



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

PLANNING & NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

R-22-141
December 13, 2022

AGENDA ITEM 2

AGENDA ITEM

La Honda Creek Parking and Trailhead Access Feasibility Study – Existing Conditions/Site Opportunities and Constraints Analysis Report

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION *den*

Receive a presentation on the La Honda Creek Parking and Trailhead Access Existing Conditions/Site Opportunity and Constraints Analysis Report, provide feedback on sites recommended to advance into conceptual design, including confirmation on not advancing Site B3 based on the reasons detailed in this report.

SUMMARY

The La Honda Creek Parking and Trailhead Access (Project) Feasibility Study analyzes four potential sites for expanded parking and trailhead access to La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve (Preserve). The goal is to provide public access to the currently closed central portion of the Preserve and connect the existing trails in the northern and southern areas. Since Board of Directors (Board) approval to evaluate specific parking, trailhead, and public access recommendations forwarded by the La Honda Public Access Working Group on October 21, 2020, District staff have proceeded with the feasibility study of the recommended sites.

On September 22, 2021, RHAA Landscape Architects (RHAA) was hired to provide technical analysis, site planning, and design services for the Project. Since being awarded the contract, RHAA has conducted site analysis and technical studies to evaluate existing conditions, circulation patterns, and environmental resources at each site and to develop site-specific opportunities and constraints and recommendations that will inform conceptual design. Of the four sites (Site B2, Site B3, Site D and Site E3) studied within the Existing Conditions/ Site Opportunities and Constraints Analysis Report, three sites (Site B2, Site D and Site E3) are recommended to move forward to conceptual design, as part of the next phase in the feasibility study. Site B3 is not recommended to advance to conceptual design due to wetlands impacts.

BACKGROUND

The sites under study were identified in La Honda Public Access Working Group's (PAWG) Recommendations Report (Attachment 4) and approved by the Board to move forward to the feasibility study phase (R-20-115). The sites reviewed within the Existing Conditions/ Site Opportunities and Constraints Analysis Report (Report) (Attachment 1) include sites B2, B3, D, and E3 (Attachment 2).

Site B2 is located downhill and west of the Preserve's existing paved parking lot on Sears Ranch Road. Site B3 is located on Sears Ranch Road, north of La Honda Elementary School at Preserve Gate LH15. Site D is centrally located within the Preserve approximately four miles south of the State Route 35 (SR-35) and State Route 84 (SR-84) intersection and includes a bridge approximately 0.2 miles down an existing ranch road from Site D as a crossing for trail access (unless another crossing is determined to be needed). Site E3 is located one mile north of Site D, near the Red Barn off SR-84. A site map is included in Attachment 2.

DISCUSSION

The project seeks to provide ecologically sensitive public access to the central, currently closed, portion of the Preserve and offers opportunities to connect visitors between the northern and southern areas of the Preserve. Staff will present the initial findings of the technical studies and recommendations for each site, which are summarized within the Report. This information, along with Planning and Natural Resource Committee (Committee) feedback, will be used to develop conceptual design options for each site. Providing access to the central area of the Preserve is included in Phase I and Phase II of the Board-approved 2012 La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan.

SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS/ OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

Existing Site Conditions

The following technical studies have been completed to form a comprehensive understanding of the existing site conditions and support the opportunities and constraints analysis. These are appendices to the Report (Attachment 1), but due to their size are made available on the [project web page](#) (versus as part of Attachment 1).

- Traffic Study
- Boundary and Topographical Survey
- Cultural Landscape Report and Cultural Resources Survey Study
- Biological Resource Evaluation Study
- Delineation of Potential Jurisdictional Waters
- Botanical Resource Evaluation
- Tree Inventory Table
- Preliminary Geologic and Geotechnical Assessment Report

Analyzing site feasibility requires careful attention to existing site conditions and understanding inherent opportunities and constraints of each location. The Report groups the site conditions into three categories: (1) existing conditions, (2) site circulation and (3) environmental resources, and includes the following subcategories as applicable for each site.

Existing Conditions:

- Land ownership
- Site access
- Natural boundaries
- Site topography
- Viewsheds
- Scenic corridors
- Site screening
- Exposure and shading
- Geological conditions

Site Circulation:

- Roadway safety and sight distance
- Entry/exit access patterns
- Emergency access
- Vehicular and equestrian trailer circulation

Environmental Resources:

- Wetlands and waters and riparian setbacks
- Site drainage
- Water quality
- Plant communities and critical habitat
- Heritage/significant trees
- Special status plants
- Invasive plant species
- Wildlife corridor

- Land use
- Special status animals
- Sensitive bird resources
- Roosting bats
- Roadway noise
- Cultural resources
- State and federal environmental permitting

Site Opportunities and Constraints

Opportunities and constraints are developed by analyzing the technical studies and identifying site conditions for each site that need to be considered to accommodate public access. Key opportunities and constraints by site are summarized below. See Attachment 1 for more detail and analysis.

Site B2 – Recommended to Advance into Conceptual Design

Site B2 is located west of the existing Preserve parking lot at the end of Sears Ranch Road about 0.7 miles from Highway 84. Because Site B2 has good access from Sears Ranch Road and is a large, relatively flat area, it appears well suited for equestrian parking and overflow parking as visitation increases at the Preserve. In addition, technical studies indicate that development of a parking area at this location would have minimal to no impact on sensitive natural resources and is not expected to require state or federal permitting. This site appears feasible to advance into the conceptual design phase of the feasibility study.

Access to Site B2 would likely require widening the end of Sears Ranch Road, between the elementary school and the existing parking lot, to accommodate trip generation and larger vehicles pulling horse trailers. Discussions with private property owners and the County of San Mateo who owns sections of the driveway/end of the road will also be required if widening is needed. Widening work could potentially affect existing fencing, storm drainage, and involve grading or retaining walls that may require removal of several existing trees. There is also an opportunity to remove or underground existing utility lines to improve scenic views.

Given its access from Sears Ranch Road, a new parking lot at this site would not have a direct impact on Highway 84. Developing a new parking lot at Site B2 would not require additional improvements to the intersection of Sears Ranch Road and Highway 84.

Given scenic views of the site from the surrounding area and views from the site, a future parking area would need to be carefully laid out to protect the viewsheds. The site is currently actively grazed and any proposed improvements, including a new parking lot and associated fencing, would need to be carefully designed to minimize reduction of grazing acreage and impacts to the conservation grazing operation.

Site B3 – **NOT** Recommended to Advance

Site B3 is located off Sears Ranch Road just south of Site B2 and the existing Preserve parking area. A seep wetland was found during the delineation of jurisdictional waters; a 100-foot setback as prescribed by the District's Resource Management Policies would cover most of the flat buildable area of Site B3 as well as the access gate, Preserve Gate LH15. The rest of the site is constrained by steep terrain and not suitable for parking without significant grading. Given these conditions, the site is not recommended to move forward into conceptual design.

Site D – Recommended to Advance

Site D is located adjacent to Highway 84, a little over two miles north of the highway's intersection with Sears Ranch Road and appears feasible to advance into conceptual design due to its relatively flat terrain, minimal impact to waters and natural resources, and lack of state and federal permitting jurisdictions. The site has a moderately flat area that is suitable for parking. Although the site has nearby existing trees that can provide vegetative screening along the highway, some of the trees would need to be removed to accommodate parking. Removal of trees along the highway would also be part of Cal Fire's project related to ongoing fuel reduction efforts, and additional screening may be needed. Site D would require replacement of an existing bridge over La Honda Creek downslope of the parking area site to connect visitors to the Preserve trail system unless another creek crossing is determined to be needed. The existing bridge is accessible from a road that connects Site D to the creek. The road is wide enough to accommodate a crane for bridge replacement and permitting requirements would be investigated as the bridge design is developed.

To maximize the line of sight for drivers exiting the driveway at Site D, the traffic analysis suggests moving the driveway 50 feet north of the existing gate to improve "intersection" sight distance to vehicles traveling on the southbound lanes of Highway 84. To improve "intersection" sight distance from this driveway to northbound lanes, the traffic analysis suggests a short turn pocket lane be added to the highway that would push the driveway entrance back from the edge of the highway. Adding a painted "Stop" bar would further position drivers in the driveway away from the edge of the highway. This maximizes the distance between drivers and the curvature of the highway to a spot where they can see farther down the curve. The traffic analysis did not recommend a full deceleration and acceleration lane because it could be used improperly as a passing lane, resulting in reduced traffic safety.

In addition, dynamic signage to slow speeds of vehicles on the highway could also be evaluated with Caltrans, ultimately improving "intersection" sight distance for motorists exiting the driveway and improving "stopping" sight distance for motorists on the highway. A caution sign with a flashing warning beacon triggered by cars in the driveway can potentially be placed on the highway at the northbound and southbound approaches to Site D's driveway. A loop detector located in the driveway could alert drivers on the highway to the presence of vehicles exiting the proposed parking lot.

Site E3 – Recommended to Advance

Site E3 is located about 1.2 miles north of Site D on Highway 84 and is situated behind a stand of existing trees north of the Red Barn. This site appears feasible to advance into the conceptual design phase for the development of limited public access opportunities, such as District-led hikes, or via a District access permit. The site is constrained in size and can only accommodate approximately 10-15 vehicles. To keep trip generation and visitation numbers low, the parking area would likely only be suitable for docent-led activities or as a permit lot where the number of visitors can be managed. The site is currently well screened by vegetation from the highway although some trees are planned to be removed as they are non-native or are part of a separate CalFire project related to ongoing fuel reduction efforts. A phased tree removal approach along with select tree replanting is suggested to ensure continued screening from Highway 84.

The site has two access points, a north driveway at Preserve Gate LH06, and a south driveway at Preserve Gate RED01. A separate entry driveway (via Gate LH06) and exit driveway (via Gate RED01) are recommended. Since there are no reasonably close locations along Highway 84 for

U-turns, restrictions for left-turns or right-turns only into or out of the driveway are not technically required for these two driveways. Instructions for accessing the driveway entrance would be included in a District permit issued to permittees or provided to District docents who lead hikes from this site. Similar to Site D, warning beacons and loop detectors could be used at Site E3 to warn drivers on the highway to the presence of vehicles exiting the proposed parking lot, slow traffic on the highway, and discourage speeding and illegal passing.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CONCEPTUAL DESIGN PHASE

General recommendations for consideration during the conceptual design phase for all sites include balancing cut and fill and preventing soil-borne disease by avoiding off-site fill. Storm water runoff treatment should be considered if there are large areas of new impervious surfaces and tree impacts should be minimized. A reconnaissance level geotechnical study was completed during technical studies, and additional borings are recommended before construction at all sites to characterize subsurface conditions for areas of development. These borings would not be part of the feasibility study, but instead would be completed during design development. Specific site improvement recommendations, such as traffic measures, are included within Attachment 1.

UPDATE ON SITES C1 AND C2 AND SHORT-TERM MEASURES

Sites C1 and C2 (C Sites)

In addition to the four sites described above, the PAWG recommended visitor-serving and educational amenities to be added in an area (Sites C1 and C2) located a mile north from the existing Sears Ranch Road parking lot, along the Harrington Creek Trail. The PAWG recommendation states that the area is a “suitable location for picnic, family-friendly, equestrian-serving and interpretive amenities”. Given the small-scale nature of the recommended improvements, District staff can separately implement these amenities as standalone site enhancements.

As shown in Attachment 3, these amenities include benches, an equestrian mounting block and hitching posts, and interpretive signage. Concerns do exist regarding picnic tables and the potential for trash being left behind, which could attract predatory birds and affect a nearby Kestrel nest. Instead of picnic tables, two District standard benches will be installed prior to the nesting bird season, before February 15th. They will be placed at a vista point along a fence, just north of an existing corral where the mounting block and hitching posts will be placed for equestrians. A consultant is currently being brought on to design and fabricate an interpretive sign for the site. In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act, staff filed a Notice of Exemption for the installation of the proposed amenities and short-term measures in Fall 2022.

Short-term Measures

Along with the visitor-serving and educational amenities described above for Sites C1 and C2, the PAWG suggested three short term measures. Below is an update on each.

- 1. Add signage at the existing pull out along Highway 84 near the Red Barn with information about current access at the Preserve or interpretive information on the Red Barn and history of the property's use as a ranch.*

District staff, comprised of representatives from several departments, met to discuss adding interpretive signage at the existing pullout area off Highway 84 near the Red Barn. After reviewing opportunities and constraints, staff do not recommend adding this interpretive signage at the pull-out because it would create a new use for the pullout and increase the total number of vehicles stopping, and decelerating/accelerating into the highway lane at this location. If Site E3 is deemed feasible for public access, interpretive signage can instead be installed within the site.

2. *Allow opportunities for docent-led hikes north from Harrington Creek Trail along the existing ranch road that leads towards La Honda Creek and the currently closed area of the Preserve.*

District staff are coordinating to add docent-led hikes into the Docent-Led Activities program, where these hikes are anticipated for Spring 2023. Currently staff are developing interpretive content for the hike to highlight key features at the Preserve.

3. *To open access to the closed area of the Preserve more quickly, prioritize projects providing new trail connections from the Allen Road vista point and existing Sears Ranch Road parking lot to the Red Barn area (note that scouting for a trail alignment from the existing parking lot to the Red Barn area is already under way).*

The trail work is being led by the District's special projects team. Trail scouting efforts were completed in 2019 and 2020 to identify trail connections from the existing trails in the Sears Ranch Area (southern area) to Allen Road (northern area). The team is currently working on technical studies and regulatory permitting. New trail construction is expected to begin in Summer 2024 and could last through Summer 2025. Trails connecting to the closed area of the Preserve will be prioritized. Improvements to existing infrastructure, such as culvert replacements and rocking of existing roads, are ongoing and will support the trail connection efforts.

FISCAL IMPACT

The recommended action has no direct, immediate fiscal impact. The Fiscal Year 2022-23 (FY23) adopted budget includes \$160,000 for the La Honda Creek Parking and Trailhead Access - Phase I Feasibility Study project VP05-002.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW

- **September 22, 2021:** The Board approved RHAA's award of contract.
 - [Board Report](#)
 - [Minutes](#)
- **March 10, 2021:** The Board received a presentation on best practices from the PAWG pilot process.
 - [Board Report](#)
 - [Minutes](#)
- **October 21, 2020:** The Board approved the PAWG recommendations.
 - [Board Report](#)
 - [Minutes](#)
- **July 28, 2020:** PNR forwarded the PAWG recommendations to the full Board.

- [PNR Report](#)
- [Minutes](#)

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act. In addition, public notices were provided to parties interested in La Honda Creek Preserve, natural resource management, coast side topics, and grazing. Notifications were posted at the Preserve's three trailheads (Event Center, Sears Ranch, and Allen Road).

CEQA COMPLIANCE

The La Honda Creek Preserve Parking and Trailhead Access 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

Comments received on the Existing Conditions/Site Opportunity and Constraints Analysis Report from the PNR Committee and members of the public will be incorporated and advance into conceptual design plans. Conceptual design alternatives are anticipated to be presented to the PNR Committee for feedback in mid- to late 2023.

Attachments

1. Existing Conditions/Site Opportunity and Constraints Analysis Report for the La Honda Creek Preserve Parking and Trailhead Access Feasibility Study
 - 1a. Exhibits
2. Site Map
3. C Sites Map
4. La Honda Public Access Working Group Recommendations Report

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La Honda Creek Parking Area and Trailhead Feasibility Study
Existing Conditions/Opportunities and Constraints Report
18 November 2022



EXISTING CONDITIONS / OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS REPORT

Date: November 18, 2022

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RE: La Honda Creek Parking Area and Trailhead – Existing Conditions/Opportunity and Constraints Report

Executive Summary

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen) is undertaking a review to evaluate potential sites for parking and trailhead locations to access the central area of the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve that is currently closed to the public. The La Honda Creek Parking and Trailhead Access Feasibility Study was driven by the 2020 La Honda Public Access Working Group (PAWG) process during which a group of representatives from La Honda and throughout Midpen looked for sites with the potential to offer access into the Preserve. The PAWG's final recommendation included a suite of six sites across which a variety of uses, amenities, and parking and trailhead access facilities would be distributed. The PAWG also recommended several short-term measures to consider while the longer-term Feasibility Study was underway.

This analysis will review four of those sites (Sites B2, B3, D, and E3) as well as a bridge associated with Site D (Bridge at D), which warrants its own section in the report. The two remaining sites (the C sites or Sites C1 and C2) recommended by the PAWG propose amenities for an area one mile north of the existing Sears Ranch Road parking lot. The C sites are outside of RHAA's scope of work due to the minimal nature of contemplated site improvements. Midpen staff will separately study these improvements and the feasibility of short term measures the PAWG recommended.

The purpose of this report is to compile site observations and technical report data generated and collected for this project by RHAA and our consultant team into a comprehensive analysis of existing site conditions and each site's distinct opportunities and constraints. The conceptual program of each site will be adjusted based on guidance from Midpen's Planning and Natural Resources Committee and community input.

La Honda Creek Parking Area and Trailhead Feasibility Study
Existing Conditions/Opportunities and Constraints Report
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Existing Conditions

RHAA's and Midpen's consultant teams prepared the following technical studies for Sites B2, B3, D, Bridge at D, and E3 between October 2021 – October 2022 (see Appendices):

- BKF Engineers, Boundary and Topographic Survey, dated September 2022
- CG&E, Cal Engineering & Geology, Preliminary Geologic and Geotechnical Assessment Report, dated March 2022
- LSA, Access (Traffic) Study, dated October 2022
- LSA, Biological Resource Evaluation Study, dated October 2022
- LSA, Cultural Landscape Report (Site E3), dated April 2022
- LSA, Cultural Resources Survey Study, dated March 2022
- LSA, Tree Inventory Table, dated January 2022
- Vollmar, Botanical Resource Survey Report, dated November 2021
- Vollmar, Delineation of Potential Jurisdictional Waters (Site B2, B3, D), dated May 2022
- Vollmar, Delineation of Potential Jurisdictional Waters (Site E3), dated May 2022

Site Analysis/Opportunities and Constraints

Each site was analyzed based on three categories of existing conditions: Site Characteristics, Site Circulation, and Environmental Resources. A list of opportunities and constraints, applicable agency consultations, and recommendations associated with each site has been included to help evaluate whether the site is a viable option for development as a parking area and trailhead. This information will be reviewed at a public meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee, and input will inform the path forward and the basis of the program for those sites advancing into the feasibility study phase and conceptual site planning.

We look forward to collaborating with you in developing and implementing a shared vision for the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve.

Sincerely,



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APPENDICES

- A. BKF Engineers, Boundary and Topographic Survey, dated September 2022
- B. Cal Engineering & Geology, Preliminary Geologic and Geotechnical Assessment Report, dated March 2022
- C. LSA, Access (Traffic) Study, dated October 2022
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- J. Vollmar, Delineation of Potential Jurisdictional Waters (Site E3), dated May 2022

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

APN	Assessor's parcel number
BMPs	Best Management Practices
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CRLF	California red-legged frog
CRPR	California Rare Plant Rank
Midpen	Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
GIS	Geographic Information System
IPM	Midpen's Integrated Pest Management Program
IS/MND	Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration
Master Plan	La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan
OHWM	Ordinary High-Water Mark
PAWG	Public Access Working Group
Preserve	La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve
project	La Honda Creek Feasibility Project
ROW	Right-of-way
RMPs	Resource Management Policies
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SFDFW	San Francisco dusky-footed woodrat
SMCo	San Mateo County
SR-35	State Route 35
SR-84	State Route 84
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 GENERAL

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen) manages the 6,142-acre La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve (Preserve), which is located within unincorporated San Mateo County in the northern Santa Cruz Mountains. The Preserve is comprised of coastal scrub, redwood and hardwood forest, and rolling grassy hills with views to the Pacific Ocean. The Preserve is used by hikers, equestrians, and dog walkers.



Figure 1-1 Midpen’s Jurisdictional Boundary and La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve

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In 2012, Midpen's Board approved the [La Honda Creek Master Plan](#) (Master Plan) and at the same time, adopted the Master Plan's [Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration](#) (IS/MND). The Master Plan includes Environmental Protection Guidelines, which are the measures from Midpen's 2003 San Mateo Coastal Annexation [Draft](#) and [Final](#) Environmental Impact Report that apply to area of La Honda Creek Preserve that lie within the Coastside Protection Area. The Master Plan is a 30-year plan to guide stewardship efforts and recreational access and includes an expanded trail system for hiking and equestrian use with specific trails identified for dogs on leash and bicycle use. The land has historically been used for ranching, and conservation grazing operations continue to be a part of the land use.

In 2017, Midpen studied adding a new parking area near the Red Barn off State Route 84 (also known as La Honda Road or SR-84) in La Honda. After hearing concerns from the La Honda community about traffic and visual impacts, Midpen paused the project to create a working group made up of La Honda residents and Midpen's District ward representatives to help the project team explore other options to provide access to the currently closed middle section of the Preserve.

For the purposes of this report, the traffic discussions note SR-84 as officially designated as an east-west state highway but in the section of the Preserve where these sites are located, the travel lanes are oriented north-south, which leads to confusion. Therefore, this document refers to the eastbound direction of SR-84 as northbound and the westbound direction of SR-84 to southbound to match the physical orientation of the highway in this location.

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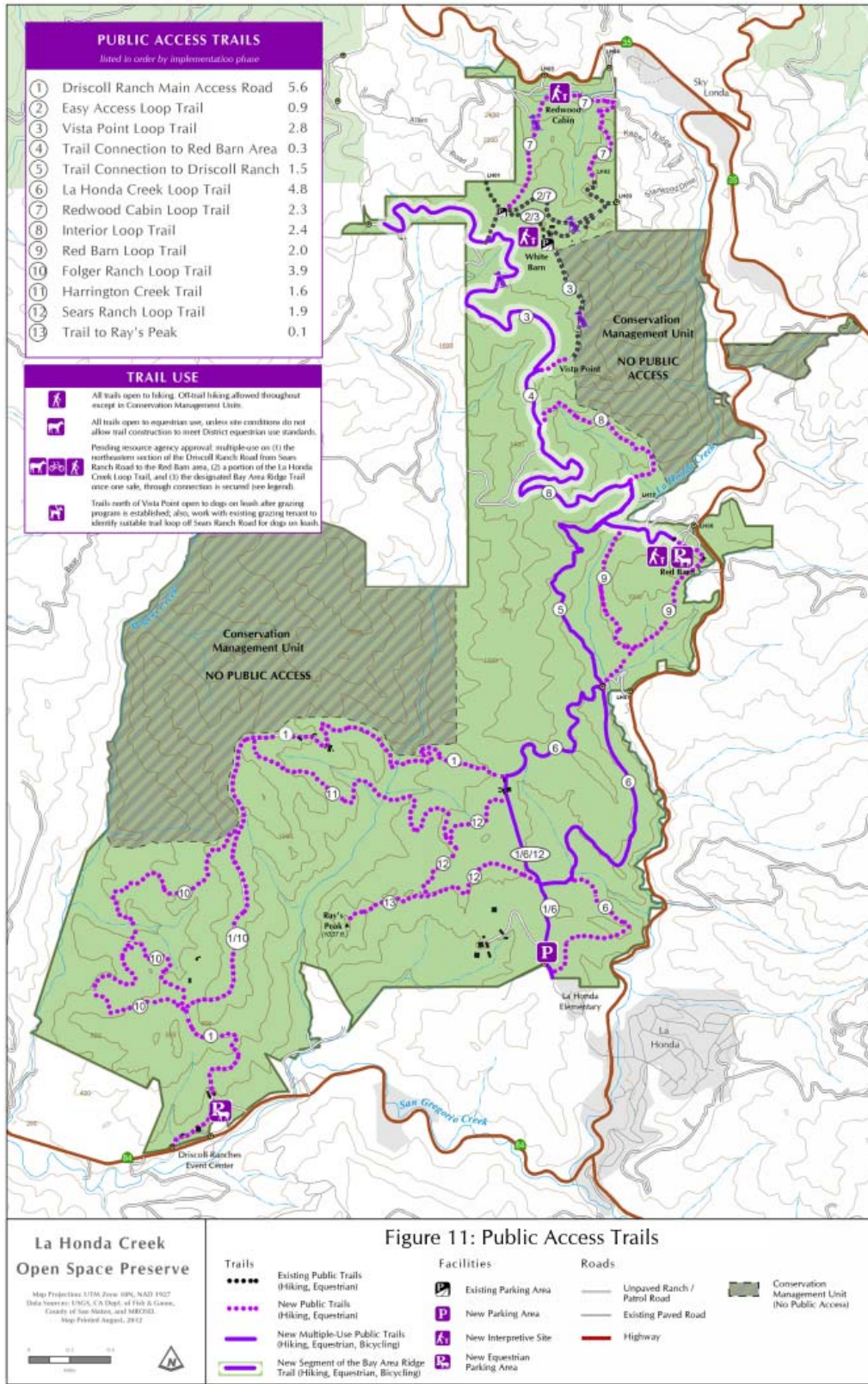


Figure 1-2 2012 La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan

La Honda Creek Parking Area and Trailhead Feasibility Study
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 18 November 2022

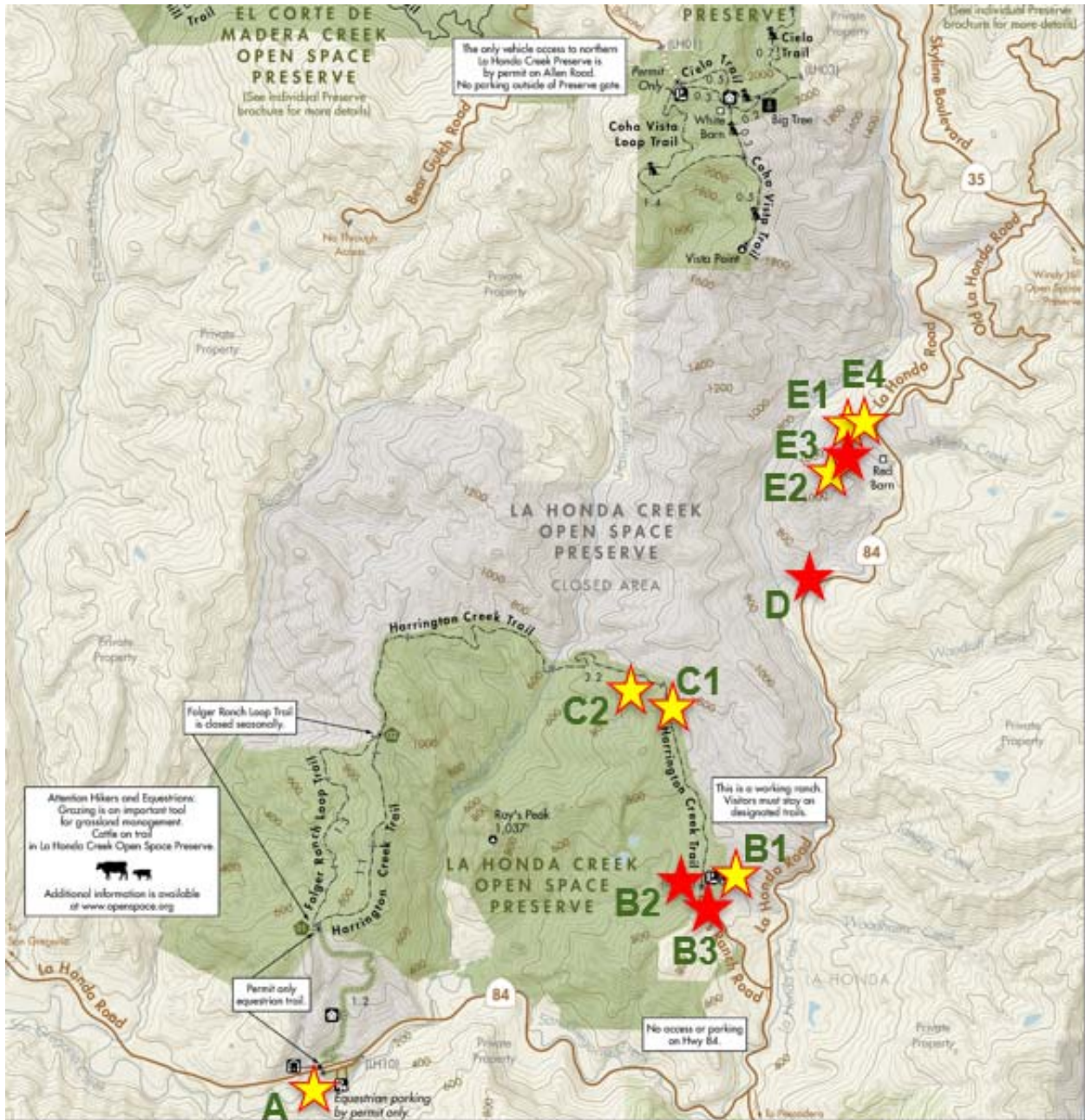


Figure 1-3 Public Access Sites studied in the 2020 La Honda PAWG Report

1.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project sites evaluated under this report are located along SR-84 and are intended to provide access to the central areas of the Preserve. Sites B2 and B3 are located off Sears Ranch Road in La Honda, California. North of these sites, on SR-84, is Site D. And further north on SR-84 is Site E3 at the Red Barn site. The public access improvements contemplated across these sites include public trailhead access, paved and gravel parking lots, restrooms, and a replacement bridge (bridge at Site D) at an existing trail.

1.3 PURPOSE, SCOPE OF WORK, AND GOALS

The purpose of the Feasibility Study is to determine if the proposed sites can support and accommodate a parking area, trailhead, and associated infrastructure. For this study, the consultant team analyzed each site and will develop conceptual renditions that support the following Board-approved project goals with the understanding that more than one of these sites will be needed to achieve all the goals.

Project goals

- Establish new public access in the central portion of the Preserve.
- Design elements to reflect the rural character of the site and the Red Barn.
- Provide safe public access.
- Balance public access with grazing activities and other uses.
- Include amenities that facilitate environmental education.
- Protect scenic views of and from the site.
- Protect natural resources to the extent possible.
- Incorporate climate change adaption where appropriate.
- Provide equitable access opportunities to accommodate the diverse community Midpen serves.

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Figure 1-4 Existing parking lot at Sears Ranch Road at Preserve Gate LH11



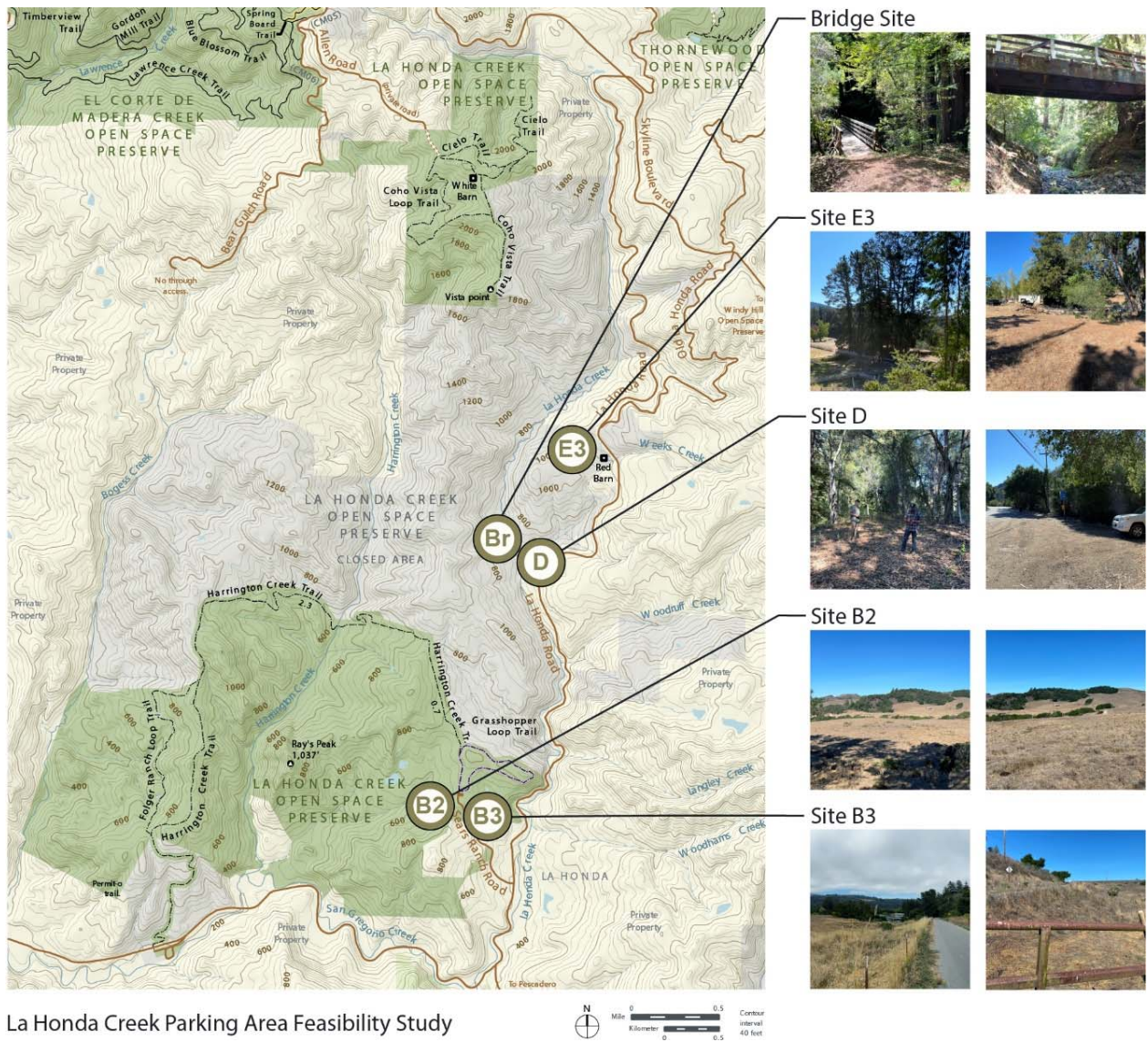
Figure 1-5 Existing entry sign at Sears Ranch Road parking lot at Preserve Gate LH11

La Honda Creek Parking Area and Trailhead Feasibility Study
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2.0 PROPOSED SITES AND PROGRAM

After consideration of each site’s specific characteristics, the PAWG recommended distributing the types of access (permit/docent or full public access), trail uses (equestrian), and infrastructure (restroom and hitching posts) throughout multiple sites.

As a starting point, the Existing Conditions/Opportunities and Constraints Report evaluates the maximum parking capacity feasible at each site to cover the broadest limits of potential parking development, understanding that a full build-out may not be ultimately implemented. In addition, where equestrian parking is considered, at least four equestrian trailer spaces are assumed.



La Honda Creek Parking Area Feasibility Study
 Figure 2-1 Locations of four sites and bridge studied in this report

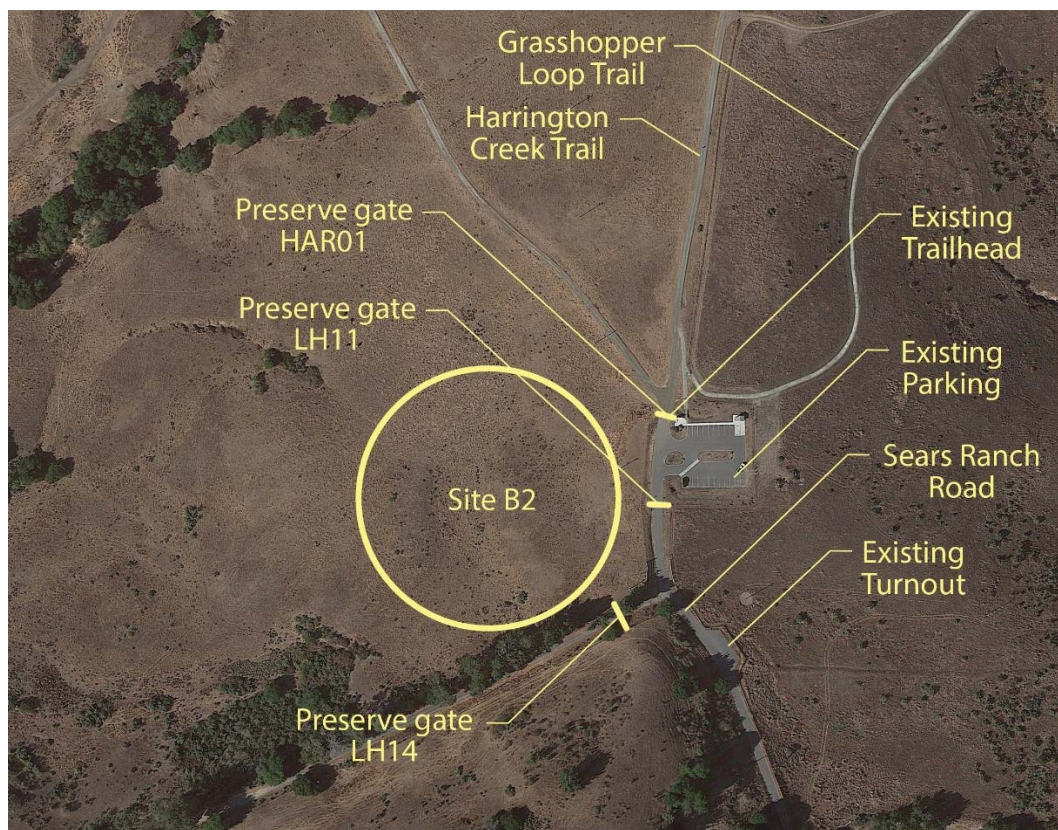
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2.1 SITE B2

Site B2 is located approximately 0.5 miles northwest of the intersection of SR-84 and Sears Ranch Road and downhill and west of the Preserve's existing paved parking lot with a west aspect slope. The site is primarily covered in grasses with minimal trees except those along the private access road to the south that leads through Preserve Gate LH14 to an existing staff residence located further west of the site.

Program Elements for Site B2

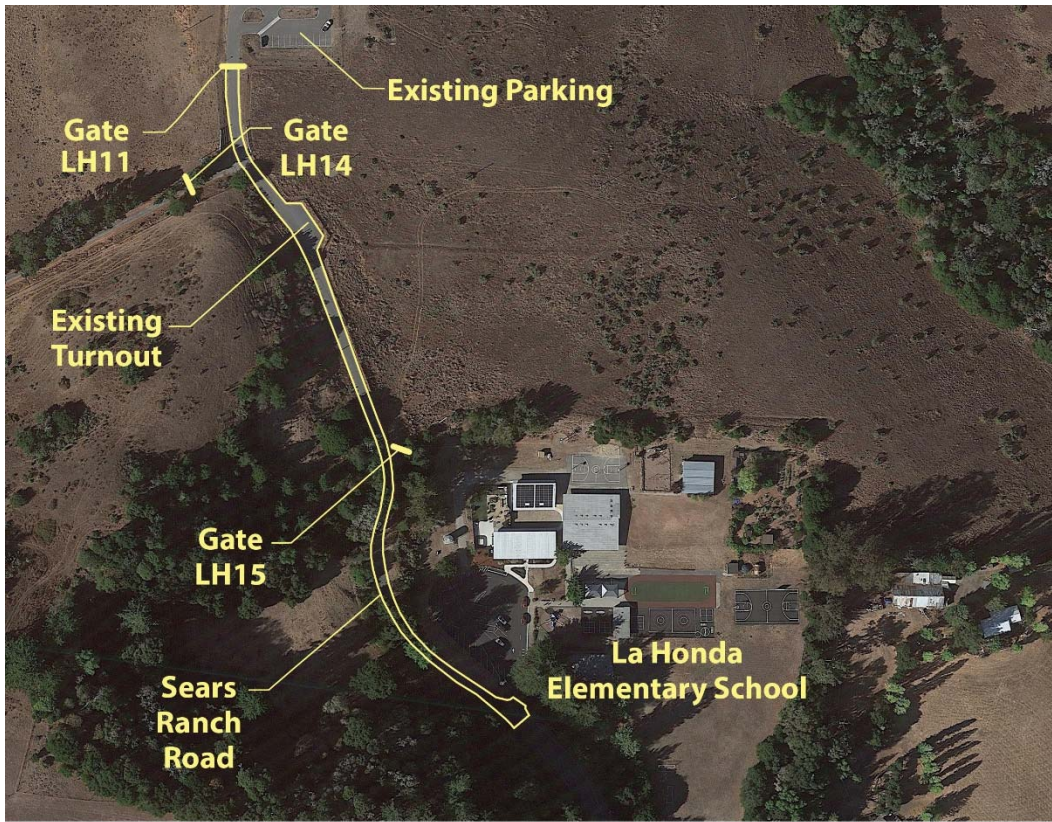
- Equestrian trailer gravel parking area (approximately four equestrian trailer spaces for up to eight horses).
- Overflow vehicular parking from the existing Sears Ranch Road parking lot (approximately 40 to 80 overflow standard parking spaces).
- Trail access to the existing Sears Ranch Road parking lot and trail system.
- Potential Sears Ranch Road improvements for the section of road from La Honda Elementary School to the existing Sears Ranch Road parking lot (see Site B3).



Site B2

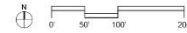
Figure 2-2 Site B2

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Site B2 - Sears Ranch Road Widening

Figure 2-3 Site B2 Sears Ranch Road Widening



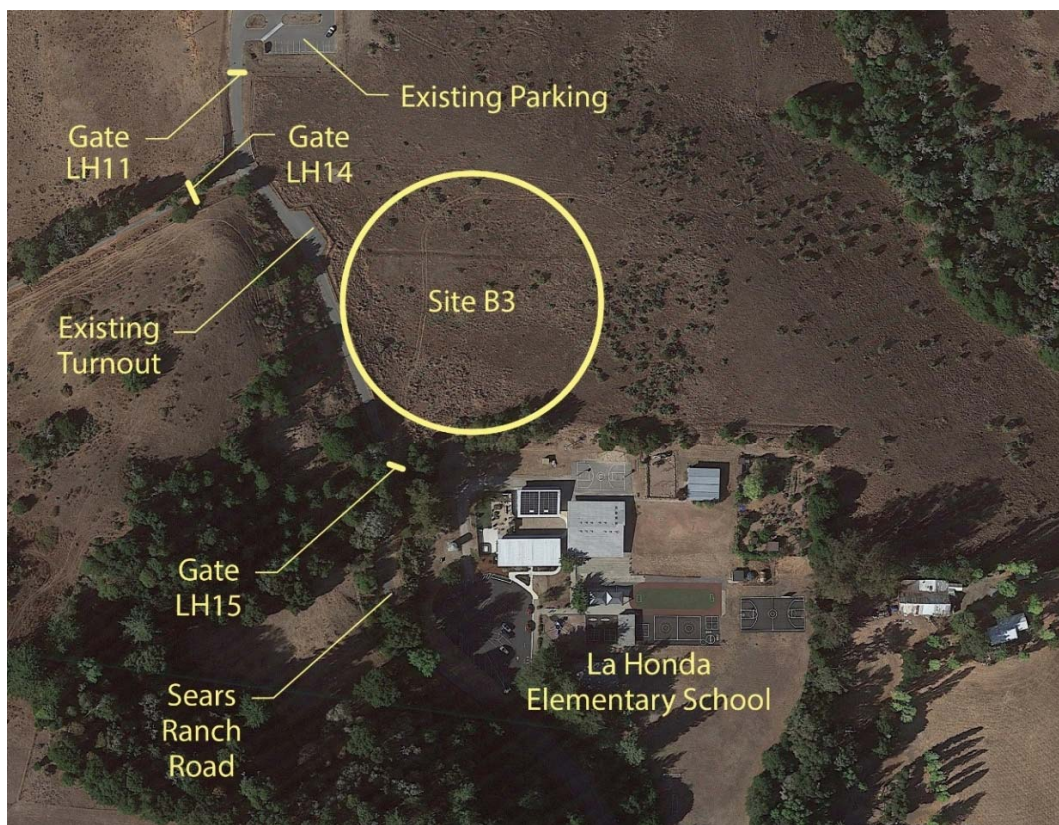
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2.2 SITE B3

Site B3 is located at the end of Sears Ranch Road and north of La Honda Elementary School at Preserve Gate LH15. This site is bounded on the west by approximately 1,000 feet of Sears Ranch Road that would need to be improved from the school's driveway to the existing paved Sears Ranch Road parking lot. Trees line both sides of Sears Ranch Road up to this site. The potential parking area at Site B3 is a level area that is down a steep slope east of Sears Ranch Road. The site is framed by trees along the southern fence but is primarily covered in grasses with wetland plant species located along the southern coterminous border with the school.

Program Elements for Site B3

- Equestrian trailer gravel parking area (approximately four equestrian trailer spaces for up to eight horses).
- Overflow vehicular parking from the existing Sears Ranch Road parking lot (approximately 20 to 30 overflow parking standard spaces).
- Trail access to the existing Sears Ranch Road parking lot and trail system.
- Potential Sears Ranch Road improvements for the section of road from the school to the existing Preserve Sears Ranch Road parking lot.



Site B3

Figure 2-4 Site B3

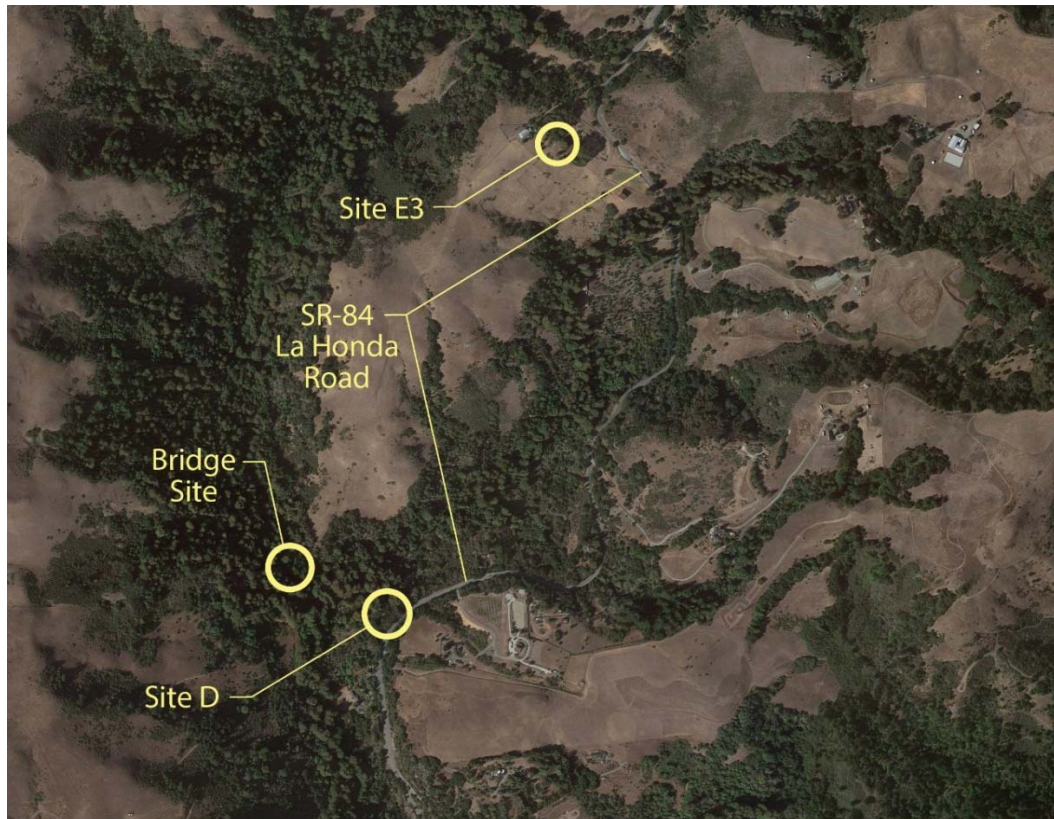
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2.3 SITE D

Site D is centrally located within the Preserve approximately 4 miles south of the State Route 35 (SR-35) and SR-84 intersection. The site is west of SR-84 at Preserve Gate LH07 between SR-84 post mile markers 10.8 and 11. Approximately 400 feet of SR-84 fronts this property, and a wide shoulder is adjacent to the highway. The site is relatively flat and is heavily shaded with tree canopy.

Program Elements for Site D

- Paved parking area with a new trailhead (approximately 20 to 40 vehicles).
- Potential vault restroom facility.
- Vehicular access to and from SR-84.
- Traffic safety enhancements.
- Trail access via the bridge over La Honda Creek connecting to the existing trail system.
- Bridge replacement (see 2.4 Site D - Bridge)



Bridge Site, Site D, & Site E3

Figure 2-5 Site D in relation to Site E3



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2.4 SITE D – BRIDGE

The bridge is approximately 0.2 miles down an existing ranch road from Site D. Due to the abutment conditions, the bridge has been deemed structurally unusable for public access. The bridge requires replacement or structural repairs to support pedestrian loads and possibly vehicle loads (vehicle use for Midpen patrol and maintenance). Upgrades to the existing unpaved road leading to the bridge from Preserve Gate LH07 are not part of the scope of this study.

Program Element for Site D - Bridge

- Replacement bridge over La Honda Creek.



Site D & Bridge Site

Figure 2-6 Site D and the Bridge Site



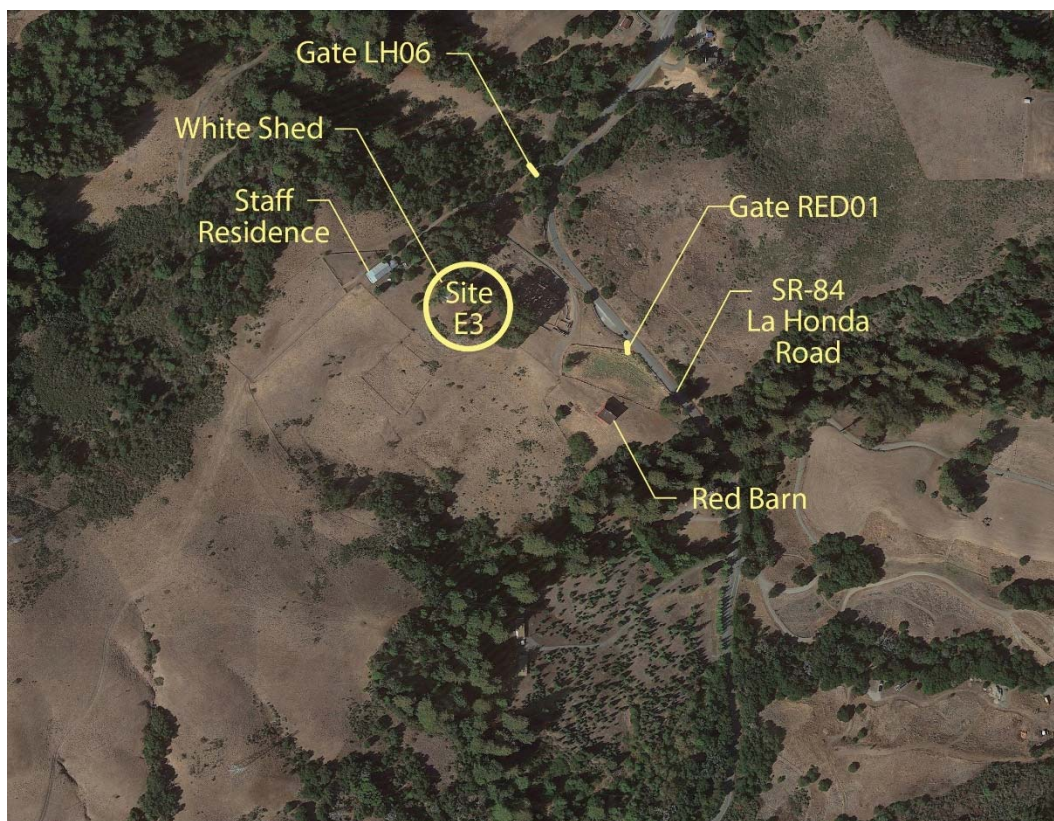
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2.5 SITE E3 – RED BARN

Site E3 is located 1 mile north of Site D on the west side of SR-84 between post mile markers 12 and 12.35. The site has approximately 800 feet of SR-84 frontage. The Red Barn is located on this property, and the picturesque view of the barn and grasses within the corral can be seen by north-bound and south-bound travelers along SR-84. The land is sloped down from the highway and contains existing entry and egress roads used primarily by the staff residence and grazing tenants. The site is a level area located behind existing trees and near an existing white shed that sits downslope from the staff residence.

Program Elements for Site E3

- Gravel parking area (approximately 10 to 15 vehicles).
- Permit and docent-led access only to limit daily traffic movements to and from SR-84.
- Vehicular access to and from SR-84.
- Traffic safety enhancements.
- Trail access to the Red Barn.



Site E3

Figure 2-7 Site E3

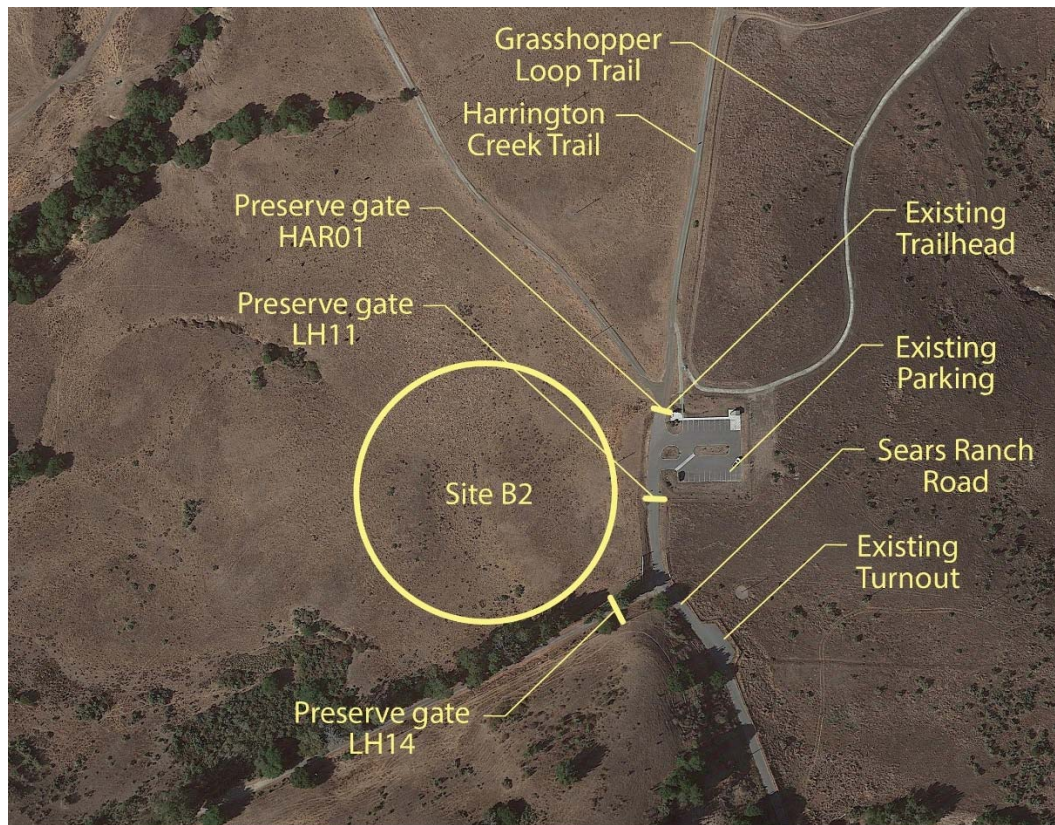
3.0 SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITY AND CONSTRAINTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY SITE

Over the past year, RHAA completed a wide range of technical studies, analyzed the existing conditions, and found three sites that are recommended to advance further into design and evaluation as potential locations that can offer access to the central area of the Preserve. RHAA found one site that is recommended to be removed from consideration. The following is a site-by-site summary of opportunities and constraints, starting with the sites being recommended for further evaluation (Site B2, D, and E3) and concluding with the site not being recommended (Site B3). For more detail on existing conditions, refer to the Existing Conditions/Opportunities and Constraints (5.0 Exhibit A), Existing Conditions Plans (Figures 1.1 – 5.3b), and Appendices for additional information.

Potential sites to further evaluate:

3.1 SITE B2

Site B2 appears to be the best site for equestrian parking as well as for overflow parking for the existing Sears Ranch Parking area. Site B2 raises minimal to no concerns regarding potential impacts to sensitive environmental resources. This site has a large, relatively flat area suitable for equestrian and standard parking. Waters or natural resources would be minimally affected. This site has no state or federal permitting jurisdictions near the project location.



Site B2

Figure 3-B2-1 Site B2. Also see Figures: 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3

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Figure 3-B2-2 Site B2 facing north



Figure 3-B2-3 Site B2 facing northeast up the steep bank

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Figure 3-B2-4 Site B2 facing north towards grazing road and barn



Figure 3-B2-5 SR-84 at Sears Ranch Road facing north

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Figure 3-B2-6 SR-84 at Sears Ranch Road facing south



Figure 3-B2-7 Sears Ranch Road facing south at existing turnout



Figure 3-B2-8 Sears Ranch Road facing north at narrow section of road near school

Opportunities

- The site has a large, relatively flat area suitable for equestrian and standard parking.
- Waters or natural resources would be minimally affected.
- This site has no state or federal permitting jurisdictions near the project location.

Constraints/Challenges

- Providing traffic safety for equestrian trailers entering and exiting SR-84 at Sears Ranch Road.
- Widening Sears Ranch Road from the school to the parking lot to accommodate equestrian trailers; identifying property ownership and, if necessary, negotiating access for road improvements.
- Ensuring ingress/egress to the existing staff residence is maintained.
- Protecting the scenic views of lower elevations (barn and pond) and higher elevations that look down into the site.
- Minimizing the impact to conservation grazing pastures and ensuring that the grazing operation is considered when site planning; efficiently locating fencing around the parking to minimize loss of pasture.
- Avoiding or mitigating numerous shallow slumps, as well as shallow slumps and landslides along Sears Ranch Road, since these limit the area of development.

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- The proposed widening of Sears Ranch Road will need to remain outside the 50-foot setback of the wetland seep (located at B3) to avoid jurisdictional waters and undergo permitting.
- If Site B2 is the only feasible site for a future well to provide water for the grazing tenant's operation, parking and trailhead improvements to the site would need to be coordinated with this work to accommodate the approximately three feet by four feet footprint of the well.

Recommendations

- *Avoid off-site soil fill to prevent soil-borne disease and introduction of invasive species at the site.*
- *Conceptual designs should strive to balance cut and fill.*
- *Borings are recommended to characterize subsurface conditions for areas of development to identify remediation or avoidance. Obtain a County permit for 3 borings estimated depth of 15 to 30 feet to characterize subsurface materials for proposed parking lot area.*
- *The LANGAN report identified areas of artificial fill that may require remediation via earthwork or the development of retention structures.*
- *If needed, use of steel beam and walls are recommended but will be dependent on the final design configuration and the results of the geotechnical investigation and analysis.*
- *Designing a new parking area with a minimal footprint is recommended to reduce the loss of active grazing land.*
- *The LSA Access (Traffic) Study recommends no modifications for the intersection of SR-84/Sears Ranch Road.*
- *The LSA Access (Traffic) Study recommends widening Sears Ranch Road to 20 feet between the La Honda Elementary School and the existing parking lot.*
- *San Mateo County's Active Transportation Plan evaluated pedestrian safety in downtown La Honda and included recommendations for addressing the disconnected/inaccessible walking network along SR-84/Sears Ranch Road and the safety of pedestrians crossing SR-84 at Sears Ranch Road. Midpen can consider working with Caltrans to identify potential improvements for pedestrian access.*
- *Where more than 10,000 square feet of new impervious areas are added or replaced, stormwater runoff treatment and detention should be considered.*
- *Any tree impacts should be minimized, and mitigation should follow San Mateo County requirements.*

3.2 SITE D

Site D appears to be feasible to continue studying for development potential. From a traffic safety standpoint, the site can maximize sight lines (for drivers waiting in the driveway) for the SR-84 traffic speeds if the driveway is moved 50 feet north of Preserve Gate LH07 and the stop bar in the driveway is recessed to accommodate a right-turn pocket. Moving the driveway north 50 feet meets sight distance for drivers in the driveway to the southbound lanes but not for the northbound lanes; therefore, additional traffic devices and warnings focused on the travel speed of vehicles on the highway could also be implemented to address safety concerns. With these devices and warnings, northbound vehicles on the highway would have the stopping sight distance and time to see the driveway and to stop and slow if someone is making a left in front of them from the driveway.

This site has a moderately flat area suitable for a paved parking lot with room to treat stormwater while also avoiding the adjacent wetland channel. Many larger, densely packed trees that would need to be

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removed for development are invasive or fire hazard trees. Removing them would provide a fire management benefit through CALFIRE's program. Perimeter trees could be retained for shade, and new native vegetation could be planted to assist with screening.



Site D & Bridge Site

Figure 3-D-1 Site D and the Bridge Site. Also see Figures: 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3

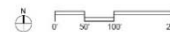


Figure 3-D-2 Site D facing south under existing canopy

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Figure 3-D-3 Site D facing west at Preserve Gate LH07



Figure 3-D-4 Site D facing north at SR-84

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Figure 3-D-5 Site D facing south at SR-84

Opportunities

- The site is centrally located within the Preserve.
- An existing flat area with a wide highway shoulder is ideal for a parking lot, which would be the only one of the four sites able to support a restroom.
- The area is shaded with existing tree canopy.
- The proposed parking area can avoid jurisdictional waters.

Constraints/Challenges

- Safe access to SR-84.
- Since the short, upper section of the existing ranch road is not owned by Midpen, plan for a new trail connection from the future parking lot to a Midpen-owned portion of the existing ranch road or investigate additional property rights for public access over the ranch road if a new trail connection is not feasible.
- Protection of the nearby creek.
- Potential deep landslides and areas of significant instability may require mitigation measures for the planned development. Conduct a more extensive geotechnical study and prepare design of mitigation measures.

Recommendations

- *Avoid off-site soil fill to prevent soil-borne disease and introduction of invasive species at the site.*
- *Conceptual designs should strive to balance cut and fill.*
- *Borings are recommended to characterize subsurface conditions for areas of development to identify remediation or avoidance. Obtain a County and Caltrans (if in ROW) permit for 3 borings estimated depth of 20 to 30 feet to characterize subsurface materials for proposed parking lot area, restroom foundation, and potential retaining walls.*
- *Designs should consider slope inclinations of 3:1 (horizontal: vertical) or shallower unless supported by retention structures or using geogrid reinforced engineered fill.*

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- *Avoid areas of significant instability.*
- *The colluvium / landslide deposit needs further exploration.*
- *Remediation measures to address the identified instabilities may include segmental block or cast-in-place concrete wall supported with pier and grade and buried stabilization piles. The selection of remedial or stabilization measures will depend on the planned improvements configuration and findings from the subsurface exploration and engineering analysis.*
- *The development of a trail is feasible, but a potential deep landslide and areas of significant instability could increase the level of maintenance needed.*
- *Access easements or agreements may be required.*
- *The Level of Service at the proposed driveway would be within Caltrans standards.*
- *The driveway is recommended to be placed 50 feet north of Preserve Gate LH07 to improve sight distance to the southbound lanes.*
- *No queue for northbound left-turn vehicles is anticipated according to Highway Capacity Manual Methodology and a left-turn pocket is not warranted.*
- *A short right-turn pocket (25 feet) with an abbreviated (60 feet) transition into and out of the driveway would maximize sight distance from the driveway to SR-84.*
- *A full deceleration and acceleration lane is not recommended because it could be used as a passing lane, reducing road safety.*
- *The Access (Traffic) Study recommends installing advance warning sign combination W2-2, warning beacon, and W16-13P "When Flashing" at both northbound and southbound approaches and interconnecting warning beacon to the loop detector at the exit lane in the driveway.*
- *Midpen can consider working with Caltrans to determine whether features would be added to the state highway to prevent passing at this location as part of the project.*
- *Where more than 10,000 square feet of new impervious areas are added or replaced, stormwater runoff treatment and detention should be considered.*
- *Any tree impacts should be minimized, and mitigation should follow San Mateo County requirements.*

3.3 SITE D BRIDGE

The rail car bridge at Site D appears to be feasible to replace if the abutments of the new bridge are outside the Ordinary High-Water Mark (OHWM) and above the top-of-bank of La Honda Creek. The existing bridge could be removed in segments, and access to the site is reasonable. Both a pedestrian and vehicular bridge will be studied.

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Figure 3-Br-1 Bridge over La Honda Creek at Site D. Also see Figures: 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3



Figure 3-Br-2 Bridge over La Honda Creek at Site D facing west

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Figure 3-Br-3 Bridge over La Honda Creek at Site D facing east

Opportunities

- Replacing the bridge can allow for vehicle and/or pedestrian access.
- The existing, wide access road provides access for a crane to remove the bridge in segments.

Constraints/Challenges

- The bridge was assessed previously and is currently zero-rated by a structural engineer and needs to be replaced before it can be used for public access.
- Any abutments would need to be outside the Ordinary High-Water Mark (OHWM) and above the top-of-bank of the creek to avoid potential impacts to state and federal Waters and associated permitting with the USACE and RWQCB. A CDFW permit would likely still be required. The CDFW permit could possibly be done using existing permit coverage under the Open Space Maintenance and Restoration Program Manual. If federal jurisdiction cannot be avoided, it is recommended that this bridge become a standalone project and not combined with the parking area, which does not have a federal jurisdiction.
- The local geotechnical mapping reconnaissance was hindered by heavy vegetation cover and thus the initial assessment cannot exclude the potential for landslides and other site conditions that may have an impact on the development of the area.
- The existing rail car cannot be reused due to the need for a longer span. Removal of the rail car will likely require lead abatement.

Recommendations

- *Avoid off-site soil fill to prevent soil-borne disease and introduction of invasive species at the site.*
- *Conceptual designs should strive to balance cut and fill.*
- *Borings are recommended to characterize subsurface conditions for areas of development at abutment locations. Obtain a County permit for 2 borings estimated depth of 30 to 45 feet to characterize bridge abutments.*
- *Where more than 10,000 square feet of new impervious areas are added or replaced, stormwater runoff treatment and detention should be considered.*
- *The bridge design should avoid working in the OHWM and be above the top-of-bank of La Honda Creek. North of the bridge is a jurisdictional non-wetland swale, which should also be avoided.*
- *Any tree impacts should be minimized, and mitigation should follow San Mateo County requirements.*

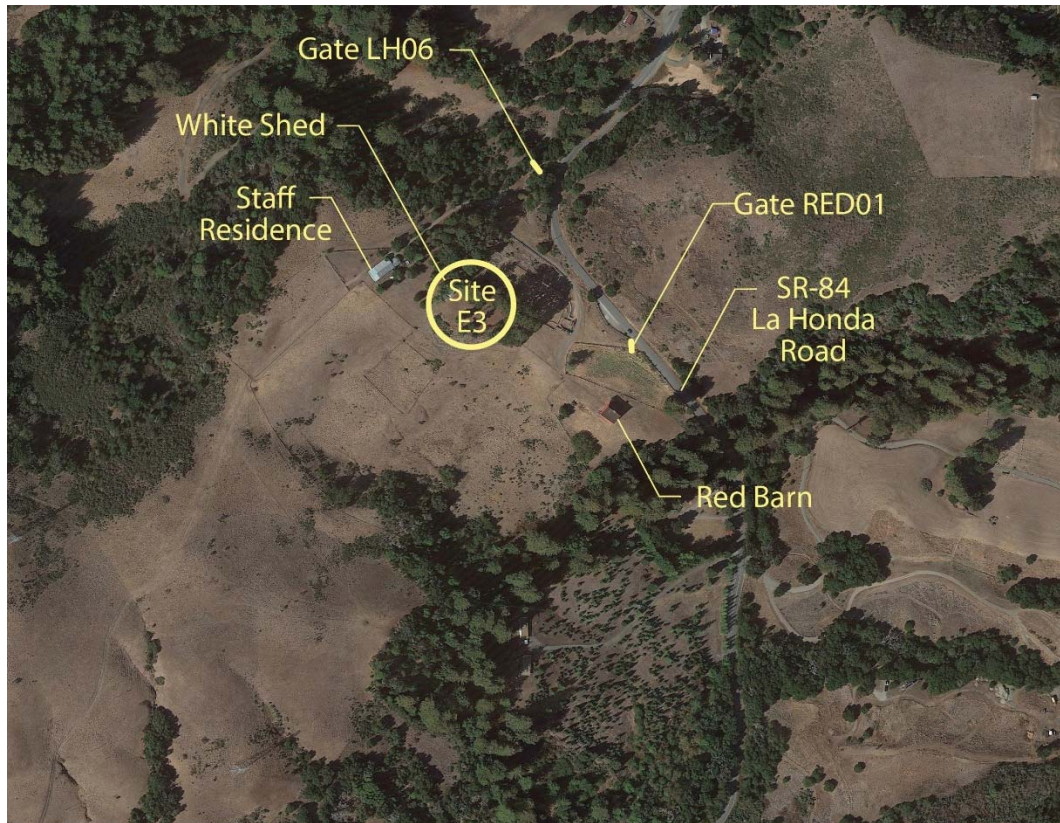
3.4 SITE E3

Site E3 appears to be feasible to continue studying for development potential for limited access only. From a traffic safety standpoint, traffic volumes are expected to be low enough that no queue would form on SR-84 of vehicles trying to enter the site if using a one-way entrance and one-way exit system. The Access (Traffic) Study does not recommend either driveway include left- and right-turn restrictions, as no feasible location within a reasonable distance from Site E3 along SR-84 could be found that would accommodate u-turns. Similar to Site D, traffic devices and warning improvements to slow traffic on SR-84 and prevent speeding and illegal passing could address safety concerns. Restricting the number of

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visitors at any given time with permit/docent-led event reservations also helps manage capacity and trip generation.

The site has a small area hidden by vegetation that would be ideal for a small parking area. Since many of the trees providing existing screening are recommended to be removed in part due to fire safety, new native vegetation could be planted to maintain the screening as viewed from the highway.



Site E3

Figure 3-E3-1 Site E3. Also see Figures: 5.1a, 5.1b, 5.2a, 5.2b, 5.3a, and 5.3b

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Figure 3-E3-2 Site E3 access drive at Preserve Gate LH06 facing southwest



Figure 3-E3-3 Site E3 behind trees from top of dirt access drive facing southeast

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Figure 3-E3-4 Site E3 existing dirt access drive at midway point facing north



Figure 3-E3-5 Site E3 existing dirt access drive to level area facing north

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Figure 3-E3-6 Site E3 level area of proposed parking and white shed facing west



Figure 3-E3-7 Site E3 level area of proposed parking and existing trees facing east

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Figure 3-E3-8 Site E3 Red Barn from level area of proposed parking facing southeast



Figure 3-E3-9 Site E3 existing gravel exit drive to Preserve Gate RED01 facing southeast

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Figure 3-E3-10 Site E3 existing entry drive at Preserve Gate LH06 facing northbound on SR-84



Figure 3-E3-11 Site E3 existing entry drive at Preserve Gate LH06 facing southbound on SR-84

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Figure 3-E3-12 Site E3 existing exit drive at Preserve Gate RED01 facing northbound on SR-84



Figure 3-E3-13 Site E3 existing exit drive at Preserve Gate RED01 facing southbound on SR-84

Opportunities

- Provide access to view the Red Barn structure.
- Potential site to access a future connection to the Bay Area Ridge Trail corridor.
- New native plantings can address loss of screening due to CALFIRE tree removal that is part of their ongoing fuel reduction efforts; otherwise, existing vegetation can serve to screen the proposed parking area.
- Driveway improvements can enhance sight lines at SR-84 and improve access to the proposed parking area.
- Traffic calming and speed reduction enhancements can enhance traffic safety.

Constraints/Challenges

- The La Honda community raised concerns about traffic safety and aesthetics during the planning process for the 2018 Red Barn Public Access Project and during the 2019/2020 PAWG process.
- Excessive speed and illegal passing occur at this location.
- Avoid extensive grading that could visually impact the aesthetic view of the Red Barn.
- Ensure the existing staff residence will not be affected by the new public access.
- Ensure existing grazing tenant operations are considered when site planning.
- Avoid or mitigate shallow slumps, since these limit the area of development.
- When the internal area is open to the public, highway shoulder parking would need to be prohibited to dissuade visitors from parking on the roadway to enter the Preserve.

Recommendations

- *Avoid off-site soil fill to prevent soil-borne disease and introduction of invasive species at the site.*
- *Conceptual designs should strive to balance cut and fill.*
- *Borings are recommended to characterize subsurface conditions for areas of development to identify remediation or avoidance. Obtain a County and Caltrans (if in ROW) permit for 3 borings estimated depth of 10 to 30 feet to characterize subsurface materials for proposed parking lot area and access driveway. Obtain a County and Caltrans (if in ROW) permit for 2 borings estimated depth of 45 feet to characterize area of Bay Area Ridge Trail crossing.*
- *For either type of programming, the Level of Service at the proposed driveways would be within Caltrans standards.*
- *No queue for northbound left-turn vehicles is anticipated according to Highway Capacity Manual Methodology, and a left-turn pocket is not warranted.*
- *The Access (Traffic) Study recommends installing advance warning sign combination W2-2, warning beacon, and W16-13P "When Flashing" at both northbound and southbound approaches to the exit driveway and interconnecting warning beacon to the loop detector at the exit lanes.*
- *On-site observation shows that some vehicles are attempting to pass over a solid yellow line at this location. A barrier would need to be designed to accommodate left-turns out of the exiting driveway. Midpen can consider working with Caltrans to determine whether features would be added to the state highway to prevent passing at this location as part of the project.*
- *Highway shoulder parking would need to be prohibited to dissuade visitors from parking on the roadway to enter the Preserve when the internal area is open to the public.*

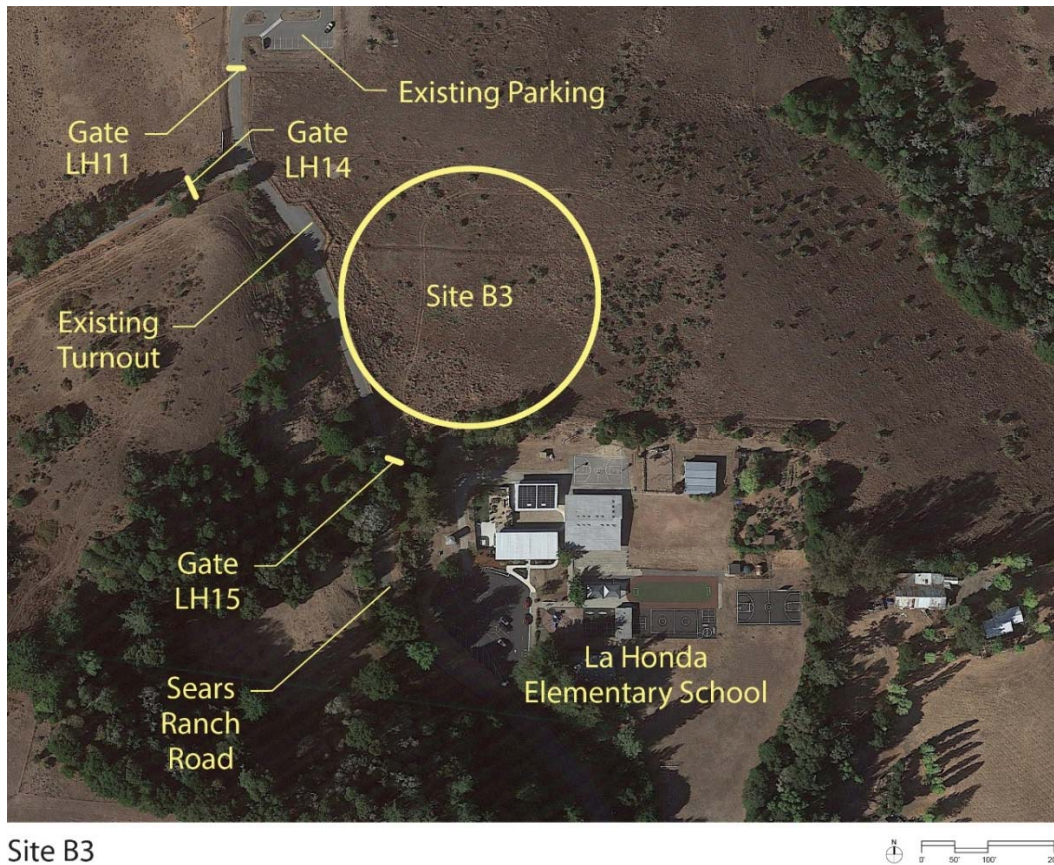
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- Storm drainage patterns should match existing conditions and any new outfalls include conveyance and dissipation to reduce potential for erosion.
- Where more than 10,000 square feet of new impervious areas are added or replaced, stormwater runoff treatment and detention should be considered.
- Any tree impacts should be minimized, and mitigation should follow San Mateo County requirements.
- Midpen's IPM and Wildland Fire Resiliency Program Plan recommend fuel reduction of the trees.

Site not recommended to move forward to evaluate:

3.5 SITE B3

Site B3 should be avoided for development of a parking area and is not recommended to move forward in the next feasibility study phase due to the jurisdictional seep wetland.



Site B3

Figure 3-B3-1 Site B3. Also see Figures: 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3

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Figure 3-B3-2 Site B3 facing north at Sears Ranch Road and Preserve Gate LH15



Figure 3-B3-3 Site B3 facing south at Sears Ranch Road with school behind

Constraints/Challenges

- Site B3 should be avoided due to the jurisdictional seep wetland affecting the buildability of any parking area improvements at this location; therefore, limited analysis is included for this site.
- Road widening of the Sears Ranch Road entryway to accommodate equestrian trailer access; identifying property ownership and, if necessary, negotiating access for road improvements.
- Providing safe access for equestrian trailers entering and existing SR-84 at Sears Ranch Road.
- Potential impacts (visual, traffic, circulation) to the school due to its close proximity.
- Avoiding or mitigating numerous shallow slumps and shallow landslides along Sears Ranch Road, since these limit the area of development.
- Site B3 may be the site of a future well to provide water for the grazing tenant's operation.

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4.0 NEXT STEPS

Pending the PNR Committee's concurrence with the three sites recommended in this report to continue studying for development potential, RHAA will advance into design and evaluation and develop conceptual design plan alternatives. Input received from the PNR Committee and members of the public on this report's findings will be considered and incorporated into this design and evaluation phase of work.

Conceptual design plan alternatives will be brought back to the PNR Committee for additional Committee and public feedback with the goal of assessing site feasibility of the three recommended sites and selecting a preferred alternative for each to forward to the Board for consideration. Once feasibility and a preferred alternative for each feasible site is affirmed by the Board, environmental review would be conducted.



Figure 4-1 Existing trailhead at Sears Ranch Road

5.0 EXHIBIT A – DETAILED EXISTING CONDITIONS BY SITE

The following is a site-by-site synthesis of existing conditions based on the most current and past technical studies. The analysis of existing conditions is separated into three categories (site characteristics, site circulation, and environmental resources) to cover specific information regarding site characteristics and land use, traffic and access organization, and the waters and habitats that require special permitting, agency consultation, and policy considerations with each of these categories. A list of applicable policies, agency consultations, or recommendations are also included as applicable for each site. Refer to the Existing Conditions/Opportunities and Constraints Plans (Figures 1.1 – 5.3b) and Appendices for additional information.

5.1 SITE B2

Site B2 appears to be the best site for equestrian parking as well as overflow parking for the existing Sears Ranch Road parking area. The site poses minimal to no concerns regarding potential impacts to sensitive environmental resources.

5.1.1 SITE B2 – SITE CHARACTERISTICS

5.1.1(1) Site B2 – Land Ownership

The seven-acre site is located within La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve APN 078 290 060 at the end of Sears Ranch Road, fully within Midpen lands. No parcel adjustments are needed for a parking lot.

The Access (Traffic) Study indicates that the entryway from Sears Ranch Road would need to be widened to 20 feet minimum to meet San Mateo County Fire standards and to accommodate two-way traffic, which would be necessary based on the number of trips generated. Access easements or agreements may be needed. Widening Sears Ranch Road may affect APN 078 290 050, APN 078 290 060, and APN 083 361 110, which are owned by Midpen, and APN 083 361 070, which is owned by an adjoining neighbor. Entryway improvements would potentially affect existing fencing and involve some grading or retaining walls on the east side.

Applicable Policies

- *Access easements or agreements, if needed*

Agency Consultations

- *San Mateo County Planning and Building Permitting (work in right-of-way)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.1.1(2) Site B2 – Site Access

Site B2 is accessed from Sears Ranch Road, which in turn is accessed from SR-84. The intersection of SR-84/Sears Ranch Road is a two-way stop-controlled intersection where the west leg (Sears Ranch Road) and the eastern leg (Entrada Way) of the intersection have stop signs and SR-84 is free-flowing. The PAWG selected the B sites for equestrian parking because vehicles with trailers would be pulling out of the driveway onto Sears Ranch Road rather than SR-84.

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Applicable Policies

- *None*

Agency Consultations

- *San Mateo County Planning and Building Permitting (work in right-of-way)*
- *San Mateo County Fire*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.1.1(3) Site B2 – Natural Boundaries

The site has a large slope on the east side and two roads along the eastern and southern perimeter. The eastern road at the end of Sears Ranch Road is the main access point. The southern road is a private drive to the staff residence, which is tree-lined along its border.

Applicable Policies

- *None*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.1.1(4) Site B2 – Site Topography

The top of the Sears Ranch Road entryway has a level high point. The flatter portion of the site (2 – 7% slope) sits below a large 250-foot-wide slope (20 – 30% slope) west of that high point. The existing grazing access road on the north has a 5 – 10% slope, and the portion of the slope to get down to the flat area is 12 – 16%. Water drains down the eastern slope and accumulates on the southern portion of the site. Development of this southern area should be avoided. Slopes west of the site drop away into an ephemeral tributary of Harrington Creek.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Policies, SA-1 (minimize evidence of human impacts within preserves)*
- *Resource Management Policies, FM-3 (ensure forest management activities are compatible with riparian ecosystem and water resources protection and policies)*
- *Resource Management Policies, WR-2, (manage human activities to control erosion)*

Recommendations

- *Avoid off-site soil fill to prevent soil-borne disease and introduction of invasive species at the site.*
- *Conceptual designs should strive to balance cut and fill.*

5.1.1(5) Site B2 – Viewsheds and Scenic Corridors

From an adjacent peak to the west, a parking lot at Site B2 would be visible. The parking lot would also be visible from the existing barn and trail from within the site. Screening a parking lot would help reduce views of the parking lots from these sites.

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Applicable Policies

- *La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan, AES-4 (screening in scenic corridors)*
- *San Mateo County General Plan, Visual Quality Policies, Scenic Corridor*
- *Resource Management Policies, Scenic Aesthetic Resources*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.1.1(6) Site B2 – Site Screening

To maintain viewsheds of natural elements from the nearby peaks to the west, a potential parking lot should be screened on the west and north. However, the PAWG suggests keeping unobstructed views of the barn and pond from the existing parking lot, so those trees may block this view. A balance of screening will need to be determined. Existing trees on the south should be retained unless such time that they are incorporated into future fire resiliency or integrated pest management work. The east slope between the site and the existing parking lot creates a natural site screen.

Applicable Policies

- *La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan, AES-3 (screening of staging areas)*
- *La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan, AES-4 (screening in scenic corridors)*
- *Resource Management Policies, SA-1 (minimize the evidence of human impacts within preserves)*
- *Resource Management Policies, FM-1 (fire and fuel management to protect the public)*
- *Integrated Pest Management Guidance Manual, IPM-1 – Manage pests in fuel management areas to reduce risk to human life and property, while also protecting natural resources.*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.1.1(7) Site B2 – Exposure and Shading

The site has a west facing exposure, mild climate, and limited tree cover. When the existing parking lot was built, no additional tree canopy/shade was required or added.

Applicable Policies

- *None*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.1.1(8) Site B2 – Geological Conditions

Site B2 has documented shallow slump failures and shallow landslides within the planned areas of improvement from the reconnaissance research. However, most of the slope instabilities and other hazards identified can be avoided or maintained with retaining walls. In 2016, LANGAN noted moderately to highly expansive clay loam. Pavement profiles were provided. This report notes the potential of expansive soils to impact structures and pavements and long-term impacts, including maintenance due to soil creep. Additional information is available in the appendix, Preliminary Geologic and Geotechnical Assessment Report, Cal Engineering & Geology, March 2022.

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Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Policies GS-1, Measure 1 (minimize construction of major improvements to avoid high risk areas)*
- *Resource Management Policies, GS-2 (minimize soil erosion and sedimentation)*

Recommendations

- *Borings are recommended to characterize subsurface conditions to identify remediation or avoidance.*
- *The LANGAN report identified that areas of artificial fill may require remediation via earthwork or the development of retention structures.*
- *If needed, use of steel beam and walls may be considered depending on the final design configuration and the results of the geotechnical investigation and analysis.*

5.1.1(9) Site B2 – Land Use

Grazing Operations: Grazing tenants currently use the site. Any improvements would need cattle guards, gates, and fencing to keep the livestock out of the parking area.

Existing structures: The existing barn and grazing access road will need to remain open and accessible to the tenants.

Staff Residence: The staff residence and driveway southwest of the site will need to remain private access only.

Existing Parking Lot: The existing Sears Ranch Road parking lot should remain open during any improvements. If needed, the lot may be closed for specific construction activities, with any closures kept to a minimum.

Proximity to La Honda Elementary School: Any improvements will need to avoid and minimize traffic and circulation impacts to the school.

Trail users: Trails are currently open to hikers and equestrians, with seasonal dog access on the Grasshopper Loop Trail. In the future, when mountain bikes are introduced as a new use, preserve visitation and trip generation are anticipated to increase.

Applicable Policies

- *San Mateo County General Plan, 6.12 (minimize agricultural land use conflicts)*
- *Resource Management Policies, GM-7 (public access to minimize impacts on grazing operations)*

Recommendations

- *Designing a new parking area with a minimal footprint is recommended to reduce the loss of active grazing land.*

5.1.1(10) Site B2 – Utilities

Any improvements will need to work with the existing storm drainage and utility poles on the site. Sears Ranch Road has a drainage ditch on the west side that would need to be reinstated should the road be widened. Consideration of a parking area at this location opens the opportunity to remove/underground

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utility lines that extend from this area toward the interior of the Preserve, completing Objective PA-7.2 *Remove obstructions to important viewshed* within the Master Plan.

Site B2 may be the site of a future well to provide water for the grazing tenant's operation. Well infrastructure would need to be coordinated with any planned parking and trailhead improvements.

Agency Consultations

- *San Mateo County Planning and Building*
- *Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.1.2 SITE B2 – SITE CIRCULATION

5.1.2(1) Site B2 – Roadway Safety and Sight Distance

Road safety due to speed and illegal passing on SR-84 is a PAWG and La Honda community concern that was carefully considered in LSA's 2022 Access (Traffic) Study. Collision data between 2017 and 2021 was examined. Within that period, two sideswipe collisions occurred at the intersection of SR-84/Sears Ranch Road when a vehicle was attempting to pass in the intersection. Traffic speeds appear to be more moderate along Sears Ranch Road. On Sears Ranch Road, the travel speed was observed to be 22 mph when surveyed in November 2021. Based on the observed traffic volumes on SR-84 and the anticipated inbound and outbound traffic at the site, delays and the level of service at the intersection of SR-84/Sears Ranch Road are anticipated to be within Caltrans standards. Queues for all movements at the intersection are anticipated to be less than one vehicle according to Highway Capacity Manual methodology. This means that the project is not expected to result in an operational traffic impact to the intersection, and no physical improvements would be required.

The Access (Traffic) Study concluded that additional traffic generated by a new parking lot to SR-84 from Sears Ranch Road would not degrade the intersection performance, even considering school traffic and highest volumes on Saturdays. No additional turn lane is recommended on Sears Ranch Road.

Currently, vehicles making a left-turn from Sears Ranch Road onto northbound SR-84 find sight distance to the south to be limited. Drivers stopped at the intersection first look left to confirm no vehicles are approaching southbound on the highway, then roll into the southbound lane and look right to confirm no vehicles are approaching northbound before completing their left-turn. Because the collision data shows two collisions from illegal passing in the intersection, and adding a center turn median on SR-84 would potentially encourage more people to illegally pass at the intersection, no modifications are recommended. There is sufficient line of sight once entering the southbound lane to check for northbound traffic.

The Sears Ranch Road entryway to Site B2 between the elementary school and the existing parking lot narrows from 32 feet to a range of 12 feet to 20 feet. The existing Sears Ranch Road parking lot received an exemption from San Mateo County from their requirement to widen the road by installing a turnout instead. The B2 lot trip generation estimates show 52 inbound and 46 outbound trips during the busiest hour, which would occur on weekends. At this volume of traffic, simultaneous inbound and outbound

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trips on Sears Ranch Road are likely to occur and the single lane sections of Sears Ranch Road would not be adequate. Therefore, the Access (Traffic) Study recommends widening to 20 feet between the school and existing parking lot. This will meet San Mateo County Fire standards and provide one travel lane in each direction to accommodate horse trailer access on the portion of road.

Applicable Policies

- *Caltrans Highway Design Manual, Chapter 4, Policy 405.1 (sight distance)*
- *San Mateo County, Active Transportation (pedestrian safety improvements)*
- *San Mateo County Public Works/Office of Education, Safe Route to School (Sears Ranch Road is a designated route)*

Agency Consultations

- *Caltrans*
- *San Mateo County Fire*
- *La Honda Fire Brigade*
- *San Mateo County Planning and Building*

Recommendations

- *The Access (Traffic) Study recommends no modifications for the intersection of SR-84/Sears Ranch Road.*
- *The Access (Traffic) Study recommends widening Sears Ranch Road to 20 feet between the La Honda Elementary School and the existing Sears Ranch Road parking lot if an additional parking area is constructed.*
- *San Mateo County's Active Transportation Plan evaluated pedestrian safety in downtown La Honda and included recommendations for addressing the disconnected/inaccessible walking network along SR-84/Sears Ranch Road and the safety of pedestrians crossing SR-84 at Sears Ranch Road. Midpen can consider working with Caltrans to identify potential improvements for pedestrian access.*

5.1.2(2) Site B2 – Entry/Exit Access Patterns

Access to the site would be from the Preserve Gate LH11 at the end of Sears Ranch Road. After the elementary school, Sears Ranch Road narrows from 32 feet to a range of 12 feet to 20 feet. A parking area at Site B2 would require San Mateo County Fire and Planning review and a determination on widening the stretch of Sears Ranch Road that lies beyond the school.

Agency Consultations

- *San Mateo County Fire*
- *La Honda Fire Brigade*
- *San Mateo County Planning and Building*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.1.2(3) Site B2 – Emergency Access

Any new roads would need to meet San Mateo County Fire minimum width, maximum length, turning radius, and turn around specifications. Any new gates would need to provide San Mateo County Fire access.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Policies, FM-1 (fire and fuel management to protect the public)*

Agency Consultations

- *San Mateo County Fire*
- *La Honda Fire Brigade*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.1.3 SITE B2 – ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

5.1.3(1) Site B2 – Wetlands and Waters and Riparian Setbacks

No jurisdictional waters lie within Site B2. Potential jurisdictional waters exist along the west side of Sears Ranch Road and include a non-wetland swale. If the road is widened, modification of this drainage feature may require permit approvals.

Widening of the Sears Ranch Road entryway may impact the 50-foot and 100-foot setbacks for a wetland seep that is located along a coterminous border with the nearby school. If the road is widened along the west, it will need to remain outside the 50-foot setback and undergo permitting.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Policies, WR-1, Measure 1 (inventory features that can affect water resources)*
- *Resource Management Policies, WR-7 (preserve wetland and ponds)*
- *Resource Management Policies, FM-3 (ensure forest management activities are compatible with riparian ecosystem and water resources protection and policies)*
- *IS/MND, Mitigation Measure BIO-6*

Agency Consultations

- *San Mateo County Planning and Building*
- *Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)*
- *US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.1.3(2) Site B2 – Site Drainage

Water on the site drains east to west by sheet flow.

Applicable Policies

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- *Resource Management Plan, WR-2 (restore hydrologic processes altered by human activity)*

Recommendations

- *Storm drainage patterns should match existing conditions and any new outfalls should include conveyance and dissipation to reduce potential for erosion.*

5.1.3(3) Site B2 – Water Quality

Any impervious surface would meet stormwater runoff treatment and detention requirements.

Applicable Policies

- *San Mateo Countywide, C.3 Regulated Projects Guide*

Recommendations

- *Where more than 10,000 square feet of new impervious areas are added or replaced, stormwater runoff treatment and detention should be considered.*

5.1.3(4) Site B2 – Plant Communities and Critical Habitat

Site B2 is comprised of Valley and Foothill Grassland (sloped and flat area) and Closed Cone Pine Forest (trees along staff residence access road). Sears Ranch Road has Valley Foothill Grassland (along the road edge) and Coastal Scrub and Cismontane Woodland (along the western side of the road). The area is being grazed by cattle.

Sensitive natural communities observed near Site B2 include Creeping Rye Grass, which is considered sensitive by California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and under CEQA.

This site is designated as critical habitat for California red-legged frog (CRLF) by the USFWS. Critical habitat is a tool that supports the continued conservation of imperiled species by guiding cooperation within the federal government. Designations affect only federal agency actions or federally funded or permitted activities (USFWS).

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, VM-1 (maintain the diversity of native plant communities)*
- *Resource Management Plan, WM-2 (protect, maintain, and enhance habitat features)*
- *Resource Management Plan, HC-2 (identify and protect existing habitat networks to prevent further compromise of ecosystem integrity)*
- *Integrated Pest Management Guidance Manual policies (retaining dead trees / snags, and size restrictions / evaluations to avoid the removal of large trees)*

Agency Consultations

- *US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)*
- *US Fish and Wildlife Service*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.1.3(5) Site B2 – Heritage/Significant Trees

Significant Trees (>38" DBH) and Heritage Trees (DBH varies per species) impacted by removal or proposed development would need to be mitigated.

Site B2 has two Significant Trees that can be avoided. Both trees are *Pinus radiata*. CNPS considers *P. radiata* a rare species ranked 1B.1 (G1/S1) within native stands at Ano Nuevo, Cambria, and the Monterey Peninsula. Outside of these three native stands, the species is considered an invasive. Due to potential genetic integrity issues, Midpen biologists recommends that *P. radiata* be removed.

The Sears Ranch Road right-of-way has two Heritage Trees that could potentially be affected by road widening. One of the Heritage Trees is a Coast Live Oak. The other one of the Heritage Trees is a Bay tree, which is a primary vector for Sudden Oak Death. Given its location and high exposure to Sudden Oak Death, it is recommended to be removed by Midpen biologists.

Applicable Policies

- *San Mateo County Planning, Heritage Tree Ordinance*
- *San Mateo County Planning, Significant Tree Ordinance*
- *Resource Management Plan, IPM-2 (prevent introduction of new pest species)*
- *Resource Management Plan, M-1 (review and consider all applicable District Policies, programmatic permits, and CEQA documents to develop the project scope, incorporating the following practices (listed in order of priority): avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation of potential impacts)*
- *Resource Management Plan, M-4 (develop a compensatory mitigation strategy as a measure of last resort)*

Agency Consultations

- *San Mateo County Planning*

Recommendations

- *Minimize impacts.*
- *Mitigation should follow San Mateo County requirements.*

5.1.3(6) Site B2 – Special Status Plants

Development of Site B2 would not impact special-status plants, since none were found during the protocol-level plant surveys completed in 2021.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, FM-2 (conduct surveys for special status species)*
- *Resource Management Plan, VM-3 (identify location and condition of special status plants and their habitats)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.1.3(7) Site B2 – Invasive Plant Species

No representative invasive weeds are within the project site; however, there are invasive species found within the site that have a distinct boundary and are wide-spread and unmappable, such as poison hemlock, bull thistle, *Avena spp*, *Torilis*, *Centaurea spp*, and *Helminthotheca*.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, IPM-2 (prevent introduction of new pest species)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.1.3(8) Site B2 – Wildlife Corridor

No designated wildlife corridors for specific species have been identified; however, allowing general wildlife movement should be considered when designing fencing, culverts, underpasses, and other measures. Frogs and turtles found in the surrounding ponds are presumed to move across the landscape to and from other ponds, creeks, and upland features.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, HC-2 (prevent existing habitat networks)*
- *Resource Management Plan, WM-1 (maintain the diversity of native wildlife)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.1.3(9) Site B2 – Special Status Animals

The Biological Resources Habitat Assessment evaluated 35 special status wildlife species, most of which could migrate through, forage, and breed at the site. These should continue to be monitored.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, FM-2 (conduct surveys for special status species)*
- *Resource Management Plan, WM-4 (protect and enhance habitats and populations of special-status animal species)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.1.3(10) Site B2 – Sensitive Bird Resources

Any tree removal would have seasonal restrictions to limit impacts on nesting birds. Pre-construction surveys for birds would set limits on tree removal and pruning to avoid nesting and active acorn granary usage.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, FM-2 (conduct surveys for special status species)*

Recommendations

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- *None*

5.1.3(11) Site B2 – Roosting Bats

Suitable habitat for roosting, hibernating, and foraging habitat may be present on site and should be monitored.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, FM-2 (conduct surveys for special status species)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.1.3(12) Site B2 – Roadway Noise

No roadway noise from SR-84 would affect Site B2.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, SA-3 (minimize unnatural noise)*
- *San Mateo County Noise Ordinance*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.1.3(13) Site B2 – Cultural Resources

No cultural resource constraints were identified. The Cultural Resources Survey Study does not recommend monitoring. If archaeological deposits or Native American human remains are identified during project construction, Midpen would implement Master Plan Environmental Protection Guidelines.

Applicable Policies

- *La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan, CUL-1 (protocol for unexpected discovery of archaeological and paleontological cultural materials)*
- *La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan, CUL-2 (Native American burial plan)*
- *La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan, CUL-4 (manage potential impacts of short-term construction activities on historic resources)*
- *District-Wide Resource Management Policies, CR-3 (protect cultural resources from disturbance)*
- *La Honda Creek Master Plan Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration*
- *La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan, Environmental Protection Guidelines for Cultural Resources*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.1.3(14) Site B2 – State and Federal Environmental Permitting

There are no state/federal permitting jurisdictions near Site B2. Because there is no federal and State nexus associated with CDFW or USFWS permits, which would require a take permit and provide Midpen

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with take coverage, biomonitoring is likely needed to avoid take of federally and State listed special-status species that may be potentially encountered in the Preserve.

State/federal permitting jurisdictions that apply to the widening of Sears Ranch Road include those for the non-wetland swale (RWQCB) and seep wetland (USACE, CDFW, RWQCB). If the road widening affects the non-wetland swale, it would trigger the need for a RWQCB permit. No work is proposed in the seep wetland, and it would be avoided during project planning and construction, eliminating the need for other agency permits at this site.

Applicable Policies

- *State Clean Water Act*
- *La Honda Creek Master Plan Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, Mitigation Measure BIO-5*

Agency Consultations

- *Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.2 SITE B3

Site B3 should be avoided for development and is not recommended to move forward in the next feasibility study phase due to a jurisdictional seep wetland.

5.2.1 SITE B3 – SITE CHARACTERISTICS

5.2.1(1) Site B3 – Land Ownership

The 2.6-acre site is located within La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve APN 078 290 060 on Sears Ranch Road just north of the La Honda Elementary School. The Sears Ranch Road entryway beyond the school is recommended by the Access (Traffic) Study to be widened to 20 feet minimum, and this site forms part of the eastern boundary of the road. Gate access to Site B3 is within the County right-of-way. Along with existing fencing, this gate may be affected by possible road improvements triggered by development of Site B2.

Agency Consultations

- *San Mateo County Planning and Building Permit (work in right-of-way)*

5.2.1(2) Site B3 – Site Access

Site B3 is currently accessed from Sears Ranch Road at Preserve Gate LH15.

Applicable Policies

- *None*

5.2.1(3) Site B3 – Utilities

Site B3 may be the site of a future well to provide water for the grazing tenant's operation.

5.2.2 SITE B3 – SITE CIRCULATION

5.2.2(1) Site B3 – Roadway Safety and Sight Distance

The Sears Ranch Road entryway is recommended to be widened. Given the similarities to Site B2, See Site B2 recommendations.

5.2.3 SITE B3 – ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

5.2.3(1) Site B3 – Wetlands and Waters Riparian Setbacks

Jurisdictional waters prohibit the development of a parking lot. Widening of the Sears Ranch Road entryway would need to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts to the seep wetland.

5.3 SITE D

Site D appears to be feasible to continue studying for development potential. From a traffic safety standpoint, the site has improved sight lines to southbound SR-84 if the driveway is moved 50 feet north. A short southbound right-turn pocket would improve sight distance from the driveway to SR-84. Additional traffic devices and warnings could also improve the access. This site has a moderately flat area suitable for a paved parking lot with room to treat any stormwater while also avoiding an adjacent wetland channel. Many of the larger trees that would need to be removed for development are invasive and CALFIRE's fuel reduction project includes removing eucalyptus trees from Midpen lands, so removing these trees would provide a fire management benefit. Perimeter trees could be retained for shade, and new vegetation could be planted to assist with screening.

5.3.1 SITE D – SITE CHARACTERISTICS

5.3.1(1) Site D – Land Ownership

The 1.4-acre study area is located within La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve APN 078 280 110 along SR-84. The site is accessed at Preserve Gate LH07, and an existing access road extends westward to La Honda Creek and connects to the Preserve trail system via an existing bridge. The road passes through a portion of the adjacent property to the south, and Midpen currently has a Patrol Easement with the landowner at APN 078 190 210. If this road is used by the public, a new easement would be needed.

Recommendations

- *Identify if any access easements or agreements are needed.*

5.3.1(2) Site D – Site Access

Site D is currently accessed from SR-84 at an existing, unpaved driveway through Preserve Gate LH07.

Applicable Policies

- *None*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.3.1(3) Site D – Natural Boundaries

The site has a moderate slope with the highway on its eastern boundary and is defined by a moderate slope to the west and steep slopes on the northeast and northwest from the drainage channel.

Applicable Policies

- *None*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.3.1(4) Site D – Site Topography

The site slopes northeast to southwest following SR-84 at 6% - 10%. The grades naturally drop off at 3:1 to 1:1 towards La Honda Creek.

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Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, SA-1 (minimize evidence of human impacts within preserves)*
- *Resource Management Plan, FM-3 (ensure forest management activities are compatible with riparian ecosystem and water resources protection and policies)*
- *Resource Management Plan, WR-2, (manage human activities to control erosion)*

Recommendations

- *Avoid off-site soil fill to prevent soil-borne disease and introduction of invasive species at the site.*
- *Conceptual designs should strive to balance cut and fill.*

5.3.1(5) Site D – View Sheds and Scenic Corridors

Views from SR-84 Scenic Corridor are open towards Site D on the west. With the extensive tree cover, there are no views beyond the site to the west.

Applicable Policies

- *La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan, AES-4 (screening in scenic corridors)*
- *San Mateo County Scenic Corridor*
- *San Mateo County General Plan, Visual Quality Policies*
- *District-Wide Resource Management Plan, Scenic Aesthetic Resources*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.3.1(6) Site D – Site Screening

Maintain or add native vegetation along the perimeter of SR-84 to help obscure the potential parking lot. It should be noted that trees such as non-native Eucalyptus are planned to be removed as a separate project in coordination with CALFIRE and their ongoing fuel reduction efforts.

Applicable Policies

- *La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan, AES-3 (screening of staging areas)*
- *La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan, AES-4 (screening in scenic corridors)*
- *Resource Management Plan, SA-1 (minimize the evidence of human impacts within preserves)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.3.1(7) Site D – Exposure and Shading

The site has a west facing exposure, mild climate, and heavy tree cover. Retaining and planting native trees in this parking lot will help mitigate any tree loss.

Applicable Policies

- *None*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.3.1(8) Site D – Geological Conditions

Site D is feasible to build from a geotechnical standpoint. Borings are recommended to characterize subsurface conditions for areas of development to identify remediation or avoidance issues. The initial interpretation is that retaining walls should suffice to support the parking area upslope. Additional information is available in the appendix, Preliminary Geologic and Geotechnical Assessment Report, Cal Engineering & Geology, March 2022.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, GS-1, Measure 1 (minimize construction of major improvements to avoid high risk areas)*
- *Resource Management Plan, GS-2 (minimize soil erosion and sedimentation)*

Agency Consultations

- *Caltrans Encroachment Permit*

Recommendations

- *Borings are recommended to characterize subsurface conditions to identify remediation or avoidance.*
- *Designs should consider slope inclinations of 3:1 (horizontal: vertical) or shallower unless supported by retention structures or using geogrid reinforced engineered fill.*
- *Avoid areas of significant instability.*
- *The colluvium / landslide deposit needs further exploration.*
- *Remediation measures to address the identified instabilities may include segmental block or cast-in-place concrete wall supported with pier and grade and buried stabilization piles. The selection of remedial or stabilization measures will depend on the planned improvements configuration and findings from the subsurface exploration and engineering analysis.*
- *The development of a trailhead is feasible, but a potential deep landslide and areas of significant instability could increase the level of maintenance needed. A more extensive geotechnical study is needed to confirm the design.*

5.3.1(9) Site D – Land Use

Grazing Operations: Grazing tenants do not typically use the site for access. Since there are two grazing tenants nearby, there could be a potential for cattle to travel onto the site. Due to active grazing activities, a parking area would need cattle guard, gates, and fencing to keep livestock out.

Proximity to Neighbor: Part of the access road that leads into the property lies on the adjacent property owner's property. Any public access or use of the road would need an easement. Alternatively, a new trail can be created that would not require access over the portion of road not owned by Midpen.

Trail users: The access road that leads into the preserve is currently closed for public access, except for Midpen staff and Midpen-authorized consultants, contractors, grazing tenants, etc. Opening new areas and additional trail mileage within the preserve to public use is anticipated to increase the level of preserve visitation and trip generation.

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Applicable Policies

- *San Mateo County General Plan, 6.12 (minimize agricultural land use conflicts)*
- *Resource Management Plan, GM-7 (public access to minimize impacts on grazing operations)*

Recommendations

- *Access easements or agreements needed.*

5.3.1(10) Site D – Utilities

Any improvements will need to work with the existing utility poles and call box on site.

Agency Consultations

- *San Mateo County Planning and Building*
- *PG&E*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.3.2 SITE D – SITE CIRCULATION

5.3.2(1) Site D – Roadway Safety and Sight Distance

Road safety is a PAWG and La Honda community concern that was seriously considered in the Access (Traffic) Study because the historic number of collisions on SR-84 is higher than statewide average (although lower than nearby SR-35). This may be due in part to the average travel speed. Although the posted speed limit is 40 mph, the 85th percentile speed of vehicles near Site D was 50 mph.

Peak usage (on a weekend) is estimated to result in an increase of 20 inbound and 18 outbound trips during the busiest hour.

Based on the observed traffic volumes on SR-84, the anticipated inbound and outbound traffic at the site, and Highway Capacity Manual methodology, the delay and level of service for the proposed paved driveway is anticipated to be within Caltrans standards. Queues for inbound and outbound movements at the project driveway would be less than one vehicle according to Highway Capacity Manual methodology. This means that the traffic consultant does not anticipate the necessity for vehicles to stop on SR-84 waiting to turn into the site. On SR-84, no additional turn lanes or widening would be necessary to maintain traffic flow or level of service. A separate left-turn pocket is not warranted according to National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 279. The addition of a left-turn pocket on SR-84 would potentially encourage people to use the lane to pass illegally, so it is not recommended.

If public access to Site D is provided at the existing access point (Preserve Gate LH07), which is currently used by Midpen vehicles and grazing tenants, sight distance at the Site D driveway would not be sufficient for the current roadway speeds. Vehicles traveling south on SR-84 affect vehicles turning both left and right from Site D. Therefore, the driveway is recommended to be placed 50 feet north of Preserve Gate LH07 to improve sight distance to the southbound lanes. However, sight distance for northbound lanes is not met at the current prevailing speed, so advanced warning devices are recommended. With this modification, sufficient sight distance to the driveway would be provided so

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that vehicles on SR-84 would be able to stop if an obstruction is present (this is referred to as stopping sight distance). Sufficient sight distance to southbound traffic would be provided so that vehicles exiting the driveway and turning right would be able to choose a gap in traffic that would not cause a vehicle on SR-84 to alter velocity. However, vehicles exiting the driveway to turn left would not be able to see far enough to select a similar gap in northbound traffic. While northbound vehicles would have enough distance to slow, it is possible that slowing would be necessary if a vehicle exiting the driveway turns left in front of them.

Sight distance from the driveway is improved if vehicles stop short of the roadway. A short turn pocket (25 feet) with an abbreviated (60 feet) transition into and out of the driveway would place the stop bar farther back from SR-84 and maximize sight distance from the driveway to SR-84. A full deceleration and acceleration lane is not recommended because it could be used illegally as a passing lane, reducing road safety.

In order to provide the sight distance to the south to meet the intersection sight distance standard at the current prevailing speed, vegetation and earthwork would need to be removed from the hillside south of the project. It is likely that a retaining wall would need to be constructed to preserve the line of sight. However, the proposal to place the paved driveway 50 feet north of Gate LH07 and recess the stop bar would result in sufficient stopping sight distance, which is the minimum required to avoid a collision.

At this driveway, the Access (Traffic) Study recommends implementing a combination of elements from the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Specifically, a combination of roadway signage W2-2, W16-13P "When Flashing," and a warning beacon are recommended to be placed at the northbound and southbound approaches to Site D driveway. Loop detectors at the exiting lane would be interconnected with the warning beacon to alert vehicles on SR-84 to the presence of exiting vehicles. This would have a twofold effect. First, the warning beacon would have the effect of extending the sight distance from the roadway to the driveway. Second, knowledge of the presence of vehicles entering the roadway should cause vehicles on SR-84 to exercise caution and slow to the speed limit. This would reduce the necessary sight distance from the driveway to SR-84. By incorporating these design features, roadway safety can be maximized while fulfilling the La Honda Creek Master Plan goal to provide public access to the central area of the Preserve.

Applicable Policies

- *Caltrans Highway Design Manual, Chapter 4, Policy 405.1 (sight distance)*

Agency Consultations

- *Caltrans*
- *San Mateo County Fire*
- *La Honda Fire Brigade*
- *San Mateo County Planning and Building*

Recommendations

- *The Level of Service at the proposed driveway would be within Caltrans standards.*

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- *The driveway is recommended to be placed 50 feet north of Preserve Gate LH07 to improve sight distance to the southbound lanes.*
- *No queue for northbound left-turn vehicles is anticipated according to Highway Capacity Manual Methodology and a left-turn pocket is not warranted.*
- *A short turn pocket (25 feet) with an abbreviated (60 feet) transition into and out of the driveway would place the stop bar farther back, maximizing sight distance from the driveway to SR-84.*
- *A full deceleration and acceleration lane is not recommended because it could be used as a passing lane, reducing road safety.*
- *The Access (Traffic) Study recommends installing advance warning sign combination W2-2, warning beacon, and W16-13P "When Flashing" at both northbound and southbound approaches and interconnecting warning beacon to the loop detector at the exit lane.*

5.3.2(2) Site D – Entry/Exit Access Patterns

Shifting the driveway 50 feet to the north improves sight lines.

Agency Consultations

- *Caltrans*
- *San Mateo County Fire*
- *La Honda Fire Brigade*
- *San Mateo County Planning and Building*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.3.2(3) Site D – Emergency Access

Any new roads will need to meet San Mateo County Fire minimum width, maximum length, turning radius, and turn around specifications. Any new gates will need to have San Mateo County Fire access.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, FM-1 (fire and fuel management to protect the public)*

Agency Consultations

- *San Mateo County Fire*
- *La Honda Fire Brigade*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.3.2(4) Site D – Pump Truck Access

A new vault restroom would require pump truck access and a turnaround.

Applicable Policies

- *None*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.3.3 SITE D – ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

5.3.3(1) Site D – Wetlands and Waters and Riparian Setbacks

Potential jurisdictional waters near the site include a wetland channel to the north. The channel, however, is outside Site D. Any development should be setback 100 feet from the channel.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, WR-1, Measure 1 (inventory features that can affect water resources)*
- *Resource Management Plan, WR-7 (preserve wetland and ponds)*
- *Resource Management Plan, FM-3 (ensure forest management activities are compatible with riparian ecosystem and water resources protection and policies)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.3.3(2) Site D – Site Drainage

Water drains across the site to the west, eventually reaching La Honda Creek.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, WR-2 (restore hydrologic processes altered by human activity)*

Recommendations

- *Storm drainage patterns should match existing conditions and any new outfalls should include conveyance and dissipation to reduce the potential for erosion.*

5.3.3(3) Site D – Water Quality

Any impervious surface would likely require stormwater runoff treatment and detention.

Applicable Policies

- *San Mateo Countywide, C.3 Regulated Projects Guide*

Recommendations

- *Where more than 10,000 square feet of new impervious areas are added or replaced, stormwater runoff treatment and detention should be considered.*

5.3.3(4) Site D – Plant Communities and Critical Habitat

Site D is comprised of Cismontane Woodland (adjacent to the road at SR-84) and backed by North Coast Coniferous Forest / Redwood Forest (downhill towards La Honda Creek).

Sensitive natural communities include the Redwood Forest and Woodland. These plant communities are considered sensitive by CDFW and under CEQA.

This site is designated as critical habitat for California red-legged frog (CRLF) by the USFWS. Critical habitat is a tool that supports the continued conservation of imperiled species by guiding cooperation

within the federal government. Designations affect only federal agency actions or federally funded or permitted activities (USFWS).

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Policies, VM-1 (maintain the diversity of native plant communities)*
- *Resource Management Policies, WM-2 (protect, maintain, and enhance habitat features)*
- *Resource Management Policies, HC-2 (identify and protect existing habitat networks to prevent further compromise of ecosystem integrity)*
- *Integrated Pest Management Guidance Manual policies (retaining dead trees / snags, and size restrictions / evaluations to avoid the removal of large trees)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.3.3(5) Site D – Heritage/Significant Trees

Significant Trees (>38" DBH) and Heritage Trees (DBH varies per species) impacted by removal or proposed development would need to be mitigated. It should be noted trees such as non-native eucalyptus will be removed as a separate project in coordination with CALFIRE and their ongoing fuel reduction efforts.

Site D has four Significant Trees that could potentially be affected by the parking area within the Preserve boundary.

Site D has two Significant Trees that could potentially be affected by the parking area within the Caltrans right-of-way.

Applicable Policies

- *San Mateo County Planning, Heritage Tree Ordinance*
- *San Mateo County Planning, Significant Tree Ordinance*
- *Caltrans, Encroachment Permits Manual, Chapter 500 (tree removal)*
- *Resource Management Plan, IPM-2 (prevent introduction of new pest species)*

Agency Consultations

- *San Mateo County Planning*
- *Caltrans*

Recommendations

- *Impacts should be minimized.*
- *Any mitigation would follow County or Caltrans requirements depending on whether the trees are located within Caltrans' right-of-way or not.*
- *Resource Management Plan, M-1 (review and consider all applicable District Policies, programmatic permits, and CEQA documents to develop the project scope, incorporating the following practices (listed in order of priority): avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation of potential impacts)*
- *Resource Management Plan, M-4 (develop a compensatory mitigation strategy as a measure of last resort)*

5.3.3(6) Site D – Special Status Plants

Development at Site D would not impact any special-status plants. California Bottle-brush Grass (CRPR 4.3) and Western Leatherwood (CRPR 1B.2) are directly outside Site D. Impacts to these plants should be avoided. The site contains several locally rare species, including Red Baneberry, Scouler's Willow, and Foamflower.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, FM-2 (conduct surveys for special status species)*
- *Resource Management Plan, VM-3 (identify location and condition of special status plants and their habitats)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.3.3(7) Site D – Invasive Plant Species

Invasive weeds within the project site include Monterey Cypress, Acacia, and French Broom.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, IPM-2 (prevent introduction of new pest species)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.3.3(8) Site D – Wildlife Corridor

No documented wildlife corridors for specific species have been identified; however, allowing general wildlife movement across the site should be considered when designing fencing, culverts, underpasses, and other measures. Frogs and turtles found in the surrounding ponds are presumed to move across the landscape to and from other ponds, creeks, and upland features.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, HC-2 (prevent existing habitat networks)*
- *Resource Management Plan, WM-1 (maintain the diversity of native wildlife)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.3.3(9) Site D – Special Status Animals

The Biological Resources Habitat Assessment evaluated 35 special status wildlife species, most of which could migrate through, forage, and breed at the site. These should continue to be monitored.

The only special-status species detected during the Biological Resources Habitat Assessment was San Francisco dusky-footed woodrat (SFDFW), which is a California Species of Special Concern. District protocol should be implemented to minimize impacts and relocate houses if they are within the development footprint.

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- *Resource Management Plan, FM-2 (conduct surveys for special status species)*
- *Resource Management Plan, WM-4 (protect and enhance habitats and populations of special-status animal species)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.3.3(10) Site D – Sensitive Bird Resources

Any tree removal will have seasonal restrictions to limit impacts on nesting birds. Pre-construction surveys for birds would set limits on tree removal and pruning to avoid nesting and active acorn granary usage.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, FM-2 (conduct surveys for special status species)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.3.3(11) Site D – Roosting Bats

Suitable habitat for roosting, hibernating, and foraging habitat may be present on site and should be monitored.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, FM-2 (conduct surveys for special status species)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.3.3(12) Site D – Roadway Noise

Mitigating roadway noise with berms from SR-84 would be an opportunity for Site D.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, SA-3 (minimize unnatural noise)*
- *San Mateo County Noise Ordinance*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.3.3(13) Site D – Cultural Resources

No cultural resource constraints were identified. The Cultural Resources Survey Study does not recommend monitoring. In the event that archaeological deposits or Native American human remains are identified during project construction, Midpen would implement Master Plan Environmental Protection Guidelines and mitigation measures from the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration.

Applicable Policies

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- *La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan, CUL-1 (protocol for unexpected discovery of archaeological and paleontological cultural materials)*
- *La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan, CUL-2 (Native American burial plan)*
- *La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan, CUL-4 (manage potential impacts of short-term construction activities on historic resources)*
- *La Honda Creek Master Plan Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration*
- *Resource Management Policies, CR-3 (protect cultural resources from disturbance)*
- *La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan, Environmental Protection Guidelines for Cultural Resources*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.3.3(14) Site D – State and Federal Environmental Permitting

State/federal permitting jurisdictions near this project location include those for the wetland channel (USACE, CDFW, RWQCB). No work is proposed in the wetland channel, and it would be avoided during project planning and construction, eliminating the need for regulatory agency permits at this site.

Recommendations

- *None*

5.4 SITE D – BRIDGE

The bridge is part of Site D in that it connects Site D to the Preserve and is evaluated separately from Site D in this report due to its specific site conditions. Site D Bridge appears to be feasible to replace if the abutments of the new bridge are outside the Ordinary High-Water Mark (OHWM) and above the top-of-bank of La Honda Creek. The existing bridge could be removed in segments, and access to the site is reasonable. Both a pedestrian and vehicular bridge should be studied.

5.4.1 SITE D BRIDGE – SITE CHARACTERISTICS

5.4.1(1) Site D Bridge – Land Ownership

The 0.25-acre study area is located within La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve APN 078 280 110 along SR-84. The access road to the bridge is accessed at Preserve Gate LH07.

Applicable Policies

- None

Recommendations

- None

5.4.1(2) Site D Bridge – Site Access

The site is reached from an existing access road starting at Preserve Gate LH07.

Applicable Policies

- None

Recommendations

- None

5.4.1(3) Site D Bridge – Natural Boundaries

The bridge is located at a low point over La Honda Creek. The banks of the stream are 20 feet tall and 50 feet wide.

Applicable Policies

- None

Recommendations

- None

5.4.1(4) Site D Bridge – Site Topography

The stream banks are nearly vertical, greater than 1:1, on both sides of the bridge.

Applicable Policies

- Resource Management Plan, SA-1 (minimize evidence of human impacts within preserves)
- Resource Management Plan, FM-3 (ensure forest management activities are compatible with riparian ecosystem and water resources protection and policies)
- Resource Management Plan, WR-2, (manage human activities to control erosion)

Recommendations

- *Avoid off-site soil fill to prevent soil-borne disease and introduction of invasive species at the site. Conceptual designs should strive to balance cut and fill.*

5.4.1(5) Site D Bridge – Exposure and Shading

The site has a mild climate, and it is in a valley at a stream crossing with heavy tree cover.

Applicable Policies

- *None*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.4.1(6) Site D Bridge – Existing Bridge

The existing steel framed (rail car) bridge is 50 feet long and 12 feet wide (6 feet wide clear travel), and it is supported by rotted logs. The logs are approximately 26 feet long on the southern abutment, and approximately 34 feet long on the northern abutment.

A Structural Investigation Report completed in 2013 provided a visual assessment of the bridge and concluded “while the bridge itself is in good condition, the abutments and log retaining wall banks are in dangerously bad condition. We recommend that this bridge not be used until the abutment and banks are repaired or replaced.” Prior to design, geotechnical drilling on both sides of the bridge will be needed to provide structural information regarding footings.

Applicable Policies

- *Open Space Maintenance and Restoration Program (OSMRP) Permitting (if non-vehicular)*

Agency Consultations

- *San Mateo County Planning and Building*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.4.1(7) Site D Bridge – Geological Conditions

The bridge at Site D is feasible to rebuild. There is 3 feet of scour at the base in the stream, but the southern abutment was partly washed away from the other logs. Any new abutments are recommended to be placed beyond the top-of-bank. The bridge site is outside of the San Mateo County Hazard Mapping tool's area of evaluation as noted in the geotechnical report. Landslides or embankment instabilities in the vicinity of the existing bridge were not observed during the January 2022 site reconnaissance. Additional information is available in the appendix, Preliminary Geologic and Geotechnical Assessment Report, Cal Engineering & Geology, March 2022.

Applicable Policies

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- *Resource Management Plan, GS-1, Measure 1 (minimize construction of major improvements to avoid high risk areas)*
- *Resource Management Plan, GS-2 (minimize soil erosion and sedimentation)*

Recommendations

- *Borings are recommended to characterize subsurface conditions for areas of development at abutment locations.*

5.4.1(8) Site D Bridge – Land Use

Grazing Operations: Grazing tenants currently use the surrounding area. Any improvements would need to be coordinated with tenants.

Trail users: The access road leading to the bridge crossing is currently closed for public access except for Midpen staff and Midpen-authorized consultants, contractors, grazing tenants, etc. Opening the area and additional trails to public access will likely increase preserve visitation and trip generation.

Applicable Policies

- *San Mateo County General Plan, 6.12 (minimize agricultural land use conflicts)*
- *Resource Management Plan, GM-7 (public access to minimize impacts on grazing operations)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.4.2 SITE D BRIDGE – SITE CIRCULATION

5.4.2(1) Site D Bridge – Entry/Exit Access Patterns

The site is reached from an existing access road starting at Preserve Gate LH07. The road proceeds down a steep slope and ends at a pedestrian bridge that crosses La Honda Creek. There is an existing hammerhead turnaround east of the bridge.

Agency Consultations

- *San Mateo County Fire*
- *La Honda Fire Brigade*
- *San Mateo County Planning and Building*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.4.2(2) Site D Bridge – Emergency Access

The new bridge is programmed to be rated for a Ranger pickup truck for emergency access, but an option to limit this to a pedestrian bridge will also be explored.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, FM-1 (fire and fuel management to protect the public)*

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- *San Mateo County Fire*
- *La Honda Fire Brigade*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.4.3 SITE D BRIDGE – ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

5.4.3(1) Site D Bridge – Wetlands and Waters and Riparian Setbacks

Potential jurisdictional waters at the bridge site include a non-wetland stream channel with the OHWM, a non-wetland stream above the OHWM, and riparian habitat.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, WR-1, Measure 1 (inventory features that can affect water resources)*
- *Resource Management Plan, WR-7 (preserve wetland and ponds)*
- *Resource Management Plan, FM-3 (ensure forest management activities are compatible with riparian ecosystem and water resources protection and policies)*

Recommendations

- *The bridge design should avoid working in the OHWM and be above the top-of-bank of La Honda Creek.*
- *North of the bridge is a jurisdictional non-wetland swale, which should also be avoided.*

5.4.3(2) Site D Bridge – Site Drainage

La Honda Creek and its surrounding watershed flow through the site. The confluence of Weeks Creek and La Honda Creek is just upstream from the bridge.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, WR-2 (restore hydrologic processes altered by human activity)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.4.3(3) Site D Bridge – Water Quality

If bridge concrete footings create a new impermeable surface, then permitting may be required.

Applicable Policies

- *San Mateo Countywide, C.3 Regulated Projects Guide*

Recommendations

- *Where more than 10,000 square feet of new impervious areas are added or replaced, stormwater runoff treatment and detention should be considered.*

5.4.3(4) Site D Bridge – Plant Communities and Critical Habitat

The bridge at Site D is dominated by North Coast Coniferous Forest / Redwood Forest. Sensitive natural communities include riparian habitat and the Redwood Forest and Woodland. These plant communities are considered sensitive by CDFW and under CEQA.

This site is designated as critical habitat for California red-legged frog (CRLF). La Honda Creek is critical habitat for steelhead and coho Salmon. Critical habitat is a tool that supports the continued conservation of imperiled species by guiding cooperation within the federal government. Designations affect only federal agency actions or federally funded or permitted activities (USFWS).

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, VM-1 (maintain the diversity of native plant communities)*
- *Resource Management Plan, WM-2 (protect, maintain, and enhance habitat features)*
- *Resource Management Plan, HC-2 (identify and protect existing habitat networks to prevent further compromise of ecosystem integrity)*
- *Integrated Pest Management Guidance Manual policies (retaining dead trees / snags, and size restrictions / evaluations to avoid the removal of large trees)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.4.3(5) Site D Bridge – Heritage/Significant Trees

Significant Trees (>38" DBH) and Heritage Trees (DBH varies per species) impacted by removal or proposed development would need to be mitigated.

Site D has two Heritage and five Significant Trees that could potentially be affected by the bridge project.

Applicable Policies

- *San Mateo County Planning, Heritage Tree Ordinance*
- *San Mateo County Planning, Significant Tree Ordinance*

Agency Consultations

- *San Mateo County Planning*

Recommendations

- *Impacts should be minimized.*
- *Any mitigation should follow San Mateo County requirements.*
- *Resource Management Plan, M-1 (review and consider all applicable District Policies, programmatic permits, and CEQA documents to develop the project scope, incorporating the following practices (listed in order of priority): avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation of potential impacts)*
- *Resource Management Plan, M-4 (develop a compensatory mitigation strategy as a measure of last resort)*

5.4.3(6) Site D Bridge – Special Status Plants

Development of the bridge at Site D would not impact any special-status plants. Directly outside the site are Scouler’s Willow and California Bottle-brush Grass (CRPR 4.3). These plants should be avoided.

Potential impact of riparian habitat may occur at the bridge.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, FM-2 (conduct surveys for special status species)*
- *Resource Management Plan, VM-3 (identify location and condition of special status plants and their habitats)*
- *IS/MND, Mitigation Measure BIO-5*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.4.3(7) Site D Bridge – Invasive Plant Species

Invasive weeds near the project site include Upright Veldt Grass and French Broom.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, IPM-2 (prevent introduction of new pest species)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.4.3(8) Site D Bridge – Wildlife Corridor

No documented wildlife corridors for specific species have been identified; however, allowing general wildlife movement across the site should be considered when designing fencing, culverts, underpasses, and other measures. Frogs and turtles found in the surrounding ponds are presumed to move across the landscape to and from other ponds, creeks, and upland features. La Honda Creek is a travel corridor for steelhead and coho salmon. Work above and adjacent to the creek must avoid and minimize impacts to these species and their habitat.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, HC-2 (prevent existing habitat networks)*
- *Resource Management Plan, WM-1 (maintain the diversity of native wildlife)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.4.3(9) Site D Bridge – Special Status Animals

The Biological Resources Habitat Assessment evaluated 35 special status wildlife species, most of which could migrate through, forage, and breed at the site. These should continue to be monitored.

The only special-status species detected during the Biological Resources Habitat Assessment was San Francisco dusky-footed woodrat (SFDFW), which is a California Species of Special Concern. District

protocol should be implemented to minimize impacts and relocate woodrat houses if they are within the development footprint.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, FM-2 (conduct surveys for special status species)*
- *Resource Management Plan, WM-4 (protect and enhance habitats and populations of special-status animal species)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.4.3(10) Site D Bridge – Sensitive Bird Resources

Any tree removal would have seasonal restrictions to limit impacts on nesting birds. Pre-construction surveys for birds would set limits on tree removal and pruning to avoid nesting and active acorn granary usage.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, FM-2 (conduct surveys for special status species)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.4.3(11) Site D Bridge – Roosting Bats

Suitable habitat for roosting under the bridge, hibernating, and foraging habitat may be present on site and should be monitored.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, FM-2 (conduct surveys for special status species)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.4.3(12) Site D Bridge – Cultural Resources

No cultural resource constraints were identified. The Cultural Resources Survey Study does not recommend monitoring. In the event that archaeological deposits or Native American human remains are identified during project construction, Midpen would implement Master Plan Environmental Protection Guidelines and mitigation measures from the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration.

Applicable Policies

- *La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan, CUL-1 (protocol for unexpected discovery of archaeological and paleontological cultural materials)*
- *La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan, CUL-2 (Native American burial plan)*
- *La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan, CUL-4 (manage potential impacts of short-term construction activities on historic resources)*
- *La Honda Creek Master Plan Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration*
- *Resource Management Policies, CR-3 (protect cultural resources from disturbance)*

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- *La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan, Environmental Protection Guidelines for Cultural Resources*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.4.3(13) Site D Bridge – State and Federal Environmental Permitting

State/federal permitting jurisdictions near this project location include those for the non-wetland stream channel with OHWM (USACE/USFWS, CDFW, RWQCB), non-wetland stream above OHWM (CDFW, RWQCB), and riparian habitat (CDFW).

Applicable Policies

- *State and Federal Clean Water Acts, Section 401 and 404*
- *State and Federal Endangered Species Acts*
- *California Department of Fish and Game Code, Section 1602*
- *IS/MND, Mitigation Measure BIO-5*

Agency Consultations

- *Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)*
- *US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)*
- *California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)*
- *US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.5 SITE E3 – RED BARN

Site E3 appears to be feasible to continue studying for limited access only. From a traffic safety standpoint, the site can maximize sight lines by limiting access at the Preserve Gate LH06 driveway to entrance-only and providing a second driveway for vehicles to make left or right turns exiting the site at the Preserve Gate RED01 driveway. Similar to Site D, traffic devices and warning improvements could slow traffic on SR-84 and prevent speeding and illegal passing to maximize sight lines. Restricting the number of visitors at any given time with permit/docent-led event reservations also helps manage capacity and trip generation. The site has a small area screened by vegetation that would be ideal for parking. Since many of the trees providing existing screening are recommended to be removed in part due to Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and Wildland Fire Resiliency programs, new native vegetation could be planted to maintain the screening.

5.5.1 SITE E3 – SITE CHARACTERISTICS

5.5.1(1) Site E3 – Land Ownership

The six-acre study area is located within La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve APN 078 280 110 along SR-84 at the Red Barn. The north gate (Preserve Gate LH06) to the Preserve overlaps APN 078 260 030. This gate will need to maintain access to the northern neighboring property.

Applicable Policies

- None

Recommendations

- None

5.5.1(2) Site E3 – Site Access

The site currently has two access points, a north driveway at Preserve Gate LH06 and a south driveway at Preserve Gate RED01.

Applicable Policies

- None

Recommendations

- None

5.5.1(3) Site E3 – Natural Boundaries

The site has a moderate slope with the highway on its eastern boundary and gradually slopes down to the Red Barn and corral low point. The remaining area slopes downhill to the west and south.

Applicable Policies

- None

Recommendations

- None

5.5.1(4) Site E3 – Site Topography

The site slopes northeast to southwest following SR-84 at 6%. The grades down to the corral are 3:1, which is not in the project study area. Site E3 is approximately 10 feet higher than the corral. The grades down to the Red Barn slope at 5%. The grades at the entry road are 5% downhill, and the grades at the exit road are 9% uphill.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, SA-1 (minimize evidence of human impacts within preserves)*
- *Resource Management Plan, FM-3 (ensure forest management activities are compatible with riparian ecosystem and water resources protection and policies)*
- *Resource Management Plan, WR-2, (manage human activities to control erosion)*

Recommendations

- *Avoid off-site soil fill to prevent soil-borne disease and introduction of invasive species at the site.*
- *Conceptual designs should strive to balance cut and fill.*

5.5.1(5) Site E3 – View Sheds and Scenic Corridors

The Red Barn is in clear view from the SR-84, a San Mateo County Scenic Corridor. The barn sits in an open field framed by surrounding woodland. SR-84 has a sweeping turn north of the site marked by a steep embankment on the east. An existing turnout with views along SR-84 exists for southbound traffic.

Applicable Policies

- *La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan, AES-4 (screening in scenic corridors)*
- *San Mateo County General Plan, Visual Quality Policies, Scenic Corridor*
- *Resource Management Plan, Scenic Aesthetic Resources*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.5.1(6) Site E3 – Site Screening

Maintaining or adding vegetation in front of a parking area will help obscure the site from SR-84. Any new grading should not hide or detract from the Red Barn. Per the CALFIRE Wildland Fire Resiliency Program Plan, the eucalyptus would need to be removed for fire safety. The Monterey Pines should also be removed because they are non-native to encourage the growth of existing oak saplings. A phased approach for removal and the option to plant more screening should be considered.

Applicable Policies

- *La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan, AES-3 (screening of staging areas)*
- *La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan, AES-4 (screening in scenic corridors)*
- *Resource Management Plan, SA-1 (minimize the evidence of human impacts within preserves)*

Recommendations

- *None*

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5.5.1(7) Site E3 – Exposure and Shading

The site has a mild climate, and it is southwest facing exposure with a wind row of trees on the east side of the potential parking area.

Applicable Policies

- None

Recommendations

- None

5.5.1(8) Site E3 – Geological Conditions

Site E3 is feasible to build from a geotechnical standpoint. No slides exist in the flat area proposed for parking. There is a small slide, which is more of a maintenance issue, on the uphill side of the dirt access road near an existing white shed. Shallow slumps were identified along the edges of the proposed development. A shallow slump near the Red Barn suggests increased moisture in the area. Additional information is available in the appendix, Preliminary Geologic and Geotechnical Assessment Report, Cal Engineering & Geology, March 2022.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, GS-1, Measure 1 (minimize construction of major improvements to avoid high risk areas)*
- *Resource Management Plan, GS-2 (minimize soil erosion and sedimentation)*

Agency Consultations

- *Caltrans Encroachment Permit*

Recommendations

- None

5.5.1(9) Site E3 – Land Use

Grazing Operations: Grazing tenants currently use the site for grazing, and they enter and exit the site using the existing access. In addition, they use an existing ranch road that passes partially through the northern neighboring property to reach northern areas of the Preserve. Any improvements would need fencing, cattle guard, and/or gates to keep the livestock out of the parking area.

Existing structures: The existing white shed and Red Barn will need to remain accessible to Midpen and the tenants. The northern gate, Preserve Gate LH06, would remain in place and kept open as a decorative element while a new metal gate would be installed farther down the driveway to allow for additional stacking room.

Staff Residence: The staff residence north of the site will need to remain private access only.

Proximity to Neighbor: An adjacent private property to the north will need to retain access to the existing access road that turns north from the gate area into the private property.

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Trail users / Permit only / Docent-led events: The area is currently closed to public access, except for Midpen staff and Midpen-authorized consultants, contractors, grazing tenants, etc. The number of vehicles allowed would be determined by site constraints. Given the size of the site, Midpen assumed there would be approximately 10-15 parking spaces, and that further study and conceptual designs would refine the number of spaces. All recent studies were under the assumption 10-15 vehicles would be allowed with restricted daily trips or consolidated arrival times for limited use via permit-only and docent-led events.

Applicable Policies

- *San Mateo County General Plan, 6.12 (minimize agricultural land use conflicts)*
- *Resource Management Plan, GM-7 (public access to minimize impacts on grazing operations)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.5.1(10) Site E3 – Utilities

Any improvements would need to work with the existing joint poles and storm drainpipes on site.

Agency Consultations

- *San Mateo County Planning and Building*
- *PG&E*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.5.1(11) Site E3 – Interpretation and Education

The PAWG recommended interpretive signage at the SR-84 pull out in front of the Red Barn as part of their short-term measures. Vehicles would be slowing to pull into the turnout and then would have to check that it is clear behind them before pulling back into the roadway. This short-term measure is likely infeasible and not recommended. Instead, as an alternative solution, interpretive signage could be installed in the interior at Site E3.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, GM-6 (rural agricultural heritage)*
- *Resource Management Plan, PI-1 (provide interpretive programming, facilities, and materials)*
- *Resource Management Plan, PI-3 (provide public outreach to encourage public knowledge and appreciation of resources)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.5.2 SITE E3 – SITE CIRCULATION

5.5.2(1) Site E3 – Roadway Safety and Sight Distance

Road safety is a PAWG and La Honda community concern that was seriously considered in the Access (Traffic) Study. Although the posted speed limit is 40 mph, vehicles near Site E3 were observed to have an 85th percentile speed of 46 mph.

Based on the observed traffic volumes on SR-84, the anticipated inbound and outbound traffic at the site, and Highway Capacity Manual methodology, the delay and level of service are anticipated to be within Caltrans standards. Queues for inbound and outbound movements at the project driveway would be less than one vehicle according to Highway Capacity Manual methodology. This means that the traffic consultant does not anticipate the necessity for vehicles to stop in SR-84 waiting to turn into the site. On SR-84, no additional turn lanes or widening would be recommended.

Public access to Site E3 would be provided at existing access points currently used by Midpen vehicles and grazing tenants. Inbound vehicles would use the existing paved access. As mentioned above, northbound left-turn vehicles are not expected to queue on SR-84 at the existing driveway. A separate left-turn pocket for inbound vehicles is not warranted according to National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 279. Therefore, the operation of the existing paved access would be the same as existing conditions with the exception of additional stacking distance being available when a new gate is installed farther in on the driveway.

Outbound vehicles would use a new paved driveway where an unpaved driveway currently exists. Sight distance at the driveway is not sufficient for the current roadway speeds. Similar to Site D, the Access (Traffic) Study is recommending implementing a combination of elements from the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Specifically, a combination of roadway signage W2-2, W16-13P “When Flashing,” and a warning beacon are recommended to be placed at the northbound and southbound approaches to Site E3 exit driveway. Loop detectors at the exiting lanes would be interconnected with the warning beacon to alert vehicles on SR-84 to the presence of exiting vehicles. This would have a twofold effect. First, the warning beacon would have the effect of extending the sight distance from the roadway to the driveway. Second, knowledge of the presence of vehicles entering the roadway should cause vehicles on SR-84 to exercise caution and slow to the speed limit. This would reduce the necessary sight distance from the driveway to SR-84. By incorporating these design features, roadway safety can be maximized while fulfilling the La Honda Creek Master Plan goal to provide public access to the central area of the Preserve.

This lot will be constrained and limited, given its small size (10-15 cars) and its carefully managed frequency (through reservations/permits only) – this too will assist with reducing potential traffic/circulation impacts. Peak usage (on a weekend) is estimated to result in 12 inbound and 11 outbound trips during the busiest hour if visits are reserved and self-led. Docent led visits could result in 18 inbound or 18 outbound trips in an hour.

Applicable Policies

- *Caltrans Highway Design Manual, Chapter 4, Policy 405.1 (sight distance)*

Agency Consultations

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- *Caltrans*
- *San Mateo County Fire*
- *La Honda Fire Brigade*
- *San Mateo County Planning and Building*

Recommendations

- *For either type of programming, the Level of Service at the proposed driveways would be within Caltrans standards.*
- *No queue for northbound left-turn vehicles is anticipated according to Highway Capacity Manual Methodology and a left-turn pocket is not warranted.*
- *The Access (Traffic) Study recommends installing advance warning sign combination W2-2, warning beacon, and W16-13P "When Flashing" at both northbound and southbound approaches to the exit driveway and interconnecting warning beacon to the loop detector at the exit lanes.*
- *On-site observation shows that some vehicles are attempting to pass over a solid yellow line at this location. A barrier would need to be designed to accommodate left-turns out of the exiting driveway. Midpen can consider working with Caltrans to determine whether features would be added to the state highway to prevent passing at this location as part of the project.*
- *Highway shoulder parking would need to be prohibited to dissuade visitors from parking on the roadway and entering the Preserve when the internal area is open to the public.*

5.5.2(2) Site E3 –Entry/Exit Access Patterns

Access to the site is currently through the north driveway and south driveway. The Access (Traffic) Study recommends entry only at the north driveway and exit only at the south driveway and limiting daily trips at this site via a permit parking or docent-led event program.

Agency Consultations

- *Caltrans*
- *San Mateo County Fire*
- *La Honda Fire Brigade*
- *San Mateo County Planning and Building*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.5.2(3) Site E3 – Emergency Access

Any new roads would need to meet San Mateo County Fire requirements regarding minimum width, maximum length, turning radius, and turn around specifications. Any new gates would need to have San Mateo County Fire access.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, FM-1 (fire and fuel management to protect the public)*

Agency Consultations

- *Caltrans*

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- *San Mateo County Fire*
- *La Honda Fire Brigade*
- *San Mateo County Planning and Building*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.5.2(4) Site E3 – Emergency Landing Zone

An emergency landing zone exists on Midpen owned land on the west side of SR-84.

Agency Consultations

- *San Mateo County Fire*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.5.2(5) Site E3 – Regional Trail Connections

A future Bay Area Ridge Trail crossing has not been planned for crossing SR-84. Although there is no Bay Area Ridge Trail connection planned east of SR-84, Midpen would like to take this opportunity to explore the idea in concept with Caltrans. The initial analysis shows this crossing feasible from a site characteristic, site circulation, and environmental resources standpoint.

A representative from the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council presented to the PAWG at the 12/12/2019 PAWG meeting to share the organization’s vision of a continuous, regional multi-use trail that circles the Bay Area ridgelines. The Bay Area Ridge Trail also provided a memo supporting the PAWG in their effort to find the most feasible option for future staging and public access that will eventually close this high priority gap in the Ridge Trail.

The Master Plan includes a goal to close a critical gap on the Bay Area Ridge Trail, connecting the regional trail to the Preserve. A crossing was previously considered during the 2017 Red Barn parking project. Once the 2017 project was placed on hold, the PAWG was made aware of the regional connection need while exploring recommendations. A high-level review of a crossing at site E3 has been included in the Feasibility Study. Further study would be needed if the crossing is moved forward. A wildlife crossing, if contemplated, would be a separate effort and project.

The site north of SR-84 has thick colluvial deposits, but a Bay Area Ridge Trail crossing over SR-84 is technically feasible—both tunnel and bridge are options. An elevated abutment should be outside the Caltrans right-of-way. Any drilling within the Caltrans right-of-way will need an encroachment permit.

Applicable Policies

- *San Mateo Countywide Trails Plan policies*

Agency Consultations

- *Caltrans*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.5.3 SITE E3 – ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

5.5.3(1) Site E3 – Wetlands and Waters and Riparian Setbacks

Potential jurisdictional waters near the study area include a non-wetland drainage swale. A culvert may need to be added to the road and would need RWQCB permitting.

If in the future, there is an opportunity to pursue a Bay Area Ridge Trail crossing of SR-84, then permitting for the incised non-wetland channel (USACE, CDFW, RWQCB) and riparian corridor habitat along Weeks Creek (CDFW) would be needed.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, WR-1, Measure 1 (inventory features that can affect water resources)*
- *Resource Management Plan, WR-7 (preserve wetland and ponds)*
- *Resource Management Plan, FM-3 (ensure forest management activities are compatible with riparian ecosystem and water resources protection and policies)*

Agency Consultations

- *RWQCB*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.5.3(2) Site E3 – Site Drainage

Water drains east to west on the site toward a low point in the corral. South of the site drains to Weeks Creek.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, WR-2 (restore hydrologic processes altered by human activity)*

Recommendations

- *Storm drainage patterns should match existing conditions and any new outfalls include conveyance and dissipation to reduce potential for erosion.*

5.5.3(3) Site E3 – Water Quality

Any impervious surface would likely require stormwater runoff treatment and detention.

Applicable Policies

- *San Mateo Countywide, C.3 Regulated Projects Guide*

Recommendations

- *Where more than 10,000 square feet of new impervious areas are added or replaced, stormwater runoff treatment and detention should be considered.*

5.5.3(4) Site E3 – Plant Communities and Critical Habitat

Site E3 is comprised of Valley and Foothill Grassland (corral and back area near the Red Barn), Closed Cone Pine Forest (tree row in front of potential parking area), and Cismontane Woodland (northwest perimeter).

This site is designated as critical habitat for California red-legged frog (CRLF) by the USFWS. Critical habitat is a tool that supports the continued conservation of imperiled species by guiding cooperation within the federal government. Designations affect only federal agency actions or federally funded or permitted activities (USFWS).

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, VM-1 (maintain the diversity of native plant communities)*
- *Resource Management Plan, WM-2 (protect, maintain, and enhance habitat features)*
- *Resource Management Plan, HC-2 (identify and protect existing habitat networks to prevent further compromise of ecosystem integrity)*
- *Integrated Pest Management Guidance Manual policies (retaining dead trees / snags, and size restrictions / evaluations to avoid the removal of large trees)*

Agency Consultations

- *US Fish and Wildlife Service*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.5.3(5) Site E3 – Cultural Landscape

The Cultural Landscape Report evaluated the 10-acre Red Barn area and determined that the site is not a cultural landscape because the site no longer retains sufficient integrity to convey the historic significance, except for the Red Barn. The Red Barn is individually eligible for listing under both the National Register of Historic Places and California Register of Historic Resources. For this reason, the Red Barn is a historical resource for the purpose of CEQA.

Applicable Policies

- *None*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.5.3(6) Site E3 – Heritage/Significant Trees

Significant Trees (>38" DBH) and Heritage Trees (DBH varies per species) impacted by removal or proposed development would need to be mitigated.

Site E3 has 21 Significant Trees that could potentially be affected by the parking area within the Preserve boundary. Per the CALFIRE Wildland Fire Resiliency Program Plan, the eucalyptus would need to be removed for fire safety. The Monterey Pines should be removed because they are non-native to

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encourage the growth of existing oak saplings. A phased approach for removal and the option to plant more screening should be considered.

Several trees are *Pinus radiata*. CNPS considers *P. radiata* a rare species ranked 1B.1 (G1/S1) but only three native stands exist in California, at Ano Nuevo, Cambria, and the Monterey Peninsula. Outside of these three native stands, the species is considered an invasive species. Due to potential genetic integrity issues, Midpen ecologists and arborists recommend that they be removed.

Applicable Policies

- *San Mateo County Planning, Heritage Tree Ordinance*
- *San Mateo County Planning, Significant Tree Ordinance*
- *Resource Management Plan, IPM-2 (prevent introduction of new pest species)*

Agency Consultations

- *San Mateo County Planning*

Recommendations

- *Impacts should be minimized.*
- *Any mitigation should follow San Mateo County requirements.*
- *IPM and Wildland Fire Resiliency Program Plan recommend fuel reduction of the trees.*
- *Resource Management Plan, M-1 (review and consider all applicable District Policies, programmatic permits, and CEQA documents to develop the project scope, incorporating the following practices (listed in order of priority): avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation of potential impacts)*
- *Resource Management Plan, M-4 (develop a compensatory mitigation strategy as a measure of last resort)*
- *Removal of granary trees is evaluated on a case-by-case basis and would need to occur over time to minimize impacts, and replanting would be done to ensure screening.*

5.5.3(7) Site E3 – Special Status Plants

Development of E3 would not impact special-status plants.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, FM-2 (conduct surveys for special status species)*
- *Resource Management Plan, VM-3 (identify location and condition of special status plants and their habitats)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.5.3(8) Site E3 – Invasive Plant Species

Invasive weeds within and near the project site include Blue Gum Eucalyptus, Monterey Pine, Harding Grass, and English Ivy.

Applicable Policies

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- *Resource Management Plan, IPM-2 (prevent introduction of new pest species)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.5.3(9) Site E3 – Wildlife Corridor

No documented wildlife corridors for specific species have been identified; however, allowing general wildlife movement across each site should be considered when designing fencing, culverts, underpasses, and other measures. Frogs and turtles found in the surrounding ponds are presumed to move across the landscape to and from other ponds, creeks, and upland features.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, HC-2 (prevent existing habitat networks)*
- *Resource Management Plan, WM-1 (maintain the diversity of native wildlife)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.5.3(10) Site E3 – Special Status Animals

The Biological Resources Habitat Assessment evaluated 35 special status wildlife species, most of which could migrate through, forage, and breed at the site. These should continue to be monitored.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, FM-2 (conduct surveys for special status species)*
- *Resource Management Plan, WM-4 (protect and enhance habitats and populations of special-status animal species)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.5.3(11) Site E3 – Sensitive Bird Resources

Tree removal would have seasonal restrictions to limit impacts on nesting birds. Pre-construction surveys for birds would set limits on tree removal and pruning to avoid nesting and active acorn granary usage.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, FM-2 (conduct surveys for special status species)*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.5.3(12) Site E3 – Roosting Bats

Suitable habitat for roosting, hibernating, and foraging habitat may be present on site and should be monitored. Special-status bats have been observed roosting in the Red Barn. Construction restrictions and buffers would apply.

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Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, FM-2 (conduct surveys for special status species)*

Recommendations

- *Construction Measures: Public access and ranch improvements adjacent to the Red Barn (e.g., construction of the parking lot, trails, retaining walls, cattle corral) should be conducted outside the bat maternity season (generally April 15 – September 1). If work is conducted during the maternity season, low noise-producing activities (e.g., moving construction vehicles, handwork, fence building, pedestrian traffic, etc.) should stay at least 120 feet from the barn, and high noise-producing activities (e.g., grading, excavation, drilling, trenching, scraping, etc.) should stay at least 150 feet from the barn. Idling trucks or operating generators should be 150 feet from the barn to avoid impacts from exhaust fumes.*
- *Because adult and sub-adult pallid bats remain in the barn well into September and possibly October, maintain reduced buffers of 60 feet for low noise-producing activities and 75 feet for high-noise producing activities, as noted above, until colony individuals disperse for the winter (from mid-October through the end of November).*
- *If these work buffer distances are infeasible due to the need for access or construction adjacent to the barn, then the project team should consult with the bat biologists to determine alternate mitigation measures, such as pre-construction surveys or noise level and equipment restrictions.*
- *Work can proceed without disturbance buffers between November 30 and February 28.*

5.5.3(13) Site E3 – Roadway Noise

Mitigating roadway noise from SR-84 would be an opportunity for Site E3 to improve user and wildlife experience.

Applicable Policies

- *Resource Management Plan, SA-3 (minimize unnatural noise)*
- *San Mateo County Noise Ordinance*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.5.3(14) Site E3 – Cultural Resources

No cultural resource constraints were identified. The Cultural Resources Survey Study does not recommend monitoring. In the event that archaeological deposits or Native American human remains are identified during project construction, Midpen would implement Master Plan Environmental Protection Guidelines and mitigation measures in the La Honda Creek Master Plan Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration.

Applicable Policies

- *La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan, CUL-1 (protocol for unexpected discovery of archaeological and paleontological cultural materials)*
- *La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan, CUL-2 (Native American burial plan)*
- *La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan, CUL-4 (manage potential impacts of short-term construction activities on historic resources)*
- *La Honda Creek Master Plan Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration*

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- *Resource Management Policies, CR-3 (protect cultural resources from disturbance)*
- *La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan, Environmental Protection Guidelines for Cultural Resources*

Recommendations

- *None*

5.5.3(15) Site E3 – State and Federal Environmental Permitting

State/federal permitting jurisdictions near this project location include those for the non-wetland drainage (RWQCB). Should Midpen pursue the Bay Area Ridge Trail crossing at SR-84, then permitting for the incised non-wetland channel (USACE/USFWS, CDFW, RWQCB) and riparian corridor habitat along Weeks Creek (CDFW) would be needed.

Applicable Policies

- *State and Federal Clean Water Acts, Section 401 and 404*
- *State and Federal Endangered Species Acts*
- *California Department of Fish and Game Code, Section 1602*
- *IS/MND, Mitigation Measure BIO-5*

Regulatory Agency Consultations

- *Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)*
- *US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Clean Water Act*
- *California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)*
- *US Fish and Wildlife Service*

Recommendations

- *None*

6.0 EXHIBIT B – RECORDS REVIEW

Midpeninsula Open Space District provided RHAA with the following documents pertaining to the sites. These records were reviewed and synthesized in this analysis report.

Project Team Reports

- BKF Engineers, Boundary and Topographic Survey, dated September 2022
- CG&E, Cal Engineering & Geology, Preliminary Geologic and Geotechnical Assessment Report, dated March 2022
- LSA, Access (Traffic) Study, dated October 2022
- LSA, Biological Resource Evaluation Study, dated October 2022
- LSA, Cultural Landscape Report (Site E3), dated April 2022
- LSA, Cultural Resources Survey Study, dated March 2022
- LSA, Tree Inventory Table, dated January 2022
- Vollmar, Botanical Resource Survey Report, dated November 2021
- Vollmar, Delineation of Potential Jurisdictional Waters (Site B2, B3, D), dated May 2022
- Vollmar, Delineation of Potential Jurisdictional Waters (Site E3), dated May 2022

Previous Records Review

- AECOM, 2016, Memorandum-Sears Ranch Parking Area Biotic Study, dated 28 October 2016
- ALTA Owners Policy, 1991, Form No. 1402-87, Schedule A, dated 03 April 1991
- ASCENT Environmental, 2012, La Honda Creek Open Space Master Plan, Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, dated 2 July 2012
- Birds Observed at the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve, 2013, table
- BKF Engineers, 2017, Red Barn- Cut and Fill Exhibit Alternative 3-Phase 1, dated 01 December 2017
- BKF Engineers, 2016, La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve, Red Barn Public Access Area, Tree Survey, San Mateo County, dated 23 November 2016
- BKF Engineers, 2021, Topographic Survey of the Lands of the Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District, County of San Mateo, dated 23 November 2021
- BKF Engineers, 2021, Topographic Survey of the Lands of the Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District, County of San Mateo, dated 30 November 2021
- California Highway Patrol, 2019, #190913 2009 AV. 2017/2018 Collisions on SR-84 Between SR 35 and SR 1, San Mateo County, dated 31 July 2019
- California Highway Patrol, 2021, #211264AC 2019-AV.2020/2021 Crashes on RT 84 (La Honda RD/Woodside RD) Between RT 35 (Skyline BL) and RT 1 (Cabrillo HWY), San Mateo CO., dated 20 October 2021
- Conservation by Design, Inc., 2011, District-Wide Interpretive Plan, dated December 2011
- Conservation Metrics, 2020, Automated Acoustic Surveys for Marbled Murrelet, Steller's Jay, and Northern Spotted Owl in the Santa Cruz Mountains

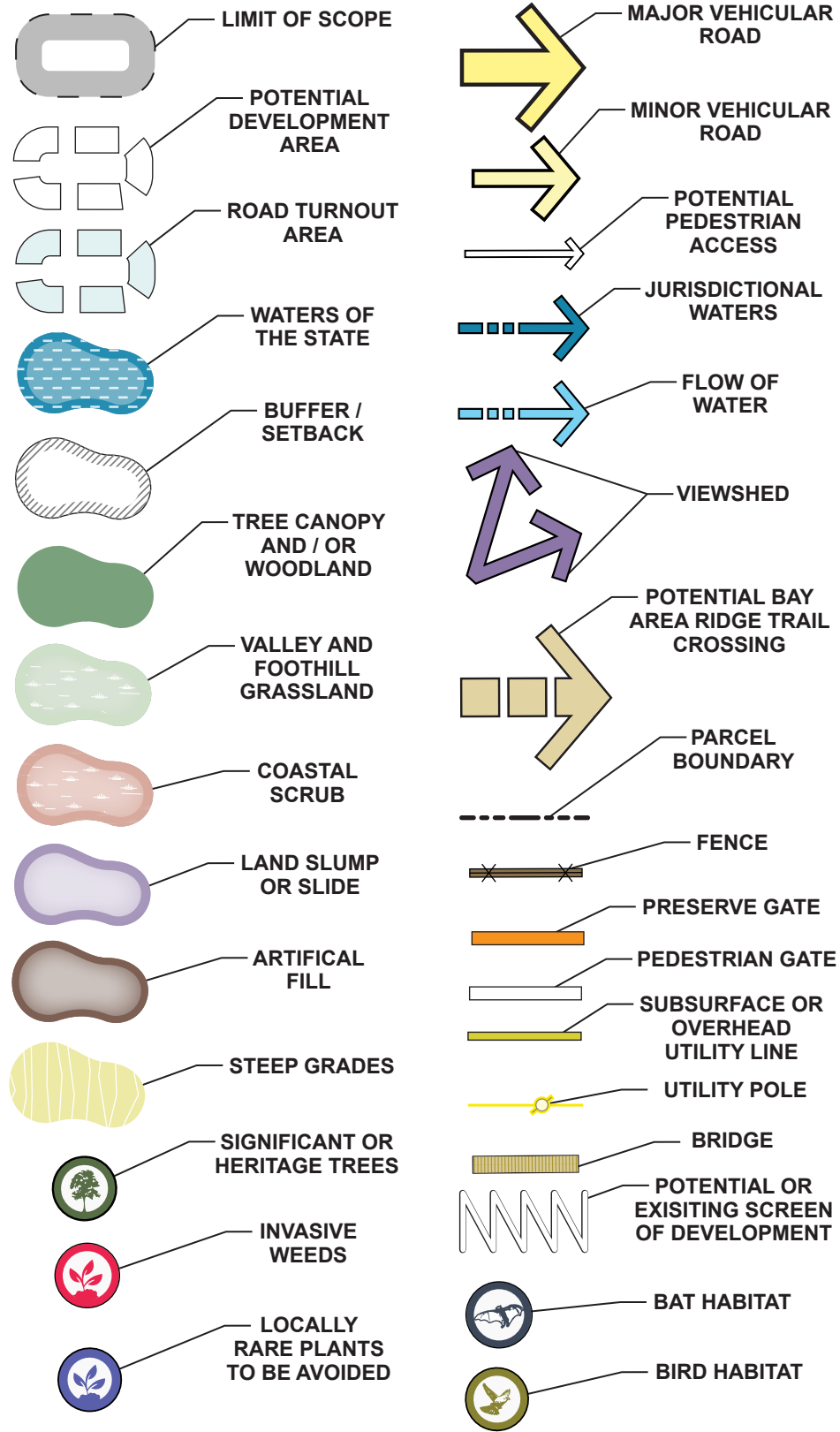
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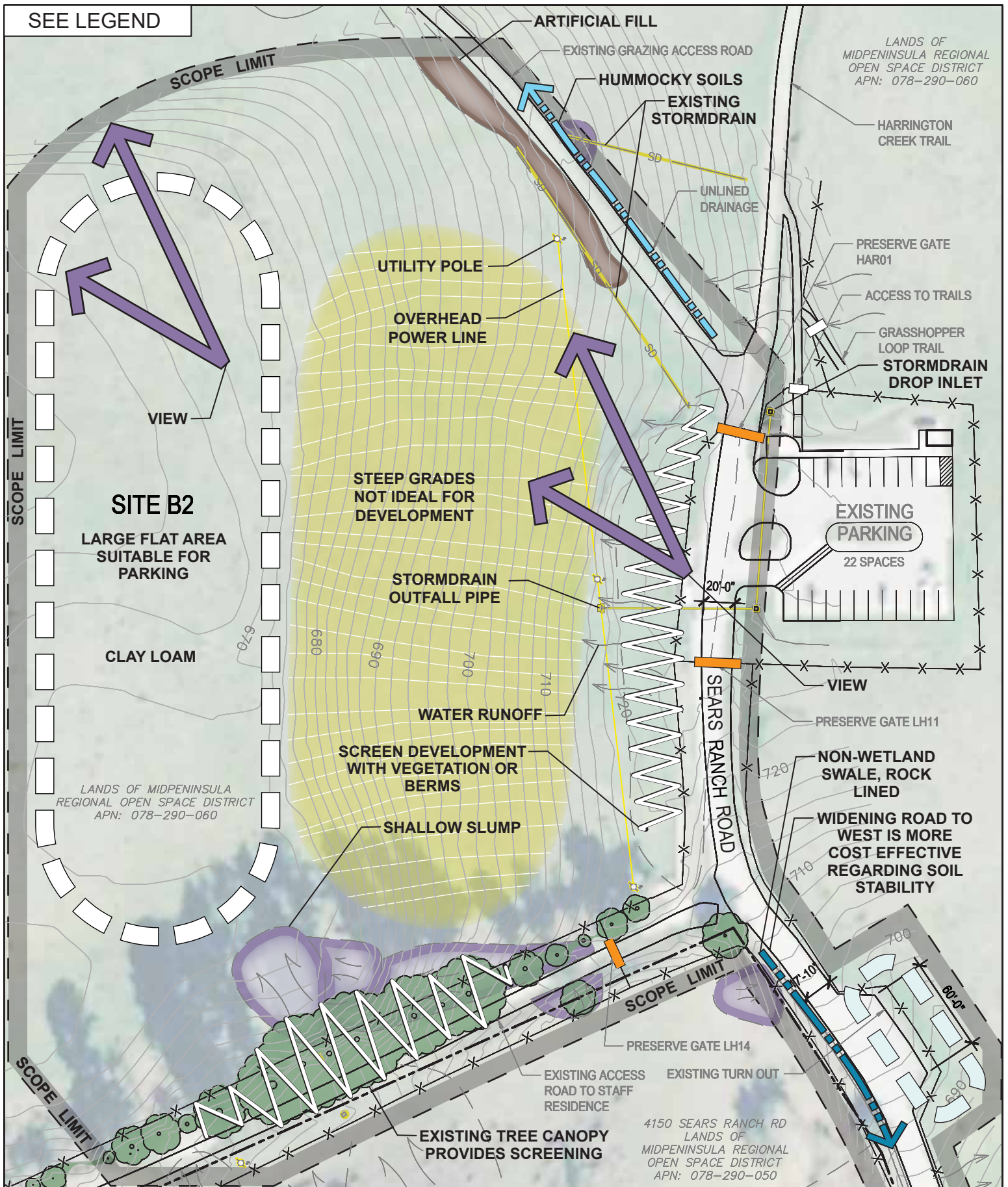
- Fall Creek Engineering, Inc., 2017, Revised Stormwater Drainage Report, La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve, San Mateo County, California, dated 26 April 2017
- Fall Creek Engineering, Inc., 2017, Sears Ranch Road, Sears Ranch Improvements and Parking Lot Installation, La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve, San Mateo County, California, April 2017
- Hexagon Transportation Consultants, Inc., 2016, Memorandum, La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve-Red Barn Access Study, dated 10 August 2016
- H.T. Harvey & Associates-Ecological Consultants, 2017 LA Honda Space Preserve-Bat Surveys for the Red Barn Public Access Project (HTH 4009-01), dated 12 October 2017
- H.T. Harvey & Associates-Ecological Consultants, 2021, Memorandum: Analysis of E-bike Noise and Recommendations for Buffer Distances between Bike Trails and Bat Roosts/Nesting Birds, dated 17 September 2021
- H.T. Harvey & Associates-Ecological Consultants, 2017, Winter Bat Survey for the Red Barn Public Access Project (HTH 4009-01), dated 30 March 2017
- LANGAN, 2016, Geotechnical Investigation, Sears Ranch Road Interim Staging Area, La Honda, California, dated 22 April 2016
- LANGAN, 2016, Memorandum, Additional Geotechnical Recommendations – Sears Ranch Road Sears Ranch Road Interim Staging Area, dated 01 November 2016
- LSA, 2016, Historic Resource Evaluation, Red Barn Staging Area, La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve, Unincorporated San Mateo County, California, dated August 2016
- Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, 2012, Meeting 12-29, Agenda Item 7, dated 22 August 2012
- Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, 2020, Meeting R-20-81, Agenda Item 2, dated 28 July 2020
- Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, 2012, La Honda Creek Open Space Master Plan, dated August 2012
- Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, 2012, La Honda Creek Open Space Master Plan, Mitigation Monitoring Program, dated 22 August 2012
- Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, 2014, McDonald Ranch Premise Map, dated October 2014
- Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District data accessed December 2021 available through the California Natural Diversity Database <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB>.
- Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, 2021, Memorandum: Update on the Electric Bicycle (e-bike) Noise Study, dated 10 November 2021
- Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, 2021, Project Limits-Site B2, dated 21 June 2021
- Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, 2021, Project Limits-Site B3, dated 21 June 2021
- Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, 2021, Project Limits-Site D and Hwy 84, dated 21 June 2021
- Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, 2021, Project Limits-Site E3, dated 21 June 2021
- Pathways for Wildlife, date unknown, American Badger Habitat Suitability Assessment: Cost Surface Layer with Draft Linkage Design and Badger Records

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- Paul A. Heady and Winifred F. Frick Central Coast Bat Research Group, 2000, Impact Assessment and Mitigation/ Action Recommendations for the Pallid Bat Colony in the La Honda Big Red Basin
- Paul A. Heady and Winifred F. Frick Central Coast Bat Research Group, 2002, Post-Construction Assessment for the Pallid Bat Colony in the La Honda Big Red Basin
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- W-Trans, 2020, La Honda Creek Open Space Access Analysis, dated 17 January 2020

LEGEND

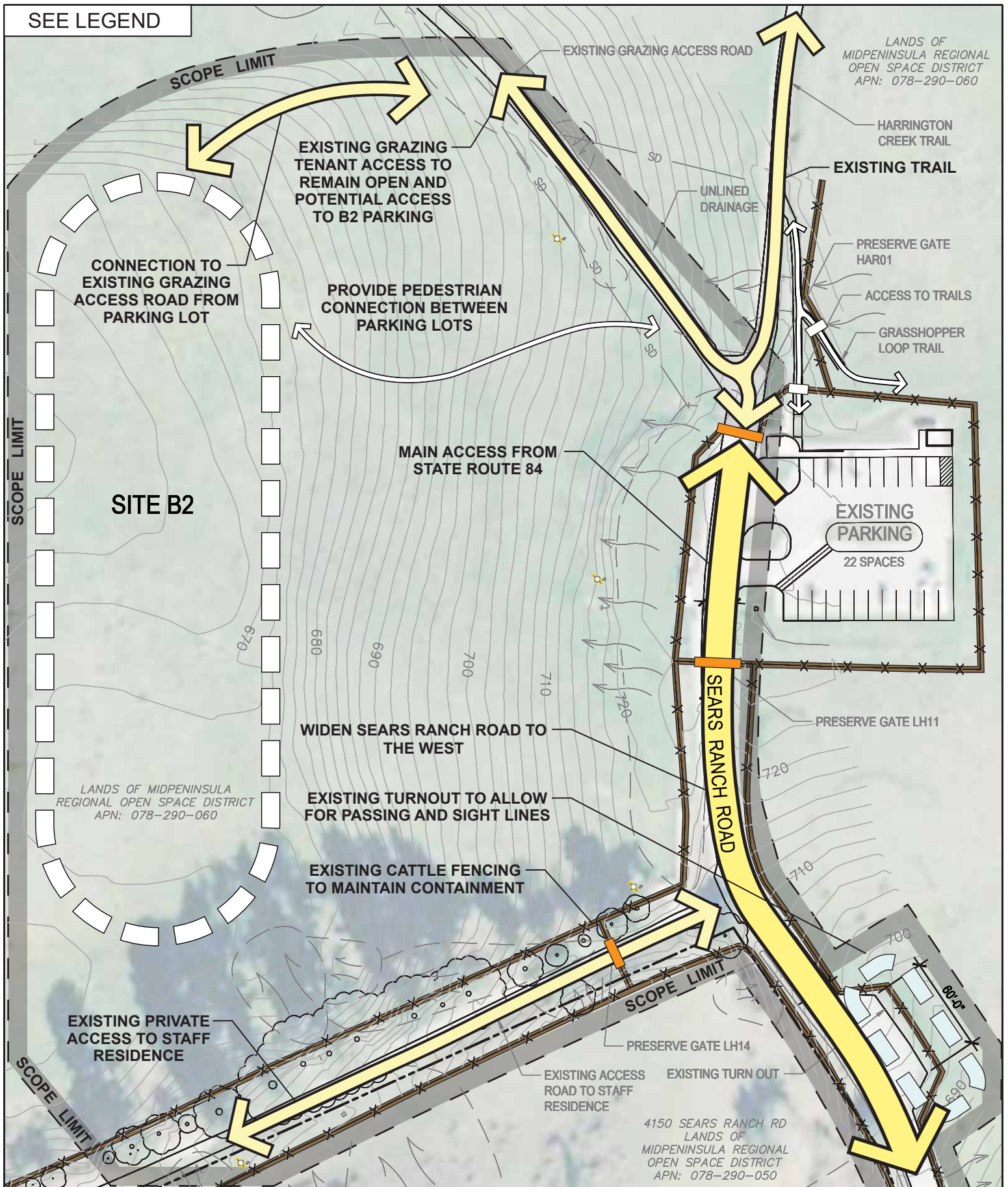




La Honda Creek Preserve
Parking Area and Trailhead Feasibility Study

Figure 1.1

Existing Conditions
Site B2



SEE LEGEND

LANDS OF MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT
APN: 078-290-060

SCOPE LIMIT

SITE B2

LANDS OF MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT
APN: 078-290-060

EXISTING PARKING
22 SPACES

SEARS RANCH ROAD

WIDEN SEARS RANCH ROAD TO THE WEST
EXISTING TURNOUT TO ALLOW FOR PASSING AND SIGHT LINES
EXISTING CATTLE FENCING TO MAINTAIN CONTAINMENT

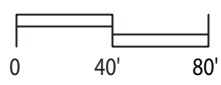
EXISTING PRIVATE ACCESS TO STAFF RESIDENCE

4150 SEARS RANCH RD
LANDS OF MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT
APN: 078-290-050

La Honda Creek Preserve
Parking Area and Trailhead Feasibility Study

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

rhaa Landscape Architecture & Planning

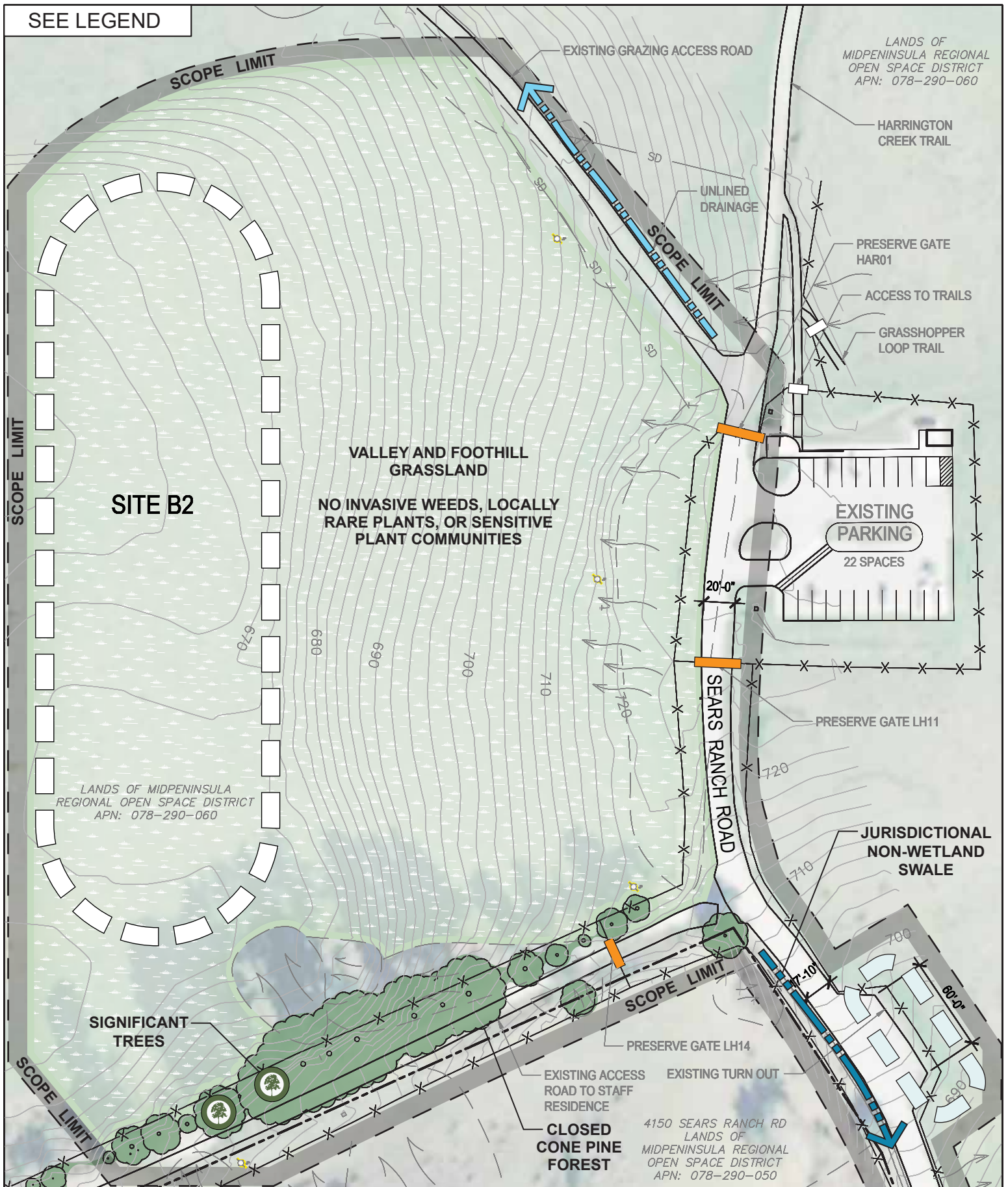


November 2022

Figure 1.2

Site Circulation
Site B2

Opportunity and Constraints Analysis



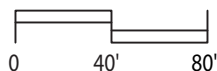
La Honda Creek Preserve
Parking Area and Trailhead Feasibility Study

Figure 1.3

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

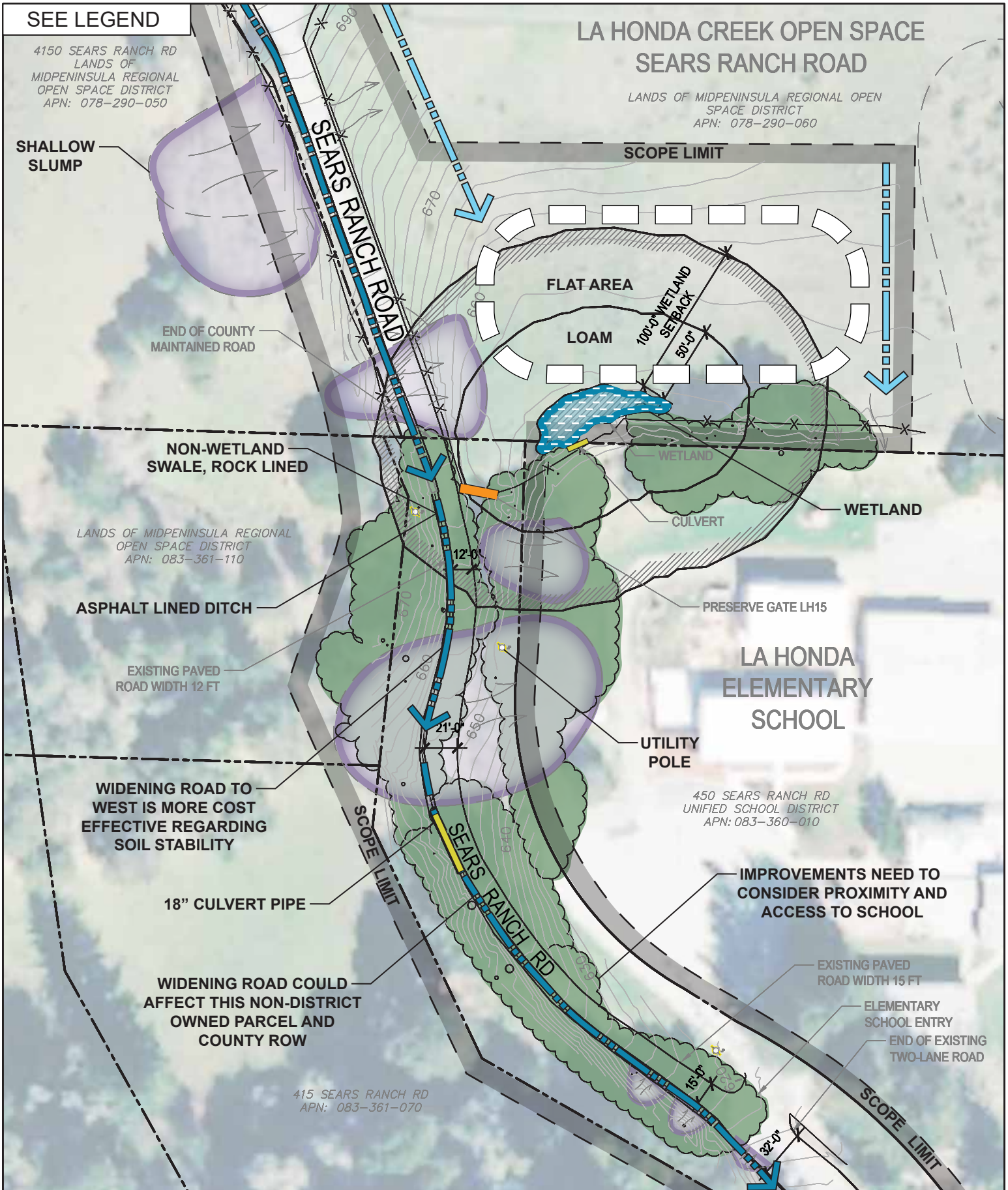
Environmental Resources Site B2

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November 2022

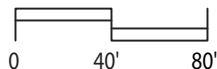
Opportunity and Constraints Analysis



La Honda Creek Preserve
Parking Area and Trailhead Feasibility Study

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

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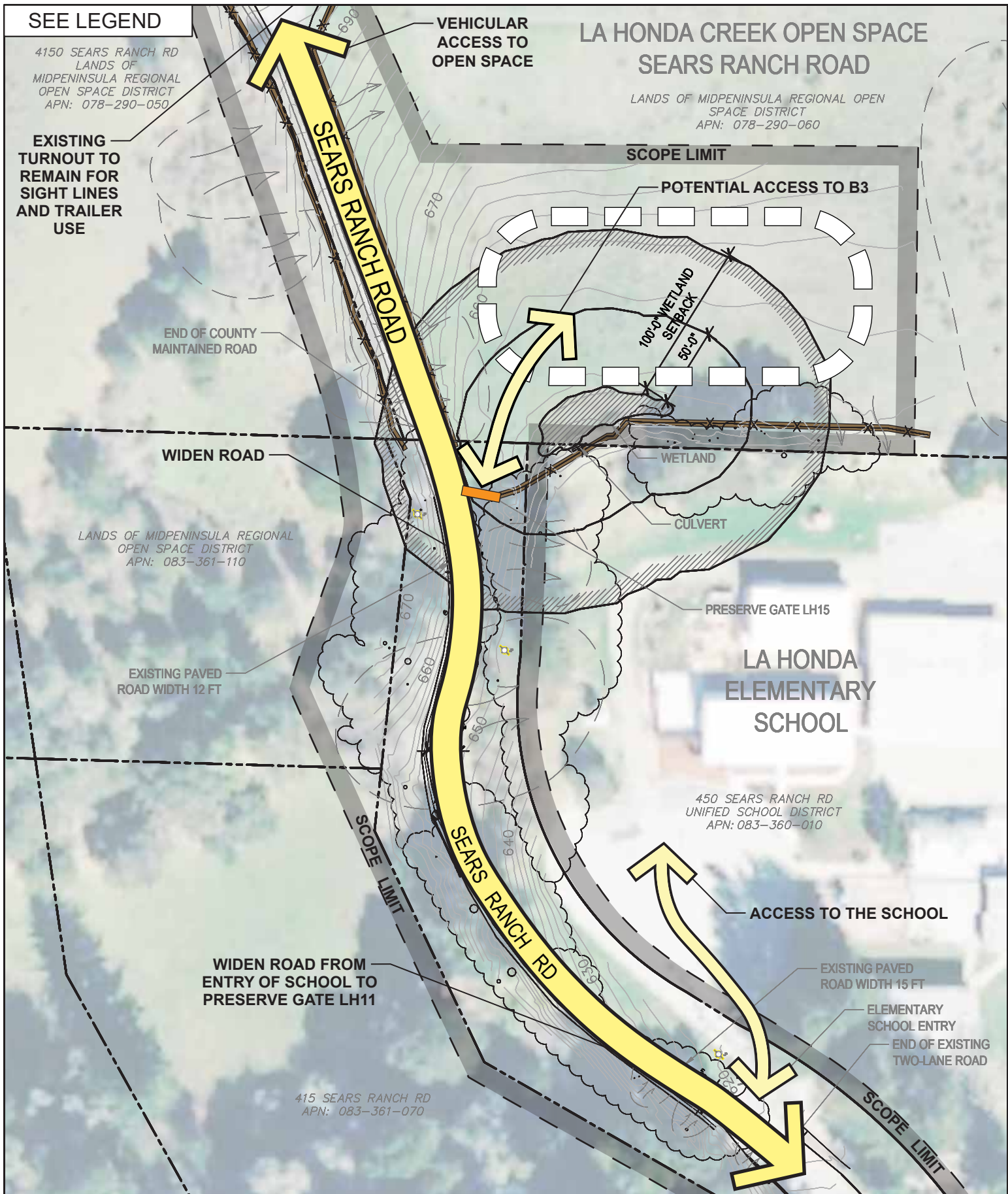


November 2022

Figure 2.1

Existing Conditions Site B3

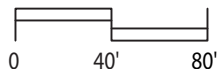
Opportunity and Constraints Analysis



La Honda Creek Preserve
Parking Area and Trailhead Feasibility Study

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

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& Planning

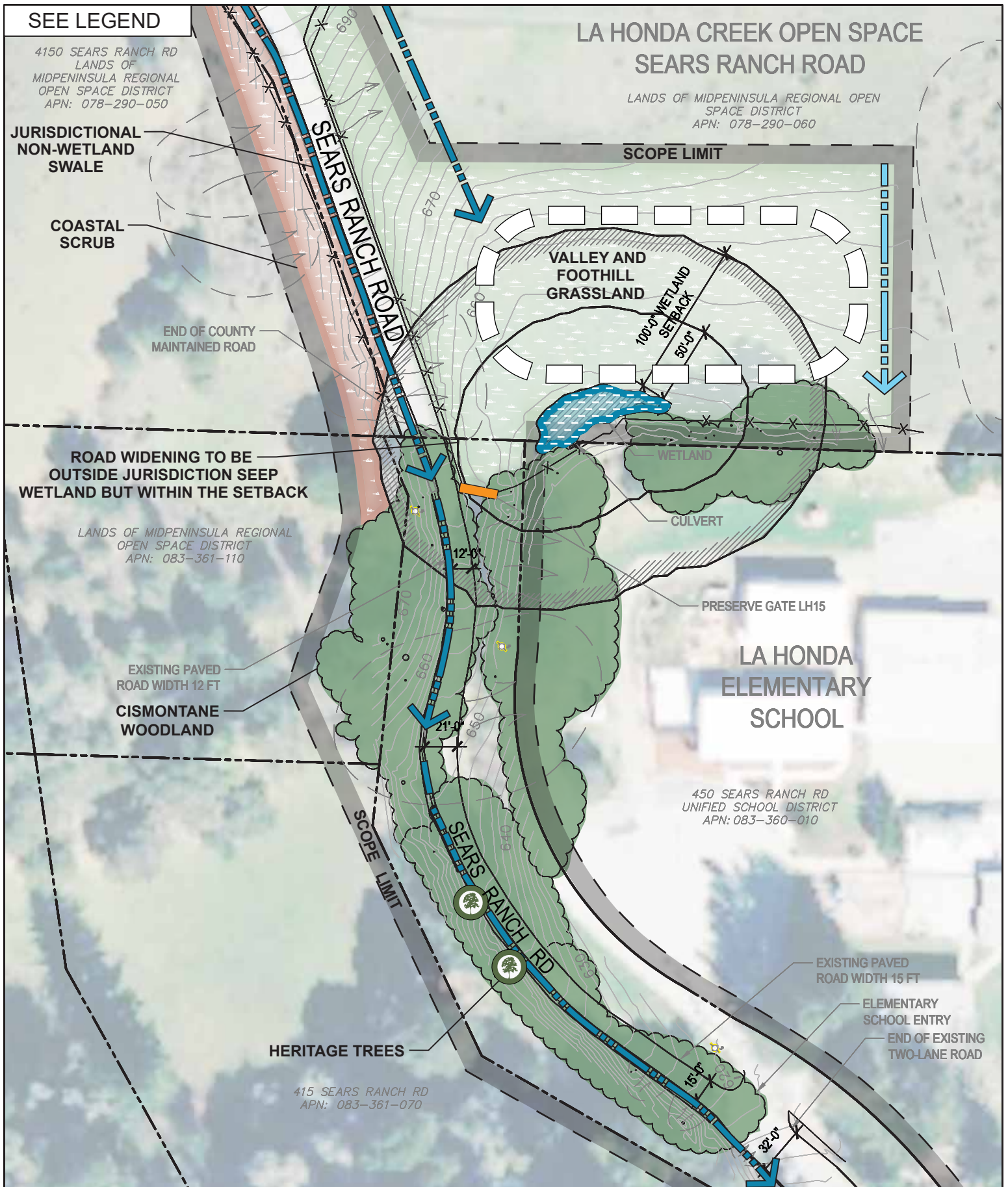


November 2022

Figure 2.2

Site Circulation
Site B3

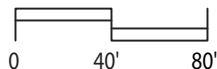
Opportunity and Constraints Analysis



La Honda Creek Preserve
Parking Area and Trailhead Feasibility Study

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

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& Planning

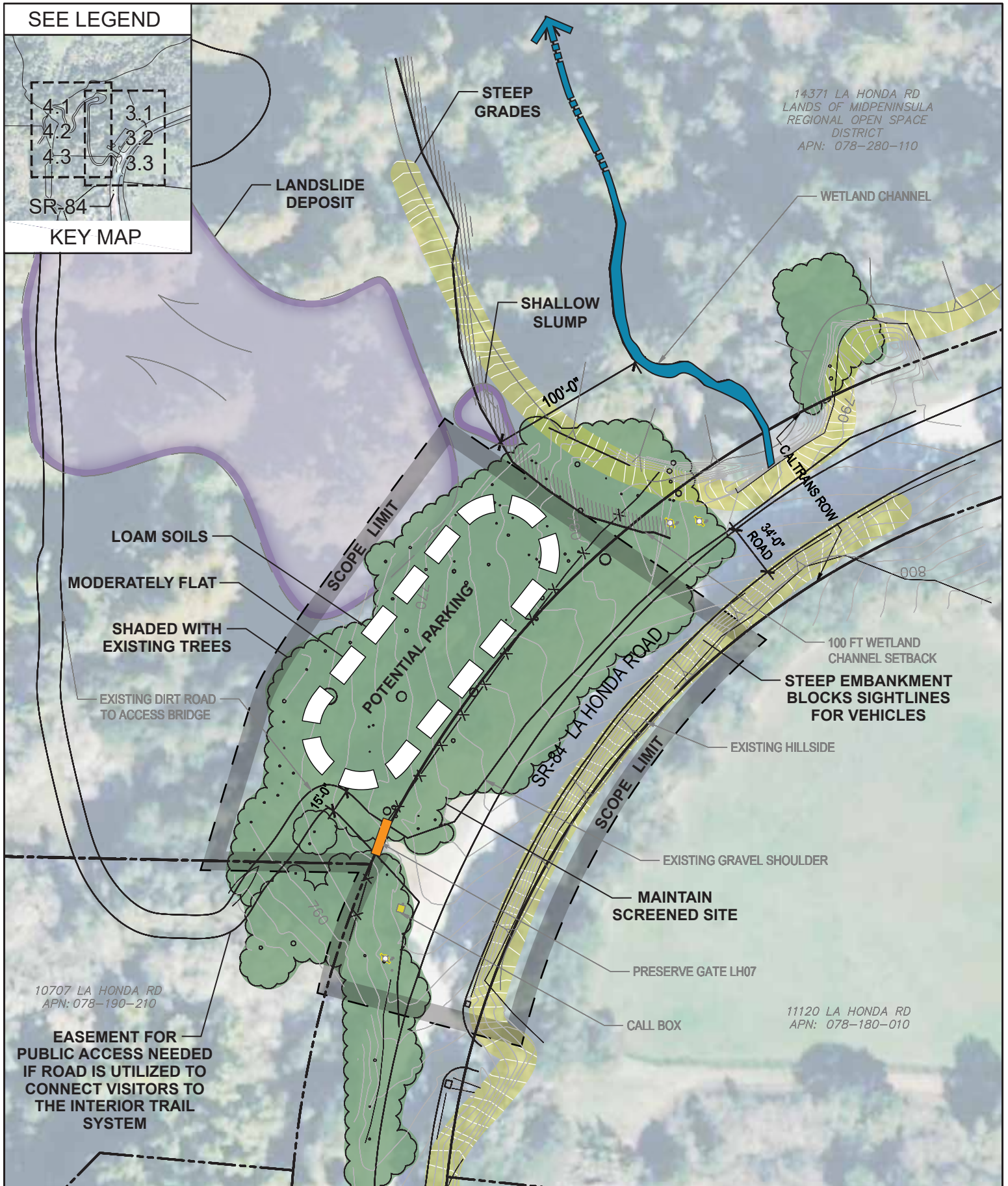


November 2022

Figure 2.3

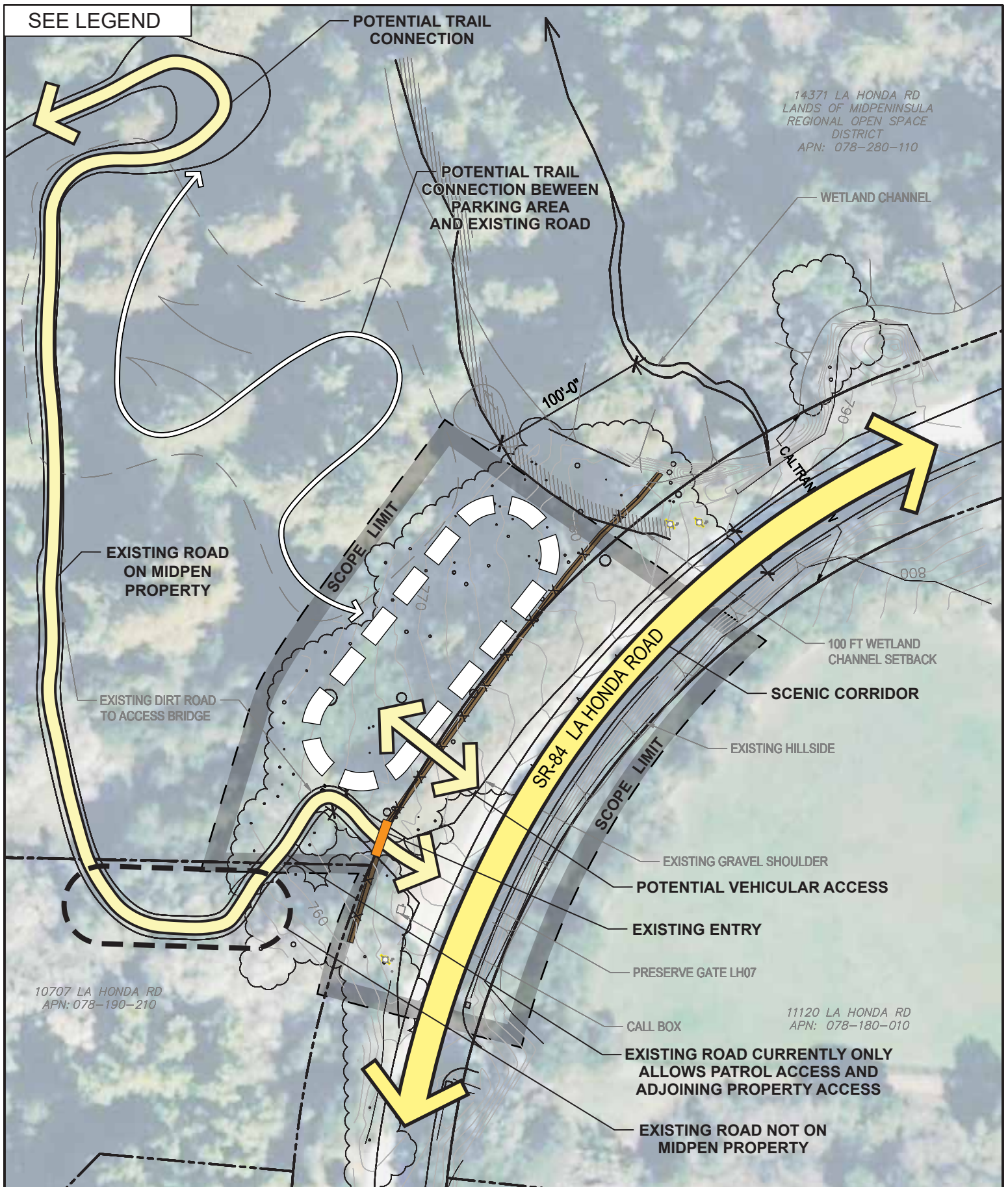
**Environmental Resources
Site B3**

Opportunity and Constraints Analysis



La Honda Creek Preserve
Parking Area and Trailhead Feasibility Study

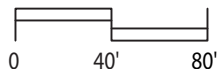
Figure 3.1
Existing Conditions
Site D



La Honda Creek Preserve
Parking Area and Trailhead Feasibility Study

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

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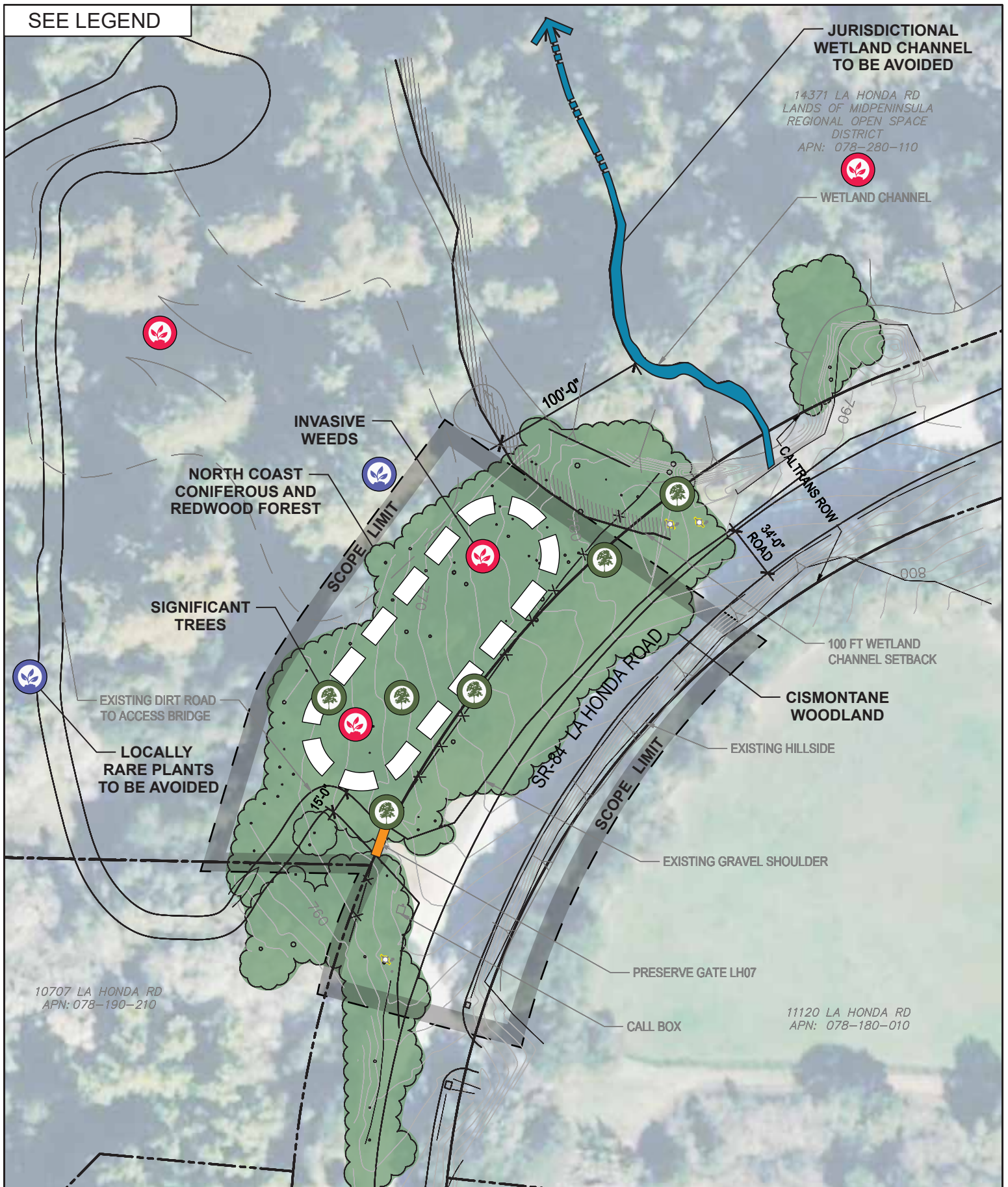
November 2022

Figure 3.2

Site Circulation
Site D

Opportunity and Constraints Analysis

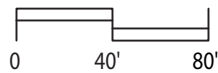
SEE LEGEND



La Honda Creek Preserve
Parking Area and Trailhead Feasibility Study

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

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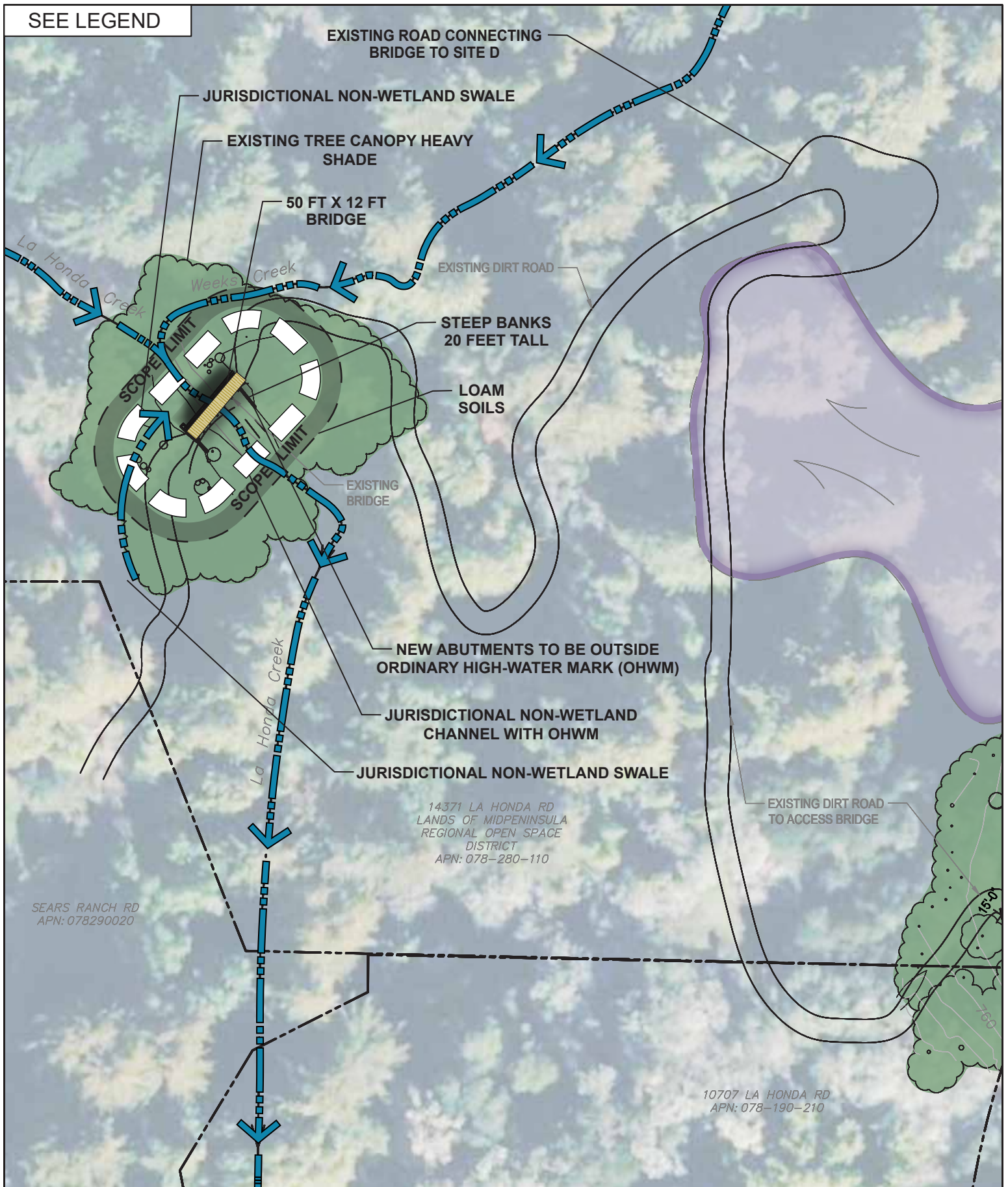
November 2022

Figure 3.3

Environmental Resources Site D

Opportunity and Constraints Analysis

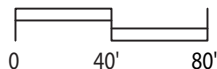
SEE LEGEND



La Honda Creek Preserve
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November 2022

Figure 4.1

Existing Conditions Bridge at Site D

Opportunity and Constraints Analysis

SEE LEGEND

EXISTING ROAD CONNECTING BRIDGE TO SITE D

EXISTING TURN AROUND ALLOWS FOR CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT

La Honda Creek

Weeks Creek

EXISTING DIRT ROAD

SCOPE LIMIT

SCOPE LIMIT

EXISTING BRIDGE

BRIDGE NEEDS TO BE REPLACED DUE TO STRUCTURAL ABUTMENTS CONDITION

MIDPEN AUTHORIZED ACCESS ONLY

14371 LA HONDA RD
LANDS OF MIDPENINSULA
REGIONAL OPEN SPACE
DISTRICT
APN: 078-280-110

EXISTING DIRT ROAD TO ACCESS BRIDGE

SEARS RANCH RD
APN: 078290020

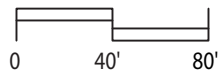
CONNECTION TO PRESERVE'S EXISTING TRAIL AND ROAD SYSTEM

10707 LA HONDA RD
APN: 078-190-210

La Honda Creek Preserve
Parking Area and Trailhead Feasibility Study

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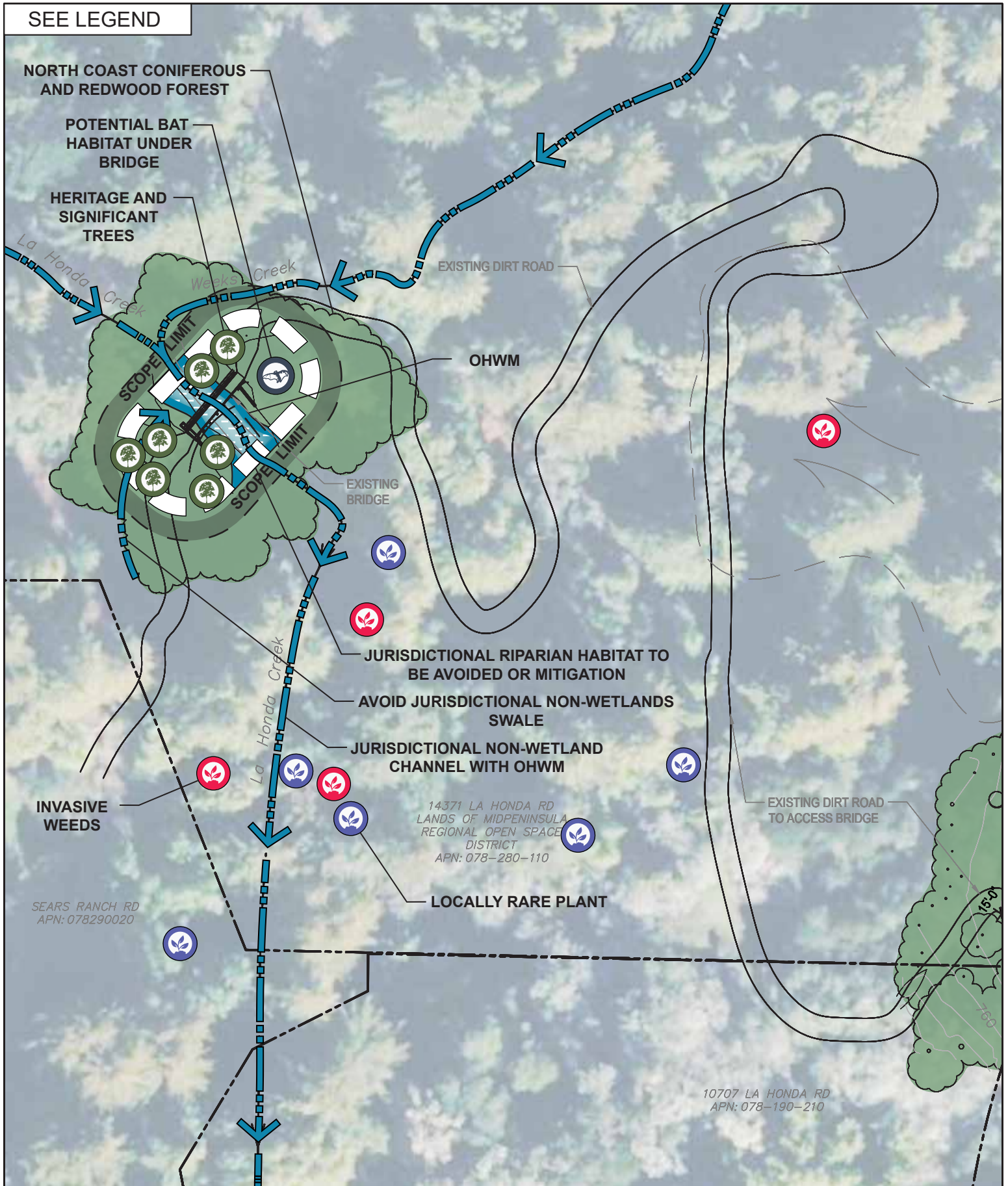
November 2022

Figure 4.2

Site Circulation Bridge at Site D

Opportunity and Constraints Analysis

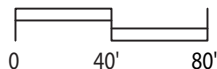
SEE LEGEND



La Honda Creek Preserve
Parking Area and Trailhead Feasibility Study

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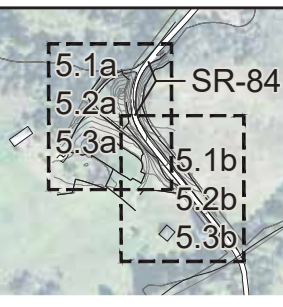
November 2022

Figure 4.3

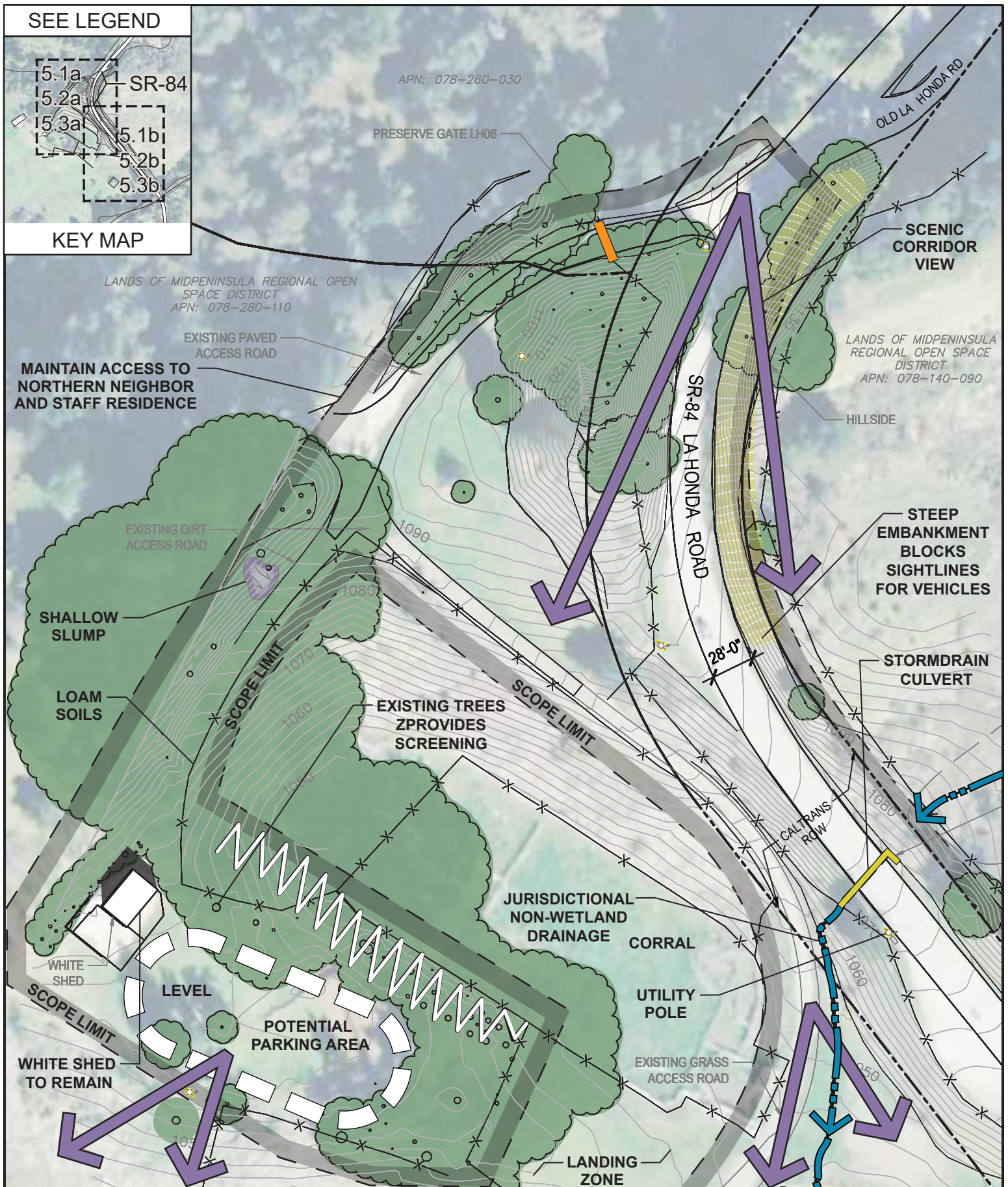
Environmental Resources Bridge at Site D

Opportunity and Constraints Analysis

SEE LEGEND



KEY MAP

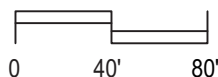


La Honda Creek Preserve
Parking Area and Trailhead Feasibility Study

Figure 5.1a
Existing Conditions
Site E3

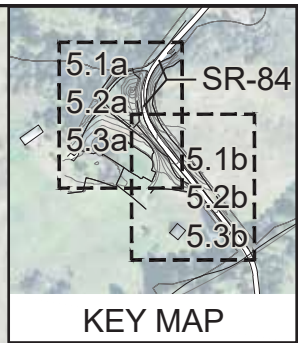
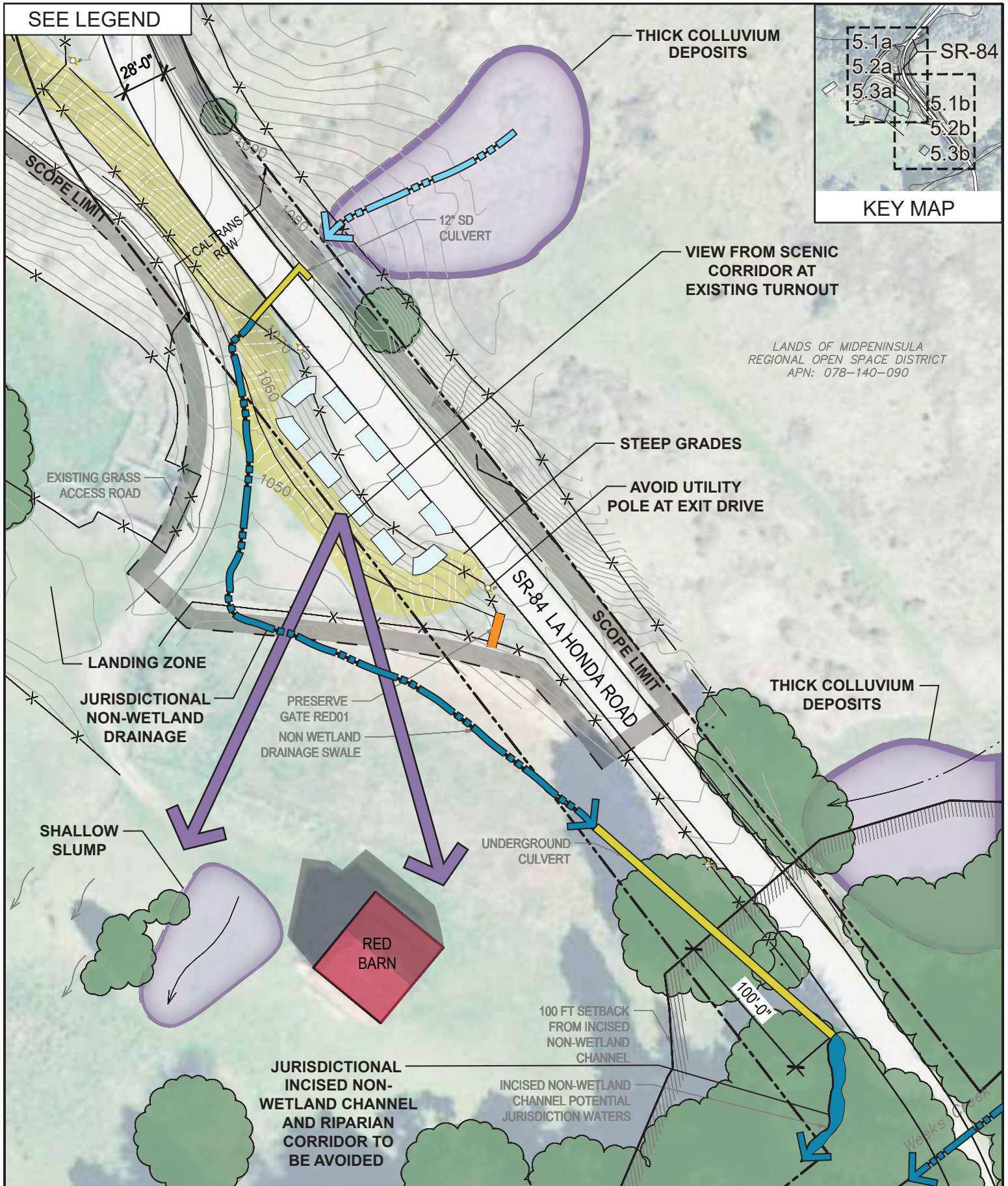
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

rhaa Landscape Architecture & Planning

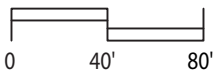


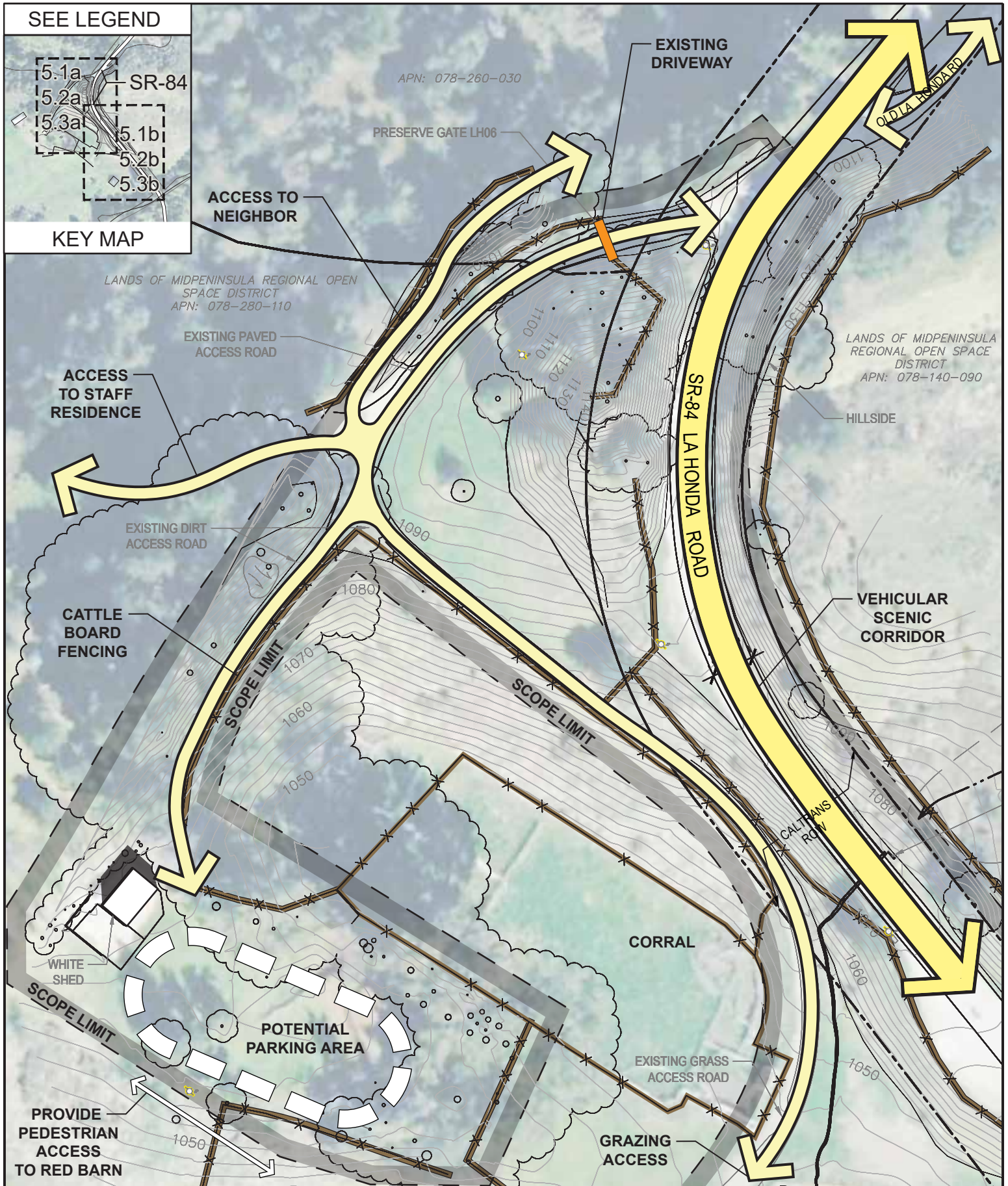
November 2022

Opportunity and Constraints Analysis



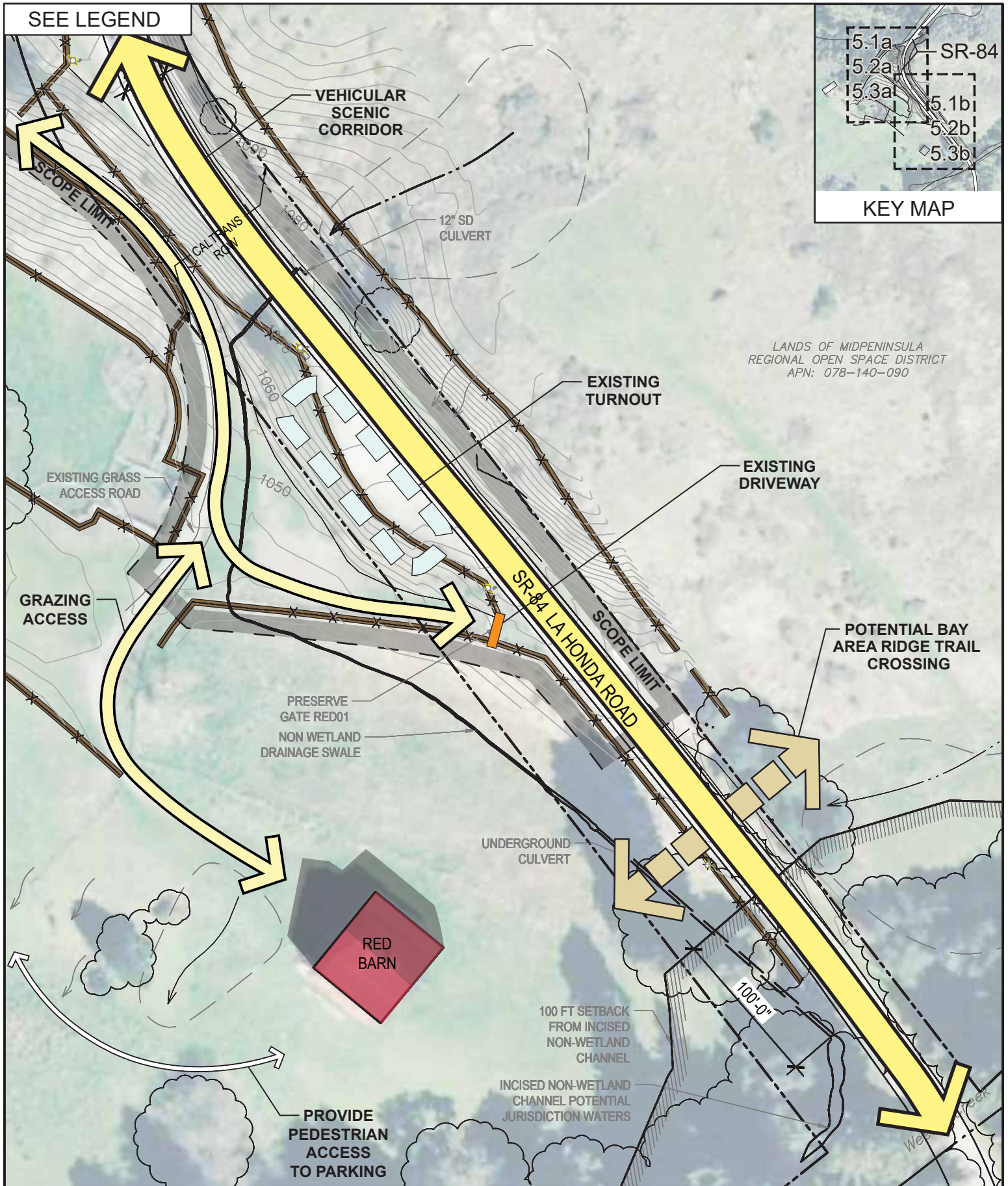
LANDS OF MIDPENINSULA
 REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT
 APN: 078-140-090





La Honda Creek Preserve
Parking Area and Trailhead Feasibility Study

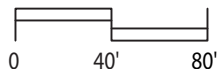
Figure 5.2a
Site Circulation
Site E3



La Honda Creek Preserve
Parking Area and Trailhead Feasibility Study

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

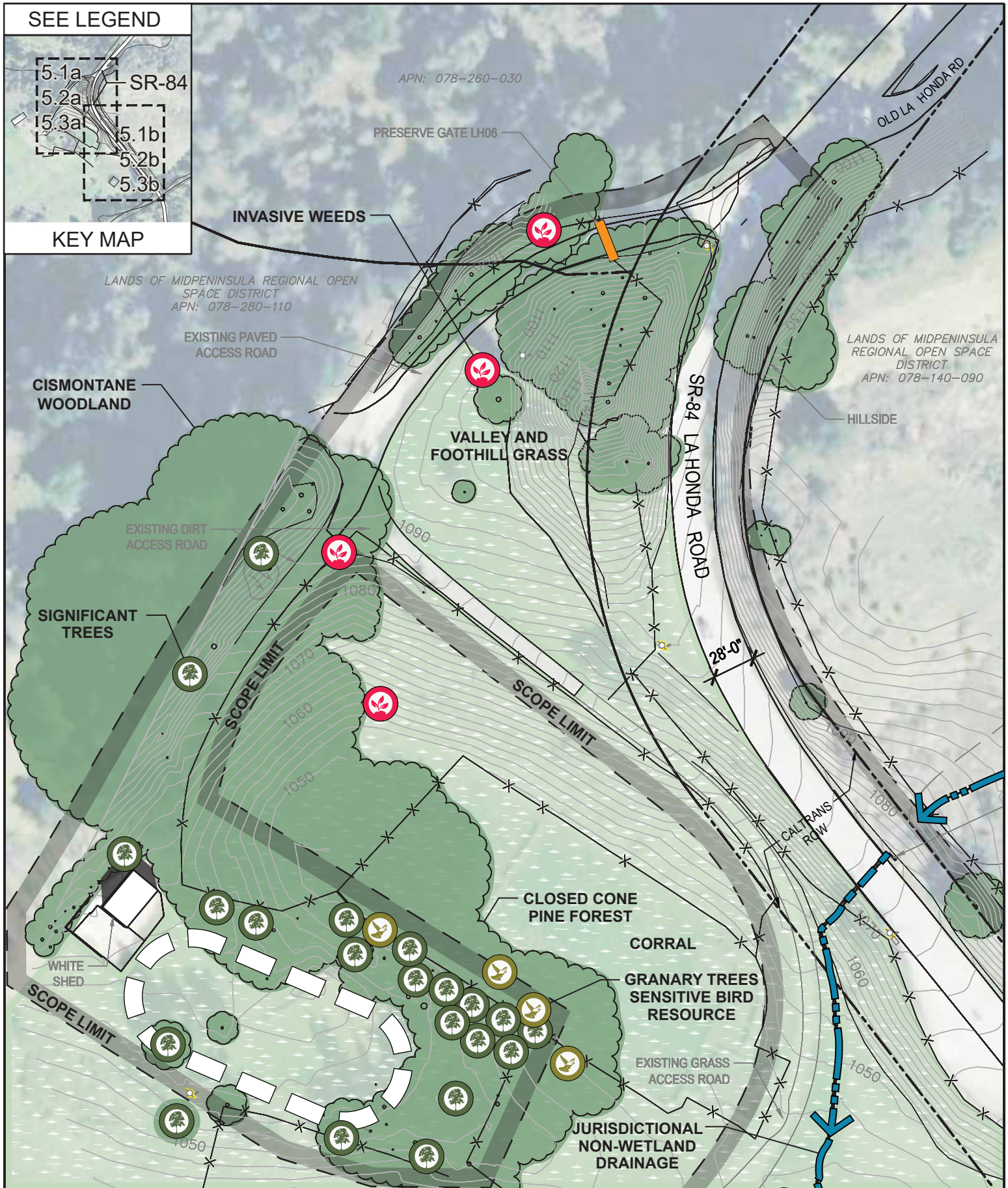
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November 2022

Figure 5.2b
Site Circulation
Site E3

Opportunity and Constraints Analysis



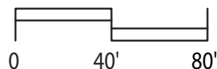
La Honda Creek Preserve
Parking Area and Trailhead Feasibility Study

Figure 5.3a

Environmental Resources Site E3

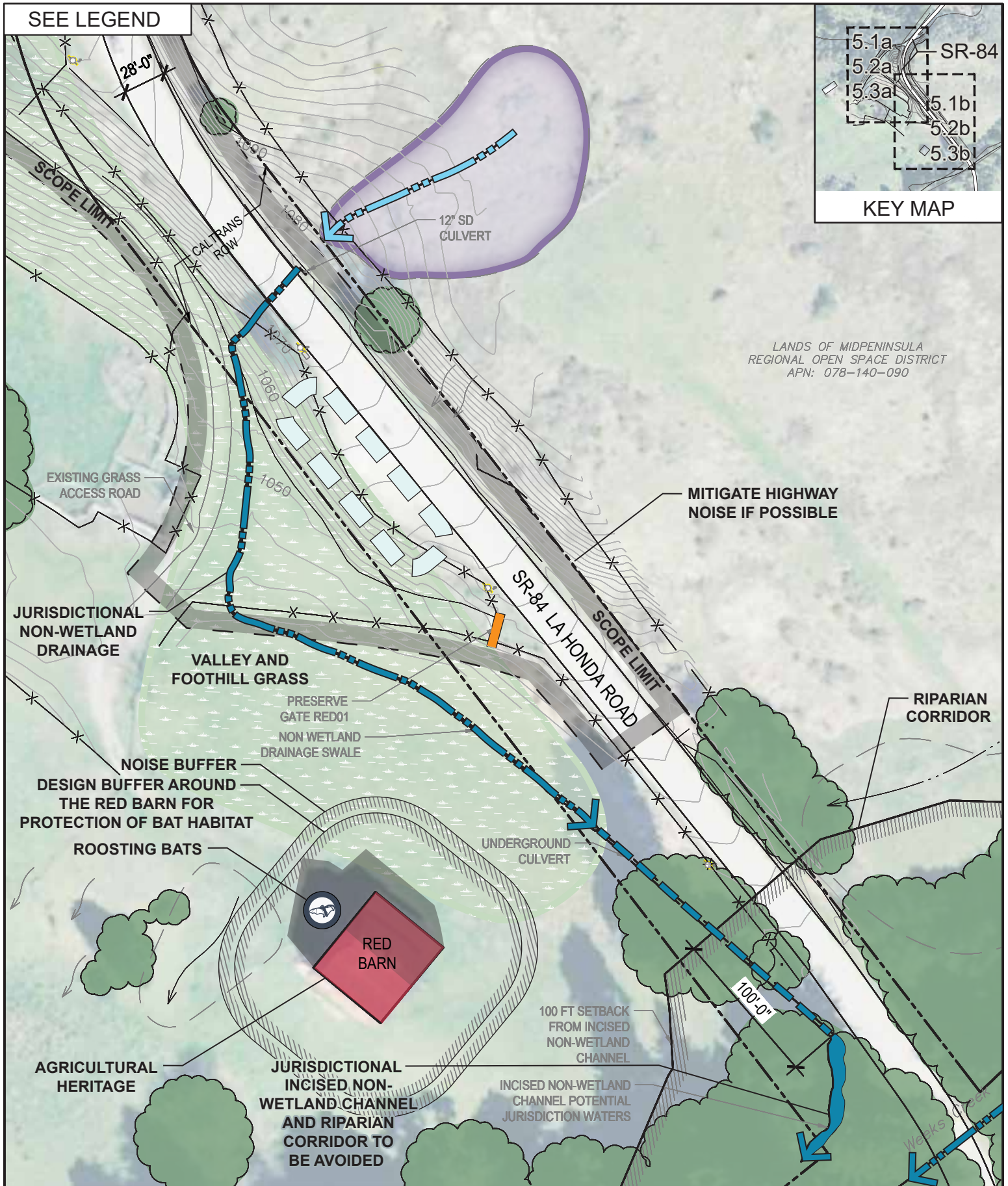
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

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November 2022

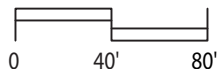
Opportunity and Constraints Analysis



La Honda Creek Preserve
Parking Area and Trailhead Feasibility Study

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

rhaa Landscape Architecture & Planning



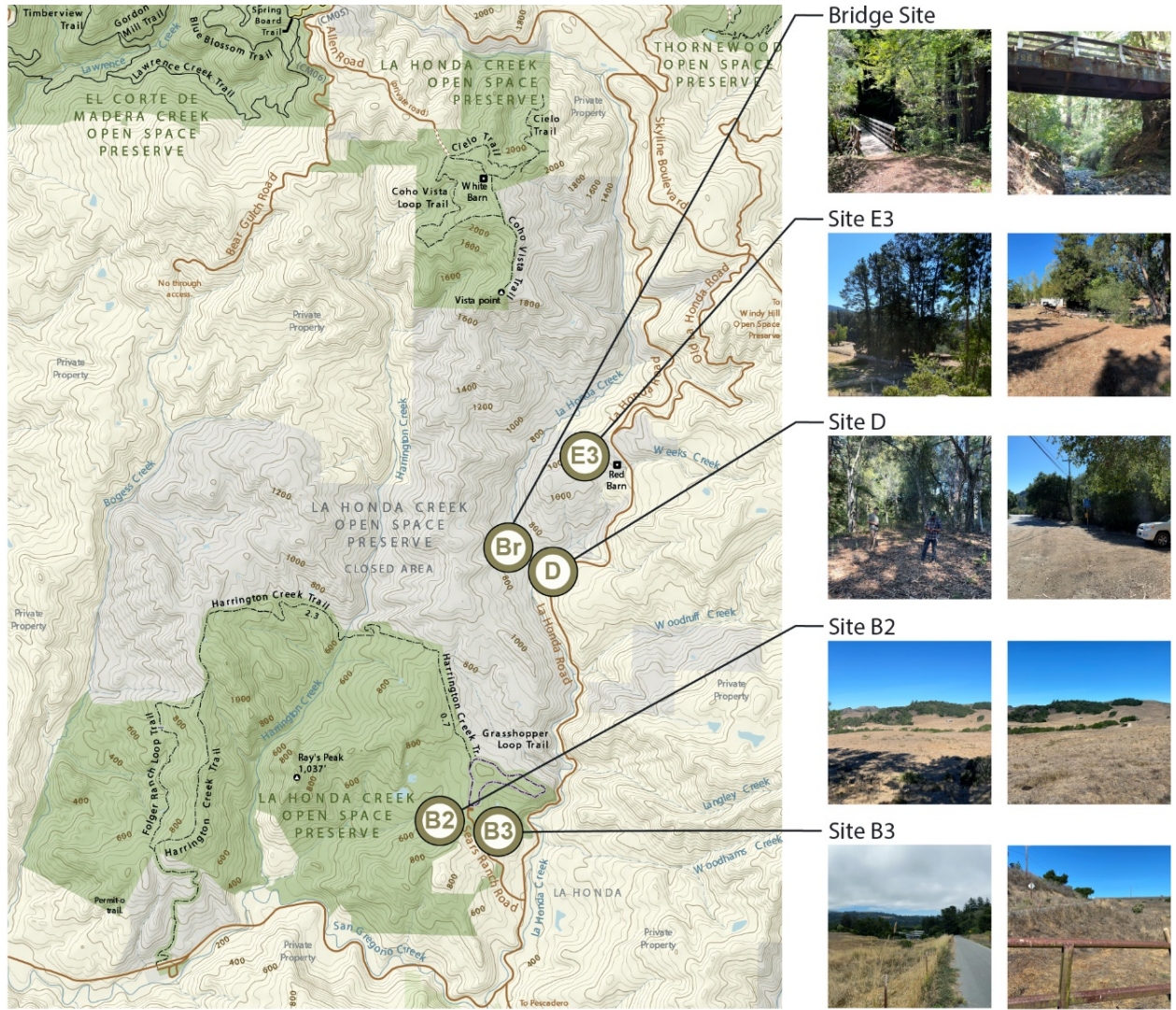
November 2022

Figure 5.3b

Environmental Resources Site E3

Opportunity and Constraints Analysis

Attachment 2: Site Map



La Honda Creek Parking Area Feasibility Study



Attachment 3: C Sites Map



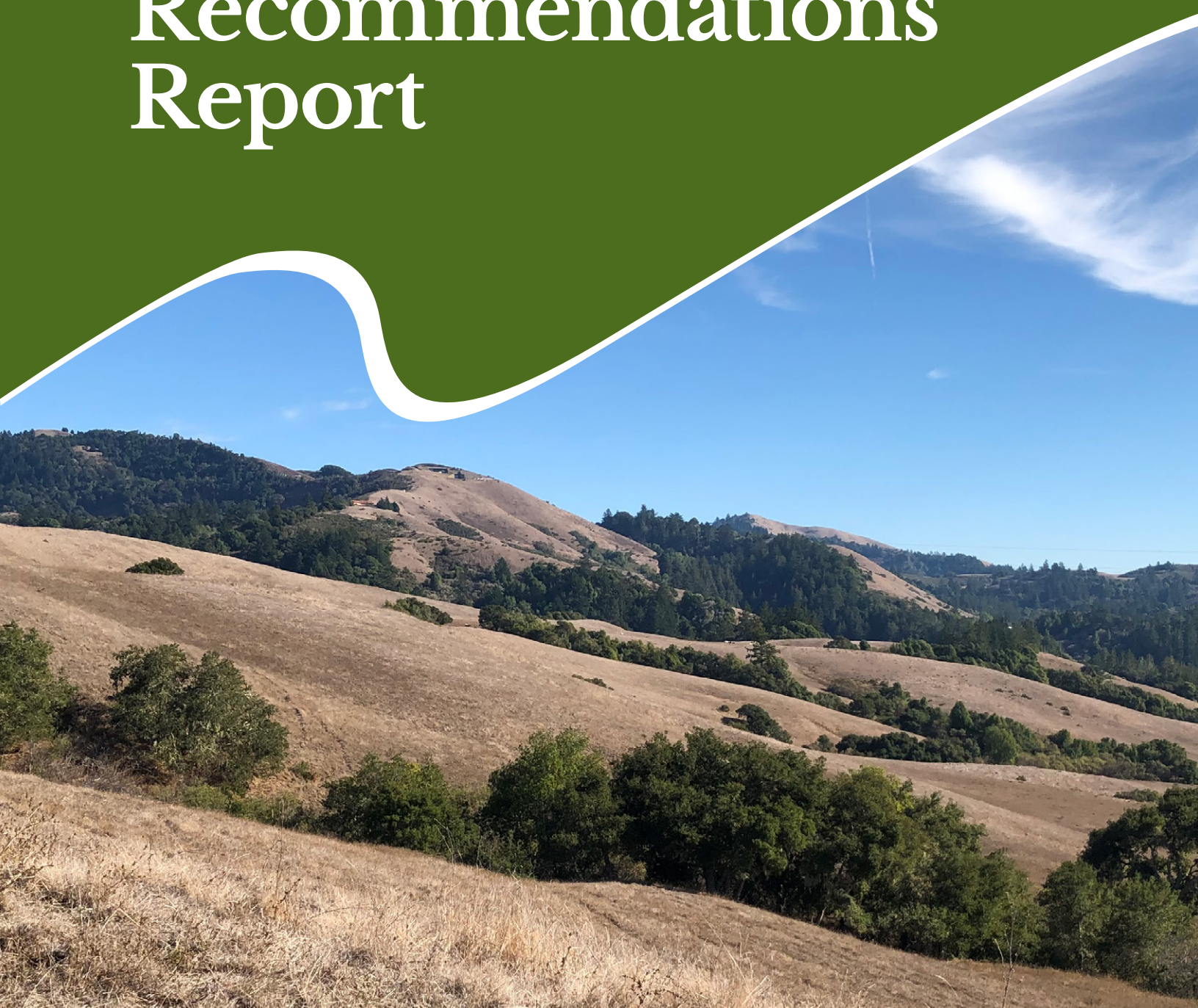
JULY 2020



La Honda Creek Preserve Parking
and Trailhead Access Feasibility Study

**La Honda Creek Preserve
Public Access Working Group**

Recommendations Report





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District Mission

“To acquire a regional greenbelt of open space land in perpetuity, protect and restore the natural environment, and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.”

District Coastside Mission

“To acquire and preserve in perpetuity open space land and agricultural land of regional significance, protect and restore the natural environment, preserve rural character, encourage viable agricultural use of land resources, and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.”



01



Introduction

In August 2012, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Board adopted the La Honda Creek Master Plan, which provided stewardship and public access prescriptions for the entire Preserve over a thirty-year period. Opening the central or middle area of the Preserve (the Red Barn area) to the public was part of the first phase of Master Plan implementation and was a high priority confirmed through the public engagement process for the Board-approved 2014 Open Space Vision Plan and supported by voters with the 2014 passage of Measure AA. The public access improvements for the Red Barn area are part of the *La Honda Creek: Upper Area Recreation, Habitat Restoration and Conservation Grazing Projects*, which ranked as one of the top 25 priority actions in the Vision Plan. Preliminary site planning and analyses to develop conceptual design options began in late 2016.

On June 12, 2018 the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) held a public meeting to discuss conceptual plans for creating new public access to the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve (Preserve) at a site along Highway 84 near the Red Barn. Roughly 100 community members were in attendance, with close to 1,000 represented on a petition, with most expressing opposition to the District's proposals. Key concerns centered around safe ingress and egress from the highway, as well as visual impacts on the pastoral views

of the Red Barn and its surroundings.

The District's Board of Directors (Board), in response to these concerns, initiated a community process to engage and convene a group of citizens from throughout the District with strong representation from the local community to investigate and evaluate a series of options to provide public access to the currently closed, middle or central area (Red Barn area) of the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve (see *Figure 1*). The goal for this group, named the La Honda Public Access

Above: PAWG members and District staff visited potential access locations on a couple of site tours.

Working Group (PAWG), was to identify what sites or access options warrant further evaluation in a subsequent feasibility study phase. Recommendations from the group would be forwarded to the District’s Planning and Natural Resources (PNR) Committee for consideration before advancing final recommendations to the Board for approval.

This report describes the PAWG process—how it was organized and implemented over an eight-month period—and the resulting conclusions and recommendations that emerged from its deliberations. Following these sections is a set of Appendices that provide information that served as input to and output from the PAWG’s considerations.

La Honda Creek Master Plan Vision Statement

“..The stewardship of this public open space preserve shall be the highest priority, followed by the practice of ecological agriculture and ranching, and finally improved trail connectivity and access...”

“Focus will be placed on protecting and enhancing the Preserve’s diverse plant, wildlife, and native habitats; protecting and interpreting the historical and cultural features that are reminiscent of past uses; continuing ranching activities and preserving scenic rangeland landscapes characteristic of rural San Mateo County; lending to the viability of agriculture on the Coast; expanding the available access and interior trail connections within the Preserve; and building connections to surrounding open space lands and Coastside communities.”



PAWG members and District staff study the characteristics of a potential public access location.



02



Process

PURPOSE AND CHARGE

The PAWG was officially formed by the Board in June 2019 and held its first meeting in August 2019. Specifically, the Board charged them...

“

... to work directly with the District project team on the La Honda Parking and Trailhead Access Feasibility Study to evaluate and submit feedback on viable parking and trailhead access options to expand accessibility to the central area of La Honda Creek Open Preserve (Preserve), consistent with the April 9, 2019, Board-approved project goals and objectives. Feedback from the Working Group will inform the options to be reviewed by the Planning and Natural Resources (PNR) Committee, and the recommendations the PNR Committee forwards to the full Board for their review and consideration. The Board will make final policy decisions informed by input from both the Working Group and PNR to determine which option(s) will move forward into the environmental review (California Environmental Quality Act or CEQA) phase.

”

Above: PAWG members begin their meeting process with an orientation to the project.

PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Board established the following goals and objectives for the La Honda Creek Preserve Parking and Trailhead Access Feasibility Study and reconfirmed them during the formation of the PAWG. The PAWG focused on these goals and objectives during its assessment from various alternative sites and access options.

- » **Establish new public access in the central portion of La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve**
- » **Design elements to reflect the rural character of the site and the Red Barn**
- » **Provide safe public access**
- » **Balance public access with grazing activities and other uses**
- » **Include amenities that facilitate environmental education**
- » **Protect scenic views of and from the site**



The La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve affords visitors with spectacular views to the coast.

MEMBERSHIP

Each Board Director appointed a representative from his or her ward to serve on the PAWG, except for the Ward 6 Director, in whose ward the project is located, who appointed two representatives. The Board also interviewed candidates of the La Honda community to fill three additional seats specifically held to represent the local community.

In addition, the Board president appointed two Board Directors to serve as non-voting members of the PAWG and provide Board perspectives to the group.

The PAWG is composed of thirteen members as described below.

Type	Representation and Appointment	Members
Board Directors (non-voting liaisons)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Represent policy interests of the Board. » Appointed by the 2019 Board President. Excludes Directors currently serving on the 2019 PNR Committee. 	Curt Riffle, Ward 4 Larry Hassett, Ward 6
La Honda area community representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Represent local community interests and local perspectives. » Ideally reside in the Town of La Honda or in relative proximity to the Preserve or the Highway 84 corridor. » Recruited through an application process. Selected and appointed by the full Board. 	Ari Delay Karl Lusebrink Kathleen Moazed
Ward 6 stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Represent more localized Ward 6 interests and perspectives. » Appointed by the Director of Ward 6. 	Lou Bordi Barbara Hooper*
Wards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, & 7 stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Represent the regional interests and perspectives of each Ward. » May be residents of the ward and/or represent regional stakeholder interests (e.g. hiking, bicycling, or equestrian uses, and/or education, conservation, recreation, agriculture, or multi-generational access). » One stakeholder appointed by each Director of Wards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7. 	Ward 1: Melany Moore Ward 2: Art Heinrich Ward 3: Willie Wool Ward 4: Sandy Sommer Ward 5: Andie Reed Ward 7: Denise Phillips*

**Barbara Hooper was elected Chair, and Denise Phillips was elected Vice Chair at the PAWG's September 12, 2019 meeting.*

PAWG MEETING PROCESS

District staff and the facilitation consultant team supported the PAWG through a series of seven working sessions over eight months. The PAWG's meetings were governed by the Brown Act, and two public comment periods offered opportunities for members of the public to provide the PAWG feedback at the beginning and end of each meeting. All agendas, meeting summaries, presentations, and materials provided to the PAWG were posted on the project website.

In addition to the regularly scheduled meetings, PAWG members worked in between meetings

to review project materials and complete homework assignments that documented their impressions and ideas regarding the various site and use options. They also cumulatively spent significant time on their own visiting site locations to gather impressions of the suitability of the locations and also to observe road and traffic conditions along Highway 84. PAWG members actively participated in setting the meeting format and process, periodically requesting additional information from the District project team (see Appendix A for list of meeting materials), suggesting homework assignments for the entire group, and recommending new sites to

visit and study. In addition, the PAWG as a group reviewed and provided feedback on the meeting summaries, with the Chair and Vice-Chair reviewing the PAWG Recommendations Report and draft meeting summary following the last scheduled PAWG meeting on March 5, 2020.

The summary table below shows the dates, locations and topics covered in the series of meetings. A detailed description of each meeting follows. *(See Appendices for meeting agendas and summaries, meeting material inventory, handouts and homework.)*

Meeting Date and Location	Topics
1 August 22, 2019 District Office	Orientation
2 September 12, 2019 District Office	Project Background and Process Overview
3 October 19, 2019 La Honda Elementary School	Site Tour #1
4 November 16, 2019 La Honda Elementary School	Site Tour #2
5 December 12, 2019 District Office	Discussion of Site Options
6 February 6, 2020 La Honda Elementary School	Discussion of Site Options
7 March 5, 2020 District Office	Discussion of Suite Options; Development of Recommendations



PAWG members debrief after one of the two site tours.

Meeting 1: August 22, 2019

At its initial meeting, the PAWG reviewed the project goals and objectives, the group's purpose and charge, ground rules and operating procedures, and the anticipated work plan and schedule through the summer of 2020. To support their discussions throughout the process, the District project team gave each member a binder with background materials on the PAWG, the District, the Preserve, and the previous Red Barn public access project. To ensure that the PAWG's work would be aligned and consistent with the District's mission and previous planning and policy documents, District staff provided a background presentation highlighting many of the relevant background and policy documents. The 2014 Districtwide Open Space Vision Plan, for example, articulated 25 priority action portfolios, and among these was one related to Upper La Honda Creek. This set of objectives was incorporated into the voter-approved Bond Measure AA. Of particular significance to this process was the District's La Honda Creek Master Plan that was completed through a public planning process between 2004 and 2012.

For homework, in addition to familiarizing themselves with the binder contents, the PAWG decided to individually stop at a pull-out area near the Red Barn site over a weekend before the next meeting to observe traffic conditions on Highway 84 – with most observing for about an hour during the midday and early afternoon hours.

Meeting 2: September 12, 2019

Working from the background materials passed out on August 22nd, the District project team presented an overview of the District, the District's typical planning and environmental review process, assessment criteria used to evaluate sites for public access potential, the 2012 La Honda Creek Master Plan and the earlier Red Barn site planning process, and existing site conditions at the Preserve. The PAWG selected a Chair and Vice-Chair – Barbara Hooper and Denise Philips, respectively – to work with the District project team on the format and topics of subsequent PAWG meetings. Along with additional background information, the District project team passed out four existing site conditions maps to the PAWG to prepare for the upcoming site tours.

Additional information included collision data from February 2009 through June 2019 provided by California Highway Patrol, and extrapolated and plotted on a map by the District's Geographic Information Systems' team; general information on the Bay Area Ridge Trail provided by the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council; and an initial assessment of the Event Center and Sears Ranch Road sites, which was a Board-directed task from the June 12, 2018 meeting on the Red Barn project. In response to a PAWG request for additional background on the Red Barn public access project, the District project team also provided links to all the reports and minutes from previous 2016, 2017, and 2018 public meetings on the project.

Meeting 3: October 19, 2019

October and November site tours allowed the PAWG to observe the conditions of Highway 84, consider the access opportunities into the Preserve from Highway 84, and look for and assess sites that could accommodate potential parking areas.

The first tour in October included stops at the three sites raised during the June 12, 2018, meeting: (1) Event Center, (2) the Sears Ranch Road parking lot, where the tour also stopped at a location suggested by a PAWG member one mile north into the Preserve, and (3) the Red Barn site, where a PAWG member suggested two specific areas as potential parking alternatives to the original conceptual plan site. As the PAWG toured each site, they used site assessment forms to document their observations in the context of the project goals and objectives and turned these in ahead of the next meeting to be shared with the rest of the PAWG. The District project team answered questions throughout the tour and documented answers as part of the meeting summary. As homework, the District project team asked the PAWG to suggest other sites to visit during the November site tour.

Information passed out to the PAWG included different access alternatives that members of the public had raised during the previous Red Barn site planning process. In response to PAWG requests for additional background information, the District project team provided a map showing the distance from the Event Center to the Red Barn area using existing roads, a map identifying existing traffic signs along Highway 84, and data on the number of permits requested for the Allen Road and Event Center permit only parking areas.

Meeting 4: November 16, 2019

The second tour included sites suggested by PAWG members: (1) Preserve Gate LH07 and (2) two additional sites next to and one mile north of the Sears Ranch parking lot. To give the PAWG a sense of the future trail experience, the tour also included a one-mile hike starting one mile from the existing Sears Ranch Road parking lot and into a closed area of the Preserve located to the northeast, heading toward La Honda Creek and the Red Barn. As the PAWG toured each site, they used site assessment forms to document their observations and turned these in ahead of the next meeting to be shared with the rest of the PAWG. The District project team answered questions throughout the tour and documented answers as part of the meeting summary. For the December meeting, the District project team asked the PAWG to reflect on the sites visited on the tours and be ready to discuss the group's observations.

Meeting 5: December 12, 2019

The District project team shared additional information compiled in response to PAWG questions received during prior meetings. A representative from the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council provided an overview of the Bay Area Ridge Trail at the request of a PAWG member. The District project team presented summaries of October and November tour site assessment comments submitted by PAWG members, and the PAWG further shared their perspectives of the sites visited and discussed each site's characteristics and how well a location met the project goals and objectives. Using the PAWG's Gradients of Agreement voting system (see Decision Making Process below), the facilitator guided the scoring process and documented voting members' individual scores of each site.

District staff briefly presented a list of "other options and iterations" focused on offering limited access via permits or docent-led activities and on distributing uses among several



PAWG members listen intently to a staff presentation.

sites to prompt the PAWG to think of other ways to provide access besides a full service parking and trailhead area at one location to meet all the project goals and objectives.

As homework, the PAWG discussed re-visiting the area behind the ranger residence at the Red Barn site and also decided to visit two new sites: (1) an area by a shed below the existing ranger residence at the Red Barn site and (2) a flat, grassy area adjacent to Preserve Gate LH15 along Sears Ranch Road past the La Honda Elementary School and before the existing lot. The District project team also asked the PAWG to start considering what combinations of sites and options to discuss further with the goal of ultimately deciding on what recommendations to forward to the PNR Committee.

Later in January, the District project team shared a traffic memo prepared by professional transportation consultants (see Appendix A for list of meeting materials provided to the PAWG) in response to an earlier PAWG request about potential traffic calming measures for the highway.

Meeting 6: February 6, 2020

The PAWG continued deliberations from its December meeting. As before, the District project team presented summaries of the site assessment comments submitted by PAWG members about the two new sites suggested in December. The PAWG further shared their views of the two new sites and discussed each site's characteristics and how well they met the project goals and objectives.

District staff provided more detail about the “other options and iterations” briefly presented in December and provided examples of how these might be applied at each site. The suggested additional limited access and use distribution options included:

- » Access via **permit only** (*would not apply to sites already open to the public*)
- » Access via **docent-led activities** (*would not apply to sites already open to the public*)
- » Distribution or separation of uses among various sites
 - Educational or interpretive elements
 - Picnic or family-oriented elements
 - Restroom access
 - Equestrian access
 - Dog access

The District project team also presented three example combinations or “suites” of sites, limited access options, and distribution of uses that could be packaged to meet the project goals and objectives.

The PAWG agreed that more time was needed to consider the three example suites of options and to think of other combinations as homework. In addition, a PAWG member suggested a final site for the PAWG to consider, in the Red Barn area adjacent to and north of the existing ranger residence, for the group to visit and assess. The PAWG determined that a meeting in March was necessary to continue deliberations.

Shortly after the February meeting, the PAWG Chair and Vice-Chair requested that the PAWG also score the limited access and use distribution options using the Gradients of Agreement voting system.

Meeting 7: March 5, 2020

Prior to continuing discussions from the February meeting, the PAWG received a presentation from Renée Fitzsimons, program manager of the District's Interpretation and Education Program, to learn more about how the docent program could be potentially leveraged to offer access. Following this informational presentation, the PAWG continued its deliberations from its February meeting, reviewing PAWG member scores for each site. The group discussed and scored the new location at the Red Barn suggested in February and shared their perspectives on the limited access and distributed use options.

The PAWG spent the remaining half of the meeting sharing their views on six suites or combinations of site alternatives and access options, three of which were the samples previously presented to the group in February and three of which were suggested by PAWG members. The ensuing discussion resulted in several sites being removed from further consideration by the group, use parameters being specified for the remaining sites, and the formation of a new, seventh suite that the PAWG ultimately advanced as their recommendation to the PNR Committee.

DECISION MAKING PROCESS

The ground rules and operating procedures (see Appendices) for the PAWG established that the group would strive to make decisions and recommendations through a consensus-based process, consensus being defined as general agreement by all members present when a decision item was on the meeting agenda. The Chair and/or Vice-Chair presided over the meetings, which were facilitated by District staff and MIG consultant Lou Hexter. Guided by the facilitator, the PAWG signaled their level of support for sites and suites using a scoring system based on the Gradients of Agreement described to the right.

Gradients of Agreement

1	I can say an unqualified “yes” to the recommendation.
2	I find the recommendation acceptable. It appears to be the best of the real options available to us at this time.
3	I can live with the recommendation, although I am not especially enthusiastic about it.
4	I do not fully agree with the recommendation, but I am willing to stand aside, remain neutral, so the process can move forward.
5	I do not fully agree with the recommendation. I have some suggestions and I would like the Working Group to do more work to see if we can reach a higher level of agreement.
6	I do not agree with the recommendation and I will work actively to oppose it.

A vote of 1 and 2 was considered supportive of a proposal, a vote of 3 and 4 was considered neutral and therefore willing to accept the proposal, and a vote of 5 and 6 was considered not supportive. A unanimous vote was not required, a majority of the voting members being sufficient to reach a decision.



PAWG members pose for a photo at a trail gate near La Honda Creek.



District staff member takes a walk around the Red Barn during one of the site tours.



03



Assessment of Sites and Other Access Options

The PAWG concentrated their work in three geographic areas of the Preserve.

- » Event Center area in the southern end of the Preserve
- » Sears Ranch Road area about 3.5 miles east of the Event Center
- » Red Barn area about 4 miles north of Sears Ranch Road

Within these geographic areas, the group evaluated 11 individual sites in 5 general locations (see Site Options Map on the next page).

Event Center area—south end of Preserve

- » **Site A:** area near existing permit area trailhead and tunnel to Preserve

Sears Ranch Road parking lot area

- » **Site B1:** expansion of the existing lot
- » **Site B2:** area opposite existing lot across driveway
- » **Site B3:** area at Gate LH15

Sears Ranch Road interior area— one mile north of existing lot

- » **Site C1:** open area (site of former residence), past first interior gate
- » **Site C2:** former corral area adjacent to C1

Preserve Gate LH07—south of Red Barn area

- » **Site D:** area at Gate LH07 and extending parallel to highway

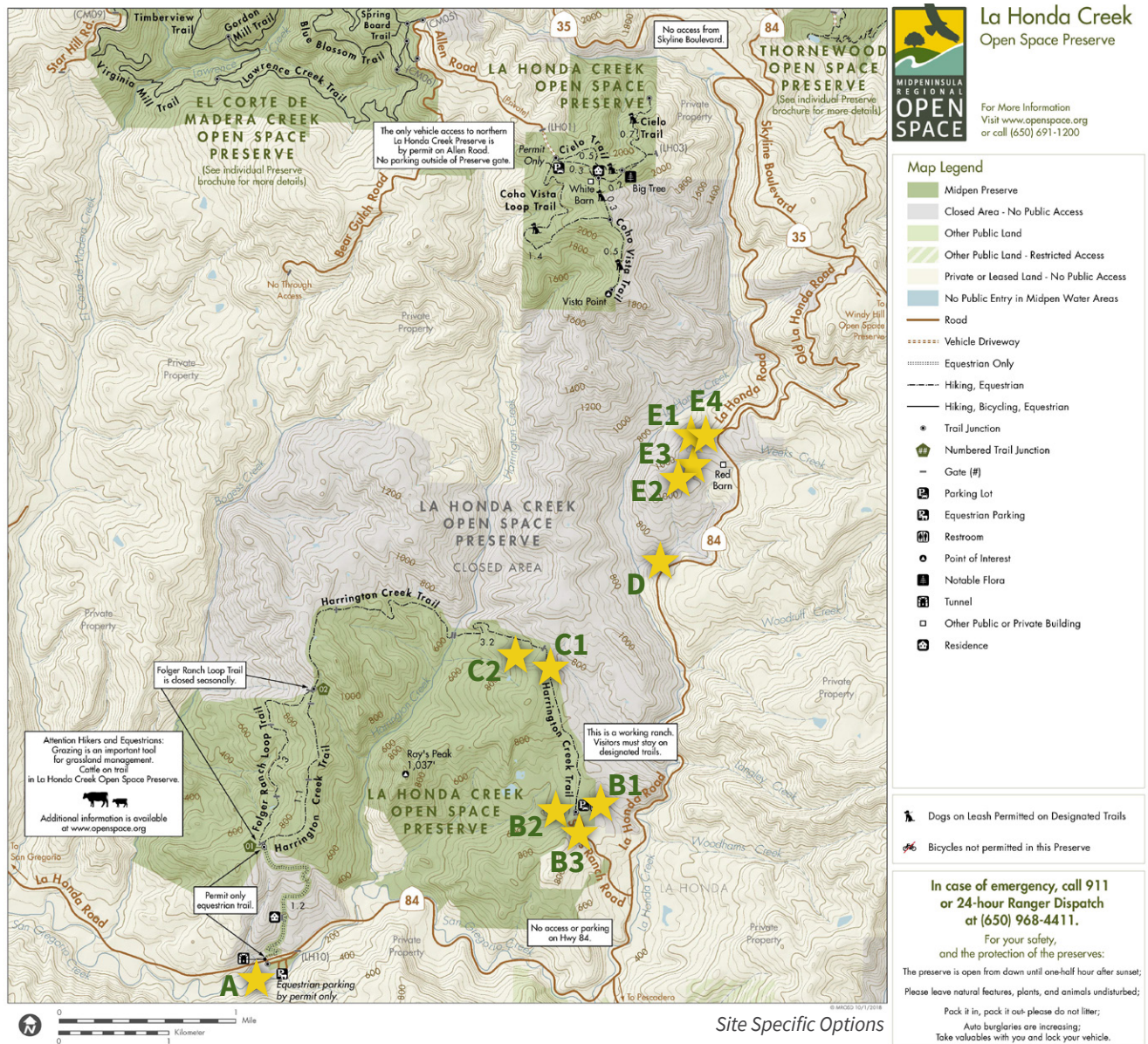
Red Barn area

- » **Site E1:** knoll west of existing ranger residence
- » **Site E2:** former corral area west of and downhill from Red Barn
- » **Site E3:** area south of and downhill from existing ranger residence
- » **Site E4:** area north of existing ranger residence

Above: PAWG members discuss and ask questions at one of the potential access locations.

The following section summarizes the Working Group’s assessment of each location’s suitability to meet the project goals and objectives.

A summary table of comment themes is shown following each narrative. The PAWG’s individual assessment forms are provided in the Appendices, except for Site E4, which the PAWG discussed together on March 5, 2020 instead of filling out site assessment forms.



Site A Event Center



The location is at the southern end of the Preserve and is connected by an existing tunnel to the main Preserve on the north side of Highway 84. Currently used for permit only equestrian parking and as an interim field staff office outpost, the site will be the subject of a future site planning effort as a

standalone project and will need to be incorporated into the 2012 La Honda Creek Master Plan.

Because the Event Center location will be the subject of a future effort, and since it is relatively far from the area under study, **the PAWG overall did not consider it integral to providing access to the middle,**

closed portion of the Preserve.

That said, the PAWG felt that the site had great potential for general public access, and thus supported continuing its use as a permit lot for equestrian visitors and urged that a multi-use access parking area and trailhead be developed at this site in the future.

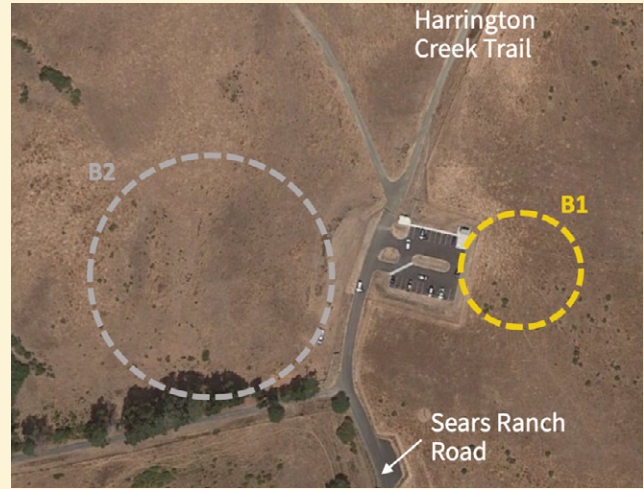
Summary Table of PAWG comments presented on December 12, 2019 (see Appendices for individual assessment forms)

*Note: The parentheses after some comments indicates the number of similar mentions: (ii) = 2 mentions

Project Specific Site Assessment Criterion	Supports	Concerns
Establish new public access in the central portion of La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Equestrian use here could help reduce need for equestrian vehicle access in the central area (iii)* » Site is already flat, paved and has buildings (ii) » Public access for hikers, cyclists, and dog walkers (in addition to the access already available to equestrians via a permit) in this site would allow visitors to enjoy the central portion » Tunnel could allow visitors to explore either side of the preserve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Doesn't provide easy access to the central part of the Preserve (iii)
Design elements to reflect the rural character of the site and the Red Barn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Does not affect Red Barn (iii) » Beautiful as is and reflects the rural character of the area » Plenty of parking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Event Center itself is not attractive
Provide safe public access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Safe public access could be feasible (iiii) » Tunnel creates excellent trail access across Highway 84; make sure it's structurally sound 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » The tunnel needs improvements (iii) » Pulling off Hwy 84 would need to be addressed (ii) » Has its own vehicular access problems
Balance public access with grazing activities and other uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » There's not much direct effect (iiii) » Well-suited to parking and horses » Other activities such as hiking, biking, and dog walking, etc. could be implemented » Maintain rodeo and training facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Concern about how the site would keep hikers » Maintenance issues/costs » Agriculture/rodeo uses separate
Include amenities that facilitate environmental education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Good place to do this (ii) » Potential to display information about agriculture, equestrians, rodeo, etc. (ii) » Information about the Red Barn could be provided here to encourage visitors to explore the trails » Plenty of area for signage » Loop over to White Barn could be interesting » Near La Honda Oil Fields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Concentrated equestrian use and location at an end of the preserve – not a likely location » Depends on what Midpen wants
Protect scenic views of and from the site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Views from both sides of the Event Center (ii) » There's not much direct effect (ii) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Not that scenic (iii)
Other considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Amend the Master Plan to include consideration for Event Center (and Driscoll Orchards) uses (ii) » Great staging area for the Driscoll Ranch part of the Preserve; when new trail options open, consider this for more than equestrian use » Density study needed for conformance with Highway 84 Scenic Corridor regulations 	

Site B1

Sears Ranch Road Area Expansion of Existing Lot



Site B1 is the existing Sears Ranch Road parking lot and trailhead that opened to the public in 2017 and one of two locations that the Board of Directors on June 12, 2018 directed staff to assess for their potential to meet the project goals and objectives. This parking lot's observed use is currently under capacity but expected to increase once more trails open in the Preserve or if additional uses are allowed from this location per the 2012

Master Plan such as bicycle access, equestrian trailer parking or dog on leash access. Expansion may be possible if more of the open grassy area is graded to flatten more area for parking and circulation.

This location would allow the District to leverage its existing investment in parking, restroom and interpretive facilities, and the lot currently has capacity. Some equestrian parking could be accommodated here,

but the PAWG preferred one of the nearby options. There is some question about how much future use is expected and how much additional traffic capacity Sears Ranch Road can accommodate.

Expansion of this lot with regular vehicles spaces may be appropriate **if use increases** in this area of the Preserve, which may result from new trails or expanded uses per the 2012 Master Plan, e.g. bicycle access, dog use or equestrian trailer parking.

Summary Table of PAWG comments presented on December 12, 2019 (see Appendices for individual assessment forms)

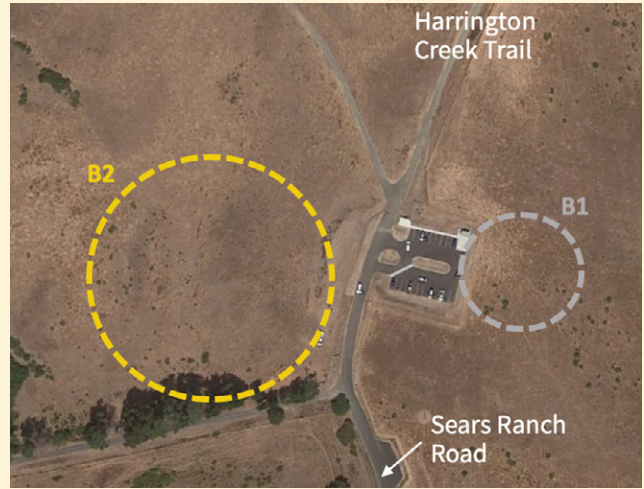
**Note: The parentheses after some comments indicates the number of similar mentions: (ii) = 2 mentions*

Project Specific Site Assessment Criterion	Supports	Concerns
Establish new public access in the central portion of La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » More parking here for equestrians » Reducing/deleting equestrian parking at central area would improve traffic safety getting into/onto 84 » Can add some parking » Biking, and dog access could be added » Would support increased use in this underutilized section 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Doesn't make central area (iiiiii)* » Doesn't fulfill parking needs

Project Specific Site Assessment Criterion	Supports	Concerns
Design elements to reflect the rural character of the site and the Red Barn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Does not affect Red Barn (iii) » Agricultural needs would add to the character » Vistas reflect the rural character » Sensitive to what is already here » Very peaceful and remote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Additional paved area would not be in keeping with rural character » Needs bathroom and trash can
Provide safe public access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Access is safe (iiiiiii) » Easy, safe driving and parking access » posted speed limit and stop signs » Impact on school grounds. » Fences separate visitors and cattle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Road needs improvements
Balance public access with grazing activities and other uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Grazing and hiking activities complement each other (iii) » No additional impact on grazing » Opportunity to inform public about the essential role of grazing in fire fuel management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Parking would use pasture area (ii)
Include amenities that facilitate environmental education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Good place to do this (iiii) » Could inform visitors about the history, geography, wildlife, Red Barn and agricultural use in the site and region (iii) » Could incorporate a loop to the ponds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Depends on what Midpen wants » Not a particularly compelling site
Protect scenic views of and from the site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Views are nice (iii) » Tucked away from the public (ii) » There is a structure already 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Parking/amenities would be visible from within the preserve » At some point a larger staging area becomes out of scale for the rural setting
Other considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Would serve additional trails planned for the area » Location is very near the La Honda Store where one can buy food and drink for picnics » Consider gravel lot instead of asphalt; better for horses » Add oak trees for screening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Possibility that roadway would need to be widened to accommodate additional capacity; could result in higher costs to the District

Site B2

Sears Ranch Road Area Site West of Existing Parking Lot



Site B2 is an open, grassy area opposite the drive from the existing Sears Ranch Road parking lot and trailhead. The area is large enough to potentially accommodate equestrian trailer parking and additional vehicular parking if the existing lot begins to exceed its capacity.

PAWG members felt this area could accommodate **equestrian trailer parking** in particular, as well as serve as **overflow** from the existing lot. The main concern here was the potential impact of a developed lot on **views of a white barn and pond located in the distance to the west.**



Summary Table of PAWG comments presented on December 12, 2019 (see Appendices for individual assessment forms)

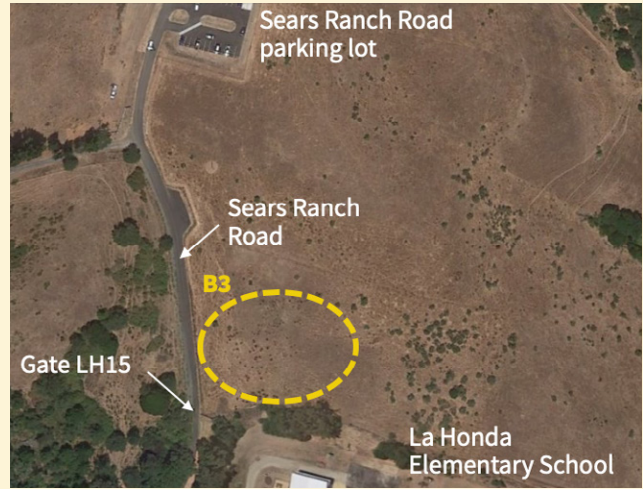
**Note: The parentheses after some comments indicates the number of similar mentions: (ii) = 2 mentions*

Project Specific Site Assessment Criterion	Supports	Concerns
Establish new public access in the central portion of La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Could provide access for equestrian parking and users (iii)* » Seems like a natural place to expand access toward the central area (ii) » Is central if one considers the overall acreage of the Preserve and the trails currently in use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Does not meet this objective (iiii). » Long hike to reach central area » Only equestrians and cyclists would consider this to be a staging area for the central Preserve

Project Specific Site Assessment Criterion	Supports	Concerns
Design elements to reflect the rural character of the site and the Red Barn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Would expect it to be designed to blend in to surrounding area » Consider gravel surfacing for lot, especially since it is better for horses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Additional paved area would be intrusive and not in keeping with rural character
Provide safe public access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Very safe access (iiiiiii) » Would provide safe access if the road could be widened to two lanes (ii) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Concern that additional capacity would require roadway widening
Balance public access with grazing activities and other uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Minimal grazing impacts (iiii) » Education of the public has been good and should continue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Would require additional fencing and gates » Concern about noise and fumes from cars
Include amenities that facilitate environmental education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Almost unlimited potential for environmental education (iii) » Potential to access Sears Ranch ponds » Only modest improvements needed, since there are amenities at the nearby existing lot 	
Protect scenic views of and from the site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Plenty of views that could be enhanced by a well-designed parking lot and other amenities (iiii) » Avoids visual impact on Red Barn (iii) » Would be out of view from the town of La Honda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Would detract from existing views of the barn and pond (iii)
Other considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Maybe appropriate for equestrian trailer parking – consider as permit only to keep it small » Prioritize equestrian parking on graded, unpaved surface » Allow for car overflow from current lot » Could accommodate a building or public bathroom » Plenty of space for picnics » When more access to the southern portion is needed, this would be a good place for parking 	

Site B3

Sears Ranch Road Area Gate LH15



This relatively open and flat site is at Preserve Gate LH15 on Sears Ranch Road, past the La Honda Elementary School and before the existing Sears Ranch Road parking lot and trailhead.

PAWG members felt this area also could accommodate **equestrian trailer parking** quite well and

would preserve views of the barn and pond compared to Site B2. The main concern at this location was the **potential impact on the La Honda Elementary School**, and the members felt that any proposed development of this site would need to involve consultation with the school.

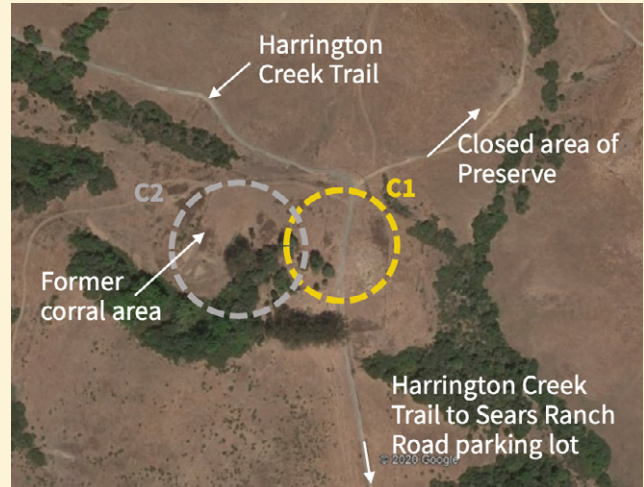
Summary Table of PAWG comments presented on December 12, 2019 (see Appendices for individual assessment forms)
*Note: The parentheses after some comments indicates the number of similar mentions: (ii) = 2 mentions

Project Specific Site Assessment Criterion	Supports	Concerns
Establish new public access in the central portion of La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » New access close to existing lot » Potential for access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Doesn't establish new public access close to the central portion of the preserve (iiii)* » Better than Event Center, but lower than many others being considered
Design elements to reflect the rural character of the site and the Red Barn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » A good location: next to the school, which is already developed, away from Highway 84 view, and well hidden from within the Preserve (ii) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Not in proximity to Red Barn (iii) » May not be desirable because of proximity to La Honda Elementary School (iii)

Project Specific Site Assessment Criterion	Supports	Concerns
Provide safe public access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Provides safe access (iiiiiii) » Plenty of room for horse trailers to turn around 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Narrow section of road might need to be redesigned to accommodate traffic » Might be hazardous for students' access to the school
Balance public access with grazing activities and other uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Limited impact to grazing (iiiiiii) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » May not be desirable because of proximity to La Honda Elementary School » Some fences
Include amenities that facilitate environmental education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Site is large enough to include many amenities for environmental education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Little opportunity for environmental education (ii) » This site has no view to the rest of the Preserve, which would make it less than inspiring for educational use » Already have interpretive signage at existing lot nearby (ii)
Protect scenic views of and from the site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Site is concealed well (iii) » Protects views of the White Barn and the Red Barn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Nice, but not nearly as nice as other locations being considered (ii)
Other considerations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » This site seems redundant given the parking lot just beyond it at the top of the hill (ii) » Perhaps used for equestrian parking, and it would preserve the views over towards the pond area from the top of the hill (the existing parking lot) » Its proximity to the school raises questions in my mind. Are there any issues associated with locating a public access site so close to an elementary school?

Site C1

Sears Ranch Road Area Former Residence Area



This location is approximately one mile north into the Preserve from the existing parking lot, accessed by the Harrington Creek Trail which takes hikers into an area currently used for conservation grazing.

Paving and **adding general or equestrian vehicle traffic** on a road

currently used as the main trail was seen as problematic by many PAWG members; some were concerned about the **conflicts with grazing** activities; and District staff expressed concern about the **challenges in patrolling and monitoring** an area so far away from a public road. Some felt a full-service parking area in

this location offered good access to multiple trails, opportunities for picnic and interpretive facilities, and closer access to the central portion of the Preserve.

Summary Table of PAWG comments presented on December 12, 2019 (see Appendices for individual assessment forms)

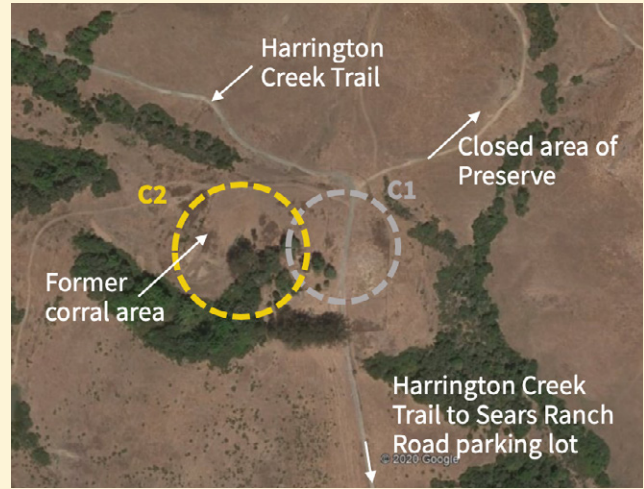
**Note: The parentheses after some comments indicates the number of similar mentions: (ii) = 2 mentions*

Project Specific Site Assessment Criterion	Supports	Concerns
Establish new public access in the central portion of La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Could accommodate equestrian access (ii)* » Biking, and dog access could be added » Would support increased use in this underutilized section » Closer access to the Red Barn » Can add some parking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Doesn't provide access to central area (iii) » Introduces vehicles and their conflicts well into the Preserve » More visible from within the Preserve
Design elements to reflect the rural character of the site and the Red Barn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Does not affect Red Barn » Agricultural needs would add to the character » Vistas reflect the rural character » Very peaceful and remote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Intrusion of fencing an additional one mile into the Preserve » New paved area would not be in keeping with rural character

Project Specific Site Assessment Criterion	Supports	Concerns
Provide safe public access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Access is safe (iiii) » Easy, safe driving and parking access » There are posted speed limit and stop signs » Farther away from highway 84 » Could build parallel trail to separate pedestrians and vehicles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Brings more Preserve users in contact with traffic (ii) » Impact on school grounds
Balance public access with grazing activities and other uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Opportunity to inform public about essential role of grazing in fire fuel management » Grazing and hiking activities complement each other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Grazing access more difficult (iiii) » Parking would reduce pasture area (ii) » Access more difficult for hikers wanting to go from one side to the other
Include amenities that facilitate environmental education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Good place to do this (iiii) » Could incorporate a loop to the ponds » Could provide education about calving grounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Better to provide this in the perimeter » Depends on what Midpen wants » Not a particularly compelling site
Protect scenic views of and from the site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Parking can be hidden from public view (iii) » Views are nice (ii) » Views are expansive enough that a visitor center would not detract 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Visible from higher points within the preserve » Would impact the area
Other considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Would serve additional trails planned for the area » Location is very near the La Honda Store where one can buy food and drink for picnics » Consider gravel lot instead of asphalt; better for horses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Concern about cost of fencing and road improvements

Site C2

Sears Ranch Road Area Former Cattle Corral at Former Residence



Site C2 is located adjacent to Site C1 within a former corral area along the Harrington Creek Trail as it turns westward.

this former corral area would be preferable because there would be **less visual impact** from other parts of the Preserve.

Considerations of this location are the same as for Site C1, though some felt that tucking improvements into

Summary Table of PAWG comments presented on December 12, 2019 (see Appendices for individual assessment forms)

**Note: The parentheses after some comments indicates the number of similar mentions: (ii) = 2 mentions*

Project Specific Site Assessment Criterion	Supports	Concerns
Establish new public access in the central portion of La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Would expand visitor access closer to the central area (iiii)* » Would provide a large area for equestrian parking » Gentle terrain good for ADA access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Does not meet this objective (iiii) » Additional parking one mile from current area is redundant; would not greatly reduce hike distance to Red Barn area
Design elements to reflect the rural character of the site and the Red Barn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Design to fit working ranch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Concern about bringing parking this far into the Preserve as a disruption to the rural character (iii) » Paved road and lot are not in keeping with rural character (ii)

Project Specific Site Assessment Criterion	Supports	Concerns
Provide safe public access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Very safe access (iiiiii) » Sears Ranch Road is well paved and already in use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Would provide safe access if the road could be widened to two lanes (ii) » Extension of road could potentially create more pedestrian conflicts within the Preserve » Concern about theft and vandalism risk
Balance public access with grazing activities and other uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Minimal impact on grazing activities and other uses » Education of the public about sharing space with cattle has been good and should continue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » High impact on grazing activities (iiii) » Would reduce pasture for grazing and increase fencing and accommodate cattle crossing gates
Include amenities that facilitate environmental education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Almost unlimited potential for environmental education (iiiiii) » The cattle calve here – a great opportunity for education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Immediate vicinity is not particularly compelling for environmental education » This would draw more traffic into the central part of the Preserve
Protect scenic views of and from the site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Equestrian and visitor parking could be somewhat hidden from view (iii) » Plenty of views that could be enhanced by a well-designed parking lot and other amenities (ii) » Fairly well screened from surrounding Preserve (ii) » Avoids visual impact on Red Barn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Views and sense of remoteness would be impacted by parking (iii)
Other considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Separate hiking/biking/equestrian/dog walking trail from roadway (ii) » When more access to the southern portion is needed, this would be a good place for parking. » Plenty of room for other amenities, such as a restroom » Consider a loop trail around hilltop residence site » Could provide a safe refuge for visitors and local residents of the La Honda community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Added cost of potentially widening SRR and creating a mile of new road.

Site D Preserve Gate LH07



Preserve Gate LH07 is about one mile south of the Red Barn area. A flat area inside parallels Highway 84 behind a fence and a stand of eucalyptus trees. A private property is adjacent to the south and an access road from the gate passes through it for a short segment before returning to District property and La Honda Creek. There is currently no public access over this segment crossing private property.

There was a great deal of interest in this location because it provides access relatively close to the Red Barn area without interfering with views. The PAWG envisions the potential for a **small parking lot**, potentially limited permit use only, with some amenities, such as a **restroom** and trailhead with signage. The site does require ingress from and egress to Highway 84 for visitors heading eastbound and

westbound on the highway, and the group understands that further traffic analysis is needed to evaluate safety concerns and to understand if improvements may be made to provide safe access. There is also some concern for habitat and creek impacts at this location.

Summary Table of PAWG comments presented on December 12, 2019 (see Appendices for individual assessment forms)

*Note: The parentheses after some comments indicates the number of similar mentions: (ii) = 2 mentions

Project Specific Site Assessment Criterion	Supports	Concerns
Establish new public access in the central portion of La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Feasible for some parking; maybe permitted access and docent-led activities (iii)* » Good alternative » Appropriate for limited access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » May be difficult terrain for mobility-challenged people
Design elements to reflect the rural character of the site and the Red Barn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Minimizes visual impact on Red Barn (ii) » Would support the rural character » Could be designed appropriately » Screen parking from the highway » Use material other than asphalt 	
Provide safe public access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Moving the driveway to the north may help make this location acceptable (ii) » Line of sight is good » Limited access might be acceptable » Possible pocket turn lanes could enhance safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Concern about collision data at this location (iii). » Concern about Highway 84 traffic danger, especially speeding motorcycles (iii) » Would need traffic calming measures » Does not provide safe access in current configuration
Balance public access with grazing activities and other uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » No impact on grazing (ii) » Minimal conflicts with existing uses » Best balance between public access and grazing activities and other uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Not sure (ii)
Include amenities that facilitate environmental education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Some potential for interpretive signs (iiii) » Redwood groves nearby would make a nice destination » Opportunity for forest habitat, salmonid spawning or wildlife corridor interpretive signs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Seems suited to parking and trailhead access only (iii) » Views from the site are limited, making explanation of the area a little more difficult

Project Specific Site Assessment Criterion	Supports	Concerns
Protect scenic views of and from the site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Forested area is a nice contrast to open views » Retain trees and bushes as much as possible (iii) » Best protection of scenic views of and from the site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » No real scenic views here
Other considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » No equestrian trailer parking here (iii) » Good parking potential » Highway noise needs to be addressed » Good access to trails going to upper and lower portions of the Preserve » Also has great potential for a regional trail (Ridge Trail) staging area and crossing » Continue to discuss roadside parking in excess Caltrans right-of-way west of LH07 » This site is within a “sensitive natural resource area” per the Natural Resources Considerations map » Minimize visitor impact to pristine creek 	

Site E1

Red Barn Area Site Behind Ranger Residence



Site E1 is located on an open knoll behind an existing ranger residence. Utility poles extend past the house into the knoll. The site is not visible from Highway 84, although it is visible from the trail system in the northern area of the Preserve.

The PAWG acknowledges that the Red Barn area is the site **closest to**

the middle portion of the Preserve, though there are differences of opinion about whether any access option in this area should

advance to the feasibility study phase due to the **traffic concerns** along Highway 84. A main concern raised was whether parking or other improvements would impose **visual impacts on the Red Barn** and immediate surroundings. This location (and Site E4) offers **good**

distancing from the Red Barn and a sense of connection to the Preserve; however, a number of members voiced concern about the potential **disruption to the occupied ranger residence**. While the site is **well-screened from the Red Barn and from the highway**, some members noted its **visibility from the northern area** of the Preserve currently accessed via a permit lot at Allen Road.

Summary Table of PAWG comments presented on December 12, 2019 (see Appendices for individual assessment forms)

**Note: The parentheses after some comments indicates the number of similar mentions: (ii) = 2 mentions*

Project Specific Site Assessment Criterion	Supports	Concerns
Establish new public access in the central portion of La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Best access to the central part of the Preserve (iii)* » Consider for permitted access and/or docent led activities (ii). » Attractive alternative to parking at the Red Barn » Excellent location for hiking or visiting the Red Barn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Not sure

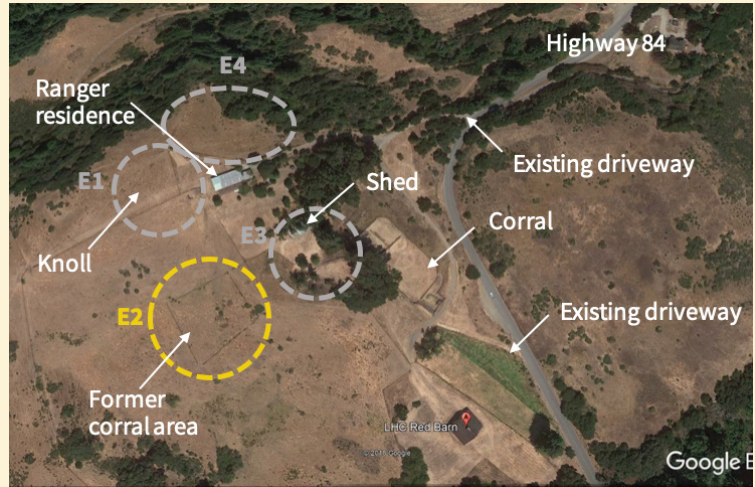
Project Specific Site Assessment Criterion	Supports	Concerns
Design elements to reflect the rural character of the site and the Red Barn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Mostly out of sight of the Red Barn and 84 (iiiiii) » Preserves the character of the Red Barn (iii) » Ranger’s house could be repurposed for bathrooms, bulletin boards, historical interpretation, visitor’s center » Add picnic tables and pond » Removed from traffic noise and views » Could preserve natural character if constructed to blend with current road-bed materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Need a context sensitive design » Hard to say if the site will be preserved » Design elements detract from the rural character and Red Barn (i) » Would detract from existing residential purpose » If built farther away from the residence would be a blot on the landscape
Provide safe public access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Feasible for parking area (iii) » Road safety could be improved with properly engineered warning signs, turning lane(s), etc. (iii) » Might use negotiated easement with adjacent property driveway » Driveway alignment and turning movements are the biggest issues » Docent-led hikes and/or permit access could potentially provide safe public access as there could be a limited number of visitors allowed per day (like the Allen Road access point) » Visitors could be given very specific guidelines about how to enter and leave the site, as well as warnings about traffic hazards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Access to and from Highway 84 would be dangerous (iiiiii) » Parking would need to be more concentrated elsewhere (ii) » Collisions have occurred in the area
Balance public access with grazing activities and other uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » This area seems to be workable with grazing activities (iiiiii) » Grazing helps make the area picturesque » Minimal conflicts with existing uses » Opportunities for observing grazing activities around the Red Barn area » Current leaseholder might be willing to reduce grazing footprint around here? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Some impact on current operation and ranger housing (iii)

Project Specific Site Assessment Criterion	Supports	Concerns
<p>Include amenities that facilitate environmental education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Good place to do this (iii) » Locating other buildings out of sight » Buffer from the Red Barn » Opportunity to add short interpretive loop to the Red Barn » Education about grazing, bats, regional trails, steelhead in La Honda Creek, historical pond » Informative signage could highlight the history of the area as long as it did not interfere with the Ranger Residence » A great location to provide easy public access (including ADA) to educational amenities planned for the Red Barn area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Depends on what Midpen wants » Not a good location for amenities
<p>Protect scenic views of and from the site</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Red Barn’s tourist attraction is visual; area around Barn could remain as-is (iiiiii) » Not visible from the 84 stretch » Lots of existing screening » Can have a context-sensitive design » Best of the Red Barn locations; there is a sense of being in the middle of the preserve as soon as you arrive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » It is visible from within the Preserve » This site is on a prominent high point that could be viewed from many locations » Designing and installing vegetation to shade and shield this location would be a challenge » Driveway is visually intrusive; consider another alignment » A simulation of the parking and outbuildings would help visualize the impacts
<p>Other considerations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Reduces La Honda neighborhood traffic concerns (ii) » Great potential for a regional trail (Ridge Trail) staging area and crossing » More easily accessible to those unfamiliar with the area » Opportunity for historical signage and pit toilets » Use existing ranch roads where possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Impinges on the ranger residence too much; residential opportunities are very important to attracting good candidates for this job » The field immediately North and adjacent to this top-of-the hill site would be preferable for parking because it is lower elevation, screened from view from the trails by trees, and further from the ranger residence

Site E2

Red Barn Area

Corral Area Below and West of Red Barn



This site is located in a former corral area west and below the Red Barn and is visible from the Red Barn itself. The PAWG unanimously determined

that this location due west and downhill from the Red Barn was **too impactful** on the enjoyment of the Red Barn area and any development

here should be **withdrawn from the PAWG's consideration.**

Summary Table of PAWG comments presented on December 12, 2019 (see Appendices for individual assessment forms)

*Note: The parentheses after some comments indicates the number of similar mentions: (ii) = 2 mentions

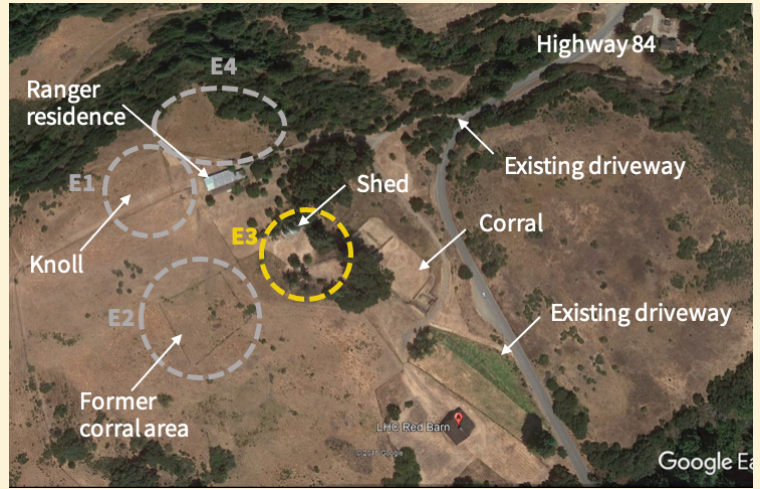
Project Specific Site Assessment Criterion	Supports	Concerns
Establish new public access in the central portion of La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Best access to the Central part of the Preserve (iii)* » Consider for permitted access and/or docent led activities » Hikers start off from there, other visitors can rest or take short hikes » A short granite loop trail in this area with limited ADA parking spaces would provide ADA access 	

Project Specific Site Assessment Criterion	Supports	Concerns
Design elements to reflect the rural character of the site and the Red Barn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Walking in front of the Red Barn is a very special experience and should be limited to docent-led groups so that it can continue to be a historic site reflecting the rural character of the region. » Leave it fairly untouched, with parking out of view and no obvious amenities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Would destroy the rural appeal of Red Barn (iiiiii), specifically grading » Hard to say if the site will be preserved » Noise and view of traffic disturbs the quiet; would not want to picnic here
Provide safe public access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Road safety could be improved with properly engineered warning signs, turning lane(s), etc. (ii) » Midpen has done its due diligence to study the traffic and will work to make the site acceptably safe given the primary goal of opening up central access (ii) » Driveway alignment and turning movements are the biggest issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Going to and from the area from Highway 84 would be dangerous (iii) » Collisions have occurred in the area » Equestrian parking would need to be more concentrated elsewhere
Balance public access with grazing activities and other uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » This area seems to be workable with grazing activities. (ii) » Minimal impact on existing uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Not sure » Impacts current infrastructure
Include amenities that facilitate environmental education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Good place to do this (ii) » Opportunity to add short interpretive loop to the Red Barn » Education about grazing, bats, regional trails, steelhead in La Honda Creek, historical pond (ii) » Buffer from the Red Barn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » It is noisy (ii) » Exposed to view » Not sure; depends on what Midpen wants
Protect scenic views of and from the site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Peaceful views, visual icon » Can have a context-sensitive design » Minimal development here 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Impact on the scenic view and rural character would need to be mitigated (iiiiii) » Driveway is visually intrusive; consider another alignment
Other considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Great potential for a regional trail (Ridge Trail) staging area and crossing » Reduces neighborhood traffic concerns » More easily accessible to those unfamiliar with the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » This is not a center of activity for the Preserve.

Site E3

Red Barn Area

Area Near Shed Below Ranger Residence



This site located next to an existing shed south and downhill from the ranger residence. It represents an opportunity to provide a small parking lot and trailhead access in an area with **natural screening** from the Red Barn and from the highway. This would allow relatively easy

access for people with disabilities to enjoy the amenities of the Red Barn area. The majority of the PAWG felt that **limiting access** to permit-only or docent-led hikes only access could help minimize the highway safety concerns by lessening the number of trips into and out of the

area. Of all the Red Barn Area sites, this location received the **highest level of support**, though the group emphasized that traffic safety would need to be addressed to make this site ultimately viable.

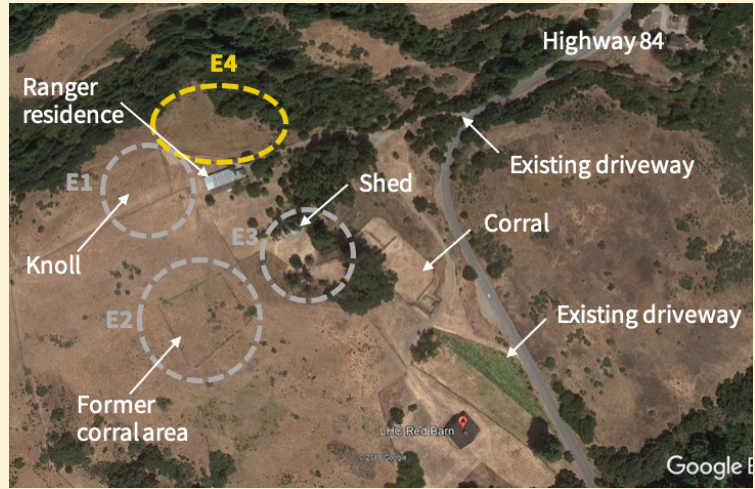
Summary Table of PAWG comments presented on December 12, 2019 (see Appendices for individual assessment forms)

*Note: The parentheses after some comments indicates the number of similar mentions: (ii) = 2 mentions

Project Specific Site Assessment Criterion	Supports	Concerns
Establish new public access in the central portion of La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » New access » Provides good access (iiii)* » Excellent location to begin a hike or visit the Red Barn area » Favorite location 	
Design elements to reflect the rural character of the site and the Red Barn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Potential to complement character of Red Barn (ii) » Well screened by trees (iiii) » Allows the public to get a close-up view of the Red Barn and the views (iii) » Shielded from Hwy 84 (ii) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Does not reflect rural character of the site nor the Red Barn (iii)
Provide safe public access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Like E1 would require traffic calming and signage on Highway 84, as well as widening the pull-in area (iiii) » Caltrans can advise re: vehicular access from Highway 84 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Does not provide safe public access (iii)
Balance public access with grazing activities and other uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Limited impact on grazing (iiiiii) » Less concern about impact on ranger residence » Current leaseholder might be willing to reduce grazing footprint around here? » Wetland pond restoration possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Might interfere with grazing
Include amenities that facilitate environmental education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Could provide amenities (iiiiiii) » Consider interpretive boards (historical, ranching, agricultural uses) and directional signs & maps » A great location to provide easy public access (including ADA) to educational amenities planned for the Red Barn area » Maintain the existing corral structure though the grazer may be willing to relocate his corrals » Perhaps the fencing could be repaired and retained and some education element could be located inside the corral » An inspiring setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Any new buildings would detract from scenic views and rural character
Protect scenic views of and from the site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Potential to hide facilities and minimize view impacts around Red Barn (iiiiii) » This area is better hidden from inside the Preserve than the ranger house area (ii) » Not quite as good as the location behind the ranger residence, but still an incredible and safe view 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Does not protect scenic views (iii) » Parking would be visible from Highway 84
Other considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Use existing ranch roads where possible 	

Site E4

Red Barn Area North of Ranger Residence



This site is located directly north of the existing ranger residence in an open grassy area not visible from the Red Barn. The PAWG felt that a parking lot here would be less intrusive on the ranger residence than Site E1, but some members still

had concerns about **impacting the residence**. Traffic safety continues to be a concern here, as is the view to this location from the vista point accessed from the Allen Road permit lot. This location did not receive the same level of support as did Site E3.

Summary Table of PAWG comments presented on December 12, 2019 (see Appendices for individual assessment forms)

**Note: The parentheses after some comments indicates the number of similar mentions: (ii) = 2 mentions*

Project Specific Site Assessment Criterion	Supports	Concerns
Establish new public access in the central portion of La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Likes the site – addresses central access. » Red Barn is the most central as defined by the Board. Addresses access for people who want to stop for a quick trip. 	
Design elements to reflect the rural character of the site and the Red Barn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Addresses aesthetic issues at Red Barn » E4 better than E3, can be better hidden from Red Barn views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » View from Allen Road trail system vista point a potential issue
Provide safe public access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Feasibility study may be able to control traffic to make Highway 84 safer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Small driveway on curve » Does not address safety issues at Red Barn (iii)*

Project Specific Site Assessment Criterion	Supports	Concerns
Balance public access with grazing activities and other uses		» E4 intrudes into rolling pasture
Include amenities that facilitate environmental education		
Protect scenic views of and from the site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Supports E4 more than E1, less visible from surrounding trails. » Difference between E1 and E4, how exposed it is from surrounding views. Can see E1 from vista, not sure if people could see E4 location. » E4 is more hidden from the road and passerby's than E3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » View from Allen Road trail system vista point shows Ranger residence like a sore thumb. Parking lot next to it will not improve the view » E4 is too exposed
Other considerations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Too close to Ranger residence » May have some slope problems that make it difficult, but engineering may be possible

LIMITED ACCESS AND DISTRIBUTION OF USE OPTIONS

In addition to considering how the above individual sites could best to accomplish the project's goals and objectives, the group delved into a range of what were generally described as "other options and iterations" that looked at distributing uses, facilities, and trail access across a range of sites rather than accommodating them all at one location. District staff provided more detail and outlined examples of how these limited access and use distribution options might be used at each site. The suggested limited access and use distribution options included:

1. Access via permit only (would not apply to sites already open to the public)
2. Access via docent-led activities (would not apply to sites already open to the public)
3. Distribution or separation of uses among various sites
 - Educational or interpretive elements
 - Picnic or family-oriented elements
 - Restroom access
 - Equestrian access
 - Dog access

The PAWG's site assessment work helped identify which locations were more suitable for one or more of the limited access or use distribution options, and how to ultimately package them in a final recommendation to the PNR.



PAWG Member Art Heinrich and Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan discuss opportunities and challenges at one of the site tour locations.



04



The PAWG discussed “suites” or combinations of sites; that is, a set of uses, amenities, and parking and trailhead access facilities distributed across multiple locations.

A key finding and principle developed from the PAWG discussions was that **no one location could meet all of the project goals and objectives, and provide all of the desired access and functions.** Thus, the PAWG discussed “suites” or combinations of sites; that is, a set of uses, amenities, and parking and trailhead access facilities distributed across multiple locations. As described above, the concept was floated early in the deliberations, and the specific recommendation of the PAWG flowed from an evaluation of the potential uses, amenities, and facilities at each location under study.

While discussing six different suites of options at their March 5, 2020 meeting, the PAWG identified a seventh suite, combining the sites and elements that the majority of the members felt warranted further evaluation in the feasibility study phase. The group is advancing this suite, described on the next page, as their recommendation to the PNR Committee.

Above: A beautiful afternoon at the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve.

The PAWG voted—7 in favor, 2 opposed, with members Ari Delay and Sandy Sommer absent and not voting—to advance the following suite of options to the Planning and Natural Resources Committee for consideration in the feasibility study phase:

Site B2 or Site B3 – Sears Ranch Road Area (existing lot)

Opportunity for additional parking for equestrian trailers and future expansion for vehicles when use of the existing Sears Ranch Road lot exceeds its capacity (size to be determined by physical and other constraints)

Site C1 or C2 – Sears Ranch Road Area (interior)

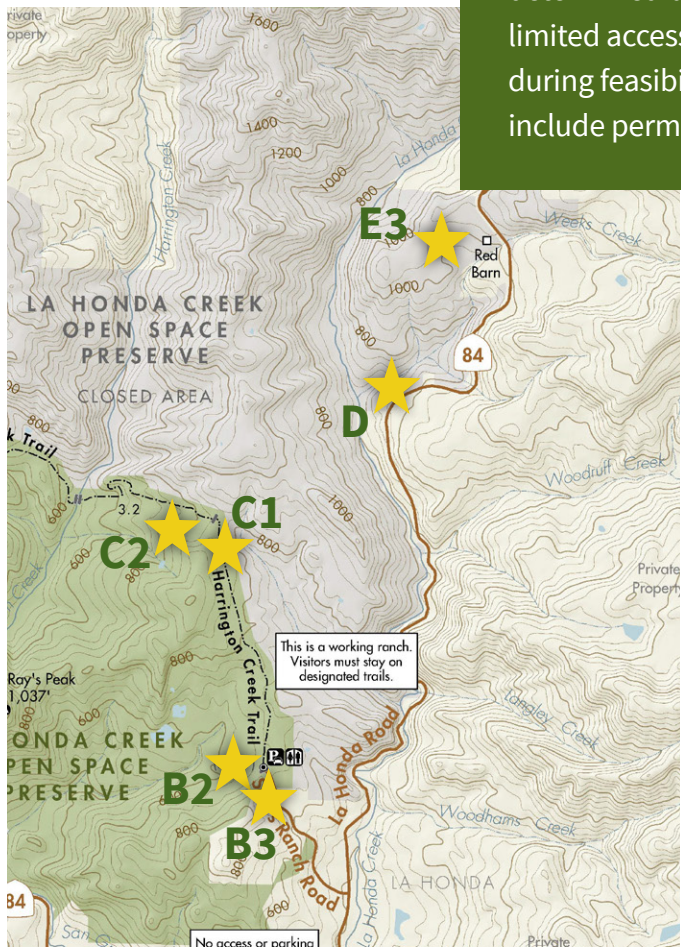
Suitable location for picnic, family-friendly, equestrian-serving and interpretive amenities only (type, location, and quantity to be determined during feasibility study phase)

Site D – Preserve Gate LH07

Location for a proposed small parking lot (size to be determined by physical and other constraints) with trailhead access and restroom facilities

Site E3 – Red Barn Area

Location for a proposed small parking lot (size to be determined by physical and other constraints), with limited access (specific constraints to be determined during feasibility study phase, but potential options include permit only/docent-led only conditions)



OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE PNR COMMITTEE

In addition to the above suite of options assembled and recommended by the PAWG, other PAWG members raised different ideas for PNR Committee consideration (see Appendices).

A PAWG member suggested **near-term solutions** to allow interim expanded public access while longer term options were pursued in the feasibility study phase and in the subsequent site planning, environmental review, and design process. The submitted list of near-term suggestions is included in the Appendices for the PNR Committee's consideration and feedback. One suggestion to allow public access for hikers at the Event Center is not possible at this time due to the existing use permit conditions set by the County of San Mateo that only allow the limited uses at the site that existed prior to District ownership. Expanding uses and adding parking involves an extensive site planning effort and fulfillment of the County's permitting requirements to increase use at the site. As part of the process, the District would need to amend the La Honda Creek Master Plan and complete environmental review for the additional planned site improvements and public uses for the Board's consideration and approval.

Other suggestions listed below may be feasible as near-term actions and would require further study if the Committee recommends forwarding them to the full Board with the PAWG's recommendation.

- » Add signage at the existing pull out along Highway 84 near the Red Barn with information about current access at the Preserve or interpretive information on the Red Barn and history of the property's use as a ranch.
- » Allow opportunities for docent-led hikes north from Harrington Creek Trail along the existing ranch road that leads towards La Honda Creek and the currently closed area of the Preserve.
- » To open access to the closed area of the Preserve more quickly, prioritize projects providing new trail connections from the Allen Road vista point and Sears Ranch Road parking lot to the Red Barn area (note that scouting for a trail alignment from the parking lot to the Red Barn area is already underway).

Another PAWG member suggested a **phased approach** for providing public access to the Red Barn site (see the submitted proposal in the Appendices). If the Board directs staff to consider this suggestion, the District could initially restrict access to a limited number of

vehicles via permit and docent-led activities only. Limited access would be through existing driveways and gates that are currently used by the ranger and grazing tenant. If the feasibility study phase identifies viable improvements to meet safety requirements and reduce speed on the highway, the District could revisit plans for increased public access and a developed parking area open to the general public. Staff currently does not recommend moving forward with a larger public access plan for the Red Barn area due to overall traffic safety and access concerns related to Highway 84.



Photo Credit: Randy Weber

05



The PAWG worked diligently and respectfully to fulfill its charge. There was a great deal of information provided, considered and generated through the eight-month process, and ultimately this group, representing the broad constituency of the entire District, came to a strategic approach for providing public access to the middle portion of the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve.

These recommendations will be reviewed by the District's Planning and Natural Resources Committee, which will determine if additional analysis by the PAWG is warranted, or whether the recommendations will be forwarded to the full Board of Directors for policy action.

Above: Fencing indicates areas of the preserve dedicated to grazing.



Appendices

- A. Inventory of Meeting Documents
- B. Meeting Agendas and Summaries
- C. Public Comments received through March 5, 2020
- D. PAWG Communication through March 5, 2020
- E. Key Decisionmaking Information
 - 1. PAWG Scores for Individual Sites (3-5-2020)
 - 2. PAWG Scores for Limited Access and Use Distribution Options (“Other Options and Iterations”) (3-5-2020)
 - 3. PAWG Scores for Site E4 Limited Access and Use Distribution Options (3-5-2020)
 - 4. Proposed Suites #1-5 (3-5-2020)
 - 5. Proposed Suite #6 Near-term Options (3-5-2020)
 - 6. PAWG Submission of Suite (2-17-2020)
 - 7. PAWG Submission for Near-term Options (3-1-2020)
- F. Site Assessment Summaries and Forms
 - 1. Summary of Site Assessments (A, B1, B2, C1, C2, D, E1, E2) (12-12-19)
 - 2. Summary of Site Assessments (B3, E1-re-visited, E3) (2-6-2020)
 - 3. PAWG Tour Assessment Forms (12-12-19)
 - 4. PAWG Tour Assessment Q&As (12-12-19)
 - 5. PAWG Site Assessment Forms (2-6-20)
 - 6. PAWG Hwy 84 Traffic Observations (12-12-19)
- G. General Information Documents
 - 1. PAWG Purpose Charge Rules and Operating Procedures
 - 2. PAWG Member Bios
 - 3. Master Plan Exhibit 2-4: Preserve Areas
 - 4. Master Plan Figure 11 Trails
 - 5. Vision Plan Portfolio 5 Summary
 - 6. Vision Plan Portfolio 7 Summary
 - 7. Site Considerations Map – Topographic
 - 8. Site Considerations Map – Ownership/Management
 - 9. Site Considerations Map – Natural Resources
 - 10. Site Considerations Map – Trails
 - 11. Site Assessment Criteria (9-12-19)
 - 12. Elevation Gain and Distance to Allen Road Map

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INVENTORY OF MEETING DOCUMENTS

Appendix

A

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MEETING AGENDAS AND SUMMARIES

Appendix

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PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED THROUGH MARCH 5, 2020

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PAWG COMMUNICATION THROUGH MARCH 5, 2020

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KEY DECISIONMAKING INFORMATION

Appendix

E

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SITE ASSESSMENT SUMMARIES AND FORMS

Appendix

F

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GENERAL INFORMATION DOCUMENTS

Appendix

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