



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-21-174
Meeting 21-35
December 15, 2021

AGENDA ITEM 6

AGENDA ITEM

Purisima-to-the-Sea Regional Trail and Parking Area Project Vision and Goals

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

Review and confirm the revised Purisima-to-the-Sea Regional Trail and Parking Area Project vision and goals, including modifications as directed by the Board of Directors during the December 1, 2021 Special Board meeting, to guide the future selection of a preferred regional trail alignment and development of conceptual parking area design alternatives.

SUMMARY

The Purisima-to-the-Sea Regional Trail and Parking Area (Project) Feasibility Study analyzes several key elements, including new regional trail alignment options, a new trailhead and parking area off Verde Road or Highway 1, and trail crossings at Verde Road and Highway 1 to ultimately facilitate a link between Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (Preserve) and the existing Cowell-Purisima Coastal Trail. This trail connection will complete an approximately 15-mile regional trail and create a critical east-west link in the regional trail network between the Bay Area Ridge Trail and the California Coastal Trail. (Attachment 1: Regional Map and Attachment 2: Feasibility Study Project Area Map) Completion of the Project is a priority for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) as identified in the public-supported and Board-approved 2014 Vision Plan, with significant funding approved by the voters as part of Measure AA Portfolio 03: *Purisima Creek Redwoods, Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail, Watershed Protection and Conservation Grazing* and grant funding from the California Coastal Conservancy.

Staff presented the initial findings of the feasibility study, the opportunities and constraints analysis, and the proposed vision and goals for the Project at the December 1, 2021 Special Board meeting (R-21-157). At this meeting, the Board of Directors (Board) directed staff to revise the proposed Project vision and goals to incorporate Board input and bring the revisions back to the Board for final approval.

DISCUSSION

The Project's approved vision and goals will guide the development and selection of elements that will be incorporated into a comprehensive use and management plan, including potential parking area designs and trail alignments, as well as other use and management considerations at this Preserve.

The proposed Project vision and goals were presented to the Board at the December 1, 2021 Special Board meeting. The Board directed staff to emphasize the importance of ecologically sensitive design, implementation of the Purisima Multimodal Access Study recommendations, and natural resource protection. Staff have completed these revisions, using underline and ~~striketrough~~, for the Board's consideration as shown below. In addition to Board input, the vision and goals have been informed by the findings of the Opportunities and Constraints Analysis and by public comment received to date, and are consistent with the 2014 Board-approved Vision Plan and 2014 voter-approved Measure AA expenditure plan.

Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail and Parking Area Project Vision

Realize the decades-long vision to connect the Santa Cruz Mountains to the Pacific Ocean in support of open space, agriculture, wildlife and people. Complete the multi-use Purisima-to-the-Sea trail connection, and improve multimodal access and develop a parking area using ecologically sensitive design and management in a manner that is respectful of the surrounding coastside communities and includes outreach to and engagement with preserve neighbors.

Goal 1: Physical Attributes

Develop the ~~regional~~ Purisima-to-the-Sea Regional Trail to accommodate low-intensity recreation by multiple user groups, provide ecologically sensitive public access to scenic viewpoints, and provide ~~improved~~ Preserve access that incorporates multimodal strategies ~~with an appropriately sized and programmed parking area.~~

Goal 2: Cultural Attributes

Protect and interpret the agricultural and coastal community culture and history.

Goal 3: Biological Attributes

Manage, protect, and interpret natural resources, habitats, sensitive species, and connectivity, and provide public access in an ecologically sensitive manner.

Goal 4: Safety

Manage the newly open area of the Preserve, trails and parking area to provide a safe visitor and neighbor experience.

Goal 5: Implementation

Continue to foster and develop partnerships to support project approvals and implementation.

FISCAL IMPACT

Further planning efforts and related costs this fiscal year for the Purisima-to-the-Sea Regional Trail and Parking Area Feasibility Study (MAA03-005) are expected to remain within the amended Fiscal Year 2021-22 (FY22) budget of \$358,777.

The District has been awarded a grant of \$301,000 from the State Coastal Conservancy for this Project. The grant supports the development of a preferred regional trail alignment, preparing conceptual designs plans for a new Verde Road/Highway 1 parking area, and evaluating options for pedestrian roadway crossings and connections to the Cowell-Purissima Coastal Trail. To meet the term of the grant agreement, the District must expend approximately \$253,000 of the \$301,000 grant award by April 15th, 2022. Use of the remaining \$47,000 in grant funds can be extended to a later deadline given their funding source.

Purissima-to-the-Sea Trail and Parking Area - Feasibility Study MAA03-005	Prior Year Actuals	FY22 Amended	FY23 Projected	FY24 Projected	Estimated Future Years	TOTAL
District Funded (Fund 30):	\$185,188	\$133,014	\$259,646	\$0	\$0	\$577,848
Grant Amount:	\$75,237	\$225,763	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$301,000
Fund 40:	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$340,000	\$0	\$340,000
Total Budget:	\$260,425	\$358,777	\$259,646	\$340,000	\$0	\$1,218,848
Spent-to-Date (as of 12/07/2021):	(\$260,425)	(\$65,365)	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$325,790)
Encumbrances:	\$0	(\$118,562)	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$118,562)
Budget Remaining (Proposed):	\$0	\$174,850	\$259,646	\$340,000	\$0	\$774,496

The following table outlines the Measure AA Portfolio 03 Purissima Creek Redwoods: Purissima to the Sea Trail, Watershed Protection and Conservation Grazing allocation, costs-to-date, projected future project expenditures and projected portfolio balance remaining.

MAA03 Purissima Creek Redwoods: Purissima to the Sea Trail, Watershed Protection and Conservation Grazing Portfolio Allocation:	\$7,608,000
Grant Income (through FY25):	\$378,480
Measure AA Interest Income:	\$1,041,000
Total Portfolio Allocation:	\$9,027,480
Life-to-Date Spent (as of 12/07/2021):	(\$6,561,098)
Encumbrances:	(\$227,496)
Remaining FY22 Project Budgets:	(\$336,029)
Future MAA03 project costs (projected through FY25):	(\$1,823,609)
Total Portfolio Expenditures:	(\$8,948,232)
Portfolio Balance Remaining (Proposed):	\$79,248

The following table outlines the Measure AA Portfolio 03 allocation, projected life of project expenditures and projected portfolio balance remaining.

MAA03 Purissima Creek Redwoods: Purissima to the Sea Trail, Watershed Protection and Conservation Grazing Portfolio Allocation:	\$7,608,000
Grant Income (through FY25):	\$378,480
Measure AA Interest Income:	\$1,041,000
Total Portfolio Allocation:	\$9,027,480
Projected Project Expenditures (life of project):	
03-001 Purissima Uplands Lot Line Adjustment and Property Transfer	(\$425,113)
03-002 Purissima Upland Site Clean up and Soil Remediation	(\$1,033,433)
03-003 Purissima Creek Fence Construction	(\$169,190)
03-004 Harkins Bridge Replacement	(\$516,916)
03-005 Purissima-to-the-Sea Regional Trail and Parking Area - Feasibility Study	(\$1,218,848)

03-006 South Cowell Upland Land Conservation	(\$4,857,967)
03-007 Purisima-to-the-Sea Habitat Enhancement and Water Supply Improvement Plan	(\$710,050)
03-008 Rieser-Nelson Land Purchase	(\$16,715)
Total Portfolio Expenditures:	(\$8,948,232)
Portfolio Balance Remaining (Proposed):	\$79,248

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW

This Project previously came before the Board of Directors at the following public meetings:

January 22, 2020: Resolution to Accept Grant Funding from the State Coastal Conservancy for the Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail and Parking Area Feasibility and Planning Project [R-20-12](#)

October 28, 2020: Purchase of interest in the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) South Cowell Property [R-20-122](#)

November 18, 2020: Award of Contract with SWCA Environmental Consultants to provide Environmental Planning, Design, and Technical Analysis for the Feasibility Studies and Conceptual Designs of the Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail and Parking Area Project [R-20-138](#)

December 1, 2021: Presentation on the Opportunities and Constraints Analysis and Confirmation of Project Vision and Goals for the Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail and Parking Area Project [R-21-157](#)

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act. In addition, public notices were sent to Preserve and Coastal interested parties.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

The Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail and Parking Area Feasibility Study is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (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

In order to meet the grant deadline for submitting reimbursements for the feasibility study by April 2022, the District would need to follow the Project's schedule shown below:

TASK	SCHEDULE
Complete technical assessment of trail alignment alternative	Fall 2021 – Winter 2022
Develop draft conceptual parking design alternatives	Fall 2021 – Spring 2022
Conduct additional public and stakeholder outreach	Fall 2021 – Spring 2022
Present preferred trail alignment and draft conceptual parking area alternatives to Planning and Natural Resources Committee	Spring 2022
Present preferred trail alignment and revised conceptual parking area alternative to Board of Directors	Winter 2022/23
Initiate environmental review of approved Project description	Spring 2023

Attachments

1. Regional Project Map
2. Feasibility Study Project Area Map
3. Draft minutes for December 1, 2021 Board meeting

Responsible Department Head:

Jane Mark, Planning Department

Prepared by:

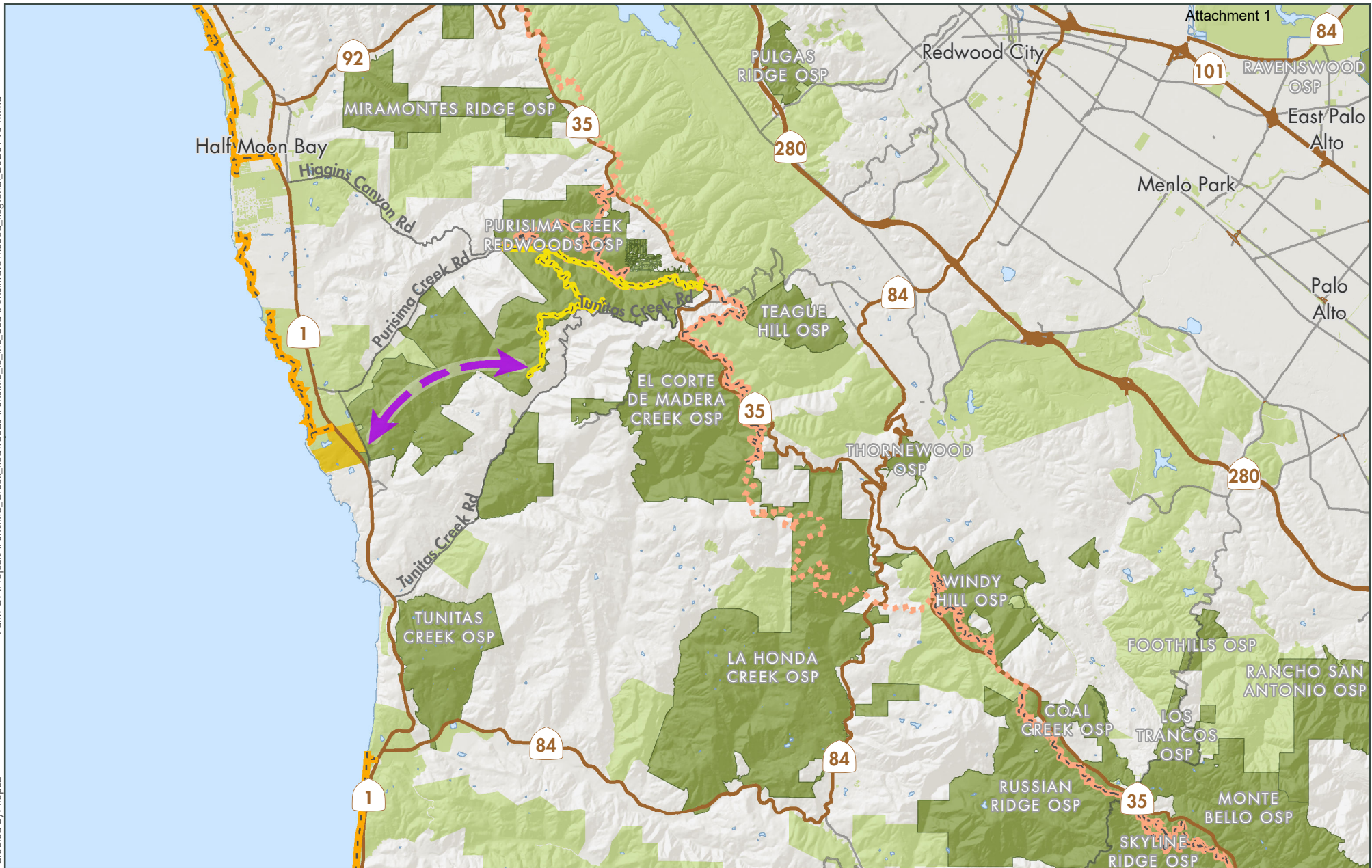
Gretchen Laustsen, Senior Planner, Planning Department

Contact person:









Gretchen Laustsen, Senior Planner, Planning Department

Graphics prepared by:

Nathan Greig, Data Analyst II

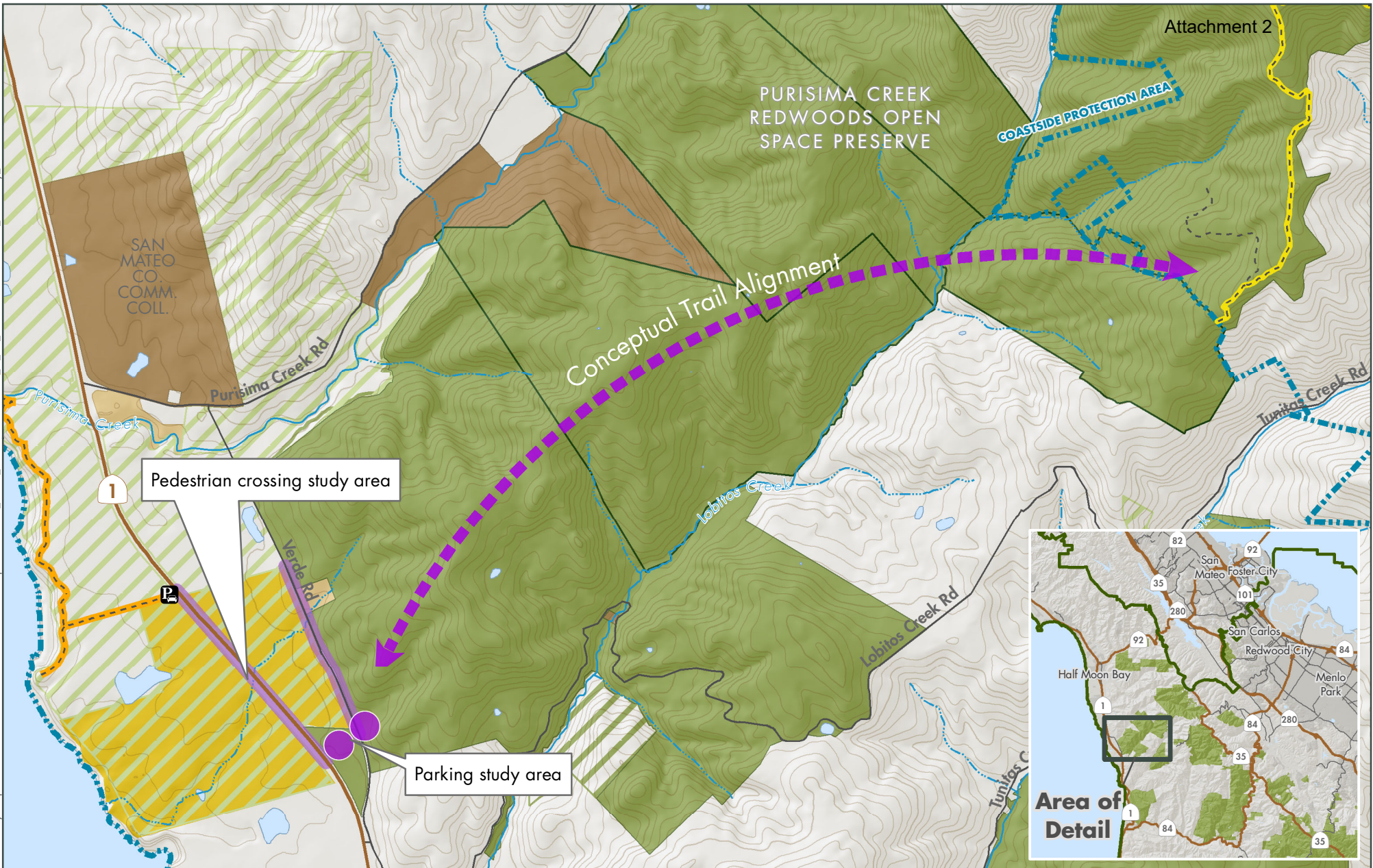


Purisima-to-the-Sea Regional Map

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
|  Midpen preserves |  Purisima-to-the-Sea Conceptual Trail |  Existing Bay Area Ridge Trail |
|  Other protected lands |  Existing Purisima-to-Sea Trail |  Proposed Bay Area Ridge Trail |
|  Private property |  Cowell-Purisima Trail & Coastal Trail | |

Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District
(Midpen)
11/22/2021





Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail and Parking Area Feasibility Study Area

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Midpen preserves |  Existing public trail |
|  South Cowell property |  Existing Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail |
|  POST easement |  Cowell-Purisima Trail & Coastal Trail |
|  Midpen easement | |

Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District
(Midpen)
11/22/2021



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Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

**December 1, 2021
Board Meeting 21-32**

SPECIAL MEETING

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

Wednesday, December 1, 2021

The Board of Directors conducted this meeting in accordance with California Government Code section 54953(e) and Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Resolution 21-33. All Board members and staff participated via teleconference.

DRAFT MINUTES

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

President Riffle called the special meeting of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to order at 5:00 p.m.

President Riffle announced this meeting is being held in accordance with Government Code section 54953(e) and Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Resolution 21-33, allowing Board members to participate remotely. The District has done its best to conduct a meeting where everyone has an opportunity to listen to the meeting and to provide comment. The public has the opportunity to comment on the agenda, and the opportunity to listen to this meeting through the internet or via telephone. This information can be found on the meeting agenda, which was physically posted at the District's Administrative Office, and on the District website. President Riffle described the process and protocols for the meeting.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Jed Cyr, Larry Hassett, Yoriko Kishimoto, Zoe Kersteen-Tucker, Curt Riffle, and Pete Siemens

Members Absent: Karen Holman

Staff Present: General Manager Ana Ruiz, General Counsel Hilary Stevenson, Assistant General Manager Brian Malone, Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan, District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Jennifer Woodworth, Planning Manager Jane Mark, Senior Planner Gretchen Laustsen, Senior Planner Tina Hugg, Capital Projects Field Manager Bryan Apple,

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

District Clerk Jennifer Woodworth read the submitted comments into the record.

Rebecca Holland submitted comments in support of providing adequate equestrian parking, specifically along Verde Road.

Anne Uecker expressed concern regarding high newt mortality near District preserves and stated the District needs to take more action to protect against newt mortality.

BOARD BUSINESS

1. Purisima-to-the-Sea Regional Trail and Parking Area Feasibility Study – Opportunities and Constraints Analysis and Project Vision and Goals (R-21-147)

Senior Planner Gretchen Laustsen provided the staff presentation describing the conceptual Purisima to the Sea Trail and the specific area included as part of the current projects, including public access and parking area. Ms. Laustsen described the project timeline, including the deadline to receive grant funds from the Coastal Conservancy.

Mark Brandi with District consultant SWCA presented information regarding the multimodal access study, including an analysis of opportunities and constraints for the project. Mr. Brandi reviewed public comments and concerns that are guiding and being addressed = as part of the analysis. Mr. Brandi described the various physical, cultural, biological, and safety attributes and considerations of the project that are being studied as part of the analysis.

Ms. Laustsen reported District staff scouted various trail options to address multiple concerns and factors, such as grazing operations, cost of building, elevation, etc. Ms. Laustsen reviewed the proposed project vision and goals and proposed strategies for accomplishing the goals. Next steps for the project include completing technical assessments, continued further trail scouting, and development of a conceptual parking area.

Patrick Golier, transportation planner with the District's traffic consultant, described the remote location of the project, which leads to many visitors driving to the preserve and therefore parking shortages. Mr. Golier explained the purpose of the multimodal study seeks to evaluate existing parking resources and public access, understand visitor behavior and patterns, improve multimodal access, etc., and provided findings from the preserve visitor survey related to parking and modes of access. Potential improvements, such as transit or shuttle service, parking capacity enhancements, and education/outreach, can help address the parking concerns raised by visitors.

Director Kishimoto requested and received additional information related to the conceptual parking area. Additionally, Director Kishimoto spoke in support of a transit shuttle, especially on the weekends, but stated that the shuttle site may be comprised of smaller parking areas.

Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested multiple trail alignment options may be preferred to allow for a scenic and also a more direct trail route. Director Kersteen-Tucker stated multiple parking areas may be preferred to a single large parking lot.

Director Hassett expressed concern regarding the safety of pedestrians crossing Highway 1.

Director Siemens spoke in support of providing adequate parking for vehicles and equestrian trailers in the parking area.

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Senior Planner Tina Hugg stated that based on traffic counts and data gathering, the demand for the parking area is high.

President Riffle stated the proposed trail is a regional connector trail, so visitor use may differ than at other preserves where visitors only stay a few hours.

At 6:20 p.m. the Board of Directors, District staff, and members of the public participated in a public workshop. The Board reconvened the special meeting at 6:47 p.m.

The project team summarized the feedback received from the public in each of the breakout groups. Feedback included:

- maximize parking to address public interest in the trail
- ensure riparian setbacks are adhered to and installation of tree screens for the parking area
- minimize impacts on agricultural operations
- ensure rail and roadway safety
- creation of a shuttle drop-off area
- enhance regional trail connections
- plan needed for emergency vehicle access
- desire for a longer trail ride experience

Public comment opened at 7:04 p.m.

Ric Barker spoke in support of expanding parking for the preserve and stated the regional trail connections will be helpful for commuting.

Henry Magnuski provided comments in support of camping sites to allow visitors to complete multi-day regional trail hikes, such as the Bay to the Sea Trail.

Ron Sturgeon spoke in support of protecting agricultural lands, and parking areas should not be located on land protected by a conservation easement. Additionally, Mr. Sturgeon stated there is already a large parking lot on the South Cowell property.

Thomas DeMeo spoke in support of continuous trail access for equestrian and bicycle use and spoke in support of regional trails to allow visitors to be off of roadways.

Ms. Woodworth read the submitted comments into the record.

Howard Higley provided comments suggesting the District partner with Peninsula Open Space Trust or Caltrans for funding, pursue a dual use underpass option to enhance wildlife crossing and pedestrian trail access, and install a camera to assess vehicle-wildlife mortality.

David Evans supported recreational bicycle access the full length of the proposed trail.

Teri Baron expressed support for equestrian parking in the area to allow equestrian access to the preserve and suggested the District ask users about this in any upcoming surveys.

Mike Liebhold inquired regarding additional parking near the Skyline end of the proposed trail, plans for increased visitor traffic and parking on Tunitas Creek next to Grabtown Gulch, and future plans for connecting to the San Francisco Bay Trail.

Director Holman joined the meeting at 7:15 pm.

John Boothroyd inquired if the District plans to convert the Bald Mountain Trail to bike and equestrian access.

Public comment closed at 7:17 p.m.

Director Cyr expressed concern regarding the carrying capacity of the parking area and potential negative impacts on those living in the area.

Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested the following edits to the project vision and goals.

Purissima-to-the-Sea Trail and Parking Area Project Vision

...Complete the multi-use Purissima-to-the-Sea trail connection and multi-modal access and parking area using ecologically sensitive design and management.

Goal 1: Physical Attributes

Develop the regional Purissima-to-the-Sea Regional Trail to accommodate low-intensity recreation by multiple user groups, provide ecologically sensitive public access to scenic viewpoints, and provide improved multi-modal Preserve access with access and multi-modal an ~~appropriately sized and programmed~~ parking area.

Goal 3: Biological Attributes

Manage, protect, and interpret natural resources, habitats, sensitive species, and connectivity, and provide public access in an ecologically sensitive manner.

President Riffle suggested the project vision should also address the District's respect for its neighbors and its role as a member of the coastal community.

Motion: Director Kersteen-Tucker moved, and Director Cyr seconded the motion to

1. Direct staff to revise the project vision and goals in accordance with the Board's suggestions and bring the language for Board approval at a future Board meeting.
2. Direct staff to move forward with developing a conceptual parking lot design in accordance with results of the multimodal access study and in conjunction with other multimodal access initiatives.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 7-0-0

ADJOURNMENT

President Riffle adjourned the special meeting of the Board of Directors of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District at 7:50 p.m.

Jennifer Woodworth, MMC
District Clerk