



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

Memorandum

DATE: February 23, 2022

MEMO TO: Board of Directors

THROUGH: Ana Ruiz, General Manager 

FROM: Susanna Chan, Assistant General Manager

SUBJECT: Rancho San Antonio Multimodal Access Implementation Update

BACKGROUND

The 2021 Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) Rancho San Antonio Multimodal Access Study (Study) explores and evaluates non-motorized mobility, transit options, and parking alternatives for Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve (Preserve). The Study aims to encourage visitors to use greener modes of transportation and reduce parking demand and traffic, while maintaining equitable access for both local and regional visitors. The Study identifies 15 transportation management strategies and prioritizes them into three sets of recommendations. The Board of Directors (Board), at its April 28, 2021 meeting, approved the implementation of the first set of recommendations, including the following six strategies:

- Bike facilities
- New and improved bike access
- Subsidized ride hail
- Free or low-cost shuttle service
- Carpool restricted lot
- Dynamic or Variable Signage

A capital improvement project is included in the fiscal year 2021-2022 (FY22) budget to implement these strategies. This memo provides an update the implementation work.

DISCUSSION

Strategy Implementation

Bike Facilities

This strategy includes installation of various bike amenities, such as bike racks, bike repair stations, and bike lockers at strategic access locations to encourage visitors to shift from driving to biking. After a thorough review of existing bike facilities at the Preserve, three additional bike racks accommodating 21 bikes were installed at the Mora Trail entrance, the Deer Meadow Trail off Stovehaven Drive (St. Joseph Avenue), and the Open Air Barn. Additionally, a bike repair station has been ordered for installation at the main parking lot.

New and Improved Bike Access

This strategy entails working with neighboring jurisdictions to improve neighborhood bike access leading to the Preserve, such as along Cristo Rey Drive to the Preserve main entrance, St. Joseph Avenue leading to the Deer Meadow Trail, and Mora Drive to the Rhus Ridge Trailhead. Staff has worked with the City of Cupertino to prioritize bike access improvements on Cristo Rey Drive as described in their adopted Bicycle Transportation Plan. Cupertino has committed to include the improvements in their 2022 annual paving project for this summer. Additionally, staff is monitoring the City of Los Altos planned project to improve bike access on St. Joseph Avenue as part of their safe routes to school program, which is also scheduled for this summer.

Subsidized Ride Hail

This strategy involves participating by existing rideshare services and utilizing the existing loading/unloading zone at the main lot. To incentivize use of these services, users could get a discount for choosing the service. Free passes could be considered for seniors and low-income residents. Staff is currently seeking consulting support to develop a potential subsidized ride hail plan through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process that would be forwarded to the Board of Directors for consideration.

Free or Low-cost Shuttle Service

This strategy would provide a free or low-cost shuttle service for Preserve visitors aimed to reduce their reliance on personal vehicles to access the Preserve. Operating a shuttle program would be a significant investment for the District that requires careful planning and evaluation. As District staff has no prior experience in developing and operating a shuttle program, staff initiated the planning process by reaching out to neighboring agencies and organizations with prior experience in shuttle services, such as the Cities of Cupertino and Mountain View, and Commute.Org, to learn from their experiences. Staff is also participating in the Santa Cruz Mountain Stewardship Network (SCMSN) Shuttle Explore Team, a group composed of park and land management agencies with interest in shuttle programs. Through this learning and collaboration, staff has identified a two-step approach to ensure the shuttle program meets the unique needs of Rancho, including retaining a transportation consultant to develop the shuttle program model and a separate selection process for the shuttle operator. The RFP process for the transportation consulting firm is currently underway with a goal to complete the program development this summer. If successful and with subsequent Board confirmation to proceed with the next step, staff would begin selection of a shuttle operator by the end of this calendar year.

Carpool Restricted Lot

This strategy would dedicate a carpool restricted lot during peak visitation periods to incentivize carpooling to the Preserve, thereby reducing overall vehicle trips. A pilot project to study the feasibility of this strategy will begin this spring on weekends and holidays. During these peak visitation periods, parking in the lower equestrian lot will be reserved for carpools of three or more. ADA-accessible spaces and equestrian trailer parking will always remain available. The restrooms at this location will also remain available to all visitors. The lot would remain open to all when not limited to carpool visitors.

Dynamic or Variable Signage

This strategy includes the addition of dynamic or variable signage or wayfinding within and/or leading to the main parking area. The original intent is to deploy portable, manually-programmed signs that display parking lot status at locations leading to the main parking area. However, through consultation with field staff, it was determined that this approach is not sustainable over the long-term as it would require dedicated field staff to constantly monitor parking conditions

on-site and manually update sign messages. Staff has since explored other options and identified electronic signage with traffic sensors as the best solution to address Preserve needs. With this solution, an electronic sign could be installed at the preserve entrance displaying current parking availability informed by several traffic sensors installed at strategic locations within the parking area. Real-time information would also be available on the District's website for potential visitors to check before they leave home. Staff is currently working closely with a selected vendor to optimize the configuration given the terrain of the parking areas and anticipates implementation in spring of this year.

Public Communication/Education

Successful implementation of these strategies, in part, depends on effective public communication and education. To date, staff has promoted the new strategies as follows:

- Ongoing updates to the Rancho San Antonio Multimodal Access [project web page](#).
- Addition of information about bicycle-friendly routes, bicycle rack locations and the Via Cupertino Shuttle on the [Rancho San Antonio Preserve webpage](#) and [project webpage](#).
- In November 2021, the District partnered with Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition (SVBC) to host a "Ride to Rancho". SVBC led a bicycle ride to the Preserve, demonstrating a safe and efficient route from the Mountain View Caltrain station.

The District's communication plan that promotes the new carpool restricted lot and dynamic signage includes:

- A-frame signage in parking areas with posted information.
- Articles in the *Views* newsletter (Spring 2022) and *Plug Into Nature* e-news (April 2022 and ongoing).
- Pop-up tabling at Rancho San Antonio on March 28.
- Press release (2 weeks prior to implementation).
- E-mail to Rancho San Antonio interested parties e-mail list.
- Coordination with partner organizations and cities for inclusion in newsletters and other publications.
- Coordination with Santa Clara County Parks to share information via their *Nextdoor* account.

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