



Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District

## PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

R-21-112  
August 24, 2021

### AGENDA ITEM 2

#### AGENDA ITEM

Hawthorns Area Draft Vision and Goals

#### GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION *den*

Review and comment on the Draft Vision and Goals for the Hawthorns Area. No Committee action required.

#### SUMMARY

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) will prepare the Hawthorns Area Plan to implement ecologically sensitive public access improvements and prescribe future management activities at the Hawthorns Area of Windy Hill Open Space Preserve (Hawthorns Area) in the Town of Portola Valley (Town) (Attachment 1; Map 1). The Hawthorns Area Plan will rely on vision and goals that are approved by the District Board of Directors (Board) to establish an overarching direction for the future use and management of the property. Staff have prepared draft vision and goals for input from the Planning and Natural Resources (PNR) Committee and the public. Staff will refine the draft vision and goals in response to feedback and will return to the PNR Committee with the revised vision and goals for recommendation to the full Board.

#### BACKGROUND

The 79-acre Hawthorns Area is located near the intersection of Alpine Road and Portola Road (Attachment 1; Map 2). The property is bounded by Alpine Road to the west, Los Trancos Creek to the east, and private property to the north and south. The property is accessible from existing driveways on Alpine Road and Los Trancos Road.

The Hawthorns Area landscape is largely comprised of scenic grasslands that afford panoramic views of the San Francisco Peninsula, the East Bay hills, and the Santa Cruz Mountains. Oak woodlands extend through the Hawthorns Area in an east-west direction and transition into a mixed evergreen forest along Los Trancos Creek (Attachment 1; Map 3). Remnants of an olive orchard occupy the hillsides west of Los Trancos Creek. Wildlife corridors to the south and east connect the Hawthorns Area to vast areas of open space along Page Mill Road and Skyline Boulevard.

The Hawthorns Area is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places because it reflects the social, agricultural, and architectural history of San Francisco Peninsula estate property from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Existing improvements to the Hawthorns Area include

residential buildings, farm structures, an olive orchard, landscaping, and ranch roads (Attachment 1; Map 3), some of which date back to the late 1800s. A modern residence and driveway constructed in the mid-1950s are currently used as a District staff residence.

The Hawthorns Area is located at the nexus of several existing trail and path systems managed by the Town (Attachment 1; Map 4). Notably, Alpine Road Trail is a multi-use trail that travels along the south side of Alpine Road and the northern Hawthorns Area property boundary. This pathway is frequently used by equestrians, hikers, and schoolchildren traveling throughout the community. The Town has requested to work with the District to realign and widen portions of Alpine Road Trail adjacent to the Hawthorns Area. In addition, the Hawthorns Area may potentially contribute to regional trail connections with other nearby public open spaces, including Pearson-Arastradero Preserve, Foothills Park, and Coal Mine Ridge Nature Preserve.

## DRAFT VISION AND GOALS

Planning for future public access at the Hawthorns Area begins with establishing the vision and goals for the property. The *vision* describes how the Hawthorns Area should look and function into the future. *Goals* define allowable uses and management strategies that support the vision. Together, the vision and goals will create a comprehensive roadmap for the Hawthorns Area. Staff prepared draft vision and goal statements (provided below) for PNR Committee review and public input.

### Draft Vision

The Hawthorns Area offers picturesque views of rolling oak grasslands and the Santa Cruz Mountains, provides important wildlife refuge, and reflects the region's natural, agricultural, and social history. The District will protect biotic resources and interpret natural and cultural resources on the Hawthorns Area in a manner consistent with the District's mission and the property's conservation easement.

### Draft Goals

- **Natural Resources:** Protect and restore native habitat, wildlife corridors, and other sensitive natural resources.
- **Public Access:** Open the Hawthorns Area to public access and provide sufficient parking, multimodal access options, an internal trail system, and low intensity recreational amenities that support ecologically sensitive public enjoyment.
- **Regional Connectivity:** Connect to adjacent public trails and explore opportunities to facilitate new regional trail connections.
- **Natural and Cultural History:** Interpret the rich natural and cultural history of the Hawthorns Area and pursue partnerships to manage key features of the Hawthorns Historic District.
- **Aesthetics:** Highlight scenic viewpoints and protect scenic viewsheds.
- **Operation and Maintenance:** Manage the property in a safe and fiscally sustainable manner that promotes ongoing public support and appreciation.

## PUBLIC FEEDBACK RECEIVED TO DATE

District staff received 36 written public comments regarding the Hawthorns Area between April 2021 and August 2021. This input informed the development of the draft vision and goals by identifying key topics and themes relevant to the Hawthorns Area. The following table

summarizes the general categories of public interest, arranged by District staff in a manner that corresponds with the draft goals. Please note that individual comments often address multiple themes, and therefore the total number of comments outlined in the following table exceeds the total number of public comments received.

Theme	Number of Comments
<b><i>Natural Resources</i></b>	
Fire Safety	1
<b><i>Public Access</i></b>	
Hiking Uses	2
Bicycle Uses	4
Equestrian Uses	3
Parking	3
Allowable Trail Uses	2
<b><i>Regional Connectivity</i></b>	
Alpine Road Trail	1
Local Trail Connections	4
Regional Connections	2
<b><i>Natural and Cultural History</i></b>	
Historic Complex	5
Tribal Resources	2
<b><i>Aesthetics</i></b>	
Viewsheds	1
<b><i>Operations and Maintenance</i></b>	
Traffic	1
Staff Residence	1
<b><i>Other</i></b>	
General Inquiry/Updates	11
Schedule	2
Support	5
Working Group	1
Public Involvement	1

## FISCAL IMPACT

Review and comment on the draft vision and goals for the Hawthorns Area has no direct, immediate fiscal impact. Further planning efforts and related costs this fiscal year are expected to remain within the approved Fiscal Year 2021-22 (FY22) budget.

The following table outlines the Measure AA Portfolio #6 Windy Hill: Trail Implementation, Preservation and Hawthorns Area Historic Partnership allocation, costs-to-date, projected future Project expenditures and projected ending balance at the portfolio level.

<b>MAA06 Windy Hill: Trail Implementation, Preservation and Hawthorns Area Historic Partnership Portfolio Allocation:</b>	
<b>Total Portfolio Allocation:</b>	<b>\$12,740,000</b>
Life-to-Date Spent (as of 07/23/2021):	(\$40,950)
Encumbrances:	(\$0)

Remaining FY22 Project Budgets:	(\$111,325)
Future MAA06 project costs (projected through FY25):	(\$95,797)
<b>Total Portfolio Expenditures:</b>	<b>(\$248,072)</b>
<b>Portfolio Balance Remaining (Proposed):</b>	<b>\$12,491,928</b>

The following table outlines the Measure AA Portfolio #06 Windy Hill: Trail Implementation, Preservation and Hawthorns Area Historic Partnership allocation, costs-to-date, projected life-to-date project expenditures and projected portfolio balance remaining.

<b>MAA06 Windy Hill: Trail Implementation, Preservation and Hawthorns Area Historic Partnership Portfolio Allocation:</b>	
<b>Total Portfolio Allocation:</b>	<b>\$12,740,000</b>
Projected Project Expenditures (life of project):	
MAA06-001 Hawthorn Parking Lot Concept Design	(\$8,490)
MAA06-002 Hawthorns Public Access Site Plan and CEQA	(\$239,582)
<b>Total Portfolio Expenditures:</b>	<b>(\$248,072)</b>
<b>Portfolio Balance Remaining (Proposed):</b>	<b>\$12,491,928</b>

## BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW

- March 10, 2021: This FYI to the Board provided an update regarding the Hawthorns Area, including a tentative schedule for developing a comprehensive use and management plan ([report link](#), [meeting minutes](#)).
- May 18, 2021: This PNR Committee Report described the Hawthorns Area and outlined the upcoming planning milestone: developing vision and goals for the property ([R-21-65](#), [meeting minutes](#)).

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act.

## CEQA COMPLIANCE

Developing the Hawthorns Area vision and goals is not a project subject to CEQA. Environmental review is anticipated to occur in a future fiscal year, pending the Board's selection of an alternative as the CEQA project description.

## NEXT STEPS

Staff will return to the PNR Committee in fall 2021 to present the revised draft Hawthorns Area vision and goals and request that the PNR Committee forward a recommendation to the full Board for consideration and approval. Staff will also present a proposed composition and formation strategy for a potential working group to assess opportunities and constraints for public access improvements at the Hawthorns Area.

Attachment:

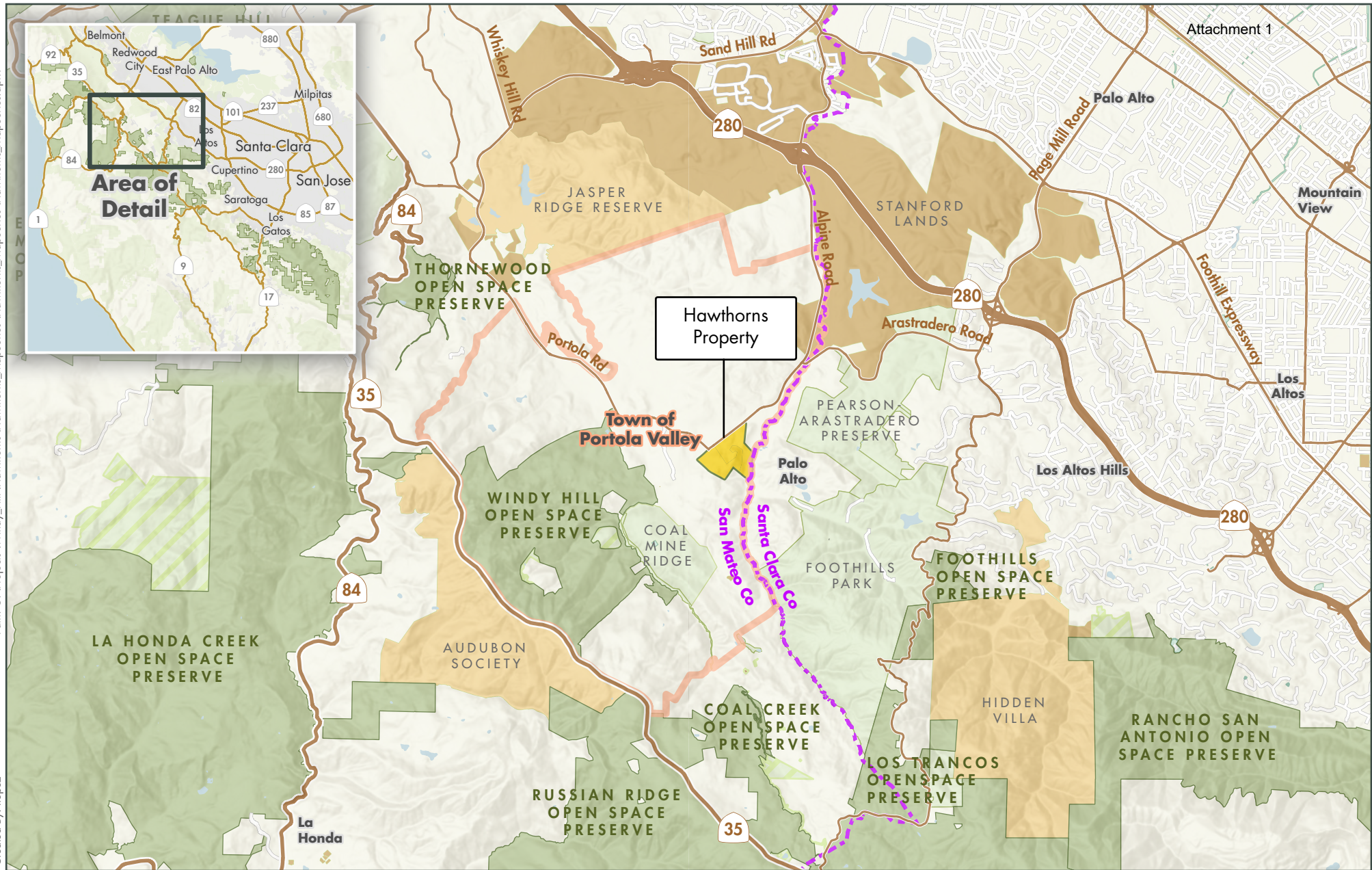
1. Mapbook



Responsible Department Head:  
Jane Mark, Planning Department

Prepared By:  
Alex Casbara, Planner III, Planning Department  
Meredith Manning, Senior Planner, Planning Department  
Xucan Zhou, Planner II, Planning Department

Contact Person:  
Alex Casbara, Planner III, Planning Department



## Hawthorns Area - Regional Map

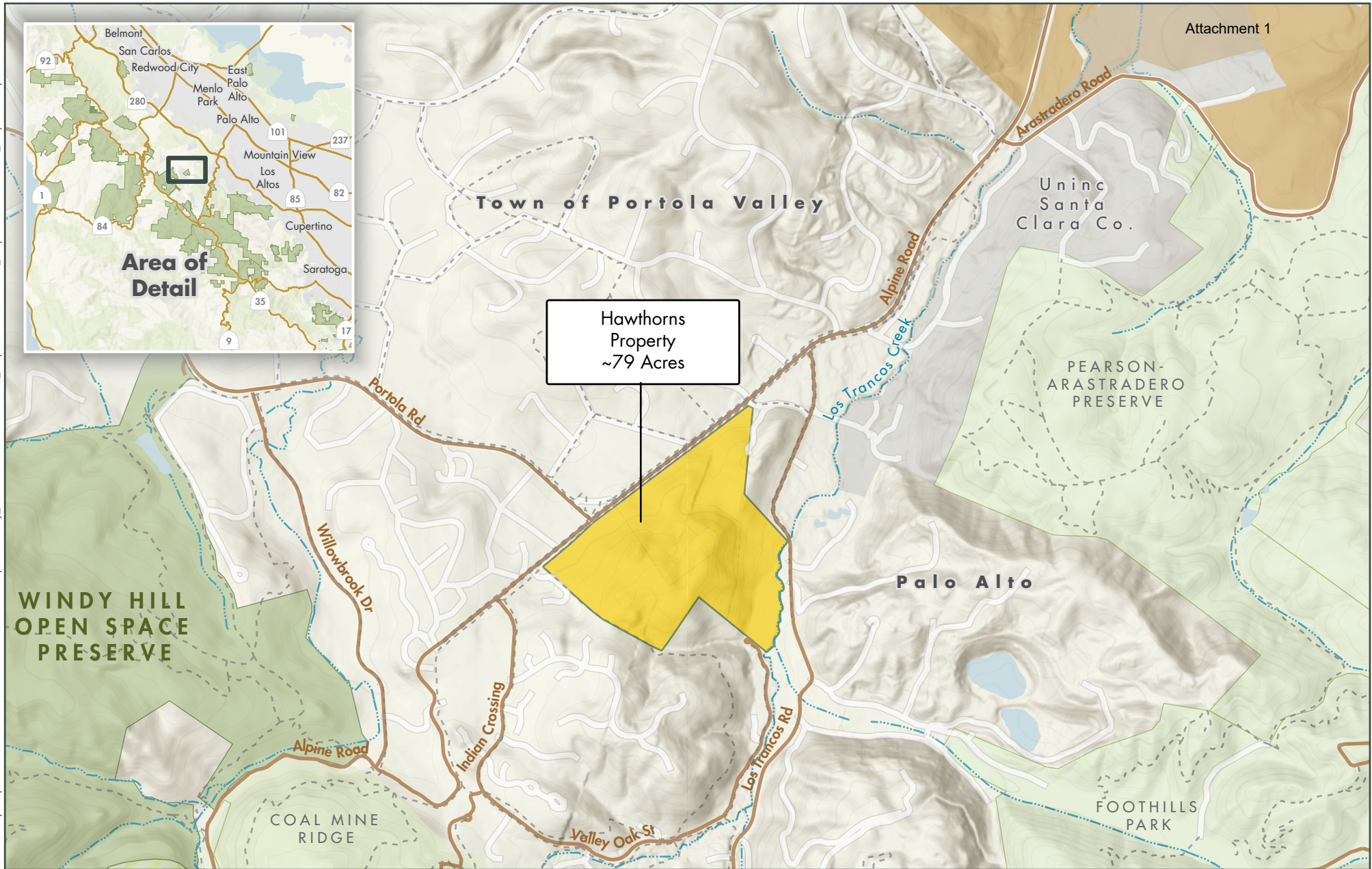
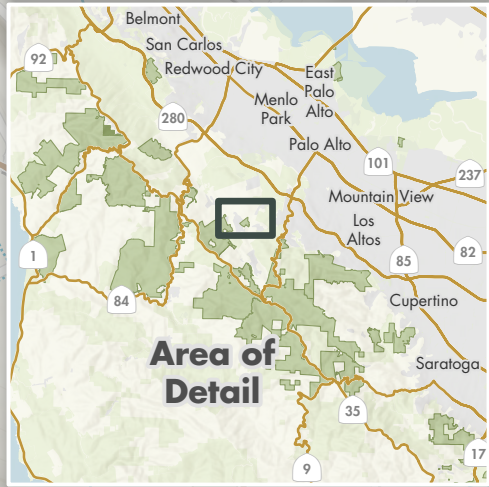
- |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  MROSD Preserves       |  Land Trust          |  County Boundary              |
|  Other Protected Lands |  Other Public Agency |  Portola Valley City Boundary |
|  Private Property      |  Hawthorns Area      |                                                                                                                  |

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



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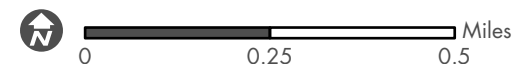




## Hawthorns Area - Local Map

- |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  MROSD Preserves       |  Other Public Agency |
|  Other Protected Lands |  Hawthorns Area      |
|  Private Property      |  Unincorporated Area |

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Attachment 1

Source: SMC Enhanced Lifeform 2020

# Hawthorns Area - Topography & Vegetation Communities

- |                                                                                    |                   |                                                                                     |           |                                                                                     |             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
|  | Hawthorns Area    |  | Woodland  |  | Olive Grove |
|  | Building          |  | Grassland |  | Developed   |
|  | Historic Building |                                                                                     |           |                                                                                     |             |

**Contour interval**  
50 ft  
10 ft

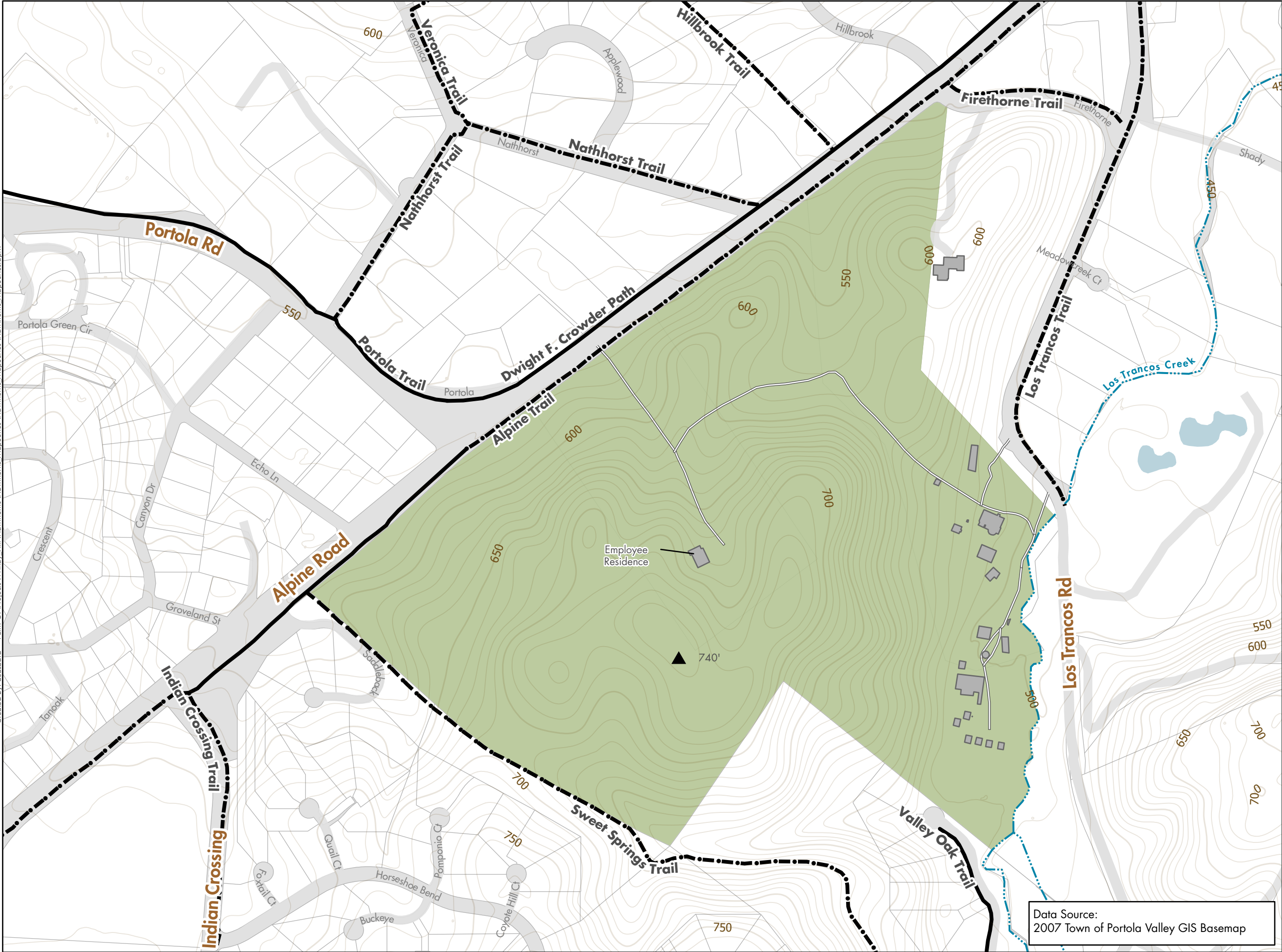
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Open Space District  
(Midpen)  
7/15/2021



While the District strives to use the best available digital data, these data do not represent a legal survey and are merely a graphic illustration of geographic features.



Created By: acasbara Path: G:\Projects\Windy Hill\Hawthorns\Hawthorns MapSeries\Hawthorns MapSeries.aprx



### Town of Portola Valley Public Trail Network

- Hawthorns Area
- Building
- Trail use type**
  - Equestrian & Pedestrian Trail, Dogs On Leash
  - Bicycle, Equestrian, & Pedestrian Trail, Dogs On Leash

Data Source:  
2007 Town of Portola Valley GIS Basemap



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