



Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District

R-16-33  
Meeting 16-07  
March 23, 2016

## SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA ITEM 1

### AGENDA ITEM

Alma College Cultural Landscape Rehabilitation Plan Informational Presentation and Tentative Approval

### GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATIONS *SM*

1. Provide feedback on proposed cleanup, minimal rehabilitation actions, and phasing of the Alma College Cultural Landscape Rehabilitation Plan
2. Tentatively approve the proposed cleanup and selective rehabilitation actions, which will be brought back at a later date for final Board approval as part of the Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve Plan.

### SUMMARY

In preparation for the upcoming public release of the Draft Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve Plan (Preserve Plan) and Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), the Board of Directors will receive a presentation on the proposed cleanup and selective rehabilitation recommendations for the Alma College Cultural Landscape Rehabilitation Plan (Rehabilitation Plan), including associated phasing and costs, for feedback and tentative approval pending completion of environmental review.

### MEASURE AA

The project is part of Measure AA (MAA) Portfolio #21, Bear Creek Redwoods Public Recreation and Interpretive Projects: Open for hiking, equestrian activities; provide parking areas, trails; upgrade stables; restore and protect habitats for various species; repair roads & trails to reduce sediment; rehabilitate Alma College site. In addition, the Rehabilitation Plan is part of the Board-approved MAA 5-year Project List.

### BACKGROUND

As part of initial planning efforts to open the former Alma College site to public use, the District commissioned Knapp Architects to conduct the "Alma College Conditions Assessment Project: Phase 1: Assessment of Existing Conditions" (March 2010). The assessment concluded that the former Alma College site is significant as a "Cultural Landscape", a type of historic district under Criterion 1 of the California Register for its historical parallels with the broader events of California history, with a period of significance of circa 1850 to 1951. This finding, affirming the site's significance, requires the project to comply with governing preservation standards known as "The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with

Guidelines for the Rehabilitation of Cultural Landscapes” (Secretary of Interior’s Standards) to address the management and future uses of the site. In addition, the site (including the classroom building, the auditorium, the chapel, the garage, and the library) is included on the Santa Clara County Heritage Resource Inventory. Santa Clara County would consider the project’s potential effects on the integrity of this resource during any demolition and/or building permit process.

While the regulatory and permitting environment is **one of several important considerations**, site rehabilitation actions must also be evaluated from a standpoint of fiscal sustainability and alignment with the District’s Mission. On June 24, 2015, the Board accepted an overview of the Alma College Cultural Landscape Rehabilitation Plan, developed by PGA Design, for the purposes of environmental review. At that time, project costs and phasing had not yet been developed.

## DISCUSSION

The vision for the former Alma College site is to implement a fiscally-sustainable clean-up and rehabilitation plan that allows the site’s cultural significance to be understood and safely enjoyed by the public, while remaining within the District’s mission. During development of the draft Alma College Cultural Landscape Rehabilitation Plan, two draft alternatives (Schemes A and B) were reviewed by the Planning and Natural Resources Committee and the Board. At their June 24, 2015 meeting, the Board selected Scheme B as the preferred approach. This approach does not include a large public facility, thereby limiting the intensity of use at the site.

Proposed rehabilitation actions are shown in Attachment 1. In general, these proposed actions enhance the overall site for interpretive purposes. Some buildings are proposed for partial demolition (leaving foundations in place), while other, more structurally-sound buildings would be retained, stabilized, and made available for potential re-use by a partner organization. The proposed actions, phasing, and conceptual-level cost estimates are shown below. The site would be ready to open to public access following Phase 1A, however, Phase 1 in its entirety (i.e. Phases 1A, 1B, and 1C) is required for the full project to comply with the Secretary’s Standards and adequately balance cultural resource stewardship with the adverse impacts associated with building demolition and construction of a new parking lot within the Alma College complex. It is anticipated that compliance with the Secretary’s Standards will, at a minimum, be required by the County of Santa Clara (County) as a condition of Phase 1A permit issuance. However, this will not be known until the District begins to consult with the County and/or a permit application is submitted (note: the County Historical Heritage Commission would likely review a future permit application).

### Phase 1A: Clean Up – \$1.3M (Measure AA Funded)

Partial demolition of dormitory, garage, classroom, and 1950 library buildings  
 Safety and security (includes fencing and limited structural stabilization)  
 Hazardous materials remediation  
 Vegetation management

### Phase 1B: Minimal Stabilization and Rehabilitation (Measure AA Funded) – \$2.9M

Stabilization of chapel building  
 Rehabilitation of shrines, lily pond and Roman plunge hardscape  
 Minimal native vegetation planting  
 Interpretive elements

Phase 1C: Minimal Stabilization and Rehabilitation (District General Fund or Grant Funded) – \$3.2M

Careful placement of native plantings to convey historic landscape  
Stabilization of 1934 library roof  
Stabilization of north retaining wall  
Fire suppression water (hydrant system utilizing Upper Lake as source)

Phase 2: Enhanced Public Access –\$4M (Partner and/or Grant Funded)

Rehabilitation of 1909 chapel for re-use, including utilities  
Modifications to 1934 library roof for use as an open air pavilion  
Restroom facility and related infrastructure

The larger Preserve Plan is at a critical juncture with regards to the environmental review process, which is why this item is coming before the Board at this time. For this Agenda Item, the Board of Directors is asked to carefully consider the proposed Rehabilitation Plan, phasing, estimated costs, and funding sources and to tentatively approve the recommendations, pending completion of the DEIR. Should the Board request changes to Phase 1 actions at a later date leading up to and including the Preserve Plan/DEIR hearing, Board approval of the Preserve Plan would need to be delayed to address these changes in the Plan and DEIR.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Sufficient funds are allocated in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2015-16 budget to proceed with the planning process for the Rehabilitation Plan. Additional funds will be requested in the proposed FY2016-17 budget for the finalization of the Rehabilitation Plan. The MAA Expenditure Plan Budget for MAA Portfolio #21, Bear Creek Redwoods Public Recreation and Interpretive Projects, allocated approximately \$4.2 M for rehabilitation of the Alma College Site to fund Phases 1A and 1B. Implementation of subsequent phases, if approved, would be funded using a combination of District General Funds, grants, and partner contributions.

### **BOARD COMMITTEE REVIEW**

Since the re-initiation of the Preserve Plan process, four Planning and Natural Resources (PNR) Committee meetings have been held. On April 14, 2015, the PNR Committee received an update on the planning process and schedule. On April 29, 2015, the PNR Committee attended a community workshop to gather public input. On June 2, 2015 and September 29, 2015, the PNR Committee reviewed the draft Plan elements, including the proposed rehabilitation actions for the Alma College site. In addition, the full Board received a presentation of the Rehabilitation Plan at its June 24, 2015 meeting. At this meeting, the Board directed staff to pursue a low-intensity use scenario (Scheme B) for the site.

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

Public notice of this Agenda Item was provided per the Brown Act. Additional notice was provided to interested parties of the Preserve Plan and Stables Site Plan, as well as adjoining neighbors of Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve.

## **CEQA COMPLIANCE**

An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is in preparation for the Preserve Plan, which analyzes the potential project impacts associated with the Rehabilitation Plan. It is anticipated that the Rehabilitation Plan will not result in significant impacts to the Alma College Cultural Landscape, since the proposed actions largely comply with the Secretary's Standards. However, due to the status of the classroom, garage, and 1950 library buildings on the Santa Clara County Heritage Resource Inventory, demolition of these buildings may result in significant, unavoidable impacts to historic resources, as such listing is a defined "threshold of significance" under CEQA. If significant unavoidable impacts would occur, the Board will be required to adopt a statement of overriding considerations, which is a common CEQA requirement associated with EIRs.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Staff will incorporate feedback received from the Board Study Session into the Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve Plan, which will be released for public review this summer.

### Attachment(s)

1. Rehabilitation Plan Summary Graphic

### Responsible Department Head:

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### Prepared by:

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### UPPER LAKE

Retain and stabilize Upper Lake, dating to the Milling Period, as the central organizing element of the site.

### ST. JOSEPH SHRINE

Rehabilitate for visitor seating/picnicking.

### HISTORIC CIRCULATION PATTERNS

Reinstate pathways around lake as ADA trails.

### ALMA COLLEGE PARKING AREA

Provide capacity for 60 vehicles between two lots, vault toilets, and signage.

### BUFFER PLANTING

Provide extensive areas of native evergreen shrub plantings along the south retaining wall as a barrier, to limit impacts in case of a seismic event.

### KEY ELEMENTS

- Rehabilitate and interpret the features that illustrate the layers of development and use of the property.
- Reinstate or rehabilitate historic plantings using evergreen shrub plantings on the path through the middle of the site, at the shrines, and in lieu of radial paths.
- Provide interpretive materials to narrate the cultural landscape components.
- Stabilize the 1909 chapel, and the 1934 library roof structure.
- Strengthen north retaining wall, minimally stabilize south retaining wall.
- Due to their position in relation to the San Andreas fault trace, remove the classroom garage, and the 1950 library.
- Provide visitor amenities.
- Establish parking for approximately 60 cars.
- Establish a regime of vegetation management.
- Plant garden areas with unirrigated wildflower and grass mixes for improved habitat.
- Plant with native species to convey the layout of other historical plantings.
- Seek a project partner or partners for the use of the rehabilitated building and gardens.

### PARTNERSHIP ELEMENTS

- Rehabilitate chapel and library superstructure for reuse.
- Provide water, septic, and power to the rehabilitated chapel.
- Rehabilitate radial gardens near Upper Lake.
- Provide enhanced visitor amenities including flush toilets

### NEW ENTRY FROM BEAR CREEK ROAD

Clear vegetation to improve line of sight as needed. Provide a safe pedestrian crossing at Bear Creek Road.

### DORMITORIES AND CLASSROOMS

Interpret the Jesuit period through the remaining foundations of the dormitories. Remove and interpret the classroom building, retaining its clay-tile paved porch and foundation.

### PEDESTRIAN PATHS

Reinstate the central path of the former historic radial path system and the former central path through the site incorporating existing lengths of path where they remain.

### 1950 LIBRARY

Remove the 1950 library to reopen views along length of the site, as between the late 1800s to 1950. Retain terraces created by Tevis for use as picnic areas. Rehabilitate historic stairs.

### MARIAN SHRINE

Rehabilitate Marian Shrine

### CHAPEL AND 1934 LIBRARY

Stabilize the wooden Chapel for rehabilitation and use by a project partner. Close the lower floor for structural strengthening. Rehabilitate the patio on the north side for use by self-guided visitors. Retain the roof of the wooden 1934 Library, removing most or all of its walls so that it becomes a weather shelter.

### FORMER TEVIS MANSION FOOTPRINT

This is a flexible-use picnic area. Interpretive paving element marks the threshold of the NW wing of the mansion. Enhance the extant remnants of the mansion foundation, flush with the pavement grade. Stabilize remnant carport columns and walls. Reinstate and interpret the location of the exterior walls, indicating the building's wings, some as sitting elements.

### NORTH AND SOUTH RETAINING WALLS

Structurally stabilize the north retaining wall with tiebacks. The south retaining wall lies on the fault trace, repair the broken ends where failure has occurred. Provide modest repairs to brickwork at the parapet edge. Provide safety barriers until north wall is stabilized

### GARAGE

Interpret the garage site and provide an overlook to the lower floor.

### MEADOW, LILY POND, AND ROMAN PLUNGE

Clear the meadow of invasive species. Rehabilitate hardscape and interpret the lily pond and Roman Plunge suitable for picnics and gatherings. Retain and strengthen the bilaterally symmetrical view to the SE between the blue cedars.

### SITE AND SAFETY CODE COMPLIANCE

Provide ADA accessible routes throughout. Provide safety barriers or vegetated buffers to prevent access near retaining walls