



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

PLANNING & NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

R-22-111
October 11, 2022

AGENDA ITEM 2

AGENDA ITEM

Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail and Parking Area Feasibility Study – Trail Alignment Options and Parking Area Conceptual Design Alternatives

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATIONS *den*

1. Receive a presentation on the Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail and Parking Area Feasibility Study and provide feedback on the trail alignment options and parking area conceptual design alternatives.
2. Consider accepting the General Manager's recommended Trail Alignment 1 and Connectors A and B, and the Conceptual Parking Area Design Alternative C and forward the recommendation to the Board of Directors for consideration as the project scope that would serve as the proposed project description to initiate environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act.

SUMMARY

The Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail and Parking Area (Project) Feasibility Study seeks to identify a new regional trail alignment to facilitate a link between Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (Preserve) and the existing Cowell-Purisima Coastal Trail as well as a new parking area that will serve as a new public access trailhead. This connection will be an approximately 15-mile regional trail connecting the Preserve to the San Mateo County coastline. This alignment will create a critical east-west link in the regional trail network between the Bay Area Ridge Trail to the California Coastal Trail and is intended to be a contributing alignment of the more extensive Bay to Sea Trail.

Staff will present the primary trail alignment options and conceptual parking area design alternatives. Staff will also present the preferred trail alignment and conceptual parking area design for the Committee's consideration. Completion of the trail is a priority project 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*.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of the Project is to analyze several key elements, including new trail alignment options, a new trailhead location with a parking area off Verde Road or Highway 1, and trail

crossings at Verde Road and Highway 1 to ultimately facilitate a link between the Preserve and the existing Cowell-Purisima Coastal Trail. Ultimately, the Project would result in a critical east-west link in the regional trail network between the Bay Area Ridge Trail to the California Coastal Trail and is intended to be a contributing alignment of the more extensive Bay to Sea Trail (Attachment 1). Work includes planning and technical studies, field investigations, and design services to analyze opportunities for a multi-use trail alignment, connector trails, parking area, trailhead, and pedestrian roadway crossings. This effort also includes significant stakeholder engagement and public outreach, as well as consultation with appropriate agencies, organizations, and neighbors.

This Project is occurring in parallel to and in close coordination with other multiple projects occurring within the Preserve, including the Purisima Multiuse Trail Crossing and Parking Area Feasibility Study (located along Skyline Boulevard) and Purisima Multimodal Access Study (Preserve-wide study). Other Preserve-wide projects focusing on resource enhancement and land management are underway with the support of Measure AA Portfolio 03: *Purisima Creek Redwoods: Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail, Watershed Protection and Conservation Grazing*. These projects are led by Natural Resources and Land and Facilities department staff and include:

- Irish Ridge Restoration (80072)
- Lobitos Creek Restoration (MAA03-011) and Cattle Fencing (61024)
- Purisima Creek Fencing (MAA03-003)
- Purisima Uplands Site Cleanup and Soil Remediation (MAA03-002)
- Purisima-to-the-Sea Habitat Enhancement and Water Supply Improvement Plan (MAA03-007)
- Marbled Murrelet Recovery Planning (80060)
- Badger/Burrowing Owl Habitat Assessment (80054)
- Districtwide Wildlife Camera Program (supporting project)

At the December 1, 2021 Board of Directors (Board) meeting, staff presented the results of the preliminary technical studies and the opportunities and constraints analysis (R-21-157). The team has conducted various field investigations, literature reviews, record searches, and traffic and parking counts. Technical studies, including a Biological Resources Assessment, Cultural Resources Survey, Culvert Drainage Study and Traffic Study identify the existing conditions, call out areas that will require further investigation, and provide findings that informed the Project's Opportunities and Constraints Analysis.

At the December 1, 2021 Board meeting, staff also presented the proposed Project vision and goals, designed to guide the development and selection of elements to 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 for the Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail and Parking Area Project. This proposed vision and goals were informed by the findings of the Opportunities and Constraints Analysis, public comments, and the 2014 Board-approved Vision Plan and 2014 voter-approved Measure AA expenditure plan. The Board approved the Project's vision and goals at the December 15, 2021 meeting (R-21-174).

DISCUSSION

The intent of this agenda item is for the Planning and Natural Resources Committee (PNR) to review the identified trail alignment options and the conceptual parking area design alternatives and consider the General Manager's recommended trail alignment and conceptual parking area

design. The following discussion describes the trail scouting and alternatives analysis process, the factors considered, and the design process for the parking area layouts and the public engagement process and feedback received.

Trail Alignment Options

District trail crews began field scouting efforts in late 2020 to evaluate potential trail connections from the existing Irish Ridge Trail to the proposed parking area on Verde Road. Staff evaluated a trail connection from the proposed Verde Road parking area to the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) Trail Easement that would provide access to the Cowell-Purissima Coastal Trail. Based on the District's trail design standards to provide an optimal trail user experience in an ecologically sensitive way, the trail crew evaluated various trail options, including re-use of existing ranch roads, conversion of abandoned or poorly maintained roads to trails, and construction of new single-track trails. Potential trail alignments were identified using Lidar, contours, and satellite imagery maps and then ground-truthed in the field.

During the trail scouting effort, staff considered many factors in evaluating feasible alignments. Some of these considerations included constructability and long-term maintenance, impacts to sensitive natural resources and associated regulatory permitting requirements, proximity to private property, visibility of trails from the Highway 1 scenic corridor, the onsite conservation grazing operation, trail user experience, and patrol/emergency access. As part of the feasibility assessment, consulting biologists and cultural resource experts joined District staff to complete reconnaissance-level surveys for rare plants and plant communities, wetlands and riparian habitats, and determine the potential for cultural and archaeological resources. The findings of these surveys factored into defining the proposed trail alignments.

Through the field scouting effort and subsequent biological and cultural resource surveys, three trail alignment alternatives were identified, along with two connector trail options to link to the POST trail easement (Attachment 2). For all trail options, relocation of critical cattle grazing infrastructure may be necessary to balance public access with the grazing operation. Due to site constraints, the three trail alternatives converge in the eastern portion of the project area where there is only one feasible connection (shown in gold on Attachment 2) that connects up to the existing Irish Ridge Trail in the current Preserve trail network. The existing Irish Ridge Trail is steep in locations, and staff will evaluate opportunities to re-route this existing trail in the future, however this area is constrained due to steep topography, intermittent and ephemeral drainages, and tight property boundaries.

Alternative	Mileage	Opportunities	Constraints
Irish Ridge to Lobitos Creek Connection	3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The only feasible, sustainable trail alignment to connect from the existing trail network to the convergence of Alignments 1 through 3 The trail is a combination of new trail and segments of repurposed legacy and ranching road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proximity to riparian habitat and other sensitive resources Multiple crossings of Lobitos tributaries and one crossing of Lobitos Creek mainstem

Alternative	Mileage	Opportunities	Constraints
1	2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New trail with low average trail grade • Minimizes interaction with conservation grazing and associated infrastructure • Offers vistas of the Pacific Coast to the west, Purisima Creek Canyon to the north, and the Lobitos Creek drainage to the south 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction cost will be higher due to proposed new trail development • New trail construction is typically more impactful than repurposing existing/legacy roads due to a new development footprint on the land • Several self-closing gates would be necessary due to trail crossing in and out of lease area
2	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizes existing ranch road to minimize natural resource concerns • Traverses the ridgeline, providing panoramic vistas • Provides highest potential for patrol and emergency access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overlaps with existing grazing infrastructure resulting in higher potential for cattle/visitor interactions • Grades are steep in some locations (>18%) and would require rock surfacing to allow for increased use
3	2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoids drainage crossings since it stays high in the watershed • New trail with low average trail grade • Offers panoramic vistas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher visibility of trail with switchbacks on the hillside • Closest alignment to adjacent private property (>100') • Trail is near stock ponds and traverses an active pasture • New trail construction is more costly and typically more impactful than repurposing existing/legacy roads due to a new development footprint on the land
Connector A	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizes existing ranch road • Provides excellent vistas after short climb to hilltop • Opportunity for short loop trail in conjunction with Connector B 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires use of the main ranch road that connects to Verde Road; same road is also used by the grazing tenant to access the property • Will likely require additional fencing and relocation of grazing infrastructure • May require periodic closure to allow for grazing tenant to move cattle to the corral

Alternative	Mileage	Opportunities	Constraints
Connector B	0.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides the most direct route from the proposed Verde Road parking area to the POST trail easement Opportunity for short loop trail in conjunction with Connector A Encourages the public to use the trail adjacent to Verde Road rather than the road itself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires multiple minor/moderate drainage crossing improvements Crosses the driveway of the South Cowell residence Likely will require fence relocation to separate visitors/cattle

Alignment 1 has been identified as the preferred trail alignment as it provides a sustainable new trail alignment that offers panoramic vistas of the Pacific Coast to the west, Purisima Creek Canyon to the north, and the Lobitos Creek Drainage to the south. Alignment 1 also strives to minimize the overlap of public access with grazing activities and infrastructure. Alignment 1 provides an enjoyable trail user experience while avoiding/minimizing impacts to known sensitive resources and supporting the ongoing operation of working/grazing lands. Moreover, the POST Trail Connectors A and B are also both recommended to provide a unique loop trail opportunity from the proposed parking area.

The total mileage of this proposed trail alignment is over seven (7) miles, and encompasses the Lobitos Ridge to Irish Ridge connection, Alignment 1, and the POST Trail Connector Loop (Connectors A & B). Approximately 4.4 miles would be new trail construction and 2.8 miles would be improvements to existing roads/trails. Adjustments to the final trail alignment may be required as a result of future resource surveys, technical studies, and the design and engineering process.

Conservation Easement

The parking area and much of the trail alignment are located on the South Cowell Ranch property, which is subject to a Restated and Amended Grant of Conservation Easement (conservation easement) recently entered into by the tenants-in-common owners (Marsh Trust, POST, and the District). The conservation easement was recorded in September 2022 and is now held by POST. The conservation easement combines and modernizes the 1989 conservation easement, which was held by the California Coastal Conservancy, and a 1991 conservation easement held by POST over the South Cowell property. The conservation easement continues to protect the land's conservation values (agriculture, scenic, habitat and natural resources, open space and recreation), and modifies the conditions of the allowable subdivision for the ownership of Upland property by the District, providing flexibility in locating public trails and eliminating the potential to develop a second residence site on the Upland parcel.

Parking Area Conceptual Design Alternatives

Following the completion of the Project's opportunities and constraints analysis and the Board's approval of the vision and goals, staff developed various preliminary parking area site designs for two locations, one on the east side of Verde Road, and one on the west side of Verde Road. Key considerations of the design process include public safety, sensitive habitats, riparian setbacks, scenic resources, the grazing operations, and adjacent farmlands. During this exercise, staff recognized the highly limited potential for locating a parking area to the east side of Verde

Road that meets the Project's goals due to required riparian setbacks and existing grazing infrastructure that limit the number of viable parking spaces.

Staff ultimately prepared three conceptual parking area design alternatives, focusing on the potential parking area to the west side of Verde Road (Attachment 3: Conceptual Parking Area Design Alternatives).

Design elements common to each alternative are as follows:

- Works with existing topography
- Incorporates the necessary riparian corridor protections
- Minimizes environmental impacts
- Minimizes impacts to the existing grazing infrastructure
- Incorporates TDM strategies
- Includes ADA-accessible trailhead and restroom, pathways, signage and overlook
- Includes a setback from the scenic corridor along Highway 1

The parking area alternatives differ in the following ways:

- Parking lot size and capacity
- Entry road configuration and trailhead location
- Equestrian parking layout and capacity
- Use of the potential parking area to the east of Verde Road

Alternative A

- Smallest project footprint (~40 general parking spaces, ~20 priority spaces, including ADA-parking spaces, 4 equestrian/bus spaces)
- Minimizes user conflicts with grazing operations and avoids grazing infrastructure
- Central pull-through for equestrian trailer/bus lot
- Entry road is located to the north of the trailhead and trail access pathway
- No development east of Verde Road

Alternative B

- Intermediate project footprint (~40 general parking spaces, ~35 priority spaces, including ADA-parking spaces, 2 equestrian/bus spaces)
- Limited development east of Verde Road (restroom, education area, equestrian/bus parking)
- Entry road is located to the south of the trailhead and trail access pathway

Alternative C (*Recommended*)

- Larger project footprint (~70 general parking spaces, ~35 priority spaces, including ADA-accessible parking spaces, ~6 equestrian/bus spaces)
- Equestrian/bus lot along perimeter of the parking lot for ease of circulation and pull-through parking
- Most effectively incorporates TDM strategies, including an overflow parking / expansion area (potential for ~80 additional parking spaces)
- Entry road is located to the south of the trailhead and trail access pathway
- No development east of Verde Road
- Minimizes impacts on the existing grazing operation by avoiding existing grazing infrastructure

Alternative C is identified as the preferred parking area design alternative. First, this alternative provides the parking capacity that most effectively accommodates the recommended TDM strategies, such as priority parking spaces, additional parking supply, and bicycle infrastructure (see Purisima Multimodal Access Study Project Update below). In addition, Alternative C includes the potential for overflow parking, or a future parking expansion, with minimal impacts to the initial site improvements. Finally, Alternative C minimizes the impact of the new public access improvements on the existing grazing operation by avoiding the area with existing grazing infrastructure.

Public Engagement and Visitor Survey

The project has included extensive public outreach and engagement to inform the community about the project and receive feedback. Public engagement consisted of focused stakeholder meetings, one-on-one meetings, public workshops and open houses, and pop-up events in the community, many held with the Purisima Multimodal and Highway 35 Multi-use Trail Crossing and Parking Study Project teams. Attachment 4 lists the various meetings and events held to date, which have included Purisima neighbors and visitors, agricultural community members, local agencies, advocacy groups and subject matter experts.

The Purisima-to-the-Sea and Purisima Multimodal project teams collaborated to develop and release a joint visitor survey that ran online from April 2022 to May 2022. The goal of the survey was to solicit feedback on the desired trail experience, parking lot size preference, configuration, amenities, parking needs, proposed TDMs and visitor likelihood of using them, e.g., bicycling to the Preserve, taking a shuttle, using a reservation system, paying for parking, utilizing a carpool priority lot, etc. Over 400 responses were received. The project team also solicited input on the preferred parking area conceptual design alternatives at two open house events (in-person and virtual).

Attachment 5 summarizes the key themes and topics emerging from feedback received through the visitor surveys and public and stakeholder engagement. The feedback confirmed preference for prioritizing biological site attributes balanced with maximizing parking capacity to accommodate TDMs recommended from the Purisima Multimodal project. The additional feedback received revealed the following:

- Regardless of activity, most visitors will not travel the entire distance of the proposed trail network, supporting the need for mid-trail facilities. Survey respondents expressed a strong preference for a rest area/bench, and a restroom.
 - Equestrian amenities would also be suitable mid-trail, including a hitching post, mounting block, and water trough.
 - Additionally, there was interest in a backpack camp along the proposed trail network.
- Preference for a loop trail experience.
- Support for the largest parking area (Alternative C) to accommodate TDM strategies.
- Importance of educating the public on the value of the conservation grazing program and sharing the trail with cattle.
- Visitors coming to Purisima primarily come to see the preserve's unique features.
- Minimize trail user conflicts with vehicles by locating the pedestrian crossing away from the driveway entrance.

- Interest in maximizing the quantity of equestrian parking and locating it on the perimeter of the proposed parking area. A little over a third of survey respondents identifying as an equestrian indicated they would use the proposed Verde Road lot at least once a month.
- Support for flexible parking uses during different times.
- Support for interpretive signage, in particular discussing wildlife, Native American history, and ecosystems.

Feedback also garnered concerns such as:

- Road safety and emergency vehicle access.
- Concerns about trespassing over private property.
- Lack of stormwater drainage on the coastside as it relates to impervious surfaces.
- Concerns about the at-grade crossing along Highway 1.
- Overdevelopment of the site, quantity of infrastructure and amenities.
- Compliance with the San Mateo Local Coastal Program
- Concerns about delineated parking as it relates to parking capacity and the need to pave surfaces.
- Consider impacts to prime agricultural land, sensitive habitats, and views.
- Designation of trail uses, balancing user conflict, and allowing for multi-uses.

The feedback received helped shape the recommendations for parking area design alternatives and trail alignments.

PURISIMA MULTIMODAL ACCESS STUDY PROJECT UPDATE

The Purisima Multimodal Access Study (Purisima Multimodal) is being completed concurrently with the Purisima-to-the-Sea project, where both project teams have been able to leverage many opportunities to combine data collection and engagement efforts for greater effectiveness and reach. Combining resources in this way has expanded outreach and engagement for both projects and facilitated a better understanding from stakeholders about the direct connection between them.

In addition to an initial survey conducted in Spring 2022, the project team completed a second online visitor survey, in collaboration with the Purisima-to-the-Sea project team, that was released in April and ran through May 2022. A full day of in-person surveys was also conducted on one weekday and one weekend in mid-May. The survey in part gauged respondent reactions to and inclinations for various proposed TDM strategies.

At the March 15, 2022 PNR meeting (R-22-38), the project team presented an overview of data collection findings and seven categories of proposed TDM strategies. The team continued public engagement into the spring and summer, returning to various stakeholders and engaging new ones through a variety of forums to present the TDM strategies and solicit feedback. The team completed public engagement for this phase of work in August 2022. Feedback from the surveys and engagement efforts informed the prioritization of recommended TDM strategies that the project team presented to the PNR on August 2, 2022 (R-22-87).

At the August 2, 2022 PNR (R-22-87), the project team presented an overview of the latest data collection analysis and public and stakeholder engagement findings. The PNR confirmed the TDM scoring, prioritization, and recommendations for the TDM strategies for inclusion into the

draft report. Key recommended TDM strategies include: parking reservations during peak periods; bicycle parking at trailheads; shuttle to/from Purisima-to-the-Sea lot to other Preserve parking areas or trailheads; shuttles from satellite parking lots; additional parking supply; real-time parking lot occupancy; priority parking spaces; and vehicle wayfinding signage. The PNR directed the project team to present the draft report before the Board of Directors, which is scheduled for November 2022.

FISCAL IMPACT

The recommended action has no direct, immediate fiscal impact. The Fiscal Year 2022-23 (FY23) adopted budget includes \$176,000 for the Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail and Parking Area - Phase I Feasibility Study project MAA03-005.

Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail and Parking Area - Phase I Feasibility Study MAA03-005	Prior Year Actuals	FY23 Adopted	FY24 Projected	Estimated Future Years	TOTAL
District Funded (Fund 30):	\$331,164	\$115,237	\$0	\$0	\$446,401
Grant Amount:	\$111,508	\$60,763	\$0	\$0	\$172,271
Total Budget:	\$442,672	\$176,000	\$0	\$0	\$618,672
Spent-to-Date (as of 08/31/22):	(\$442,672)	(\$11,150)	\$0	\$0	(\$453,822)
Encumbrances:	\$0	(\$10,997)	\$0	\$0	(\$10,997)
SWCA Environmental Consultants Contract Amendment and 15% Contingency*:	\$0	(\$47,768)	\$0	\$0	(\$47,768)
Budget Remaining (Proposed):	\$0	\$106,085	\$0	\$0	\$106,085

* At the August 10, 2022 Board meeting the Board approved a contract amendment SWCA Environmental Consultants in the amount of \$41,537 to conduct additional technical studies and support additional public engagement (R-22-94).

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

MAA03 Purisima Creek Redwoods — Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail, Watershed Protection and Conservation Grazing Portfolio Allocation:	\$7,608,000
Grant Income (through FY26):	\$378,480
Fund 40 Allocation:	\$305,000
Total Portfolio Allocation:	\$8,291,480
Life-to-Date Spent (as of 08/31/22):	(\$6,786,984)
Encumbrances:	(\$10,997)
Remaining FY23 Project Budgets:	(\$523,463)
Future MAA03 project costs (projected through FY26):	(\$7,540,115)
Total Portfolio Expenditures:	(\$14,861,559)
Portfolio Balance Remaining (Proposed):	(\$6,570,079)

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

MAA03 Purisima Creek Redwoods — Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail, Watershed Protection and Conservation Grazing Portfolio Allocation:	\$7,608,000
Grant Income (through FY25):	\$378,480
Fund 40 Allocation:	\$305,000

Total Portfolio Allocation:	\$8,291,480
Projected Project Expenditures (life of project):	
03-001 Purisima Uplands Lot Line Adjustment and Property Transfer	(\$425,113)
03-002 Purisima Upland Site Clean up and Soil Remediation	(\$1,004,058)
03-003 Purisima Creek Fence Construction	(\$169,190)
03-004 Harkins Bridge Replacement	(\$516,916)
03-005 Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail and Parking Area - Phase I Feasibility Study	(\$638,830)
03-006 South Cowell Upland Land Conservation	(\$4,872,967)
03-007 Purisima-to-the-Sea Habitat Enhancement and Water Supply Improvement Plan	(\$568,674)
03-008 Rieser-Nelson Land Purchase	(\$16,715)
03-009 Purisima-to-the-Sea Parking	(\$3,991,687)
03-010 Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail	(\$2,120,000)
03-011 Lobitos Creek Fisheries Restoration	(\$397,410)
03-012 Purisima-to-the-Sea Comprehensive Use and Management Plan	(\$140,000)
Total Portfolio Expenditures:	(\$14,861,559)
Portfolio Balance Remaining (Proposed):	(\$6,570,079)

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW

While this project is being presented to the PNR for initial input on trail alignment options and conceptual parking area design alternatives, the full Board and Committee have reviewed and discussed project elements at these meetings, shown below:

December 1, 2021: Purisima-to-the-Sea Regional Trail and Parking Area Feasibility Study – Opportunities and Constraints Analysis and Project Vision and Goals ([R-21-157](#), [meeting minutes](#)).

December 15, 2021: Purisima-to-the-Sea Regional Trail and Parking Area Project Vision and Goals ([R-21-174](#), [meeting minutes](#))

March 15, 2022: Preliminary Findings from the Purisima Creek Preserve Multimodal Access Project ([R-22-38](#), [meeting minutes](#))

August 2, 2022: Proposed Transportation Demand Management Strategies and Preliminary Recommendations from the Purisima Creek Preserve Multimodal Access Project ([R-22-87](#), draft meeting minutes)

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act. In addition, post cards were sent to project area neighbors within the Coastal Service Area and public emails notices were sent to interested parties of the Preserve and hiking, biking, equestrian, accessibility, Regional Trails, and Coastal interested parties.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

The feasibility study and conceptual designs will identify and evaluate possible future actions, which the District has not yet approved, within the meaning of CEQA Section 15262. The feasibility study and conceptual designs will inform future actions that will be subject to CEQA, and subsequent environmental review will be conducted at that time. Pending the Board's

selection of a preferred trail alignment and conceptual parking area design at a future meeting tentatively scheduled for Spring 2023, staff would begin environmental review for the Project.

Additionally, as stated in the background section of this report, this Project is occurring in parallel to and in close coordination with multiple projects within the Preserve, including restoration and maintenance projects led by the Natural Resources and Land and Facilities departments. Projects that are occurring within the Preserve and are reasonably certain to occur within the foreseeable future, will be evaluated for impacts as part of a comprehensive environmental review document. In accordance with the District's Mitigation Policy, this process will allow staff to develop a comprehensive project description that aims to avoid and minimize adverse impacts to natural and cultural resources across all projects while meeting the projects' goals.

NEXT STEPS

If the Planning and Natural Resources Committee confirms the General Manager's trail alignment and conceptual parking area design recommendation, staff will finalize the remaining tasks associated with feasibility study. This work includes the development of:

- Conceptual plans for roadway crossings and connector trails that consider buffer/screening, evaluate the need for warning devices or other improvements, and evaluate the long-term potential for below-grade or above-grade crossing,
- Permitting analysis of the trails and parking areas, and
- Parking area cost estimates.

In addition, staff would return to the Board in FY23 Quarter 4 to present the additional information and the recommended trail alignment and conceptual parking area design for Board consideration.

Attachments:

1. Study Area Map
2. Trail Alignment Options Map
3. Conceptual Parking Area Design Alternatives
4. Summary of Engagement Activities
5. Summary of Public Feedback
6. Draft August 2, 2022 PNR meeting minutes

Responsible Department Head:

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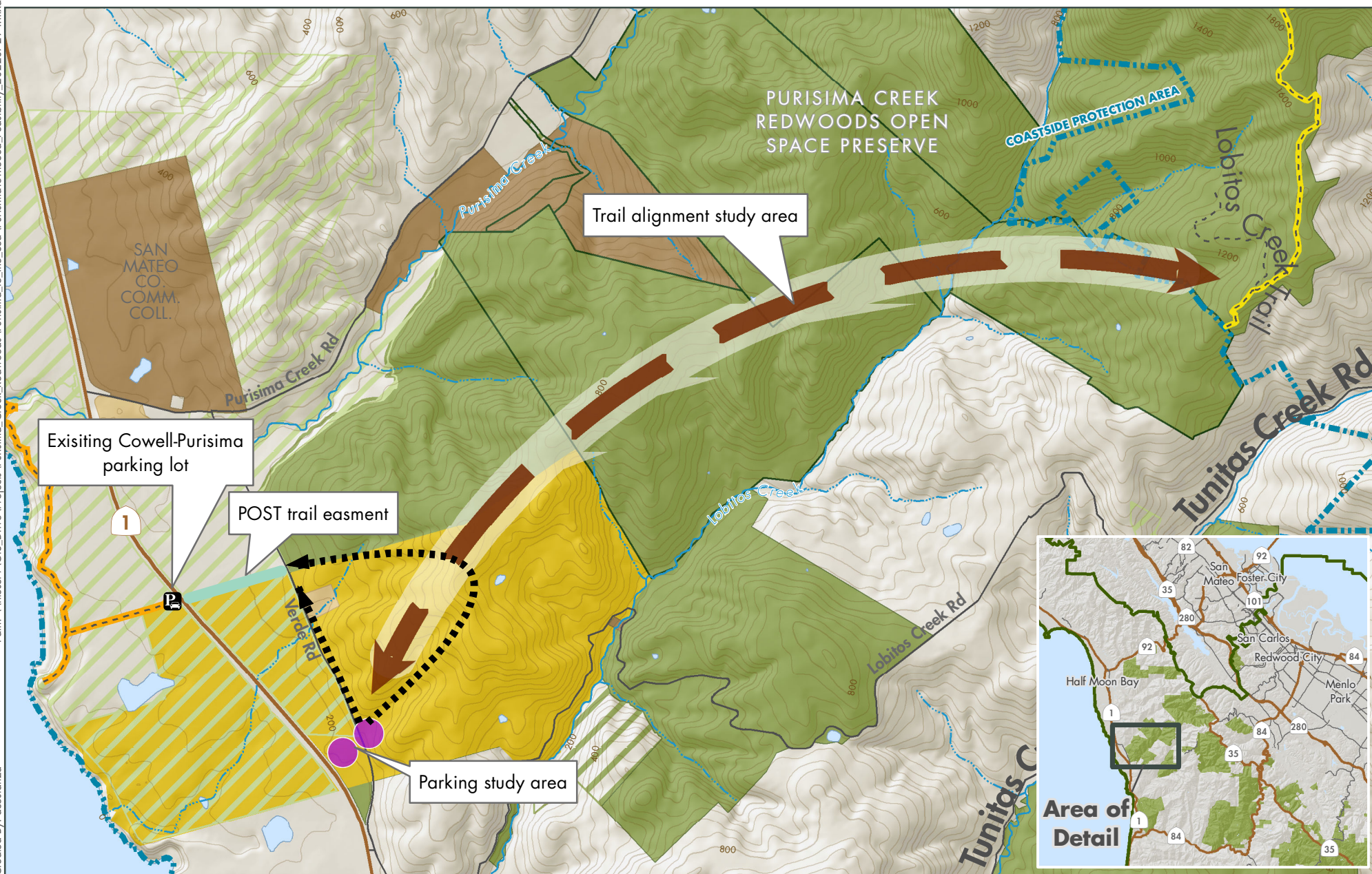
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Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail and Parking Area Feasibility Study Area

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

Study Areas

- | |
|--|
| Trail alignment study area |
| Parking study area |
| Pedestrian crossing and connector trail study area |

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(Midpen)
7/29/2022

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Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District
(Midpen)

**Purisima-to-the-Sea
Trail Alignment
Alternatives**

Preferred Trail Alignment

Alignment Linking Irish Ridge
Road to Alternatives 1-3

Alignment Alternative 1

Alignment Alternative 2

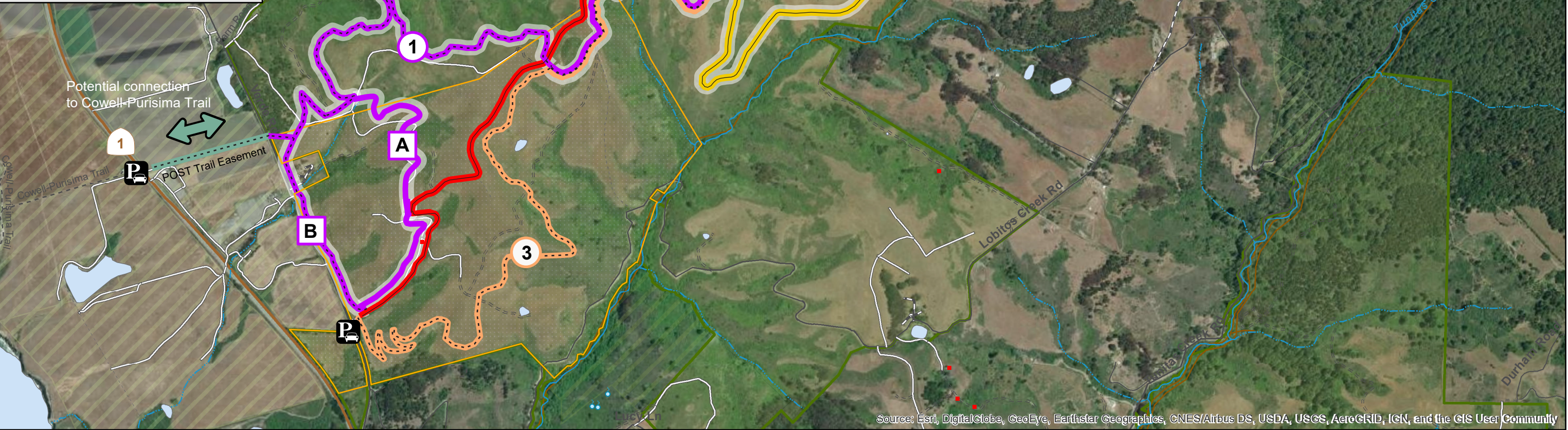
Alignment Alternative 3

POST Trail Easement

Improve Existing Road/Trail

New Trail Construction

South Cowell
Property Boundary



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Conceptual Design | Alternative A



Conceptual Design | Alternative B



Recommended Conceptual Design | Alternative C



Attachment 4:

Purisima-to-the-Sea – Summary of Total Engagement Activities

October 11, 2022

Date	Meeting / Event
July 13, 2021*	Purisima-to-the-Sea Neighbor Meeting
July 27, 2021	Coastal and Trail User Community Meeting
August 18, 2021	Peninsula Trails Team (Bay Area Ridge Trail, Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network, National Park Service, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, County of San Mateo)
September 28, 2021	Agricultural Community Onsite Meeting
November 4, 2021**	Make It Main Street (Half Moon Bay community event)
November 9, 2021*	Pescadero Municipal Advisory Council
December 1, 2021*	Purisima-to-the-Sea Public Open House and Special Meeting
December 15, 2021*	Purisima-to-the-Sea Vision and Goals
December 18, 2021*	Tabling at Coastside Farmers Market (Half Moon Bay)
February 23, 2022*	Midcoast Community Council
March 15, 2022	Kings Mountain Association
May 14, 2022**	College of San Mateo Farmer's Market
May 15, 2022**	Purisima hike with Spanish speaking group
June 07, 2022	San Mateo County Farm Bureau consultation
June 29, 2022	Purisima projects open house (in-person)
July 12, 2022	Purisima projects open house (virtual)
July 27, 2022	Green Foothills staff
September 21, 2022	Trail User Stakeholder Meeting
September 29, 2022	Trail User Stakeholder Meeting

* Public meeting

** Public event

Attachment 5: Summary of Public Feedback Received to Date

Purisima-to-the-Sea Feasibility Study – Trail Alignment Options and Parking Area Conceptual Design Alternatives

October 11, 2022

Theme/Topic	General Feedback/Comments ¹
Visitor Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 95% are hikers, with a preference for 4 to 7-mile hikes.• 45% ride their bicycle or horse, with a preference for 10 to 15-mile rides.• 90% prefer a loop trail, as opposed to 7% preferring out and back, and 3% preferring a one-way with shuttle.• 75% stated they come to Purisima either on weekday mornings or afternoons; 50% visit on weekday mornings.
Destinations people are interested in seeing when coming to Purisima	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 50% prefer Purisima's unique features.• 19% prefer the nearby inland vistas and viewpoints.• 15% prefer the coastal overlooks and beaches.
Priorities of survey respondents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When asked about the most important factors that should be considered in planning for the Purisima-to-the-Sea project, 50% prioritized biological site attributes, and 25% prioritized physical site attributes.
Preferred parking design alternative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At open house events, members of the public overwhelmingly supported a larger parking area to accommodate TDM strategies.• Survey respondents heavily favored standard and larger parking area sizes.
Impacts to Parking Lot Design and amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trail Access<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Preference for accessing the trail without having to cross the drive aisle near the parking area's drive entrance.• Shuttle Pick-Up/Drop-Off<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 50% reported that they would use a shuttle if their preferred parking area was full; 25% said that they may be interested.○ Design should consider shuttle pick-up/drop-off area and parking quantity to accommodate those taking the shuttle in addition to parking for those using the trailhead.• Electric vehicle parking:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Public expressed interest in electric vehicle parking.• Flexible Parking Uses<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 66% were open to flexible parking uses at different times.○ Commenters noted that flexible parking areas would need to be clearly signed. Education would be necessary to inform the public.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bikes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ~50% indicated they would visit by bike ○ Interest in bike racks, bike lockers, and bike repair stations ○ Bike brushes to remove debris off tires and prevent spread of Sudden Oak Death ○ E-bike charging station • Equestrians <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Majority of those parking with equestrian trailers would like to see at least 4 equestrian trailer spaces at the new lot. ○ ~66% prefer having a natural surface parking area and pathways ○ ~50% expressed interest in having hitching posts and mounting blocks available. ○ Preference for having equestrian parking on the outer ring in the parking alternatives • Parking / Parking Surface <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Interest in loading zone adjacent to / back of parking spaces ○ Commenters note that the coastal areas lack storm water drainage and that the proposed parking should incorporate impervious surfaces into the design ○ If overflow lot is proposed, there was interest in natural surface for overflow parking. • Restroom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Interest in having a second vault toilet near equestrian parking. • Other amenities suggested: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Availability of restrooms ○ Stroller and wheelchair rentals ○ Seating / rest area ○ Potable water / drinking fountains ○ Trash collection ○ Pay phone ○ Connections to other transit ○ Signboard w/ maps, showing nearby points of interest ○ Interpretive signage ○ WiFi ○ Cell phone charging ○ Wayfinding signage ○ Animal waste bags ○ Fire lanes / loading zones
Mid-Trail facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 89% expressed interest in a rest area / bench and 82% in a restroom as mid-trail (interior preserve) amenities. • 22% were interested in a picnic area as a mid-trail amenity • Hitching post, mounting block, and non-potable water trough received support from 8% of respondents

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over half of survey respondents identifying as equestrians would like to see a hitching post, mounting block, and water trough at a mid-trail location. • Backpack camping
Impacts to Grazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When asked what measures the District should consider to ensure compatibility of the existing conservation grazing and future recreational access, 50% supported providing on-site education about the value of the conservation grazing program. ~25% supported providing education on sharing the trail with cattle.
Interpretive Signage Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey respondents had a preference for interpretive signage topics discussing wildlife (20%), Native American history (19%) and Ecosystems (19%).
Trail Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest in allowing multi-uses on trails • Interest in single-track bike trails
Highway Crossing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about at grade crossing • Suggestions for above grade or below grade crossings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Underpass study to accommodate wildlife crossing
Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage available in English and Spanish
Additional comments / concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road safety and emergency vehicle access • Concerns about preserve visitors trespassing over private property • Consider that Cowell Ranch Beach trailhead exceeds capacity on good weather days, this lot may be used as an overflow lot for beach use and other nearby open space destinations. • Ensure project is compatible with San Mateo Local Coastal Program. • Consider impacts to prime agricultural land, sensitive habitats, views. • Balance square footage of parking area with protecting habitat • Allow backpacking and reservation camping • Allow dog access • Real-time parking information • Clear signage, and enforcement of violations • Strong etiquette education program • Allow e-bike use • Limit equestrian use / limit bike use • Minimize infrastructure in parking areas

¹Feedback noted above is based on visitor survey and input received during engagement activities; percentages reflect respondent responses from the visitor survey.



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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

Tuesday, August 2, 2022

DRAFT MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Director Riffle called the meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee to order at 2:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members present: Yoriko Kishimoto, Curt Riffle, and Pete Siemens

Members absent: None

Staff present: General Manager Ana Ruiz, General Counsel Hilary Stevenson, Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan, Assistant General Brian Malone, District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Jennifer Woodworth, Planning Manager Jane Mark, Senior Planner Tina Hugg, Planner II Tyler Smith

Director Riffle announced this meeting is being held in accordance with California Government Code section 54953(e) and Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Resolution 21-33 allowing Committee 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. Director Riffle described the process and protocols for the meeting.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion: Director Kishimoto moved, and Director Siemens seconded the motion to adopt the agenda.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

District Clerk Jennifer Woodworth reported no comments were submitted.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

1. Approve the March 15, 2022 Planning and Natural Resources Committee Meeting Minutes.

Motion: Director Kishimoto moved, and Director Siemens seconded the motion to approve the March 15, 2022 Planning and Natural Resources Committee meeting minutes.

Public comment opened at 2:04 p.m.

No public comments were submitted for this item.

Public comment closed at 2:04 p.m.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

2. Proposed Transportation Demand Management Strategies and Preliminary Recommendations from the Purisima Creek Preserve Multimodal Access Project (R-22-87)

Senior Planner Tina Hugg provided the staff presentation describing the project timeline and project's objectives and goals, including identifying ways to improve multimodal access, evaluate existing parking resources and access, improve internal visitor circulation, etc.

Joakim Osthus, with Parisi Transportation Consulting, reviewed the various transportation demand management (TDM) strategies related to bicycling, transit options, visitor demand management, education/outreach, and traveler information/wayfinding. Mr. Osthus described the various types of data collection completed by the project team, including virtual surveys, speaking with preserve visitors, and public engagement at various locations and provided highlights from the comments received from the public regarding the various TDM strategies. Mr. Osthus summarized key takeaways and recurring themes, such as general support for a shuttle system, additional parking, carpooling, and parking reservation system; consideration of equity when implementing the TDM strategies, and support for increased wayfinding in English and Spanish.

Director Kishimoto supported potentially closing the lower Purisima Creek parking lot, which would have the benefit of reducing traffic for the community.

Director Riffle spoke in support of the shuttle option and commented on the need to determine when the District's preserves should be considered as full.

General Manager Ana Ruiz stated the current carrying capacity of the preserves is largely tied to the parking capacity of the preserves, which limits the number of preserve visitors. The number of people who should be in a preserve at one time will need to be studied separately from the number of people who are able visit a preserve due to limited parking.

Mr. Osthus reviewed the criteria used to score the various TDM strategies, the results of the TDM strategy scoring, and recommendations for TDM strategies.

Director Siemens commented the lower Purisima Creek Road lot should be reconfigured and limited to shuttle parking, ADA accessible parking, and some equestrian parking. Limiting standard parking will encourage visitors to use shuttles to visit the preserve. Additionally, a safe route to the Verde Road parking lot is needed for those who do not take a shuttle.

Director Kishimoto suggested incorporating parking areas at the Johnston House as part of the TDM strategies for Purisima.

Director Siemens requested and received information regarding the proposed parking lot sizes for the proposed Purisima-to-the-Sea trail.

Assistant General Manager Brian Malone expressed concern that equestrian parking would likely not be able to accommodate equestrian parking due to its size.

Ms. Hugg stated the parking areas, including on-street parking, would likely need to be closed for the weekend to increase the use of a shuttle and increase safety for pedestrian and cyclists walking in the area.

Director Kishimoto inquired regarding parking options for those who are staying multiple days in order to hike a regional trail, such as the proposed Bay-to-Sea trail.

Mr. Malone stated currently the District will issue permits for multi-day parking when needed.

Planning Manager Jane Mark stated the District and its partners will look more comprehensively for regional staging areas to accommodate multi-day hikes as part of the regional Bay-to-Sea Trail planning, but it is not currently being addressed as part of this project.

Ms. Hugg reviewed the next steps for the project and proposed timeline.

Director Riffle requested and received additional information regarding the suggestion to reconfigure existing parking lots.

Public comment opened at 3:34 p.m.

No public comments submitted.

Public comment closed at 3:34 p.m.

Motion: Director Siemens moved, and Director Kishimoto seconded the motion to confirm the preliminary scoring, prioritization and recommendations for the transportation demand management strategies for inclusion into a draft report.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

ADJOURNMENT

Director Riffle adjourned the meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee at 3:36 p.m.

Jennifer Woodworth, MMC
District Clerk