



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

**MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT
PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Administrative Office
5050 El Camino Real
Los Altos, CA 94022

Tuesday, April 4, 2023

This meeting is being held in person at the District's Administrative Office, and by teleconference pursuant to Government Code Section 54953.

DRAFT MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Cyr requested that Director Holman chair today's meeting. Director Holman agreed.

Director Holman called the meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee to order at 2:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members present: Jed Cyr, Craig Gleason, Karen Holman

Members absent: None

Staff present: General Manager Ana M. Ruiz, General Counsel Hilary Stevenson, Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan, Assistant General Manager Brian Malone, Chief Financial Officer/Director of Administrative Services Stefan Jaskulak, District Clerk Maria Soria, Planning Manager Jane Mark, Planner II Brittany Wheatman, Senior Capital Project Manager Scott Reeves, Senior Planner Gretchen Laustsen, Public Affairs Manager Kori Skinner, and Skyline Area Superintendent Chris Barresi

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion: Director Cyr moved, and Director Gleason seconded the motion to adopt the agenda.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

District Clerk Maria Soria reported there were no public speakers for this item.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

1. Approve the March 21, 2023 Planning and Natural Resources Committee Meeting Minutes.

Public comment opened at 2:04 p.m.

Ms. Soria reported there were no public speakers for this item.

Public comment closed at 2:04 p.m.

Motion: Director Gleason moved, and Director Cyr seconded the motion to approve the March 21, 2023 Planning and Natural Resources Committee meeting minutes.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

2. 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 (R-23-38)

Planner II Brittany Wheatman provided an overview of the Highway 35 Multi-Use Trail Crossing and Parking Feasibility Study (Project) history, exiting conditions, project location, elements and goals, timeline, and scope. Several technical studies were conducted for this project, including field scouting, boundary and topographic studies, biological, cultural and historic resources surveys, and a traffic study. Geotechnical studies will be conducted, and those recommendations will be forthcoming. Ms. Wheatman provided a summary of the findings, which showed no biological resources of concern, no known cultural resources, low likelihood of archaeological resources, and no historic structures present. The field scouting identified a preferred spur trail alignment.

Senior Capital Project Manager Scott Reeves continued with the presentation and reviewed the process and findings of the traffic study. Mr. Reeves stated that 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 that conforms to Caltrans highway design standards. The traffic study evaluated the level of service, traffic volume, vehicle speed, collision history and sight distances. Mr. Reeves reviewed TJKM's recommendations and stated that the work was done in coordination with Caltrans. The traffic study was submitted to Caltrans for their review and comment, no formal opinion will be issued by Caltrans until the District submits an encroachment permit application. Caltrans feedback received to date was incorporated into the final report. Mr. Reeves also provided four examples of on-grade crossings along Skyline Boulevard, reviewed the Transportation Demand Management Strategies (TDM) recommended in the Purisima Multimodal Access Study, and asked the Committee to reaffirm the recommendations as some may have design implications.

He also provided a high-level overview of the key takeaways of the site opportunities and constraints.

Director Gleason commented the proposal does not include a flashing light at the crossing and asked for confirmation.

Mr. Reeves stated that the baseline recommendations from the traffic engineer does not include flashing lights. The goal is to meet Caltrans requirements, and through the encroachment process, staff will know if flashing lights will be required by Caltrans.

Director Holman asked whether equestrian trailer egress (with the towing vehicle) requires a longer line of sight because of their length and whether this was something that had been taken into account.

Mr. Reeves believes the design manual takes into account all types of vehicles for ingress, egress, and sightline consideration.

Director Holman requested to confirm that that information is included in the design manual.

Director Holman inquired if there was interest for equestrian use during the public outreach.

Mr. Reeves stated that it was hard to gauge since it was not a prevalent topic during the outreach meetings. The general feedback received is that horses are important, but equestrian use was not the focus of the meetings. He also noted that historically, equestrian parking has been lower in this lot than others, though this could be because there is no designated equestrian parking.

Director Holman suggested attaining more information on whether there is a need for equestrian parking since the option is to either have 2 or 4 equestrian parking spaces.

Director Gleason inquired about the requirements for shuttles at the parking lot.

Planning Manager Jane Mark stated that the Purisima Creek Redwoods preserve shuttle program has not yet been designed. A shuttle program is being designed for Rancho San Antonino, and staff will use this shuttle program as a pilot program, take lessons learned, and identify best practices before working on the Purisima Creek Redwoods shuttle program.

Director Holman inquired if the study for the shuttle program at Rancho San Antonio specifies prioritizing shuttle parking during the weekday versus weekends.

Ms. Mark stated that a flexible space will be considered for the shuttle program at the Purisima Northridge parking area, but the program has not been designed. As for whether the shuttle will be used for specific times of the week or weekends, that has also not yet been programmed. In addition, Rancho San Antonio is set in a more urban environment, so the public clientele will be slightly different, affecting level of usage and from where and how often the public is picked up. The intent for the Rancho shuttle is to have it during peak periods.

Ms. Wheatman continued the presentation and reviewed the stakeholder engagement that was conducted with partner agencies, neighborhood organizations, and two stakeholder group meetings that included members of public from two general groups - neighbors and preserve

users (hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians). Ms. Wheatman also reviewed the summary of general feedback and comments from the engagement meetings. Overall, there has been general support for the project as long as traffic and safety concerns are addressed. Lastly, Ms. Wheatman reviewed the next steps of the project.

Ms. Wheatman asked the Committee for their feedback regarding parking capacity, whether both parking at the upper and lower parking expansion areas should be utilized, and what other amenities should be included in the Northridge Trail Head. She also inquired about the Committee's other considerations for evaluating the on-grade crossing through the next phase of project work as the conceptual design alternatives are developed.

Public comment opened at 2:56 p.m.

Mike Busche suggested the two-plus-two equestrian parking, two dedicated parking spots and two flexible parking spots which provide the ability for people to bring one or two trailers maximum. Mr. Busche also believes there is not a conflict of multiple groups using the area at the same time. He also recommends conducting a utilization survey that shows how many spots are presently being used for cars at the facility so that the Board can consider how many parking spots should be considered. Mr. Busche recommends having flashing lights at the crosswalk for two reasons, one to give the driver an opportunity to slow down and second, to give the pedestrian more confidence that they have been seen and can cross safely. Lastly, he recommends using the lower area for equestrian parking as gated area that requires reservations.

Public comment closed at 2:59 p.m.

Director Gleason suggested that shuttles would be a great addition for the parking area at Northridge and for the new alignment to the Bay Area Ridge trail to connect people who might want to hike along trails located on one or both sides of the highway. Director Gleason commented if this type of shuttle is not provided, the public may self-shuttle to those same segments and double the parking demand.

Director Gleason commented that the equestrian parking should be as flexible as possible to help manage the parking during peak times and be able to use the space for a different purpose on different days. Also, it would be great for different user groups to be flexible in order to accommodate more cars on peak days.

Director Holman agrees with the notion of flexible parking; however, she is unsure how staff would determine which days would be best used for the different users and suggested determining what is the demand. Another consideration would be reserved parking for peak periods to reduce impacts to neighbors.

Director Holman stated her preference for a signalized crossing to include pavement markings in addition to shoulder signage.

Director Holman stated that her preference is not to add any additional parking at the lower parking area, but if parking will be added, there must be some level of screening for privacy considerations for the resident who lives in this area.

Mr. Reeves stated that staff did meet with the current tenant, who expressed similar concerns about screening and felt that adequate screening could provide them with privacy from the public.

Director Holman inquired if there have been any concerns raised about parking in close proximity to employee housing, such as noise or littering.

Skyline Area Superintendent Chris Barresi stated he has not heard of any issues at this particular residence. The resident has reported that occasionally the public do come to the door for assistance with their cars or if the gate does not open properly. Mr. Barresi indicated that he has not heard of any issues that occur after the preserve is closed.

Chair Cyr suggested not building the parking at the lower lot right now, he also suggests having pre-arranged parking. Additionally, he commented that a blinking light at the crossing might not be appropriate because the area is more of a scenic corridor rather than an urban area and noted that his preference are markings on the pavement.

Director Gleason queried the Committee over their recommendations for cross markings, and whether they envisioned only using paint or reflectors.

Chair Cyr suggests having triangles marked on the pavement.

Director Holman suggested having a painted word on the pavement, such as pedestrian crossing from both directions.

General Manager Ana Ruiz stated that staff will take back the feedback of the Committee, and that the final design elements are contingent upon Caltrans approval. She reiterated that the Committee prefers to maintain the rural setting and not have urban signage while nevertheless alerting both pedestrians and motorists to the crossing.

Director Holman noted her preference for the parking is to have 3 cars and 1 shuttle on the shoulder because the shuttle can unload and leave quickly from this area.

Director Gleason commented that one of the Transportation Demand Management Strategies (TDM) is proposing to have a bike rack. However, Northridge is difficult to access by bike and believes that bicyclists may not park their bikes there to hike and noted that it may not be a good use of space.

Director Gleason commented that one the TDM Strategies suggested providing electric vehicle charging infrastructure, but it may not be a great addition because it would increase parking demand. In addition, he suggests using the lower space for parking and recognizes the issue with privacy to the resident and additional screening would be beneficial.

Director Holman asked her colleagues their thoughts if the lower parking is restricted to only cars and not equestrian trailers due to their maneuverability and radius.

Director Gleason stated he did not have enough details to accept the suggestion.

Mr. Reeves explained that it would be more economical to invest in equestrian parking in the upper lot than the lower lot. In addition, the upper lot is also set up for equestrian pull-through parking.

Director Holman inquired as to whether staff has considered a means to prevent empty parking stalls for electric vehicles parking.

Chair Cyr commented he does not believe that a charging station is necessary.

Director Holman inquired how many electrical charging stations are presumed and whether they will be available for only a set period of time to give opportunity to others to charge their vehicles.

Mr. Reeves stated that he will return to the Committee with additional information on the charging stations.

Director Holman suggested having parking reservations during peak hours and sought the Committee's opinion.

Chair Cyr agreed with the suggestion but shared his concern that it may add limitations to those who may not have access to devices or application to make a reservation.

Director Holman suggested there may be both open and reserved parking spaces to alleviate that issue.

Director Gleason requested information from other organizations that have implemented reserved parking. Furthermore, he suggested implementing reserved parking if other organizations found success with it.

Director Holman asked staff whether they needed any additional feedback from the Committee.

Mr. Reeves summarized the feedback attained from the Committee such as bringing back ideas of maximum capacity for parking given the current demand issues facing the lot.

Director Holman inquired about staff's definition of maximum, would maximum be all cars or cars with equestrian parking and with the option of flexible parking?

General Manager Ruiz asked Mr. Reeves if it was reasonable to consider a high and low range, such as 2 equestrian spaces at the low end and 4 at the high end to develop alternatives that can be brought back to the Committee.

Mr. Reeves confirmed the approach as suggested by the General Manager, and explained that by maximum, he meant the maximum footprint available in the area. In addition, staff can incorporate a reservable priority area in the alternatives as one option.

Chair Cyr suggested that parking in the upper section may also be done diagonally to accommodate more vehicles.

Director Gleason supported providing a flexible range of parking, such as 2 or 4 equestrian parking spaces. In addition, he is also interested in seeing cases where that can flex to zero in certain days.

Director Gleason thanked the staff on their ability to deal with the all the complexities of this project.

Chair Cyr congratulated staff on a very thorough job.

Director Holman agreed that this is a complex project and appreciates staff providing options and asking the Committee's feedback, and staff also did a great job with the report and presentation.

ADJOURNMENT

Director Holman adjourned the meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee at 3:40 p.m.

Maria Soria, MMC
District Clerk