



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

PLANNING & NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

R-23-38

April 4, 2023

AGENDA ITEM 2

AGENDA ITEM

Highway 35 Multi-Use Trail Crossing and Parking Feasibility Study located at and near the North Ridge Parking Area of Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve – Review of Project Goals and Existing Conditions/Site Opportunities and Constraints Analysis

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Receive a presentation on the Highway 35 Multi-use Trail Crossing and Parking Feasibility Study, including Project Goals and the Existing Conditions/Site Opportunity and Constraints Analysis.
2. Provide feedback on parking capacity and multimodal access elements to evaluate through the next phase of Project work as part of the development of parking area conceptual design alternatives.

SUMMARY

The Highway 35 Multi-Use Trail Crossing and Parking Feasibility Study (Project) is a partnership between the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District), San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), Bay Area Ridge Trail Council (Ridge Trail Council) and Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST). The Project is evaluating a multi-use trail crossing location and connector trail in the northeastern reaches of Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (Purisima, Preserve), as well as the potential expansion of the North Ridge parking area. At the April 4, 2023 Planning and Natural Resource (PNR) Committee meeting, staff will present the Project goals and the initial findings of the feasibility study, including results from the Existing Conditions/Opportunities and Constraints Analysis. In addition, staff will seek feedback from the PNR Committee on the parking capacity and multimodal access elements to evaluate through the next phase of Project work as part of developing the parking area conceptual design alternatives.

BACKGROUND

The District is conducting a feasibility study to identify a trail crossing location from the Purisima North Ridge parking area across Skyline Boulevard (Highway 35) to connect existing segments of the Bay Area Ridge Trail within Purisima, west of Highway 35, to a new segment of the Bay Area Ridge Trail planned on the east side of Highway 35 (Ridge Trail Extension). The feasibility study will also analyze the potential expansion of the North Ridge parking area to serve visitors to both the existing Preserve trailhead and to the proposed Ridge Trail Extension.

The Highway 35 Multi-use Trail Crossing and Parking Study (Project) is a partnership between the District, SFPUC, Ridge Trail Council, and POST.

DISCUSSION

Project Goals

The intent of the Project is to enhance regional connectivity through a multi-use trail crossing that will allow access to trails on both sides of Highway 35 and to identify ways to reconfigure and increase parking capacity at the North Ridge parking area. Project goals and strategies have been identified to guide the development of Project elements and evaluate Project success.

Goal 1: Support the implementation of the regional Bay Area Ridge Trail.

Strategies:

- Identify a multi-use trail crossing and trail spur location to connect the SFPUC's new segment of the Bay Area Ridge Trail to the Preserve and the existing Ridge Trail segment within the Preserve.
- Maximize safety and minimize neighbor impacts when evaluating multi-use trail crossing locations and infrastructure.
- Develop the multi-use trail crossing and spur trail to accommodate low-intensity recreational use by hikers, bicyclists and equestrians, consistent with Bay Area Ridge Trail corridor goals.
- Collaborate with partner agencies to complete the planning, design and implementation of the multi-use trail crossing and spur trail.

Goal 2: Improve public access and visitor experience at Purisima's North Ridge trailhead using ecologically sensitive design, construction practices, and long-term maintenance and management.

Strategies:

- Add parking capacity through the reconfiguration of existing parking spaces and expansion of the North Ridge Parking Area.
- Improve the existing trailhead amenities, such as replacing the existing restroom with a new ADA compliant vault restroom, replacing dated signboards with current standard design, and adding bicycle parking.
- Incorporate Transportation Demand Management Strategies consistent with the Board-approved Purisima Multimodal Access Study.
- Design recreational amenities to protect the scenic corridor.
- Maximize safety and minimize neighbor impacts when evaluating the multi-use trail crossing, parking enhancements and vehicle circulation.
- Maintain routine patrols and maintenance and use adaptive management to address unforeseen issues that arise from increased visitation to the North Ridge trailhead.

Existing Conditions

The Project site includes an area west of Highway 35 within Purisima, comprised of the existing North Ridge parking area and adjacent open areas west of the parking area. The Project site also includes the Caltrans Highway 35 right-of-way and approximately four acres of SFPUC Watershed lands east of Highway 35 for the spur trail study area.

The North Ridge parking area and trailhead is the northernmost entry point into Purisima, located along Highway 35, and currently provides public access to hiking, biking, and equestrian trails within the Preserve. Purisima also contains existing segments of the Bay Area Ridge Trail, of which these segments contribute to over 400 miles (and counting) of existing multi-use trail that follow the ridgelines encircling the San Francisco Bay. A new alignment of the Bay Area Ridge Trail (Ridge Trail Extension) will be constructed on SFPUC Watershed lands east of the North Ridge trailhead, posing an opportunity to connect Purisima and its Bay Area Ridge Trail segment to the new trail extension through the Project's multi-use trail crossing on Highway 35. With the implementation of this multi-use trail crossing, the North Ridge parking area can also serve as the southern staging area for future visitors of the Ridge Trail Extension.

The North Ridge trailhead is surrounded by a rural, forested setting, primarily comprised of redwood forest with some annual grassland and Monterey cypress woodland. The area in the vicinity of the Project site is also sparsely populated with single family residences and businesses along the Highway 35 corridor. The existing North Ridge parking area is an unstriped gravel lot that can accommodate 41 standard parking spaces and 2 ADA parking spaces. Equestrian parking at the North Ridge lot is accommodated along the northwest boundary of the parking area, with space for approximately two equestrian trailers. The North Ridge trailhead includes standard trailhead amenities such as an equestrian hitching post, map and sign boards, a boot brush, and a single-stall vault restroom. As with many other District Preserves, the North Ridge trailhead receives peak visitation on weekends and the parking area, which currently only serves visitors to Purisima, frequently reaches capacity during peak visitation.

Adjacent to the North Ridge parking lot is an open, flat area (upper expansion area) that is currently used as a helicopter landing zone for CalFire emergency response. Further west of this open area, the land slopes down and levels out to another open, flat area (lower expansion area) adjacent to a District employee residence. This lower expansion area can be accessed from the existing North Ridge parking lot via a separate driveway along the Preserve's north property boundary.

Technical Studies

District staff contracted with professional consulting firms to complete various technical studies to analyze the biological, cultural, traffic, and topographic characteristics of the Project area. The findings of these studies are summarized below:

Biological Resources Survey

AECOM conducted a thorough Biological Resources Survey to identify any existing or potential biological resources within the Project area. This survey did not uncover any special-status wildlife species, nesting birds or raptors, aquatic resources, roosting bats, or other sensitive biological resources within the Project area. A Dusky-Footed Woodrat midden was found at a distance, about 250 feet from the Project area, which is unlikely to be affected by the Project. Due to the Project site's proximity to Huddart County Park, which is designated critical habitat for the endangered marbled murrelet, District staff also conducted a site assessment for marbled murrelet and consulted with California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) about the potential need for special species protections. However, based on results of the site assessment and discussions with CDFW, both the District and CDFW staff confirmed that no suitable murrelet habitat is located within or in the vicinity of the Project area.

Phytophthora Risk Assessment

AECOM also prepared a Phytophthora Risk Assessment in February 2023 to identify any risk of soil pathogen infection related to Project and to provide specific mitigation and best management practices. Analysis from this study found that the Project area within Purisima has relatively low levels of contamination risk, while areas east of Hwy 35 are highly receptive to potential contamination and are considered sensitive sites.

Cultural and Historic Resource Surveys

Cogstone Resource Management, Inc., conducted cultural and historic resource surveys in the fall and winter of 2022 to determine if any cultural or historic resources were present within the Project area that may be affected by the Project. No archaeological resources were observed during the survey and the background research did not find any previously recorded cultural or historical resources located within the Project area. A Sacred Lands File search identified one tribal band, which the District will contact for further information and guidance on any tribal cultural resources that may be present in the vicinity of the Project. The District will contact the tribe directly once preliminary concept plans are available and again when a design alternative is selected and the Project proceeds into the environmental review phase, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and in accordance with Assembly Bill (AB) 52 consultations. No archaeological monitoring is anticipated due to the geological age of the soils as well as the absence of any known cultural resources within the Project area. In addition, a pedestrian survey of the Project site performed by Cogstone in the fall of 2022 did not identify archaeological resources within the Project site. An Historic Resources Evaluation was also conducted for the nearby onsite employee residence that was built over 50 years ago (circa 1948) given its proximity to the parking area. The residence includes Ranch style architectural elements such as a low pitch roof with a wide eave overhang. Due to a lack of significance and notable architectural alteration, the residence was not found eligible for listing at the local, state, or national level, and no further evaluation is recommended. No changes are proposed for this residence, which would remain in place as part of the Project and continued to be used as an employee residence to maintain onsite presence and vigilance of the property.

Traffic Study

TJKM Transportation Consultants (TJKM) evaluated the sight distance conditions for the two existing parking area driveways and the feasibility/design of a new on-grade trail crossing on Highway 35. Data collection from April 2022 was used to determine if adequate sight distance is available for vehicles exiting the existing driveways, and if northbound and southbound vehicles on Highway 35 have adequate stopping sight distance for a new on-grade trail crossing. TJKM also reviewed five years of traffic collision data within the vicinity of the project site to inform the final recommendations. Based on the available information, TJKM concluded that there is a feasible on-grade trail crossing location immediately adjacent to the existing exit driveway. TJKM recommends improvements within the right-of-way to maintain site distances and enhance visibility of the crossing. Furthermore, TJKM concluded that the existing driveway configuration is the most favorable for ingress and egress. TJKM has sought concurrence with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) on their findings and recommendations. Caltrans reviewed the findings and requested additional information in the final report, which was provided by TJKM. Caltrans does not have any further comments at this time. Additional coordination with Caltrans will be required for future encroachment permits, which would occur after a Board-approved alternative is selected and analyzed as part of the CEQA environmental review process. Additional details of the recommended crossing location and roadway improvements are shown in Attachment 1c.

Public Engagement

From 2021 to 2022, the District engaged with stakeholder groups and partners as part of Project-focused meetings and at meetings that included the Purisima-to-the-Sea project and the Purisima Multimodal Access Study. These engagement activities were used to gather initial feedback on existing challenges at the North Ridge parking area and any desired amenities that should be considered for this parking area. The feedback received during the stakeholder engagement process has been incorporated into the opportunities and constraints analysis. Key engagement activities specific to the Highway 35 Multiuse Crossing and Parking Expansion project included:

- Peninsula Trails Team (comprised of regional trails partners and land managers) – October 19, 2022
- Kings Mountain Association – March 15, 2022 and November 9, 2022
- Fisher Investments (neighboring property) – November 9, 2022
- Stakeholder group meetings – November 15 & 17, 2022

Feedback received includes the following¹:

Theme/Topic	General Feedback/Comments
Traffic and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns related to providing a safe pedestrian roadway crossing due to current vehicle speeds on Highway 35. • Neighbors would like to see roadway striping and advanced warning beacon for the trail crossing. • Concerns related to roadside parking that create potentially unsafe roadway conditions for pedestrians and vehicles. • Suggestion to modify the parking area entrance to allow vehicles to turn into the parking area quickly. • Suggestion to provide historic traffic accident data in the vicinity of North Ridge to better understand safety issues. • Concerns related to foggy conditions on Highway 35 that could limit visibility.
Parking and Visitor Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing E-bikes within the Preserve may reduce parking demand. • Request for better equestrian parking and access at this trailhead. • Better/clearer roadway parking signage can discourage parking along the roadway, which is impacting neighboring properties.
Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for the proposed trailhead amenities. • Suggestion to include emergency response information on trailhead signage.
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General support for the Project if concerns are addressed. • New regional trail connection may result in additional traffic and trash. • Concerns regarding relocating the CalFire helicopter landing zone and how this would impact fire response.

¹ This feedback has been received in addition to previous feedback that was presented to the PNR Committee and the Board as part of the Purisima Multimodal Access engagement on [August 2nd, 2022](#) (see attachment 5) .

Site Opportunities and Constraints

Opportunities and Constraints for the Project are developed by analyzing the results of the technical studies and identifying site conditions that need to be considered for the multi-use trail crossing, spur trail, and North Ridge parking expansion. Key opportunities and constraints are summarized below, and additional details can be found in Attachment 1.

Natural Resources:

The biological survey did not uncover any special-status wildlife species, nesting birds or raptors, aquatic resources, roosting bats, or other sensitive biological resources within the Project area. Best Management Practices (BMPs) are recommended to avoid any impacts to nearby biological resources from future construction of the Project, including nesting bird surveys, San Francisco dusky-footed woodrat midden avoidance buffer, marbled murrelet avoidance and mitigation measures, BMPs to prevent *Phytophthora* and other pathogen contamination, and BMPs related to construction runoff and drainage.

Public Access:

The North Ridge parking area and trailhead currently provide public parking and access to Purisima, and the overall types of uses at this parking area and trailhead will not significantly change with the implementation of the Project. The traffic study identified a suitable multiuse crossing location on Highway 35 as well as roadway improvements to establish a safer crossing with sufficient lines of sight at this location. The North Ridge trailhead has two potential onsite locations that can provide additional parking; expansion of the parking area coupled with multimodal access strategies are expected to significantly alleviate parking demands and potentially meet anticipated parking needs at this trailhead.

Local and Regional Connectivity:

Existing segments of the Bay Area Ridge Trail within Purisima can be accessed from the North Ridge trailhead, which makes a multi-use trail crossing at Highway 35 from the planned Ridge Trail Extension to the North Ridge trailhead a natural and direct connection point.

Cultural and Historic Resources:

The cultural resources survey did not identify any previously recorded cultural resources within the Project area and no archaeological resources were encountered during the pedestrian survey. Aside from consultations with the recommended tribe for review of the preliminary concept plans and during the CEQA environmental review process, no further action is recommended regarding cultural or archaeological resources. The historic resource evaluation for the onsite employee residence found that the structure was not eligible for listing at the local, state, or national level and no further action is necessary for this structure (residence would remain in place and continue to be used as an employee residence).

Aesthetics:

Highway 35 is a state scenic highway and is therefore subject to both State of California and San Mateo County policies regulating development along scenic corridors. The Project will direct new development (parking areas and vault restroom) to areas away from the Highway 35 scenic corridor zone. There is also an existing vegetated barrier between the Caltrans right-of-way and the existing parking area, partially screening it from the highway. Changes visible from the highway may include the upper parking expansion area and the replacement vault restroom, which would be relocated to a more central location to address ADA barriers. The lower parking

expansion area is set further back from the roadway and at a lower elevation as compared to the existing parking area, making this area less visible from Highway 35.

Operations and Maintenance:

The North Ridge trailhead currently has electrical and cellular service available, which could support the implementation of new trailhead amenities and infrastructure, such as electric vehicle charging and real-time parking sensors. The existing vault restroom is in deteriorating condition and requires replacement with an ADA-accessible model and accessible path to meet ADA standards. Staff have reached out to the agencies and organizations that may utilize the landing zone at the upper expansion area, including CalFire, San Mateo County Fire, and the Kings Mountain Volunteer Fire Department. These organizations are aware of the Project and have not requested further coordination at this time. In addition, there are other landing zones located in the vicinity of the Project area that are currently used by these organizations. These nearby alternative landing zone locations include private properties on Cyprus Ridge Road, less than a mile north of the Project site, and Tunitas Creek Road, approximately two miles south of the Project site. The nearest alternative landing zone on District lands is located at El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve, approximately five miles south of the Project site. Should a Project alternative be selected for CEQA review that would change the use of the landing zone, District staff will engage in additional coordination with these agencies at that time to confirm the landing zone can be formally retired.

Spatial Analysis and Parking Capacity

The Project proposes to expand parking for passenger vehicles and horse trailers. The trailhead would have amenities typical to District preserves, including a vault restroom, trailhead signboards, boot brush, bike racks, and equestrian mounting block. The parking lot, trailhead, and restroom would meet ADA accessibility requirements.

The Committee is asked to provide feedback on the share of passenger vehicle, horse trailer, and shuttle spaces that should be accommodated as part of the proposed parking expansion design. The share of spaces is based on the expansion potential that exists at the Upper Area, comprised of the existing parking area and the adjacent vacant area to the west, and the Lower Area, comprised of the vacant area adjacent to the employee residence. Staff completed a spatial analysis for the Upper and Lower Areas, which is detailed below (refer also to Attachment 1c).

The Upper Area could accommodate any of the following scenarios:

Capacity Scenarios	Number of Passenger Vehicle Parking	Number of Horse Trailer Parking	Number of Shuttle Bus Parking
Scenario 1	65	0	0
Scenario 2	45	4	0
Scenario 3	45	0	4

The Lower Area could accommodate any of the following scenarios:

Capacity Scenarios	Number of Passenger Vehicle Parking	Number of Horse Trailer Parking	Number of Shuttle Bus Parking
Scenario 1	15	0	0
Scenario 2	0	2	0
Scenario 3	0	0	2

Staff seeks the Committee's direction on the scenarios to develop final parking program alternatives, which may be a combination of the scenarios listed above and may include other parking elements. For example, one possible combination of these scenarios that maximizes all three uses is to provide 45 passenger vehicles, 2 horse trailer spaces and 2 shuttle spaces in the Upper Area; and 15 passenger vehicle spaces in the Lower Area. The above scenarios are only to demonstrate maximum available space at each expansion area and are not the only parking alternatives that should be considered for the Project.

In addition, the Project will consider the following Transportation Demand Management strategies (TDMs) recommended in the Purisima Multimodal Access Study that the Board approved on November 9, 2022. The expectation is that many of these strategies will be suitable for the site and be incorporated into the design and long-term management of the parking area:

Highest priority TDMs

- Peak period parking reservations/priority parking
- Bicycle parking and facilities (including bicycle repair stations)
- Temporarily redesignate spaces on specific days/times to best meet demands
 - May include designating special parking areas temporarily for carpool, equestrian, shuttle pick-up/drop-off, or other uses
- Real-time parking lot occupancy sensors and signage
- Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure

Lower priority TDMs

- Vehicle wayfinding signage
- Clearly identify permitted on-street / shoulder parking
- Accommodate future shuttle / transit systems

FISCAL IMPACT

The Fiscal Year 2022-23 budget includes \$95,000, which covers consultant, site engineering, and geotechnical costs through the end of the fiscal year. The Project received \$114,000 in grant funding from the SFPUC for completion of the feasibility study, which was authorized by the Board in 2020 (Res. 20-32).

This project is not currently funded by Measure AA as it is still within a feasibility stage. However, implementation of capital improvements may be eligible for Measure AA reimbursements.

PRIOR BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW

- **September 29, 2020:** The Legislative, Funding and Public Affairs Committee (LFPAC) reviewed the partnership agreement and recommended the Board adopt a resolution authorizing the General Manager to accept \$114,000 in grant funding from the SFPUC for the Project.
 - [Board Report \(R-20-101\)](#)
 - [Minutes](#)

- **October 28, 2020:** The Board adopted a resolution authorizing the General Manager to accept grant funding for the Project.
 - [Board Report \(Res. 20-32\)](#)
 - [Minutes](#)

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act. In addition, public notices were sent to Preserve neighbors along Highway 35 and interested parties of the Preserve and hiking, biking, equestrian, accessibility, and regional trails interested parties’ lists.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

The Highway 35 Multi-use Trail Crossing and Parking 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 Board selection of a project design alternative as the CEQA project description.

NEXT STEPS

With guidance from the PNR Committee, staff will proceed with development of parking area conceptual design alternatives and return to the PNR Committee and Board according to the following tentative schedule:

Feasibility Study Milestone	Tentative Schedule
PNR Committee Meeting #2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of trail crossing recommendations and parking area conceptual design alternatives. Staff will request feedback from the PNR Committee on the selection of a preferred alternative to be forwarded to the Board for consideration. 	Summer 2023
Board Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of trail crossing recommendations and preferred parking area conceptual design alternatives 	Winter 2023

Future Project Phases	Tentative Schedule
Environmental review conducted as part of Purisima Comprehensive Use and Management Plan	FY 24 and FY 25
Design development, engineering, and permitting	FY 25 and FY 26

Attachment(s)

1. Existing Conditions / Opportunities and Constraints Analysis Report
 - 1a. Project Location
 - 1b. Project Study Area
 - 1c. Existing Conditions
 - 1d. On-grade Crossing Recommendations
 - 1e. Spatial Analysis

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 Highway 35 Multi-use Trail Crossing and Parking Expansion

EXISTING CONDITIONS & OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

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Highway 35 Multi-use Trail Crossing and Parking Expansion

1.0 Project Background and Goals

1.1 Project Background

The District is conducting a feasibility study to identify a trail crossing location from the Purisima Creek Redwoods (Purisima, Preserve) North Ridge parking area across Skyline Boulevard (Highway 35) to connect existing segments of the Bay Area Ridge Trail within Purisima, west of Highway 35, to a new segment of the Bay Area Ridge Trail planned on the east side of Highway 35 (Ridge Trail Extension). The feasibility study will also analyze the potential expansion of the North Ridge parking area to serve visitors to both the existing trailhead and to the proposed Ridge Trail Extension. The Highway 35 Multi-use Trail Crossing and Parking Study (Project) is a partnership between the District, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), Bay Area Ridge Trail Council (Ridge Trail Council), and Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST).

The intent of the Project is to enhance regional connectivity through a multi-use highway crossing allowing access to trails on both sides of Highway 35 and to identify ways to reconfigure and increase parking capacity of the North Ridge parking area.

The North Ridge parking area and trailhead is the northern-most entrance to Purisima, located on the west side of Highway 35, approximately midway between Highway 92 to the north and Highway 84 to the south (see Figure 1). To the east of Highway 35 are SFPUC's watershed lands, where SFPUC is planning to construct a new segment of the Bay Area Ridge Trail (Ridge Trail Extension). The Ridge Trail Extension would run approximately six miles south from Highway 92 on SFPUC watershed lands and terminate near the boundary of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) Phleger Estate property. As part of the Ridge Trail Extension project, SFPUC will construct a new parking area at the north end of the new trail, just south of the intersection of Highways 92 and 35. The Purisima North Ridge parking area will be the nearest parking location to the south end of the six-mile Ridge Trail Extension and is likely to attract future trail users looking to access the new trail segment. Lack of a nearby highway crossing location from the North Ridge parking area to the east side of Highway 35 may potentially create safety concerns for users of the Ridge Trail Extension attempting to cross Highway 35 from the North Ridge parking area. In addition, an increase in visitors to the North Ridge parking area may exacerbate parking congestion in a lot that is prone to exceeding capacity on weekends from current visitors to Purisima.

To address these potential impacts from the Ridge Trail Extension, the District and its project partners (Ridge Trail Council, POST, and SFPUC) identified the need to study the feasibility of a crossing location on Highway 35 and an expansion of the existing North Ridge parking area. This Project will analyze expanded parking and multimodal access options at the North Ridge parking area, identify a multi-use trail crossing area on Highway 35, and an alignment of a spur trail to connect the Highway 35 crossing location directly to the SFPUC's planned Ridge Trail Extension. The North Ridge trailhead provides access to an existing segment of the Bay Area Ridge Trail within Purisima and the multi-use trail crossing and spur trail would connect it with the planned Ridge Trail Extension. Providing connections between Purisima and the Ridge Trail Extension will contribute an important regional connection for multiple trail users, including hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians.

The Project is occurring in parallel with two other planning studies at Purisima to improve public access and complete regional trail connections. In 2022, District staff completed the Purisima Creek Multimodal

Highway 35 Multi-use Trail Crossing and Parking Expansion

Access Study, which evaluated existing visitation at Purisima and developed a plan to address parking and traffic congestion issues, increase greener modes of transportation, and better manage visitation at the preserve. The Multimodal Access Study recommends a series of Transportation Demand Management strategies (TDMs) to be implemented preserve-wide as well as some strategies specific to the North Ridge parking area, in order of priority.

Planning for the Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail and Parking Area project is also underway, which is studying the addition of five miles of new trail within Purisima to link the California Coastal Trail to the Bay Area Ridge Trail. The project also includes planning of a new parking area to improve capacity for coastal access to Purisima.

The District is supporting the implementation of a regional trail network through the efforts of these projects and through ongoing partnerships to provide access to important trail connections. Purisima is located at a significant junction for regional trails that will provide north-south corridors along the Bay Area Ridge Trail, as well as east-west corridors through the Bay to Sea Trail with the Purisima-to-the-Sea component. These regional trail networks not only provide opportunities to connect trail users to a variety of open spaces, but also to understand the importance of regional conservation efforts and contiguous open spaces for maintaining natural ecosystems.

1.2 Project Goals

The intent of the Project is to enhance regional connectivity through a multi-use highway crossing allowing access to trails on both sides of Highway 35 and to identify ways to reconfigure and increase parking capacity of the North Ridge parking area. Project goals and strategies have been identified to guide the development of Project elements and evaluate Project success.

Goal 1: Support the implementation of the regional Bay Area Ridge Trail.

Strategies:

- *Identify a multi-use trail crossing and trail spur location to connect the SFPUC's new segment of the Bay Area Ridge Trail to the Preserve and the existing Ridge Trail segment within the Preserve.*
- *Maximize safety and minimize neighbor impacts when evaluating multi-use trail crossing locations and infrastructure.*
- *Develop the multi-use trail crossing and spur trail to accommodate low-intensity recreational use by hikers, bicyclists and equestrians, consistent with Bay Area Ridge Trail corridor goals.*
- *Collaborate with partner agencies to complete the planning, design and implementation of the multi-use trail crossing and spur trail.*

Goal 2: Improve public access and visitor experience at Purisima's North Ridge trailhead using ecologically sensitive design, construction practices, and long-term maintenance and management.

Strategies:

- *Add parking capacity through reconfiguration of existing parking spaces and expansion of the North Ridge Parking Area.*

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- *Improve the existing trailhead amenities, such as replacing the existing restroom with a new ADA compliant vault restroom, replacing dated signboards with current standard design, and adding bicycle parking.*
- *Incorporate Transportation Demand Management Strategies consistent with the Board-approved Purisima Multimodal Access Study recommendations.*
- *Design recreational amenities to protect the scenic corridor.*
- *Maximize safety and minimize neighbor impacts when evaluating the multi-use trail crossing, parking enhancements and vehicle circulation.*
- *Maintain routine patrols and maintenance and use adaptive management to address unforeseen issues that arise from increased visitation to the North Ridge trailhead.*

2.0 Existing Conditions

The Project site includes an area west of Highway 35 within Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve, comprised of the existing North Ridge parking area and adjacent open areas west of the parking area. The site of the existing North Ridge parking area was purchased as an addition to the Preserve in 1983 (R-83-05). Prior to this land purchase, the District had acquired a public easement over the area that allowed for vehicular access and parking as part of the original Whittemore Gulch purchase, the first acquisition to form what is now called Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (R-82-30). The site was identified as having the potential to allow for a parking area adjacent to Skyline Boulevard to provide Preserve access. In 1988, with grant funds from the State of California, the North Ridge parking area was enlarged to the current capacity for passenger vehicles and horse trailers and trailhead improvements were completed. According to a review of the Use and Management Plan for the Preserve in 1989, public use of the Preserve increased sharply with the new public access improvements and the available parking associated with the three Preserve trailheads (North Ridge, Purisima Creek/Higgins Road, and Redwood) reached capacity on weekends (R-89-20).

The boundaries of the existing parking area and proposed parking expansion areas follow the Purisima property boundary with Fisher Investments to the north and Highway 35 right of way to the east. The employee residence defines the west boundary of the lower parking expansion area, and the southwest boundaries of the project site are defined by dense forest and other vegetation that signal the start of the preserve (see Figure 2). The Project site also includes the Caltrans Highway 35 right of way and approximately four acres of SFPUC Watershed lands east of Highway 35 for the spur trail study area.

2.1 Natural Resources

North Ridge trailhead is located along the upper ridge of a watershed that flows west into the preserve and into Purisima Creek. Due to the location of the trailhead on a ridge bordering two watersheds, many aquatic features such as creeks, rivers, and wetlands do not occur near the trailhead, but further west into the preserve where the topography slopes toward the coast.

2.2 Public Access

The North Ridge parking area and trailhead is the northern most entry point into Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve and is located along Highway 35, approximately 4.5 miles south of its intersection with Highway 92 (Figure 3). From the North Ridge trailhead, visitors can access the 5,400-acre Purisima preserve located on the western slopes of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Purisima offers

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twenty-two miles of public trails with access for hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians as well as views of the coast from various trails along the ridgelines that slope toward the coast from east to west.

The parking area is adjacent to the west side of Highway 35 with a vegetated barrier between the parking area and the highway right-of-way. The gravel parking area can accommodate perpendicular parking for 41 standard vehicle spaces and two ADA spaces. The parking area is unstriped and does not delineate parking stalls, except for the two ADA spaces that are identified by ADA parking signs and a blue curb. Wheel stops line the west and east sides of the parking area and help to define the boundaries of the existing lot. While the North Ridge parking area does not include designated equestrian parking spaces, approximately two equestrian trailers can be accommodated for parallel parking along the split-rail fencing on the northwest side of the parking lot. The North Ridge trailhead includes standard trailhead amenities such as an equestrian hitching post, map and sign boards, a boot brush, and a single-stall vault restroom. The vault restroom, installed in 1999, is in deteriorating condition and requires improvements and an accessible path to meet ADA accessibility standards.

The North Ridge parking area is accessible by a one-way entrance on the south end of the parking area and a one-way exit at the north end of the parking area, which circulate traffic in a single direction through the parking area from south to north. There are no entry or exit signs visible from Highway 35, aside from a “do not enter” sign at the north driveway that indicates that it is an exit only. Within the parking area, an exit sign is posted near the north driveway and a “not an exit” sign is posted near the south driveway. A preserve sign for Purisima Creek Redwoods is located next to the North Ridge entrance and is visible from Highway 35.

Of the four parking areas available for visitors to Purisima, the North Ridge parking area can accommodate the largest number of on-site vehicle parking. All four parking areas frequently exceed capacity on the weekends, during peak visitation, and visitors often use informal, roadside parking when the lots are full. The Purisima Multimodal Access Study (2022) found that during the peak summer months, the North Ridge parking area alone averaged between 225 to 525 vehicles and 500 to 1,225 pedestrians per day¹, despite its maximum 41-car capacity.

2.3 Local and Regional Connectivity

Highway 35 provides key access points not only to Purisima, but also to the greater Skyline region, including direct access to seven other preserves within the District and many other open spaces that together act as a protected, regional greenbelt throughout the mid-peninsula. Among the many trails and open spaces accessible from Highway 35 are a series of existing and planned regional trails that provide connections throughout the Bay Area. Purisima will provide important trail connections for many regional trails, including the Bay Area Ridge Trail and the planned Bay to Sea trail, lead by POST, which will be an approximately 40-mile regional trail that is envisioned to connect communities from the San Francisco Bay to the Pacific Ocean. A key component of the Bay to Sea trail will be the development of the District’s Purisima-to-the-Sea trail, which will create a five-mile trail connection through Purisima to the California Coastal Trail along Highway 1. Purisima also contains existing segments of the Bay Area Ridge Trail, of which these segments contribute to over 400 miles (and counting) of existing multi-use trail that follow the ridgelines encircling the San Francisco Bay. The alignment of the Ridge Trail

¹ [Purisima Creek Multimodal Access and Transportation Demand Management Study](#). Attachment 1, page 10.

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Extension on SFPUC Watershed lands poses an opportunity to connect Purisima and its Bay Area Ridge Trail segment to the new trail extension through the Project's multi-use trail crossing on Highway 35.

2.4 Cultural Resources

The Project area is within a region that was historically occupied by tribes of the Ramaytush Ohlone people. Ohlone territory spanned from areas north of the San Francisco Bay down the coast as far as Carmel Valley, and inland to the coast range. San Mateo County is home to numerous historic Ohlone sites and villages, whose boundaries were typically defined by topographic features such as rivers, watersheds, and ridgelines. The nearest known cultural site of the Ramaytush Ohlone is a well-known and historically significant village site located at what is now the private Filoli Estate, approximately two miles northeast of the Project area on the eastern slope of the Santa Cruz Mountains.

2.5 Aesthetics

The North Ridge trailhead is surrounded by a rural, forested setting, primarily comprised of redwood forest with some annual grassland and Monterey cypress woodland. The area is also sparsely populated with single family residences and businesses along the Highway 35 corridor. The North Ridge trailhead is accessible from Highway 35, a rural, two-lane highway providing north and south-bound travel along the ridgeline of the Santa Cruz Mountains. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has designated Highway 35 as a scenic highway, which is meant to preserve the visual character of highways and manage new development to preserve the scenic and natural features visible from the highways. The stretch of Highway 35 in the vicinity of the North Ridge trailhead is lined with heavy vegetation that contributes to its scenic beauty, but can also make roadway visibility challenging at high speeds.

2.6 Operations and Maintenance

Adjacent to the west boundary of the existing parking lot is an approximately 0.3-acre (13,000 square foot) open, flat area (Upper area) that is vacant aside from the hitching post. This Upper area is used as a helicopter landing zone by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) for emergency response. Further west of the Upper area, moving into the preserve, the land slopes down to another open, flat area (approximately 1.2 acres or 52,000 square feet) where an employee residence and separated garage are located (Lower area). This Lower area previously hosted an experimental fog collector, a device installed in 2016 to conduct initial studies of moisture collection from fog that occurs over the Santa Cruz mountains. The fog collector was removed in December of 2022 after the data collection ended in 2018 and the device was left idle for many years. The slope separating the two open areas west of the North Ridge parking area is also covered with dense vegetation, which provides visual and physical separation between the trailhead and the employee residence. The employee residence is accessed by a gated, gravel driveway along the north boundary of the preserve that connects the property to the North Ridge parking area.

The adjacent property to the north of the North Ridge parking area is owned and occupied by a private company, Fisher Investments. Their property is highly developed with offices and other support buildings as well as a parking area accessible from Highway 35. To the east of the North Ridge parking area and of Highway 35 are SFPUC watershed lands, which are undeveloped and primarily consist of dense redwood forest. Adjacent properties to the south of the North Ridge trailhead are private, single-family homes. The closest private driveway is 400 feet south of the entry driveway to the North Ridge trailhead.

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The posted speed limit is 50 mph at the North Ridge trailhead, however, many nearby residents and frequent preserve visitors have provided public comments that vehicles often go at much higher speeds. The District is aware of safety concerns regarding the speed of vehicles travelling along Highway 35 and the feasibility study aims to identify potential safety concerns related to the Project.

3.0 Technical Studies

District staff contracted with professional consulting firms to complete various technical studies to analyze the biological, cultural, traffic, and topographic characteristics of the Project area (including both the Upper and Lower parking expansion areas). The methodology, key findings, and recommendations from these studies are summarized below.

3.1 Biological Resources Survey and Phytophthora Risk Assessment

In June, 2022, AECOM conducted a thorough Biological Resources Survey to identify any existing or potential biological resources within the proposed Project area. In particular, the survey was conducted to identify all San Francisco dusky-footed woodrat (SFDFW) middens present within the project area, any substantial or permanent nesting bird resources (e.g. suitable nesting trees) in the area, any aquatic features including jurisdictional wetlands or other waters, the presence of any bat maternity roosts within the onsite residence, and the suitability of the Project site for special-status wildlife habitat. A daytime biological survey analyzed an area consisting of the Project site, traffic survey area, spur trail study area, and included three buffer areas of up to 1,000 feet for nesting birds. A bat emergence survey was also conducted during the evening to monitor any bat activity near the employee residence and garage.

The surveys found one active SFDFW midden at a distance approximately 250 feet from the project area, which is unlikely to be affected by the Project. No active raptor, accipiter, or passerine bird nests or nesting platforms were found in the vicinity of the Project site; however, a Monterey cypress tree being used as an acorn woodpecker granary was found in the Spur Trail study area. The survey found no evidence of aquatic resources or jurisdictional wetlands and special status species within the Project area, nor was there evidence of the presence of bat maternity roosts within the onsite employee residence or garage.

Due to the project site's proximity to Huddart County Park which is a designated critical habitat for the endangered marbled murrelet, District staff conducted a site assessment for marbled murrelet and consulted with California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) about the potential need for special species protections. However, based on results of the site assessment and discussions with CDFW, both the District and CDFW staff confirmed that no suitable murrelet habitat within the project area and within the project vicinity, therefore the project will have zero species impacts. Noise and visual disturbance avoidance measures will likely not be necessary.

In February 2023, AECOM prepared a Phytophthora Risk Assessment in order to identify the modality of soil pathogen infection and to provide specific mitigation and best management practices to minimize the introduction or spread of Phytophthora species at the site. Analysis found that the project area has

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relatively low levels of contamination risk; however, areas east of Hwy 35 are highly receptive to contamination and are considered sensitive sites.

3.2 Traffic Survey

TJKM Transportation Consultants (TJKM) evaluated the sight distance conditions for the two existing parking area driveways and the feasibility/design of a new on-grade trail crossing on Highway 35. TJKM performed a Sight Distance analysis using standards in “Highway Design Manual”, 2020 7th Edition by the California Department of Transportation, a policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Street, 2018 7th Edition, from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA-MUTCD). In April 2022, TJKM measured vehicle speeds in the vicinity of the North Ridge parking area to determine the project design speed. The project design speed is the 85th percentile of actual speeds measured on the roadway; it is used to determine if adequate sight distance is available for vehicles exiting the existing driveways, and if northbound and southbound vehicles on Highway 35 have adequate stopping sight distance for the new on-grade trail crossing. Although the posted speed limit is 50 mph, the design speed measured on the road was 51.7 mph northbound and 51.0 mph southbound. TJKM rounded these findings up to 55 mph as the final design speed used in the feasibility analysis. TJKM also reviewed five years of traffic collision data within the vicinity of the project site to inform the final recommendations. There were no reported incidents directly in front of the parking area to prompt additional recommendations. The traffic collision data can be found as an appendix to the traffic report. Based on the available information, TJKM concluded that there is a feasible on-grade trail crossing location immediately adjacent to the existing exit driveway. TJKM recommended improvements within the right-of-way to preserve site distances and enhance visibility of the trail crossing (see Figure 4). Furthermore, TJKM concluded that the existing driveway configuration is the most favorable for ingress and egress. TJKM has sought concurrence with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) on their findings and recommendations. Caltrans reviewed the findings and requested additional information in the final report, which was provided by TJKM. Caltrans does not have any further comments at this time. Additional coordination with Caltrans will be required for future encroachment permits, which would occur after a Board-approved alternative is selected and analyzed as part of the CEQA environmental review process. Refer to roadway trail crossing graphics for more details (Figure 4).

3.3 Cultural and Historic Resources Survey

Cogstone Resource Management, Inc. conducted cultural and historic resource surveys in the fall and winter of 2022 to determine if any cultural or historic resources were present within the Project area that may be affected by implementation of the Project. Cogstone conducted background research involving a search for archaeological and historical records at the Northwest Information Center (NWIC) as well as a request for a Sacred Lands File (SLF) search from the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). Cogstone also conducted a pedestrian survey of the Project area to determine whether any archaeological resources were present. No archaeological resources were observed during the survey and the background research did not find any previously recorded cultural or historical resources located within the Project area. The boundary of one historic resource, the Filoli Estate, was located within the half mile search radius, but is outside of the Project area and is unlikely to be affected by the proposed Project. The SLF search identified one tribal band and the NAHC recommended they be contacted for information on any tribal cultural resources in the vicinity of the Project. The District will

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will contact the tribe directly once preliminary concept plans are available and again when a design alternative is selected and the Project proceeds to the environmental review phase, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and in accordance with Assembly Bill (AB) 52 consultations. No archaeological monitoring is anticipated due to the geological age of the soils as well as the absence of any known cultural resources within the Project area.

Cogstone also conducted an Historic Resources Evaluation for the nearby onsite employee residence that was built over 50 years ago (circa 1948) given its proximity to the parking area. The residence includes Ranch style architectural elements such as a low pitch roof with a wide eave overhang. The entire exterior of the single-family residence was photographed and recorded on the Department of Parks and Recreation 523 (DPR 523) forms. Due to a lack of significance and notable architectural alteration, the residence was not found eligible for listing at the local, state, or national level. No further evaluation is recommended. No changes are proposed for this residence, which would remain in place as part of the Project and continued to be used as an employee residence to maintain onsite presence and vigilance of the property.

4.0 Opportunities and Constraints

This section describes the opportunities and constraints for the Project site, which are related to important attributes of the site and require consideration for Project program development. Opportunities and constraints are categorized by topic area (such as Natural Resources or Public Access) and some attributes may be listed as both an opportunity and a constraint based on their relationship to the Project goals. In addition, several policies and best management practices (BMPs) that may be relevant to the Project are listed below.

Potential applicable policies, guidelines, or regulations:

- **Caltrans Highway Design Manual**
- **District Best Management Practices**
- **District Good Neighbor Policy**
- **District Resource Management Policies**
- **Purisima Multimodal Access Study**
- **San Mateo County Active Transportation Plan**
- **San Mateo County General Plan. 4.22 Scenic Corridors.** Protect and enhance the visual quality of scenic corridors by managing the location and appearance of structural development.
- **San Mateo County General Plan. 4.24 Rural Development Design Concept.** Regulate the location and siting of structures in rural areas to encourage positive visual quality in relation to the scenic character of the natural landscape.
- **San Mateo County Heritage/Significant Tree Ordinance**
- **San Mateo County Trails Plan**
- **San Mateo Water Pollution Prevention Program**

*Relevant policies, guidelines or regulations are shown with corresponding opportunities or constraints and labeled with an asterisk.

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4.1 Natural Resources

Attribute	Opportunities & Constraints	Discussion
Biological Resources	O	<p>The biological survey conducted for the Project site did not uncover any special-status wildlife species, nesting birds or raptors, aquatic resources, roosting bats, or other sensitive biological resources within the Project area. A Dusky-Footed Woodrat midden is present about 250 feet from the Project area, which is well beyond the minimum avoidance buffer of 3-10 feet established by the District. It is unlikely that midden would be affected by the Project at this distance. It is unlikely that marbled murrelet protections will be required during construction. Construction activities should avoid direct impacts to trees within the spur trail study area during bird nesting season (between March 15 and August 30).</p> <p><i>* District wildlife BMPs: nesting bird surveys, SF dusky-footed woodrat midden avoidance buffer, marbled murrelet AMMs</i></p>
Biological Resources	C	<p>There is dense vegetation along the east side of Highway 35 (on SFPUC Watershed lands), which may affect the spur trail alignment as well as the line of sight for the multi-use crossing. Some vegetation may need to be removed and/or trimmed back to improve line of sight for the crossing as well as develop the spur trail connection to the Ridge Trail Extension.</p> <p><i>*San Mateo County Heritage/Significant Tree Ordinance</i></p>
Hydrology	C	<p>Drainage from the existing parking area and trailhead flows west, into the preserve, while drainage on the east side of Highway 35 flows east, contributing to the SFPUC watershed. An existing drainage culvert is located just south of the North Ridge trailhead and parking entrance. Drainage from the site may be affected by construction activities related to parking expansion as well as an increase in impervious surfaces. Potential runoff from an expanded parking area will need to be evaluated to ensure there will be no impacts to water quality and buffers implemented where/if necessary.</p> <p><i>*San Mateo Water Pollution Prevention Program</i></p>
Pathogens	O/C	<p>The Phytophthora risk assessment determined that the project site has relatively low levels of pathogen contamination west of Highway 35. However, movement of Phytophthora pathogens may also migrate from the Project area and construction activities (e.g. reseeded) to SFPUC property east of Highway 35 and some sensitive areas will require particular protection from infection.</p> <p><i>*Phytophthora Risk Assessment BMPs and AMMs</i></p>

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4.2 Public Access

Attribute	Opportunities & Constraints	Discussion
Parking Area	O	<p>The existing North Ridge parking area and trailhead are frequently visited and familiar to visitors of Purisima, as it is currently the largest parking area available for the preserve. Expansion of the parking area coupled with multimodal access strategies are expected to significantly alleviate parking demands and potentially meet anticipated parking needs at this trailhead. The Project will maintain the existing vegetated buffer and berm between the parking lot and Highway 35 to minimize visibility of the parking area from the highway. The separate driveway for entrance and exit will also be preserved to better accommodate larger vehicles such as shuttle buses, emergency vehicles, and equestrian trailers. This will save space by not requiring a turn-around area. Minor improvements to signage may be implemented to better identify the entry and exit to vehicles travelling along Highway 35.</p>
Parking Capacity	C	<p>Although expansion of the parking area would add much needed parking at the North Ridge trailhead, the available expansion areas are limited in size. Future expansion will likely not fulfill the maximum parking demand at peak visitation hours and TDM strategies should be considered to manage parking.</p> <p><i>*Good Neighbor Policy</i> <i>*Purisima Multitmodal Access Study</i></p>
Trail Crossing Location	O	<p>Based on the traffic study conducted at the North Ridge trailhead, an adequate line of sight was identified that would allow for a safer crossing location just south of the exit driveway. The adequate line of sight indicates that vehicles traveling north and south bound along Highway 35 will have enough warning, visibility, and space to yield to trail users crossing at the recommended location. The traffic study also recommended the use of crossing signage that is consistent with many other highway crossing locations along Highway 35 and would be familiar to trail users and vehicles approaching the crossing.</p> <p><i>*Caltrans Highway Design Manual Policy 405.1</i> <i>*SMC Active Transportation</i></p>
Trail Crossing Safety	C	<p>During the stakeholder engagement process neighbors expressed concern over current excessive vehicle speeds along Highway 35 that are perceived to be much higher than the posted speed limit. While the traffic study analysis used current traffic data and accounted for greater vehicle speeds along Highway 35 in its recommendation of the highway crossing location, further consultation with Caltrans is required to determine the final crossing design and signage that would be appropriate for the recommended crossing location.</p>
Parking	O	<p>On the west side of Highway 35, the existing parking area and adjacent upper expansion area are generally flat with a very gradual</p>

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		<p>slope to the west, into the preserve. Adjacent to this area, a steep, vegetated slope separates the upper parking expansion area from the lower expansion area and employee residence. The terrain levels out again at the lower expansion area and residence with just a gradual slope to the southwest. The existing topography will influence the parking capacity for both the upper and lower parking expansion areas and neither expansion area will require significant grading. During the stakeholder engagement process, interest was expressed in adding designated equestrian parking at the North Ridge trailhead. Although equestrian parking is currently permitted at North Ridge, equestrians must share the space with standard vehicle parking and there is rarely enough available space to park equestrian trailers during peak visitation hours. Reconfiguring and expanding the parking area will provide an opportunity to address public interest in adding designated equestrian parking to the North Ridge parking area.</p>
Parking	C	<p>The steep, vegetated slope creates a barrier between the upper parking expansion area and the lower expansion area and employee residence. This slope limits the area that can be used for on-site parking expansion as well as internal circulation if the lower expansion area is utilized.</p> <p>The addition of designated equestrian parking would mean reducing the number of additional standard vehicle parking that could be accommodated onsite. Although feedback from the stakeholder engagement process showed interest in designated equestrian parking, it's unclear how many spaces are required to meet the demand for equestrian parking and whether this should be prioritized over the addition of standard vehicle parking, which is in high demand at this location.</p>
Proximity to Adjacent Properties	O	<p>There are limited adjacent properties and driveways in the vicinity of the Project site that could be impacted by an increase in visitation to the North Ridge parking area. The Fisher Investments property, adjacent to the north boundary of the North Ridge parking area, has an opposite visitation schedule from visitors to North Ridge where most Fisher Investments employees are working on site during the weekdays, while Purisima has peak visitation on weekends.</p> <p><i>*Good Neighbor Policy</i></p>
Proximity to Adjacent Properties	C	<p>The lower parking expansion area is adjacent to the existing employee residence. Use of the lower parking expansion area for additional visitor parking may require a buffer from the residence for privacy and to maintain District operational access to and from the residence. Although the Fisher Investments property is busiest on weekdays when visitation to Purisima is lower, the Ridge Trail Extension may increase weekday visitation that could contribute to more traffic congestion in the vicinity of the private property.</p> <p><i>*Good Neighbor Policy</i></p>

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4.3 Local and Regional Connectivity

Attribute	Opportunities & Constraints	Discussion
Trail Crossing Location	O	Existing segments of the Bay Area Ridge Trail within Purisima can be accessed from the North Ridge trailhead, which makes a multi-use trail crossing at Highway 35 from the planned Ridge Trail Extension to the North Ridge trailhead a natural and direct connection point. <i>*San Mateo County Trails Plan</i>

4.4 Cultural and Historic Resources

Attribute	Opportunities & Constraints	Discussion
Cultural Resources	O	The cultural resources survey conducted for the Project site did not identify any previously recorded cultural resources within the Project area and no archaeological resources were encountered during the pedestrian survey. A Sacred Lands File search identified one Native American Tribe that will be consulted when preliminary concept plans are available and during the planning and CEQA environmental review process to obtain more information about any potential cultural resources within the Project site. Due to the results of the pedestrian survey, background research, and soil analysis, archaeological monitoring is not recommended during development of the Project. <i>*District Cultural Resources Policies</i>
Historic Resources	O	The historic resources evaluation thoroughly documented and analyzed the site's existing employee residence to determine if it is historically significant. Despite the age of residence, originally constructed sometime between 1941 and 1948, this building is not recommended as eligible for listing at the local, state, or national level due to lack of significance and the notable architectural alterations made to the residence since it was originally built. <i>*District Cultural Resources Policies</i>

4.5 Aesthetics

Attribute	Opportunities & Constraints	Discussion
Caltrans Scenic Highway Designation	O	Caltrans designates portions of Highway 35 as a state scenic highway, including the portion of Highway 35 adjacent to the Project site. Caltrans and San Mateo County have developed policies that regulate development along scenic corridors and provide guidance for other

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		<p>visual resources. The existing North Ridge parking area is adjacent to Highway 35 and partially visible from the highway. A barrier of redwood trees along the east boundary of the parking lot separates the existing parking area from the highway right-of-way and provides a natural visual barrier, which will remain regardless of the final parking area program. In addition, the proposed lower parking expansion area is set back from the roadway and is lower in elevation as compared to the existing parking area, which will help to reduce visibility of the expanded parking area from the highway. The Project proposes to maintain the existing entry and exit driveways to the parking area along Highway 35 to minimize the Project’s visibility from the scenic highway.</p> <p><i>* San Mateo County General Plan. 4.22 Scenic Corridors California Streets and Highways Code Division 1, Chapter 2, Article 2.5</i></p>
<p>Caltrans Scenic Highway Designation</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>Although the Project will direct new development to areas away from Highway 35, there is potential for changes to be visible from the highway, including the upper parking expansion area and the replacement vault restroom, which would be relocated to a more central location to address ADA barriers. In addition, the Project will require a crossing sign and two crossing warning signs to be installed along Highway 35 to identify the multi-use trail crossing location. While these traffic features will be minimal, they are meant to be highly visible to vehicles travelling on Highway 35 to promote safer crossing. Vegetation clearing along Highway 35 right-of-way will also occur, both to support the traffic study recommendations for improving line of sight to the multi-use trail crossing as part of the Project and separately through Fire Safe San Mateo County to support fuel reduction efforts for wildfire prevention.</p> <p><i>*San Mateo County General Plan. 4.24 Rural Development Design Concept. California Streets and Highways Code Division 1, Chapter 2, Article 2.5</i></p>

4.6 Operations and Maintenance

Attribute	Opportunities & Constraints	Discussion
<p>Utilities and Services</p>	<p>O</p>	<p>Above-ground power lines run along Highway 35 adjacent to the Project site and underground electric lines currently serve the employee residence, garage, and the existing parking area entry and exit gates. A water main line also runs beneath Highway 35, including a water distribution line that serves the employee residence. Cellular service is also available at the existing North Ridge parking area.</p>
<p>Utilities and Services</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>Sewer service is not available at the employee residence nor at the North Ridge trailhead. The trailhead provides a vault restroom for public use. Relocating the vault restroom would be a challenge due to</p>

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		the existing topography and vegetation near the trailhead that limits alternative locations. The vault restroom will be replaced with an ADA-accessible model. Vault restrooms, as opposed to plumbed restrooms, are only permissible on a case-by-case basis through an exemption with the County of San Mateo. Preliminary inspection by District staff indicates that the site meets the criteria to allow the exemption.
CalFire Landing Zone	C	District staff have reached out to the agencies and organizations that may utilize the landing zone at the upper expansion area, including CalFire, San Mateo County Fire, and the Kings Mountain Volunteer Fire Department. These organizations are aware of the Project and have not requested further coordination at this time. In addition, there are other landing zones located in the vicinity of the Project area that are currently used by these organizations. These nearby alternative landing zone locations include private properties on Cyprus Ridge Road, less than a mile north of the Project site, and Tunitas Creek Road, approximately two miles south of the Project site. The nearest alternative landing zone on District lands is located at El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve, approximately five miles south of the Project site. Should a Project alternative be selected for CEQA review that would change the use of the landing zone, District staff will engage in additional coordination with these agencies at that time to confirm the site can be formally retired.

5.0 Public and Stakeholder Engagement

From 2021 to 2022, the District engaged with stakeholder groups and partners as part of the Project focused meetings and at meetings that included the Purisima-to-the-Sea project and the Purisima Multimodal Access Study. These engagement activities were used to gather initial feedback on existing challenges at the North Ridge parking area and any desired amenities that should be considered for this parking area. Feedback received includes the following²:

Theme/Topic	General Feedback/Comments
Traffic and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns related to providing a safe pedestrian roadway crossing due to current vehicle speeds on Highway 35 Neighbors would like to see roadway striping and advanced warning beacon for trail crossing Concerns related to roadside parking that create potentially unsafe roadway conditions for pedestrians and vehicles Suggestion to modify parking area entrance to allow vehicles to turn into the parking area quickly

² This feedback has been received in addition to previous feedback that was presented to the PNR Committee and the Board as part of the Purisima Multimodal Access engagement on [August 2nd, 2022](#) (see attachment 5) .

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestion to review historic traffic accident data in the vicinity of North Ridge to better understand safety issues • Concerns related to foggy conditions on Highway 35 that could limit visibility
Parking and Visitor Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing E-bikes within the Preserve may reduce parking demand • Request for better equestrian parking and access at this trailhead • Better/clearer roadway parking signage can discourage parking along the roadway that impacts neighboring properties
Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for the proposed trailhead amenities • Suggestion to include emergency response information on trailhead signage
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General support for the Project if concerns are addressed • New regional trail connection may result in additional traffic and trash • Concerns regarding relocating the CalFire helicopter landing zone and how this would impact fire response

5.1 Partner and Agency Meetings

On October 19th, 2022, District staff made a presentation at a monthly meeting of the Peninsula Trails Team, a working group made up of regional trails partners and land managers, including representatives from POST, SFPUC, Ridge Trail Council, California Coastal Conservancy, County of San Mateo, National Parks Service, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and the District. Following the presentation of the Project scope, updated schedule, and the results of the completed technical studies, the group discussed regional implications for the new trail connection as well as the potential timing for future planning and CEQA environmental review.

5.2 Neighborhood Meetings

District staff met with representatives from local organizations including members of the Kings Mountain Association, a neighborhood association, and the facilities manager of Fisher Investments, the neighboring property to the north of the Project site. District staff presented the Project to the Kings Mountain Association in March and November of 2022 and engaged in group discussions. District staff also provided a presentation to the facilities manager of Fisher Investments on November 9th, 2022 to notify them of the Project, answer questions, and receive initial feedback.

5.3 Stakeholder Group Meetings

District staff invited individuals who were familiar with Purisima and other District preserves to participate in focused virtual stakeholder meetings held on November 15th and 17th, 2022. The individuals invited to the stakeholder meetings were identified from their previous participation in public engagement activities with the District and represented a range of user groups, including hikers, cyclists, equestrians, ADA-accessibility interests, and District docents and volunteers. The virtual

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stakeholder meetings were organized with a brief presentation by District staff, followed by polling questions and open discussion.

5.4 Prior Board and Committee Meetings

To date, the Highway 35 Multi-use Crossing and Parking Expansion Feasibility Study has been brought before the District's Legislative, Funding and Public Affairs Committee (LFPAC) at the following meetings:

- **September 29, 2020:** The LFPAC reviewed the partnership agreement with SFPUC and provided comments. The LFPAC voted unanimously to forward a recommendation to the full Board of Directors to adopt the resolution authorizing the General Manager to execute the grant agreement. ([R-20-101, Meeting Minutes](#))

The Highway 35 Multi-use Crossing and Parking Expansion Feasibility Study has also been brought before the full District Board at the following meetings:

- **October 28, 2020:** The Board adopted a resolution authorizing the General Manager to accept grant funding from SFPUC for the proposed Project. ([R-20-32, Meeting Minutes](#))

6.0 Program Elements

The Project proposes to expand parking for passenger vehicles and horse trailers. The trailhead would have amenities typical to District preserves, including a vault restroom, trailhead sign boards, boot brush, bike racks, and an equestrian mounting block. The parking lot, trailhead, and restroom would meet ADA accessibility requirements.

The Committee is asked to provide feedback on the share of passenger vehicle, horse trailer, and shuttle bus spaces that should be accommodated as part of the proposed parking expansion design. The share of spaces is based on the expansion potential that exists at the Upper Area, comprised of the existing parking area and the adjacent vacant area to the west, and the Lower Area, comprised of the vacant area adjacent to the employee residence. District staff completed a spatial analysis for the Upper and Lower Areas, which is detailed below (refer also to Figure 5).

The Upper Area could accommodate any of the following scenarios:

Capacity Scenarios	Number of Passenger Vehicle Parking ³	Number of Horse Trailer Parking ⁴	Number of Shuttle Bus Parking ⁵
Scenario 1	65	0	0
Scenario 2	45	4	0
Scenario 3	45	0	4

³ AASHTO Geometric Design of Highways and Streets Exhibit 2-3 Passenger Car (P)

⁴ AASHTO Geometric Design of Highways and Streets Exhibit 2-21 Passenger Car and Trailer (P/T)

⁵ AASHTO Geometric Design of Highways and Streets Exhibit 2-8 Conventional School Bus (S-BUS-11 [S-BUS-36])

Highway 35 Multi-use Trail Crossing and Parking Expansion

The Lower Area could accommodate any of the following scenarios:

Capacity Scenarios	Number of Passenger Vehicle Parking	Number of Horse Trailer Parking	Number of Shuttle Bus Parking
Scenario 1	15	0	0
Scenario 2	0	2	0
Scenario 3	0	0	2

Staff seeks the Board’s direction on the scenarios to develop final parking program alternatives, which may be a combination of the scenarios listed above and may include other parking elements. For example, one possible combination of these scenarios that maximizes all three uses is to provide 45 passenger vehicles, 2 horse trailer spaces and 2 shuttle spaces in the Upper Area; and 15 passenger vehicle spaces in the Lower Area. The above scenarios are only to demonstrate maximum available space at each expansion area and are not the only parking alternatives that should be considered for the Project.

6.1 Purisima Multimodal Recommendations

The Purisima Multimodal Access Study, approved by the Board on November 9, 2022, recommends a series of transportation demand management strategies (TDMs) for the preserve’s parking areas, including the North Ridge parking area. The TDMs considered for the North Ridge parking area are categorized by priority level based on a variety of factors such as ease of implementation, overall effectiveness for improving public access, and interest from the public. The expectation is that many of these strategies will be suitable for the site and be incorporated into the design and long-term management of the parking area TDMs that are being considered for the North Ridge trailhead include the following:

Highest priority TDMs

- Peak period parking reservations/priority parking
- Bicycle parking and facilities (including bicycle repair stations)
- Temporarily redesignate spaces on specific days/times to best meet demands
 - May include designating special parking areas temporarily for carpool, equestrian, shuttle pick-up/drop-off, or other uses
- Real-time parking lot occupancy sensors and signage
- Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure

Lower priority TDMs

- Vehicle way-finding signage
- Clearly identify permitted on-street / shoulder parking
- Accommodate future shuttle / transit systems

Highway 35 Multi-use Trail Crossing and Parking Expansion

7.0 Figures

Figure 1: Project location

Figure 2: Project area

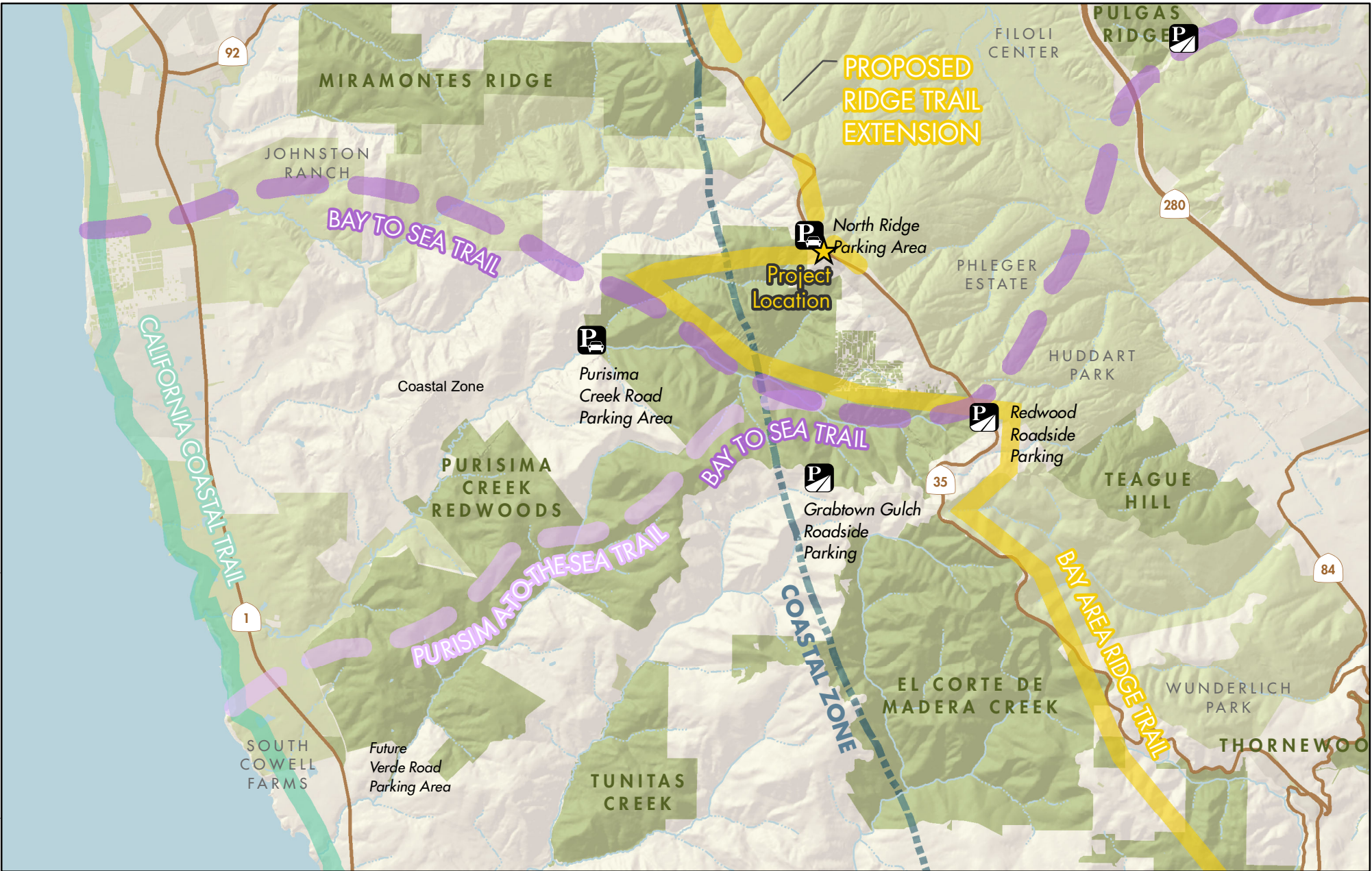
Figure 3: Existing Conditions

Figure 4: On-grade Crossing Recommendations




Figure 5: Spatial Analysis




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Created By: acostanza



Hwy 35 Multi-Use Trail Crossing and Parking Expansion Feasibility Study

-  Midpen preserves
-  Other protected lands
-  Private property

-  Existing parking lot
-  Existing roadside parking
-  Proposed parking area

-  Existing Bay Area Ridge Trail
-  Proposed extension of Bay Area Ridge Trail
-  Proposed Bay to Sea Trail
-  Proposed Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail
-  California Coastal Trail

Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District
(Midpen)
3/7/2023



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



HWY 35 MULTI-USE TRAIL CROSSING AND PARKING EXPANSION FEASIBILITY STUDY

PURISIMA CREEK REDWOODS OPEN SPACE PRESERVE

NORTH RIDGE PARKING LOT



Not to scale



ATTACHMENT 1.b PROJECT STUDY AREAS



HWY 35 MULTI-USE TRAIL CROSSING AND PARKING EXPANSION FEASIBILITY STUDY

PURISIMA CREEK REDWOODS OPEN SPACE PRESERVE

NORTH RIDGE PARKING LOT



Not to scale



ATTACHMENT 1.c EXISTING CONDITIONS

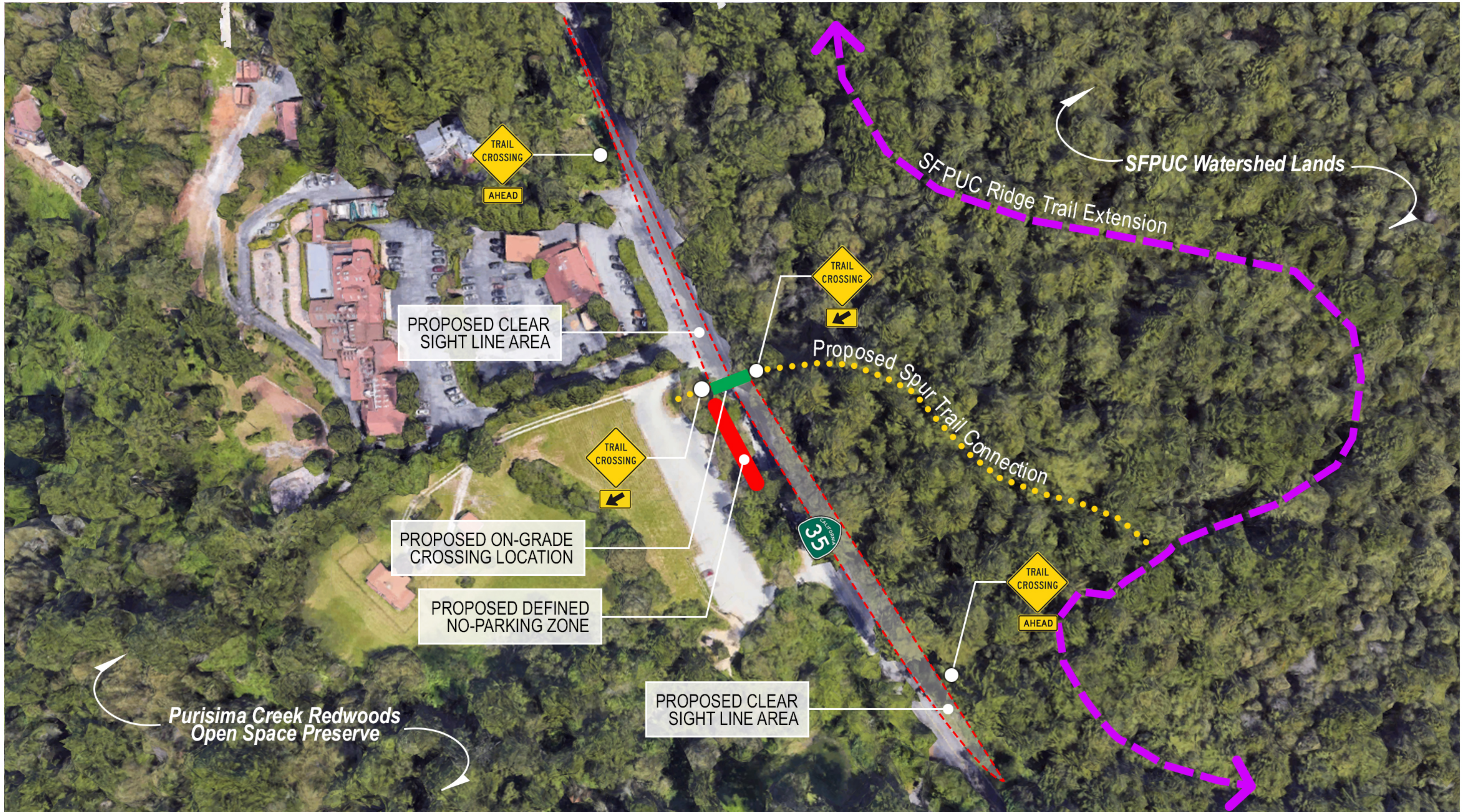


HWY 35 MULTI-USE TRAIL CROSSING AND PARKING EXPANSION FEASIBILITY STUDY

PURISIMA CREEK REDWOODS OPEN SPACE PRESERVE
NORTH RIDGE PARKING LOT



Not to scale



ATTACHMENT 1.d ON-GRADE CROSSING RECOMMENDATIONS



HWY 35 MULTI-USE TRAIL CROSSING AND PARKING EXPANSION FEASIBILITY STUDY

PURISIMA CREEK REDWOODS OPEN SPACE PRESERVE

NORTH RIDGE PARKING LOT



Not to scale

