- Establish and support regional trails, including: Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail, Bay to Sea Trail, Bay Area Ridge Trail, and California Coastal Trail.
- Improve access to the Preserve through new and expanded parking and trailheads, and adaptive use of visitor demand/multimodal strategies.
- Enrich the visitor experience through environmental education and interpretive opportunities.

- Highlight unique attributes of the Preserve while respecting natural and cultural resources, exhibiting a sense of place, and utilizing sustainable practices.

#### Goal 3: Cultural Resources

- Protect and interpret the agricultural and coastal community culture and history.
- Protect and interpret significant tribal, cultural, historical and archaeological resources.

#### Goal 4: Operations and Maintenance

- Reduce the risk of high-intensity wildfires.
- Reduce and control erosion and sedimentation.
- Address environmental hazards to ecosystem health and visitor safety.
- Maintain facilities in working and safe conditions, protective of the natural environment and visitor/neighbor experience.

### Comprehensive Use and Management Plan Overview

The CUMP incorporates ongoing Preserve activities and the various new proposed public access and restorations projects that have been in discussions with robust public engagement since 2020 (refer to Attachment 3 for a Summary of these projects).

In summary, the Plan proposes the following changes for the Preserve:

- Expanding the Preserve trail network from approximately 23 miles of trail to approximately 30 miles;
- Opening over 2,200 acres of the Preserve to public access via on-trail use;
- Adding two new regional trail connections, including connecting the California Coastal Trail to the Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail and connecting the SFPUC Ridge Trail Extension to the North Ridge trailhead, which will contribute to the Bay to Sea and Bay Area Ridge Trail regional trail corridors;
- Expanding parking at the North Ridge parking area by approximately 27 standard vehicle spaces and two designated equestrian spaces;
- Adding a new parking area on the coastside on Verde Road to provide 107 standard parking spaces and five designated equestrian spaces;
- Restoring approximately 42 acres of forest;
- Expanding access to the Purisima Creek trailhead through a pilot shuttle program between Verde and Purisima Creek parking areas; and
- Providing real-time parking information for visitors to the North Ridge and Verde parking areas.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

No direct fiscal impact will result from the Committee's review and input on the proposed CUMP. Sufficient funds are included in the fiscal year 2026-27 budget under Project MAA#03-012 - Purisima Preserve Comprehensive Use and Management Plan for the development and finalization of the CUMP and CEQA environmental review. The associated site plans and implementation costs for the proposed new projects listed in the CUMP are accounted for separately under discreet project budgets and in the three-year Capital Improvement and Action Plan.

## PRIOR BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW

**February 9, 2022 Board Meeting:** Award of Contract with Vollmar Natural Land Consulting for the Preparation of **Habitat Restoration Plans for the Irish Ridge Area** of Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve ([R-22-17](#), [meeting minutes](#)).

**May 24, 2023 Board Meeting: Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail and Parking Area** Feasibility Study, Preferred Trail Alignment and Parking Area Conceptual Design ([R-23-52](#), [meeting minutes](#)).

**November 8, 2023 Board Meeting: Highway 35 Multi-use Trail Crossing and Parking** Feasibility Study, Trail Crossing and Parking Area Expansion Conceptual Design ([R-23-137](#), [meeting minutes](#)).

**January 10, 2024 Board Meeting:** Award of Contract with Ascent Environmental to Provide Planning and CEQA Services for the **Purisima Comprehensive Use and Management Plan** ([R-24-07](#), [meeting minutes](#)).

**December 11, 2024 Board Meeting:** Acceptance of Recommended **Shuttle and Parking Management Concepts at Purisima** with Any Final Modifications ([R-24-155](#), [meeting minutes](#)).

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act. In addition, post cards were sent to Preserve neighbors, including areas within the Coastal Service Area, public email notices were sent to interested parties of the Preserve, Coastside Protection Area, regional trails, hiking, biking, equestrian, ADA, and agricultural land use.

## CEQA COMPLIANCE

This meeting is for the Board to accept and provide feedback on the recommended actions of the CUMP and accompanying implementation action table, which will serve as the project description to initiate environmental review pursuant to CEQA.

Note: Certain restoration projects identified in the CUMP may serve as mitigation for other CUMP projects. Also, CEQA compliance for certain prior Board-approved programmatic actions listed in the CUMP has already been completed (e.g., Open Space Maintenance and Restoration Plan (OSMRP), Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program, Wildland Fire Resiliency Program, and Rangeland Management Plans (RMPs)).

## NEXT STEPS

Following PNR confirmation of the General Manager's recommendations, and any additional directions from the Committee, staff and the consultant team will continue to refine the CUMP elements. The refined CUMP will next be presented to the Board for consideration of approval as the CEQA project description to initiate CEQA review. The table below provides a tentative project schedule.

Task	Tentative Dates
Presentation of the Proposed CUMP and Implementation Action Table to the Board of Directors for approval as the CEQA project description	Fall 2025
Release of the CUMP and CEQA review document for public review and comment	Spring 2026
Board of Directors considers CEQA certification and approval of the CUMP	Summer 2026

## Attachment(s)

1. Purisima Comprehensive Plan Implementation Action Table
2. New Projects Location Map
3. Summary of New Public Access and Restorations Projects

## Responsible Department Head:

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## 1. Natural Resources Management

Focus Areas	Purpose and Actions	Phasing	Priority	Action Type	Potential Partners*
<b>Natural Resources Management</b>					
Vegetation	<b>Purpose:</b> Protect ecosystem function by promoting native plant species.  <b>Actions:</b> Identify, monitor and consider enhancement or reintroduction of special status native plant species. Work with neighbors and partners on coordinated land management actions to promote landscape level ecosystem benefits.	Ongoing	High	PRG	CalFire, RCD, CDFW
	<b>Purpose:</b> Manage grasslands consistent with the District's Grazing Management Policy to support both biological resources and agricultural heritage of the area.  <b>Actions:</b> Manage and conserve grassland habitat with adequate amounts of residual dry matter at the start of each growing season and a diverse range of vegetation heights and species composition and complexity. Control encroachment of problematic invasive vegetation.	Ongoing	High	PRG	
	<b>Purpose:</b> Enhance and protect pollinator habitat.  <b>Actions:</b> Develop a pollinator habitat enhancement plan. Conduct seed collection and seed amplification of pollinator host and nectaring plants appropriate for the local ecology. Identify, prioritize and implement plan actions in appropriate areas.	Ongoing and I	Medium	NR	
	<b>Purpose:</b> Restore native forest ecosystems in areas with disturbance from past land use.  <b>Actions:</b> Implement the Irish Ridge Restoration Plan, manage invasive species per the Integrated Pest Management Program, and implement vegetation management according to the Wildland Fire Resiliency Program.	Ongoing and I	High	NR, PRG	

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on the final page of this attachment

Focus Areas	Purpose and Actions	Phasing	Priority	Action Type	Potential Partners*
<b>Natural Resources Management</b>					
Wildlife	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Protect wildlife by reducing barriers to movement and dispersal.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b> Use wildlife-friendly fencing and infrastructure when replacing existing or installing new infrastructure, establish and maintain safe wildlife crossings, including wildlife compatible culverts, and install signage to increase public awareness. Conduct habitat assessments to refine objectives and prioritize barrier removals. Reference best available data sources when planning project areas to select most appropriate tool to inform the identification and protection of wildlife corridors (e.g., District American badger studies and linkage analysis, regional wildlife connectivity data, vehicular mortality hotspots).</p>	Ongoing and II	High	NR, PRG	
	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Protect ecosystem function by promoting native wildlife populations.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b> Consider designation of conservation management units, restore or enhance degraded habitats for native wildlife, support species reintroduction and/or projects that enhance the genetic diversity and health of wildlife species. Continue efforts of the District's wildlife programs for birds, bats, amphibians, invertebrates and mammals by conducting marbled murrelet monitoring, grassland bird and habitat management, bat species research, frog monitoring and early detection rapid response, invertebrate monitoring and grassland management, badger management, and maintaining wildlife habitat connectivity. Explore and implement shared benefits of wildlife conservation with Conservation Grazing management actions and landscape regimes.</p>	Ongoing and I	High	NR, PRG	CDFW, RCD

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<b>Natural Resources Management</b>					
	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Enhance habitats for rare and special status species.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b> Protect, monitor, and conduct adaptive management actions to sustain viable habitat for special status species, including for the San Francisco dusky footed woodrat, mountain lion, marbled murrelet, California giant salamander, California red-legged frog, golden eagle, American badger, steelhead trout, grasshopper sparrow, ferruginous hawk, long eared myotis, and Bryant's Savannah sparrow. Conduct monitoring studies to identify priority habitat areas for special status wildlife.</p>	Ongoing and I	High	NR, PRG	CDFW
Watershed Resources and Aquatic Habitat	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Enhance the quality of riparian habitat along Purisima, Whittemore Gulch, and Lobitos Creeks to promote healthy water quality and anadromy, sequester additional carbon, and protect riparian ecosystem function.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b> Where feasible, enhance and/or expand the width and extent of the vegetated riparian corridor along major creeks within the Preserve. Monitor Lobitos Creek to assess conditions for water quality and anadromy and identify restoration and habitat enhancement opportunities.</p>	II and III	Medium	NR	CDFW, RCD
	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Protect and monitor water quality to support long-term preservation, restoration, and enhancement of natural resources within Purisima.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b> Provide appropriate setbacks/buffers to water resources during public access planning in accordance with the Coastal Service Plan guidelines and mitigation. Restrict direct human and livestock access to Lobitos Creek to minimize sedimentation and other impacts to the creek. Fence riparian areas, as needed, to exclude cattle. Continue to implement the Water Quality Monitoring Program priorities for the Preserve, including regular</p>	Ongoing and I	High	NR, PRG, CSP	

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<b>Natural Resources Management</b>					
	monitoring of creeks, ponds, springs, and wells to guide adaptive management efforts and any appropriate response actions.				
	<b>Purpose:</b> Prevent erosion impacts to riparian habitats and water resources.  <b>Actions:</b> Monitor stream bank stability at Purisima and Lobitos Creeks, particularly in areas near trails and cattle access and implement stabilization actions and/or restrict access as needed.	II	Medium	NR, PRG	
Conservation Grazing	<b>Purpose:</b> Continue conservation grazing as a land management tool to preserve grasslands, reduce fire fuels, and support local agriculture.  <b>Actions:</b> Manage grazing in accordance with the Board-approved Rangeland Management Plan (RMP) and Agricultural Policy. Update the RMP as needed. Continue existing monitoring program and evaluate introducing new monitoring frameworks (e.g. Audubon Conservation Grazing, Pt. Blue Rangeland Monitoring Network) as needed.	Ongoing	High	PRG	Grazing tenant, NRCS, UCCE
	<b>Purpose:</b> Update conservation grazing infrastructure to support existing and future operations.  <b>Actions:</b> Install and replace grazing infrastructure (e.g. new and/or repairs to pasture fences, new gates, stock water systems) to achieve grazing management objectives set forth in the RMP; explore emerging infrastructure technologies that improve general range management (e.g. stock water monitoring systems, electric fence, virtual fence).	I and II	High	NR, PRG	Tenant, RCD
	<b>Purpose:</b> Consider expanding conservation grazing operations to further support natural resource management.  <b>Actions:</b> Evaluate potential to expand conservation grazing in the western areas of the Preserve to address fuel reduction, control invasive plants, control brush encroachment, and conserve native plant and animal diversity.	II	Low	PRG	Tenant

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<b>Natural Resources Management</b>					
Wildfire Resiliency	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Reduce wildland fire risk in the Preserve.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b> Implement the Wildland Fire Resiliency Program's vegetation management plan, which includes ecosystem resiliency/healthy forest initiatives, enhanced fire management (i.e., fuel breaks and legally required defensible spaces around critical infrastructure), targeted removal of eucalyptus, and updating fire response resource maps. Conduct outreach to neighbors to promote the District's defensible space permits and encourage ecologically sensitive vegetation management related to wildfire resiliency and natural resource enhancement consistent with the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and Wildland Fire Resiliency programs. Close trail access points within the coastal service area during red flag days and post notice of closures on the District's website.</p>	Ongoing	High	PRG, POL	
Habitat Integrity	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Preserve habitat integrity when siting new preserve infrastructure to support ecosystem resilience and health.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b> Properly design and site new preserve infrastructure (i.e., trails, parking areas, fencing, corrals, etc.) to avoid habitat segmentation and maintain wildlife movement. Focus on siting new physical elements in the outer edges of preserves and close to areas of existing development where possible as recommended in the District's Parking Area and Trailhead/Staging Area Design guidelines. Identify and implement proper buffers to critical habitats and wetlands, both within and near the Preserve.</p>	Ongoing and I	High	NR, POL, CSP	
Sensitive Area Management	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Protect highly sensitive areas of conservation priority.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b> Identify and designate highly sensitive natural resource areas and/or highly disturbed areas that require extensive restoration effort as areas restricted to on-trail use only and/or as Conservation Management Units (CMUs).</p>	Ongoing and I	High	NR, POL	

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<b>Natural Resources Management</b>					
Climate Resiliency	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Reduce and manage greenhouse gas emissions where possible.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b> Promote resilience of long-term vegetation carbon sequestration by implementing the Wildland Fire Resiliency Program actions. Support rangeland carbon sequestration and storage by implementing actions under the Bluebrush Carbon Farming Plan. Protect soil carbon storage by managing erosion. Promote old-growth structure in redwood forest through active forest management practices for long-term carbon sequestration and storage potential. Reduce visitor greenhouse gas emissions by promoting use of multimodal and green travel alternatives and the associated support infrastructure.</p>	I	High	NR, PRG	
	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Promote habitat resilience to the effects of extreme weather conditions and climate change.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b> Implement priorities under the Wildland fire Resiliency Program and Integrated Pest Management Program, including Early Detection and Rapid Response protocols for new invasive species. Maintain and enhance habitat corridors to support species migration needs. Consider best-available models of future climate conditions when designing restoration or mitigation projects. Identify and protect a mosaic of habitat refugia with consideration given to changing temperatures and moisture levels. Balance shade and water needs of people, livestock, and wildlife.</p>	Ongoing	High	PRG	
	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Inform the public about the effects of climate change and the District's resilience efforts in the preserve.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b> Provide interpretive opportunities regarding climate change impacts to the preserve and the San Mateo Coast, and the District's resiliency work. Anticipate increased coast side visitation during heatwaves and alert the public ahead of these conditions about heat risks and safety measures via the</p>	Ongoing	High	PRG	

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<b>Natural Resources Management</b>					
	District website and/or social media. Provide clear messaging when weather conditions (e.g. storm damage, red flag days on the coastside) lead to trail closures.				

## 2. Historic, Cultural, and Tribal Cultural Resources

Focus Areas	Purpose and Actions	Phasing	Priority	Action Type	Potential Partners*
<b>Historic, Cultural, Tribal Cultural Resources</b>					
Tribal Cultural Resources	<b>Purpose:</b> Engage with Native American tribes to plan for and address tribal cultural resources within the Preserve.  <b>Action:</b> Begin tribal consultations as early as possible in the project planning process, as appropriate. Conduct cultural resource studies and analyses where appropriate and needed, including areas with proposed ground disturbance.	Ongoing and I	High	CIP	
	<b>Purpose:</b> Appropriately address Tribal Cultural Resources that could be affected by a proposed project.  <b>Action:</b> In areas where there are known tribal cultural resources, implement avoidance measures to the greatest extent possible. When avoidance is not possible, work with the tribe(s) on implementing cultural resource protection measures and monitoring for known Tribal Cultural Resources. In the event that previously undiscovered Tribal Cultural Resources are discovered, work with the appropriate tribes to develop and implement recommendations for the protection and treatment of the cultural resources in accordance with tribal cultural values, District's Resource Management Policies, and Coastal Service Plan protocols.	Ongoing	High	CIP, POL	

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<b>Historic, Cultural, Tribal Cultural Resources</b>					
	<b>Purpose:</b> Incorporate tribal knowledge and history into the visitor experience.  <b>Action:</b> Engage tribes in development of ongoing education opportunities regarding archeology, anthropology, and Native American cultural history. Develop interpretation signage that includes Indigenous voices.	Ongoing	Medium	PRG	
	<b>Purpose:</b> Support tribal relationships and access to their ancestral homelands.  <b>Action:</b> Consider formalizing access for tribal members to practice traditional lifeways, such as cultural burns/prescribed fires, ethnobotanical collection, and land stewardship actions that connect tribal members to their ancestral homeland and/or support ecosystem land management goals.	Ongoing	Medium	PRG	
Historic and Cultural Resources	<b>Purpose:</b> Appropriately address significant cultural and historical resources that could be affected by a proposed project.  <b>Action:</b> Conduct records searches and surveys with qualified archaeologists and consult the District's historic and cultural resource inventories to identify significant resources prior to project implementation, in accordance with the District's Resource Management Policies for cultural resources. For projects that may trigger environmental (CEQA) review and may negatively impact historic resources, hire a qualified architectural historian to verify historic significance eligibility and inform treatment. Provide a qualified historic/cultural resource monitor when ground-disturbing work is occurring within areas of concern to protect resources from damage.	Ongoing and I	High	CIP, POL	

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<b>Historic, Cultural, Tribal Cultural Resources</b>					
	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Ensure financial and operational sustainability in the management of historic and cultural resources.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> With guidance from qualified architectural and cultural historians and informed by cost projections, identify financially and operationally sustainable options for the long-term management of cultural and historical resources, such as interpretation and documentation.</p>	Ongoing	Medium	PRG, CIP	

## 3. Aesthetic Resources

Focus Areas	Purpose and Actions	Phasing	Priority	Action Type	Potential Partners*
<b>Aesthetic Resources</b>					
Viewshed	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Protect important Preserve viewsheds, including views and elements that depict the rural character of San Mateo County.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Site proposed infrastructure and amenities in accordance with the District's Coastal Service Plan and the Parking and Staging Area Design Guidelines. Where feasible, use materials complementary of the Preserve's natural landscape and the rural character of San Mateo County. Design new parking areas in a way that utilizes existing topography to screen them from view and site them naturalistically in the landscape to limit the need for earthwork and retaining walls. Include native plantings to provide additional screening.</p>	Ongoing and I	High	POL	

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<b>Aesthetic Resources</b>					
	<b>Purpose:</b> Showcase the Preserve's natural beauty, unique characteristics and landscape features for public enjoyment.  <b>Action:</b> Site proposed amenities, including benches, overlooks and interpretive signage, in accordance with the District's Parking and Staging Area Design Guidelines to highlight key vistas, including coastal views.	Ongoing and I	High	POL	
Scenic Corridor	<b>Purpose:</b> Protect designated State and County Scenic Corridors.  <b>Action:</b> Site proposed infrastructure and amenities to minimize effects on the Highway 1 and Skyline Boulevard (Highway 35) Scenic Corridors in alignment with the County of San Mateo and Coastal Service Plan policies. Retain existing berms and trees where possible that provide screening of new public access facilities.	Ongoing and I	High	POL	SMC

## 4. Public Access

Focus Areas	Purpose and Actions	Phasing	Priority	Action Type	Potential Partners*
<b>Public Access</b>					
Public Use	<b>Purpose:</b> Locate trails and designate trail uses (hiking, mountain biking, equestrian uses, dog use) appropriately based on site suitability to remain protective of the natural resources, agricultural uses, and public safety.  <b>Action:</b> Consider natural and cultural resource sensitivities, trail features, including slope and line of sight, the presence of agricultural uses, and other elements when in determining the allowable uses for each trail to protect natural and cultural resources, reduce the potential for conflicts, and maintain visitor safety. Designate public	Ongoing and I	High	POL, EVAL	

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II - Mid-term (4-9 years)

III - Long-term (10+ years)

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Focus Areas	Purpose and Actions	Phasing	Priority	Action Type	Potential Partners*
<b>Public Access</b>					
	access as on-trail use only within conservation grazing areas, restoration areas, and other sensitive areas within the preserve. Designate the Purisima Uplands area as a closed area until site remediation work is completed. Evaluate appropriate trail segments for dog access, such as the Purisima-to-the-Sea trail loop, that avoids impacts to sensitive natural and cultural resources and grazing operations.				
	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Remain consistent with the Board-adopted Trail Use Policies for regional trails.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Designate the regional Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail as hiking, biking and equestrian use; includes redesignating existing segments that are hiking-only as multi-use.</p>	Ongoing, I	High	POL, CIP	Bay Area Ridge Trail, POST
Trails	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Site and design trails to be protective of the natural and cultural resources, minimize impacts to surrounding uses, and for long-term durability.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Consider topography, vegetation, native habitats, habitat connectivity, species sensitivities and other natural features when laying out new trail alignments. Evaluate the suitability of existing roads and trails for public use to minimize new cuts on the landscape. Design trails for long-term durability by building trails to an average grade of eight percent, where feasible, and incorporating proper drainage that is directed to vegetated areas away from creeks. Avoid siting trails near private property boundaries, cattle grazing infrastructure and sensitive habitats when practicable.</p>	II and III	Medium	EVAL, POL	
	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Provide a variety of trail opportunities to offer a diversity of trail experiences.</p>	II and III	Medium	EVAL	

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<b>Public Access</b>					
	<b>Action:</b> Consider trail loop opportunities of varying distances, including shorter loops (e.g. 1-4 miles) from main trailheads. Consider new internal trail connections to improve trail connectivity within the preserve (e.g. a western North Ridge Trail connector to lower Whittemore Trail).				
	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Explore opportunities for local and regional trail connections to the Preserve.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Coordinate with the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) to implement the Highway 35 trail crossing on Highway 35 and a spur trail from the North Ridge parking area to connect existing segments of the Bay Area Ridge Trail within Purisima to the new SFPUC Ridge Trail Extension. Implement the Purisima-to-the-Sea regional trail within the preserve and coordinate with POST, San Mateo County Parks, Coastal Conservancy and Caltrans to connect the Purisima-to-the-Sea trail to the California Coastal Trail at the Cowell-Purisima trailhead via an existing trail easement on POST property.</p>	Ongoing and I	High	CIP, POL	SFPUC, POST, SMC Parks, Coastal Conservancy, Caltrans, Adjacent landowners
	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Expand Easy Access trail opportunities.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Explore opportunities to extend the existing 0.3-mile Easy Access Redwood Trail. Evaluate new locations for Easy Access trails that connect to ADA facilities and other amenities (e.g. restrooms, benches, vista points).</p>	Ongoing	High	EVAL	
	<b>Purpose:</b> Ensure new trails remain consistent with Board-approved policies, including the Coastal Service Plan for trails within the Coastside Protection Area, and the Trail Use Policies.	Ongoing and I	High	POL, CSP	

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Focus Areas	Purpose and Actions	Phasing	Priority	Action Type	Potential Partners*
<b>Public Access</b>					
	<b>Action:</b> Follow the applicable Board-approved trail design guidelines when identifying new trail alignments and designing/constructing new trails.				
Parking and Trailheads	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Develop safe driveways connecting public roadways to Preserve parking areas.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Develop new driveways in accordance with the Board approved Parking/Staging Areas and Trailhead design guidelines, including confirming adequate lines of sight. Implement no parking areas along public roadway frontages near driveway entrances, as appropriate, to maintain lines of sight and orderly site circulation.</p>	I	High	CIP, POL	
	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Design and develop new parking areas that are functional, safe, and reflect a sense of place appropriate for the parking/trailhead location.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Develop the new Verde parking area and North Ridge parking area expansion in alignment with the Board-approved Coastal Service Plan and Parking/Staging Areas and Trailhead design guidelines, including proper siting/design of new parking areas and selection of construction materials that are durable and reflect the open space character of the surrounding area. Coordinate with the County of San Mateo to designate no-parking zones on roadways adjacent to parking areas, where necessary, to reduce congestion and improve visitor safety and emergency access near Preserve parking areas and trailheads.</p>	I	High	CIP, CSP, POL	SCC, SFPUC, Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, POST, SMC
Multimodal Access	<b>Purpose:</b> Improve parking management at the Purisima Creek Road trailhead.	I and III	High	CIP/PRG	

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Focus Areas	Purpose and Actions	Phasing	Priority	Action Type	Potential Partners*
<b>Public Access</b>					
	<b>Action:</b> Implement a three-year pilot shuttle program that provides a point-to-point shuttle service between the new Verde Road Parking Area and Purisima Creek Road Trailhead consistent with the Purisima Multimodal Implementation Project Report. Close roadside and trailhead parking at the Purisima Creek Road Trailhead when the shuttle is in service.				
	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Consider additional transportation demand management (TDM) strategies, as needed, for the lower area of the Preserve.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> After evaluating the level of success of the pilot shuttle program for the Purisima Creek Road Trailhead, consider either expanding the shuttle program with stops in Half Moon Bay and/or Pescadero, or pursuing other TDM strategies to further manage parking and visitation. Seek partnerships and funding sources for implementation and long-term operation.</p>	III	Low	PRG	SamTrans, SMC, HMB, CSP,
	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Provide visitors with real-time parking availability information at the North Ridge and Verde Road parking areas as an effective parking management tool.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Establish an online real-time parking information system, using sensors to track available parking spaces at the North Ridge and Verde parking areas, providing information online to assist the public in scheduling their visit and better distribute parking use.</p>	Ongoing and I	High	CIP/PRG	
	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Take incremental actions to further manage parking, as needed, at the North Ridge and/or Verde Road parking area.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> When parking demand meets established capacity thresholds, consider the following:</p>	II, III	Medium for Carpool Space	PRG	

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<b>Public Access</b>					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designating parking spaces for carpool, vanpool or high-occupancy vehicles as an incremental, additional step to better manage parking use and encourage carpooling to the Preserve; and/or</li> <li>Establishing a reservation parking system.</li> </ul>		Low for Reservation System		
	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Pursue additional strategies to reduce parking congestion at specific sites.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Advertise other District trailheads and nearby preserves for visitors to find alternative destinations when specific parking areas are at capacity.</p>	I	Medium	PRG	
Site Amenities	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Explore new interior trail amenities that support long distance travel within the preserve (i.e., travel between Skyline Boulevard and Verde Road).</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Inventory the various rest stop amenities, including restrooms and rest areas that currently exist within the preserve. Identify potential suitable interior sites for new amenities to support long distance travel within the preserve.</p>	I	Medium	CIP	
	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Explore new interior trail amenities that support long distance, regional trail use.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Inventory the various rest stop amenities, including restrooms, rest areas with bench(es), potable water, hitching post, and/or a backpack camps that currently exist along the regional Bay to Sea Trail corridor. Conduct a feasibility study to identify critical gaps where similar amenities can be offered within the preserve to support this regional trail use.</p>	II and III	Low	EVAL	Bay Area Ridge Trail, POST

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<b>Public Access</b>					
	<b>Purpose:</b> Provide visitor serving amenities at new parking areas and trailheads.  <b>Action:</b> Incorporate visitor serving amenities in accordance with the Board approved Parking/Staging Areas and Trailhead design guidelines, including proper signage. Provide a vault toilet at the future Verde Road parking area.	I	High	CIP	
	<b>Purpose:</b> Provide amenities at trailheads that promote multimodal travel to the preserve.  <b>Action:</b> Include bicycle racks, a bicycle repair station, hitching posts, and/or water troughs, as would be suitable, at preserve trailheads.	I	High	CIP	
Signage	<b>Purpose:</b> Install proper signage at new trails, parking areas and other public access features per District standards.  <b>Action:</b> Develop a signage plan in alignment with the District's Sign Manual to provide trail directional signs, relevant regulation signs, and appropriate resource management signs. Install standard District signboards at the future Verde Road trailhead, including a partner signboard that recognizes the support from partners and Measure AA public funding support.	I	High	CIP	
Interpretation and Education	<b>Purpose:</b> Incorporate interpretive signage at the Preserve, as appropriate, to highlight important resources and site history, including the land's agricultural heritage.  <b>Action:</b> Identify appropriate locations for new interpretive signage at trailheads or on trails where mid-trail facilities may be located and at	I	Medium	PRG, CIP	

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<b>Public Access</b>					
	the Verde Road trailhead/parking area. Potential interpretive topics include themes that highlight the local natural resources, agricultural heritage, tribal cultural resources, climate change impacts and sustainability measures, and land management practices that protect biodiversity and support the preservation of local agriculture on the San Mateo County coast. Include Spanish language translations on interpretive signage on the coastside.				
	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Enrich the visitor experience through outdoor guided activities that highlight the importance of open space, conservation, and agricultural preservation.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Provide docent naturalist guided activities to the public. When effective and as capacity allows, generate digital media content (e.g., StoryMaps, OuterSpatial, podcasts, mobile apps, audio tours, etc.) to enhance storytelling. Provide language translations for online resources.</p>	Ongoing	Medium	PRG	
	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Expand reach of educational and interpretation programs to new and underserved communities.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Explore opportunities and interest in offering cultural and/or natural resource docent-led programming for local schools. Incorporate Spanish language translations and other language translations to signage and educational programs, as needed, to expand reach to non-English speaking communities on the coastside.</p>	Ongoing	Medium	PRG	
Conservation Management Unit (CMU)	<b>Purpose:</b> Manage public access in CMUs to be consistent with site specific management goals.	Ongoing and I	High	POL	

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Focus Areas	Purpose and Actions	Phasing	Priority	Action Type	Potential Partners*
<b>Public Access</b>					
	<b>Action:</b> Designate CMUs at the Preserve, when needed, for sensitive areas requiring limited public access and/or special management considerations.				

## 5. Operations and Maintenance

Focus Areas	Purpose and Actions	Phasing	Priority	Action Type	Potential Partners*
<b>Operations and Maintenance</b>					
Road and Trail Maintenance	<b>Purpose:</b> Provide and maintain adequate emergency access to the Preserve  <b>Action:</b> Maintain existing operational roadways consistent with the District's best management practices.	Ongoing	High	M	
	<b>Purpose:</b> Reduce erosion and sedimentation originating from legacy roads.  <b>Action:</b> Properly decommission unnecessary internal roadways. Implement erosion control measures and drainage improvements, including maintenance of existing culverts, as needed for the remaining roads. Avoid conducting maintenance work in wet conditions to reduce impacts from erosion.	Ongoing	Medium	POL, CSP	
	<b>Purpose:</b> Maintain trails to promote an enjoyable trail experience.  <b>Action:</b> Maintain vegetation along trails in compliance with the District's Wildland Fire Resiliency Program and Integrated Pest Management program. Maintain trail surfaces and associated drainage infrastructure in compliance with the Open Space Maintenance and Restoration Program. Identify trail segments that require additional hardening,	Ongoing	High	PRG, M	

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Focus Areas	Purpose and Actions	Phasing	Priority	Action Type	Potential Partners*
<b>Operations and Maintenance</b>					
	particularly for new trail segments in grazing areas, and install and replace aggregate material as needed to maintain trail function. Evaluate and implement minor trail reroutes to avoid problematic trail conditions or trail failures.				
Safety and Security	<b>Purpose:</b> Ensure compliance with District rules and regulations for public safety and resource protection.  <b>Action:</b> Provide signage and education to promote compliance with District regulations. As needed, conduct enforcement actions to address violations for the protection and safety of the resources and public.	Ongoing and I	High	PRG, CSP, CIP	
	<b>Purpose:</b> Ensure security of Preserve lands.  <b>Action:</b> Conduct ongoing patrol to monitor safe, appropriate, and permissible public uses. Patrol closed areas for unauthorized access. Utilize gates, wildlife-friendly fencing, and signage on District property where appropriate to maintain site security and meet public safety objectives in alignment with the District's Good Neighbor Policy.	Ongoing	High	PRG, POL	
	<b>Purpose:</b> Manage Preserve lands to minimize wildland fire risk  <b>Action:</b> Maintain vegetation along roads and trails, educate visitors about regulations to maximize compliance, conduct regular patrols, and conduct maintenance activities according to best managements practices for fire safety. Implement actions specified for the Preserve in the Wildland Fire Resiliency Program.	Ongoing	High	PRG, POL, CSP, M	
	<b>Purpose:</b> Minimize impacts to private properties and avoid public/private use conflicts and trespassing.	Ongoing and I	High	POL, CSP	

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<b>Operations and Maintenance</b>					
	<b>Action:</b> In areas where trail routes are adjacent to private property, wildlife-friendly fencing shall be employed as necessary to deter users from leaving the trail and private property signs will be installed to inform visitors of private property rights. Specific fence, gate, and crossing designs will be determined in consultations with adjacent affected property owner(s) at the Use and Management Plan stage. In the coastside protection area, trails should be sited 300 feet from any occupied dwellings on neighboring properties, where feasible, with a minimum 50-foot setback if greater separation from dwellings is not feasible. Consider impacts from District business in the vicinity of private properties such as noise, maintenance activities, and siting of new trails and facilities in accordance with the District's Good Neighbor Policy.				
Utilities and Infrastructure	<b>Purpose:</b> Remove obsolete infrastructure.  <b>Action:</b> Identify and document utilities and infrastructure and remove unnecessary facilities and infrastructure, such as obsolete water systems and fencing. Remove the old county park restroom near the Redwood Trailhead, approved for demolition by the Board in 2000.	II	Medium	M, CIP	
	<b>Purpose:</b> Maintain reliable domestic and agricultural water sources essential to implement management objectives.  <b>Action:</b> Inventory and maintain existing water infrastructure. Measure domestic and agricultural consumptive water use and evaluate opportunities to use municipal water supply where feasible. Evaluate opportunities to expand and/or replace existing water infrastructure to support conservation grazing operations.	Ongoing, II	Medium	M, EVAL, CIP	

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Focus Areas	Purpose and Actions	Phasing	Priority	Action Type	Potential Partners*
<b>Operations and Maintenance</b>					
	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Promote resilience of infrastructure to impacts of extreme weather conditions and climate change.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b> Assess roads, trails, crossings, and water conveyance infrastructure for vulnerability to impacts from severe storms, fire, and extreme heat. Upgrade or decommission infrastructure as appropriate. Design new infrastructure and repairs in consideration of more severe weather conditions than historic levels.</p>	III	Medium	PRG	
Environmental Hazards	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Address environmental hazards</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Remove barbed wire, nails, debris, and other materials that no longer have a functional purpose or that pose public safety hazards. Support the long-term stewardship of the property and meet public safety objectives in alignment with the District's Good Neighbor Policy.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Identify and contain hazardous areas. Remove and remediate hazards where appropriate in alignment with natural and historic resource management objectives and procedures. Designate Purisima Uplands as a closed area until the site has been remediated.</p>	I	High	M, NR, AGT	CalGEM
Legal Agreements	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Ensure conditions of easements and other agreements are met.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Where required, develop public access in alignment with stipulations set forth by the conservation and trail easements held by the Peninsula Open Space Trust and California Coastal Conservancy.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Comply with access easements with applicable neighbors.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Comply with the Purisima Creek Water Adjudication.</p>	Ongoing	High	AGT	POST, SCC, adjacent landowners

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Focus Areas	Purpose and Actions	Phasing	Priority	Action Type	Potential Partners*
<b>Operations and Maintenance</b>					
Partnerships	<b>Purpose:</b> Seek and maintain partnerships to support management of the Preserve in alignment with the District's mission and policies  <b>Action:</b> Explore potential partnerships for implementation and long-term use and/or management of trail crossings and connectors to Cowell Purisima Coastal Trail.	Ongoing, I	High	AGT	POST, SMC, CSP
	<b>Action:</b> Partner with tribes, non-profits, governmental entities, and/or other interested communities in regional resource and land management efforts pertaining to the preserve in accordance with the District's Good Neighbor Policy.	Ongoing, I	Medium	AGT	SMC, HMB, POST, Tribes
	<b>Action:</b> Explore local and regional partnership opportunities that encourage multimodal access to the preserve as well as connections to the California Coastal Trail, Bay to Sea Trail, Bay Area Ridge Trail, Ohlone-Portolá Heritage Trail, etc. Support the implementation of San Mateo County's planned bike routes and planned Connect the Coastside projects.	Ongoing	Medium	AGT	SMC, Caltrans, RCD, CSP, SamTrans, POST
	<b>Purpose:</b> Seek funding partnerships to leverage and magnify District resources.  <b>Action:</b> Explore grant and external funding opportunities to support public access improvements, resource management actions, and long-term use and management of the preserve.	Ongoing	Medium	AGT	SFPUC, SCC

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## List of Acronyms

CalFire	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
CalGEM	California Geologic Energy Management Division
CalTrans	California Department of Transportation
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CSP	California State Parks
HMB	City of Half Moon Bay
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
POST	Peninsula Open Space Trust
RCD	San Mateo Resource Conservation District
SamTrans	San Mateo County Transit District
SCC	County of Santa Clara
SFPUC	San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
SMC	County of San Mateo
UCCE	University of California Cooperative Extension

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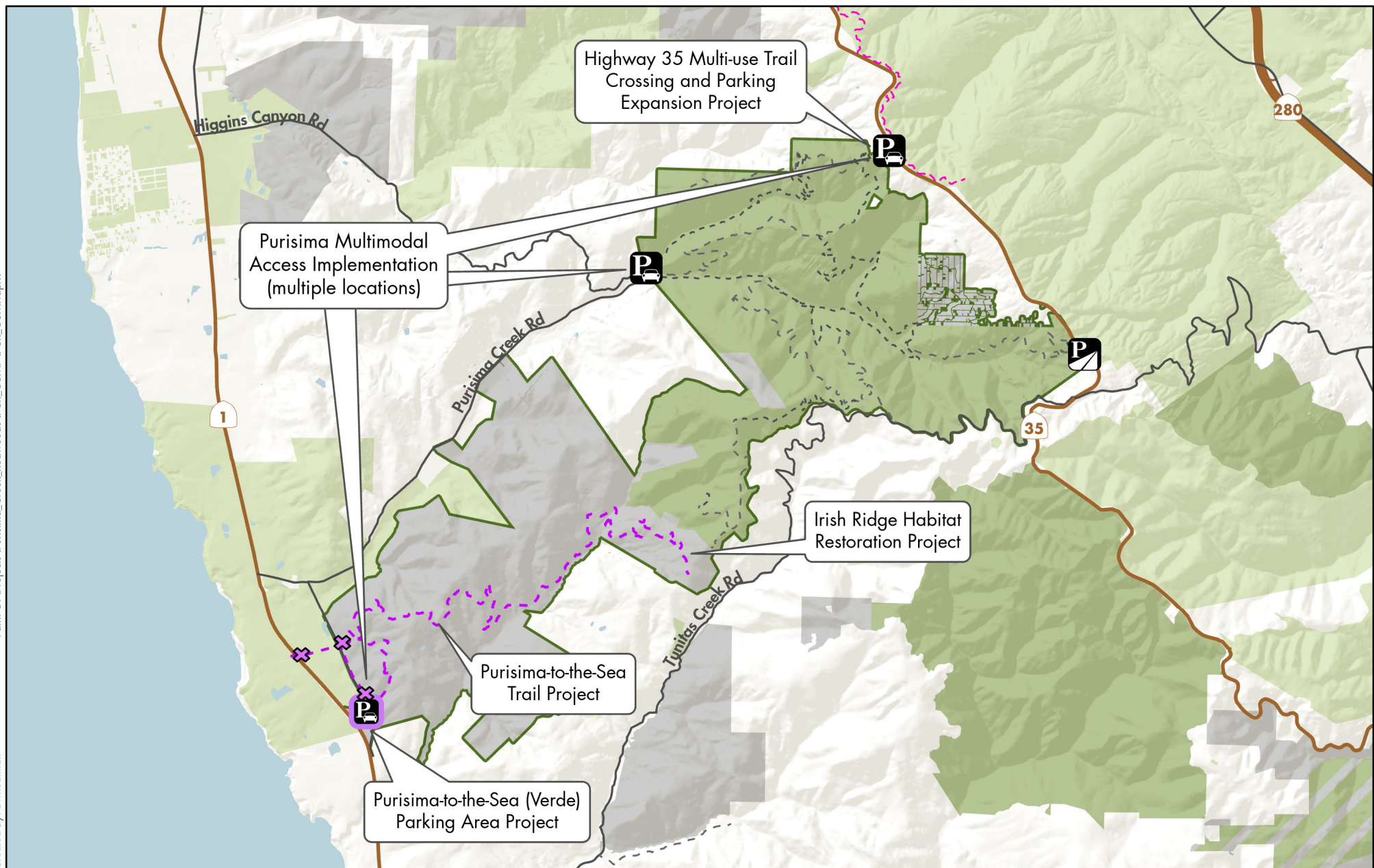
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## Purisima Comprehensive Use and Management Plan - New Project Locations

Midpen preserves

Other protected lands

Closed areas



Existing parking area



Proposed parking area



Existing trails

Future Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail



Future road crossing locations

Future Bay Area Ridge Trail Extension



Miles 0 0.5 1

Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District  
(Midpen)  
8/7/2025



## Summary of New Public Access and Restoration Projects

The Comprehensive Use and Management Plan (Plan, CUMP) builds off extensive resource analysis, technical studies, and public input conducted as part of the individual planning processes for new public access and restorations projects between 2020 and 2024. Over 50 public and stakeholder engagement activities were conducted related to one or more of these projects, including District Board and Committee meetings, tabling at community events, regional partner meetings, site tours with coastal community residents, and meetings with neighborhood associations. A summary of these projects and their previous planning processes are included below:

- **Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail and Parking Project**

The planned Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail will be a 15-mile east-west link as part of the regional trail network that connects the Bay Area Ridge Trail with the California Coastal Trail and is also anticipated to be a significant segment of the more extensive Bay to Sea Trail. The project's feasibility study recommendations, which identifies the proposed trail alignment and concept designs for a new trailhead and parking area off Verde Road, was accepted by the Board in May 2023. The project also includes interior Preserve connector trails and trail crossings across Verde Road and Highway 1. Design development to support the CEQA analysis was initiated in fall 2023.

- **Hwy 35 Multi-use Crossing and Parking Expansion Project**

The planned multi-use trail crossing on Highway 35 will provide an important regional trail connection between existing segments of the Bay Area Ridge Trail from the North Ridge trailhead to a new extension of the Bay Area Ridge Trail on the adjacent San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) watershed lands. Additionally, the project includes onsite parking expansion and reconfiguration of the North Ridge parking area to better address current and future parking demand at this location. The Board accepted the feasibility study recommendations in November 2023, including selection of a conceptual parking design and multi-use trail crossing location. Design development to support the CEQA analysis was initiated in spring 2024 that includes the North Ridge parking expansion, highway crossing, and a spur trail connection on SFPUC watershed lands. SFPUC has partnered with the District to help implement the CEQA, permitting, and construction phases of this project in support of this important regional trail connection.

- **Purisima Multimodal Implementation Project**

The 2022 Purisima Multimodal Access and Transportation Demand Study (Study) identified several high priority transportation demand management (TDM) strategies directly related to and being incorporated into the design of the new Purisima-to-the-Sea parking area and the expanded North Ridge parking area. On December 11, 2024, the Board accepted the recommended shuttle and parking management concepts at Purisima, which includes a pilot shuttle program with service between the new Verde parking area and existing Purisima Creek trailhead as well as dynamic real-time parking information for both the Verde Road and North Ridge parking areas.

- **Irish Ridge Restoration Plan**

The project aims to restore a site dominated by non-native, invasive plants that are reducing habitat quality, invading adjacent natural areas, and contributing excessive woody debris that increase the risk of wildland fire. The project aims to remove the invasive plants and selectively thin the unnaturally high-density forested areas. The habitat restoration plan was completed in 2023 and will serve as mitigation for one or more of the new District projects within the Preserve, such as the adjacent Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail project.

###