

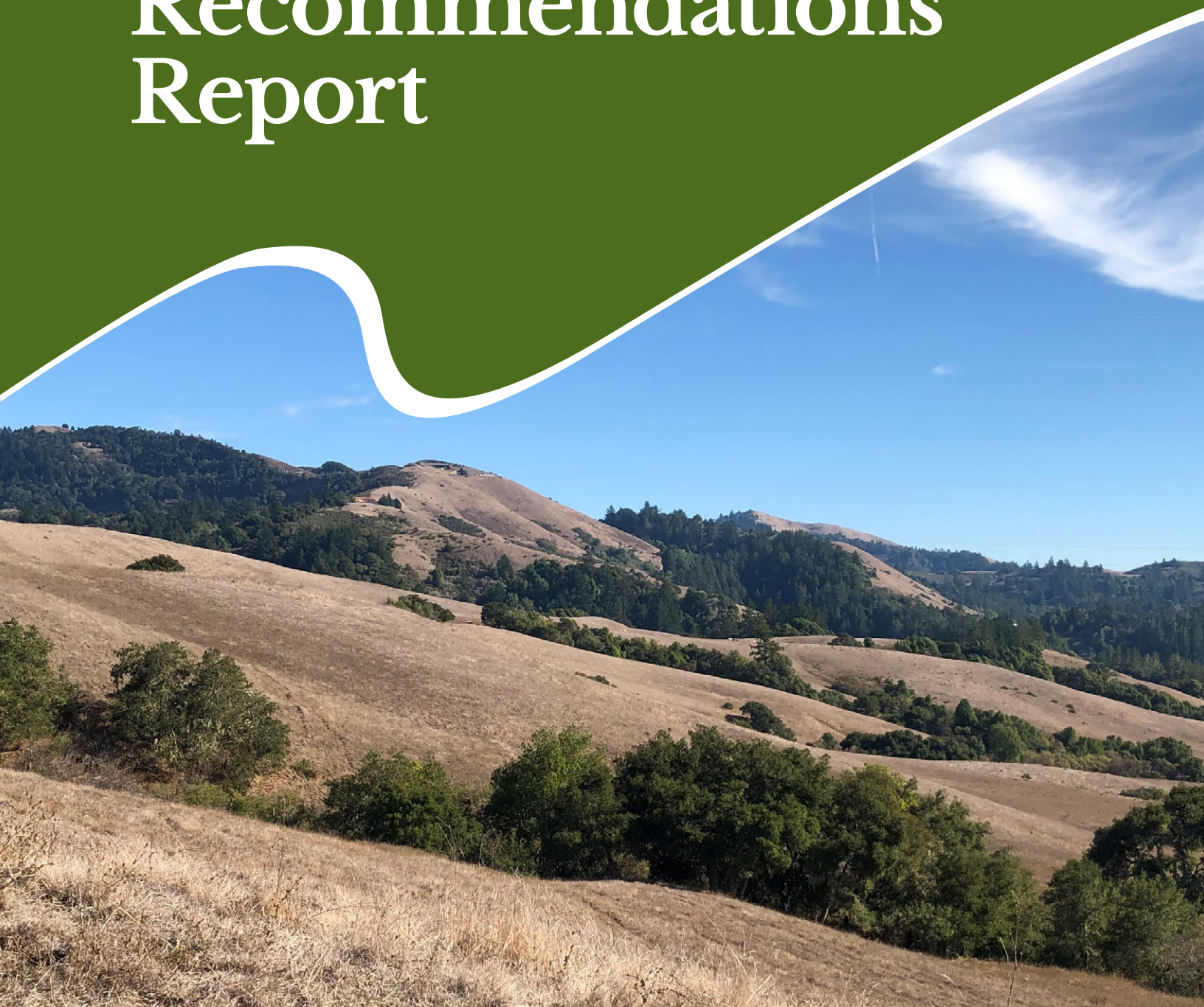


JULY 2020

La Honda Creek Preserve Parking
and Trailhead Access Feasibility Study

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

Recommendations Report





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District Mission

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

District Coastside Mission

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



01



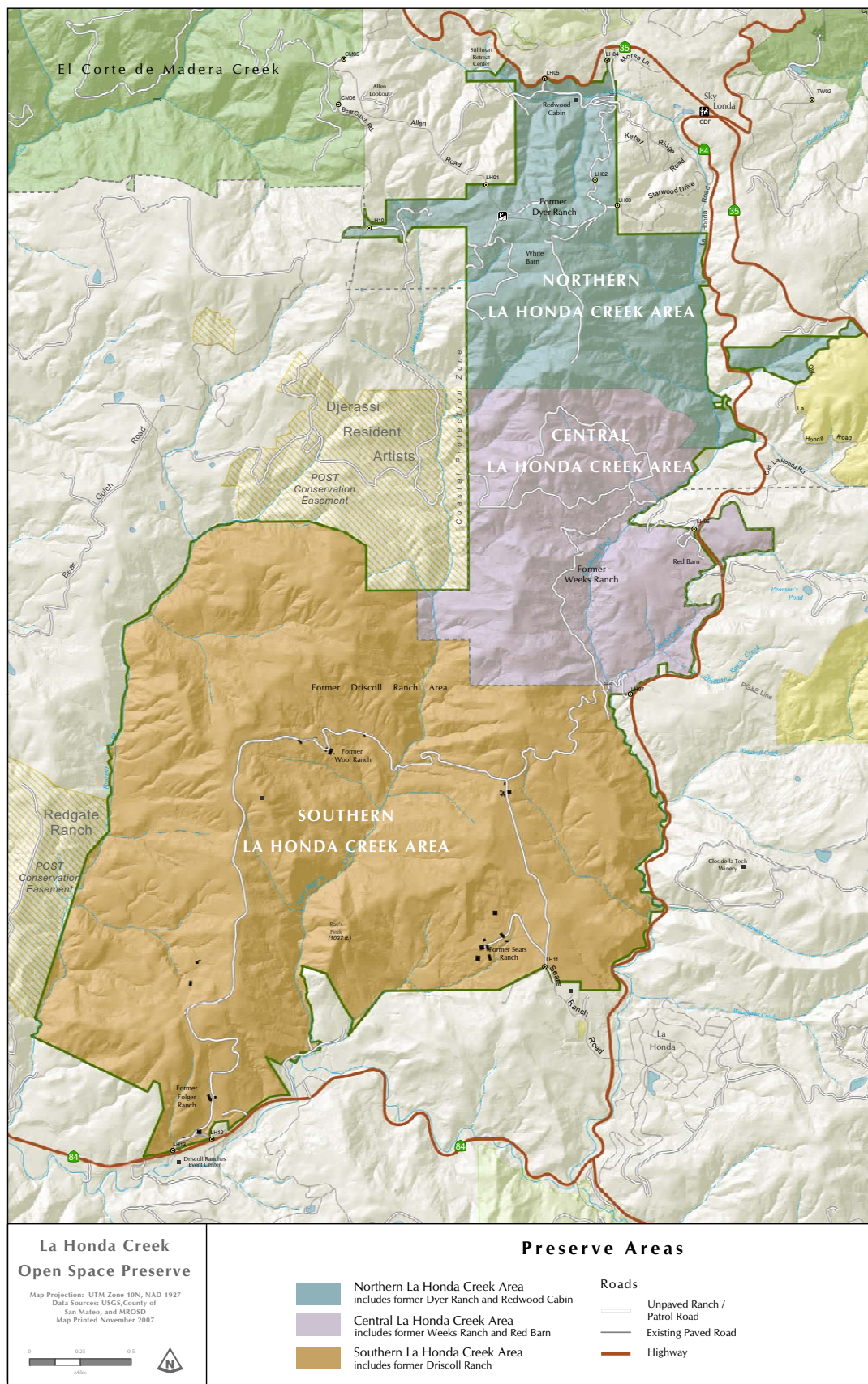
In August 2012, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Board adopted the La Honda Creek Master Plan, which provided stewardship and public access prescriptions for the entire Preserve over a thirty-year period. Opening the central or middle area of the Preserve (the Red Barn area) to the public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

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

of the Red Barn and its surroundings.

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

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



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

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

La Honda Creek Master Plan Vision Statement

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

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



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



02

Process



PURPOSE AND CHARGE

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

“

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

”

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

PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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

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



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

MEMBERSHIP

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

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

The PAWG is composed of thirteen members as described below.

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

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

PAWG MEETING PROCESS

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

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

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

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

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

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



PAWG members debrief after one of the two site tours.

Meeting 1: August 22, 2019

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

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

Meeting 2: September 12, 2019

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

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

Meeting 3: October 19, 2019

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

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

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

Meeting 4: November 16, 2019

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

Meeting 5: December 12, 2019

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

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



PAWG members listen intently to a staff presentation.

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

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

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

Meeting 6: February 6, 2020

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

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

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

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

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

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

Meeting 7: March 5, 2020

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

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

DECISION MAKING PROCESS

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

Gradients of Agreement

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

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



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



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



03



Assessment of Sites and Other Access Options

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

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

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

Event Center area—south end of Preserve

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

Sears Ranch Road parking lot area

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

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

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

Preserve Gate LH07—south of Red Barn area

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

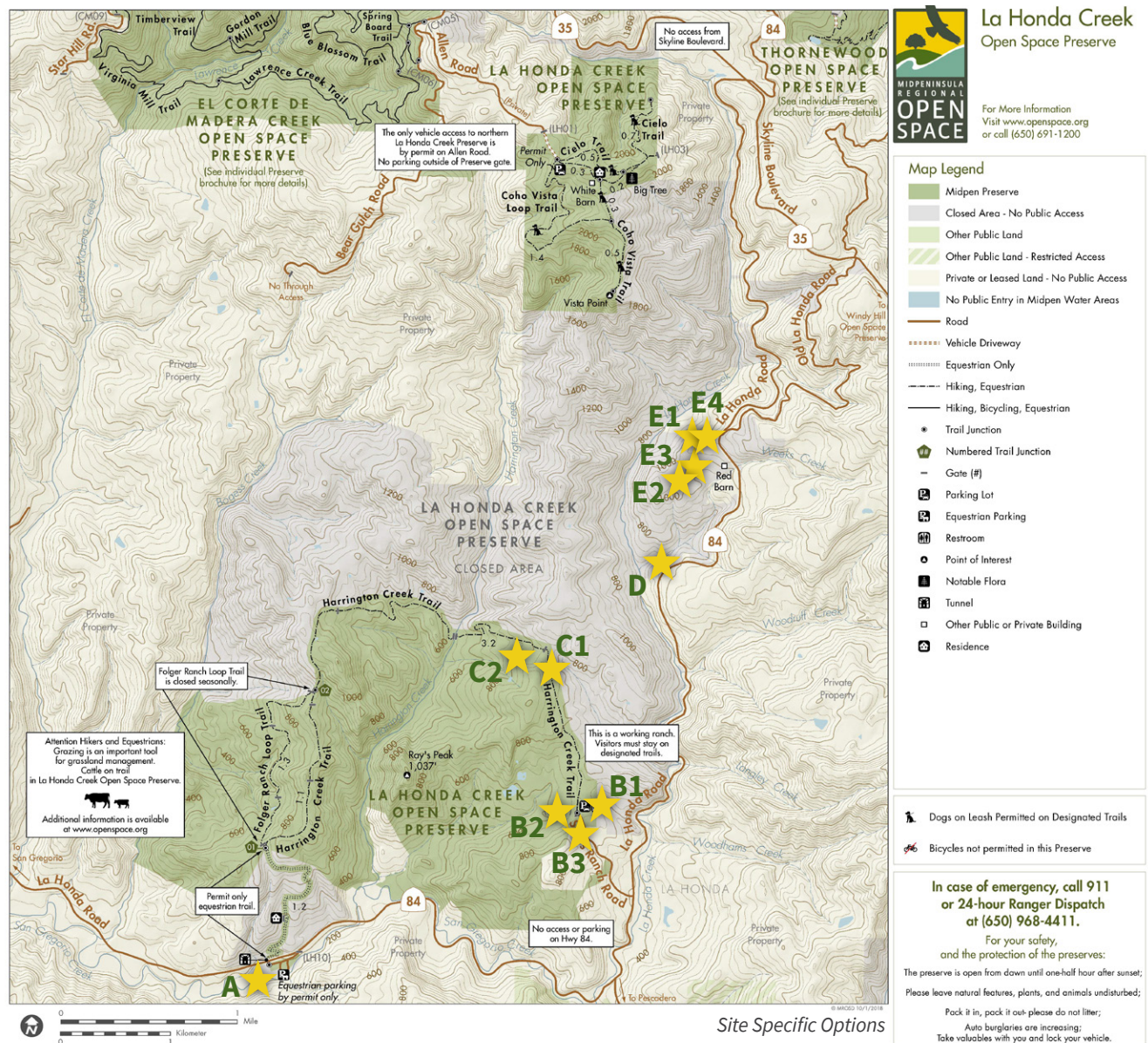
Red Barn area

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

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

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

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



Site A Event Center



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

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

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

closed portion of the Preserve.

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

ASSESSMENT OF SITES

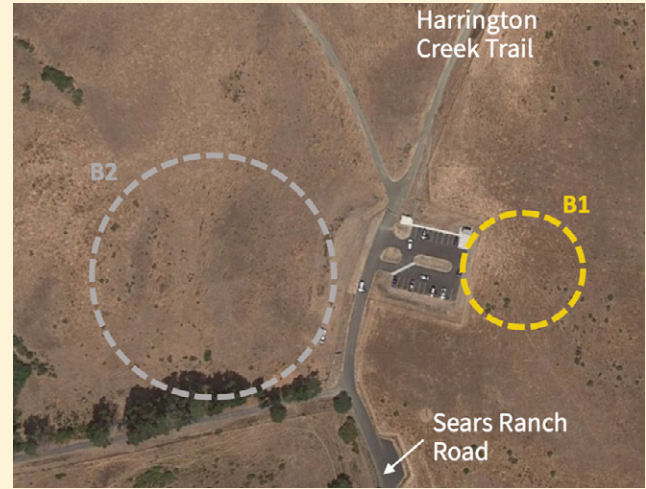
Summary Table of PAWG comments presented on December 12, 2019 (see Appendices for individual assessment forms)

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

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

Site B1

Sears Ranch Road Area Expansion of Existing Lot



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

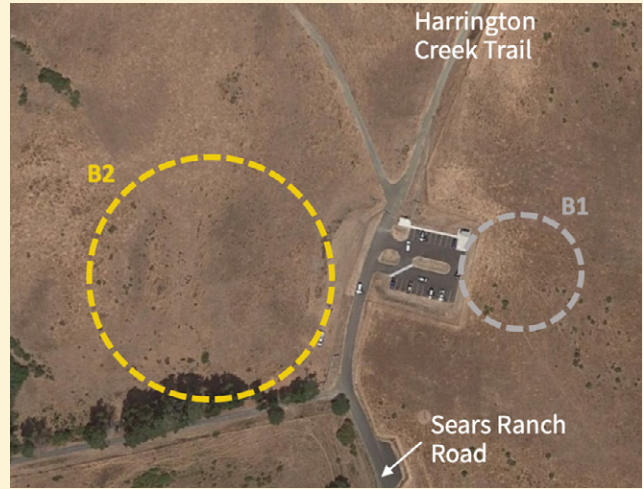
ASSESSMENT OF SITES

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

Site B2

Sears Ranch Road Area

Site West of Existing Parking Lot



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

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



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

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

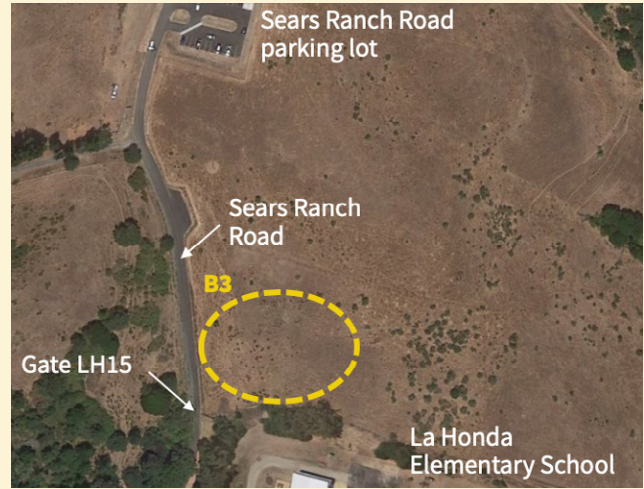
Project Specific Site Assessment Criterion	Supports	Concerns
Establish new public access in the central portion of La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Could provide access for equestrian parking and users (iii)* » Seems like a natural place to expand access toward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

ASSESSMENT OF SITES

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

Site B3

Sears Ranch Road Area Gate LH15



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

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

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

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

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

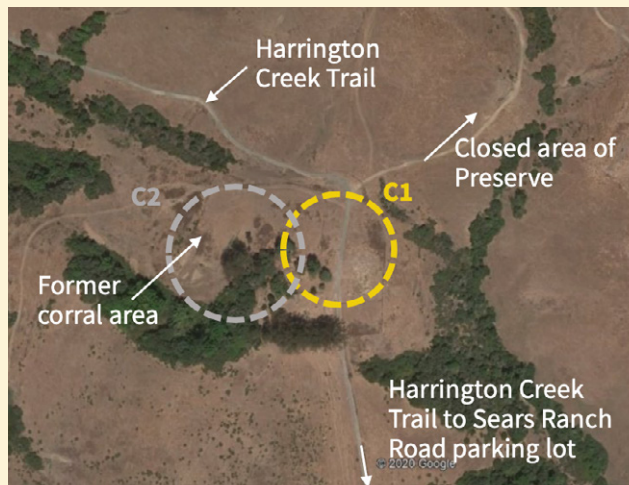
ASSESSMENT OF SITES

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

Site C1

Sears Ranch Road Area

Former Residence Area



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

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

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

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

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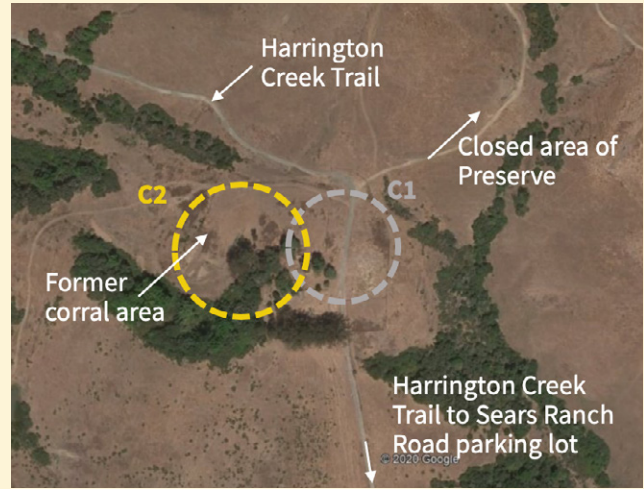
Project Specific Site Assessment Criterion	Supports	Concerns
Establish new public access in the central portion of La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Could accommodate equestrian access (ii)* » Biking, and dog access could be added » Would support increased use in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

ASSESSMENT OF SITES

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

Site C2

Sears Ranch Road Area Former Cattle Corral at Former Residence



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

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

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

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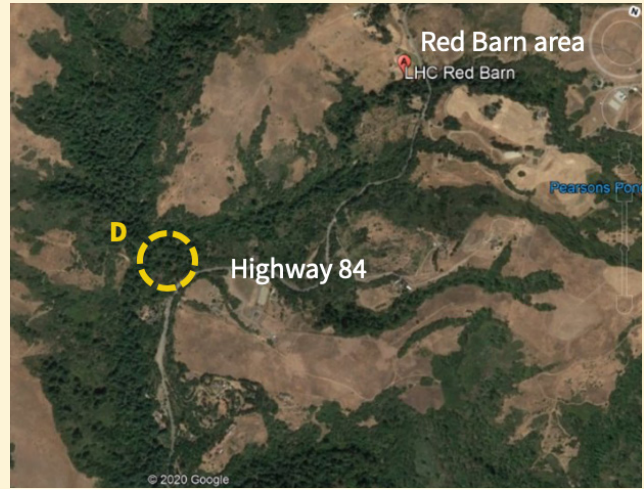
**Note: The parentheses after some comments indicates the number of similar mentions: (ii) = 2 mentions*

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

ASSESSMENT OF SITES

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

Site D Preserve Gate LH07



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

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

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

ASSESSMENT OF SITES

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

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

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

Site E1

Red Barn Area Site Behind Ranger Residence



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

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



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

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

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

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

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

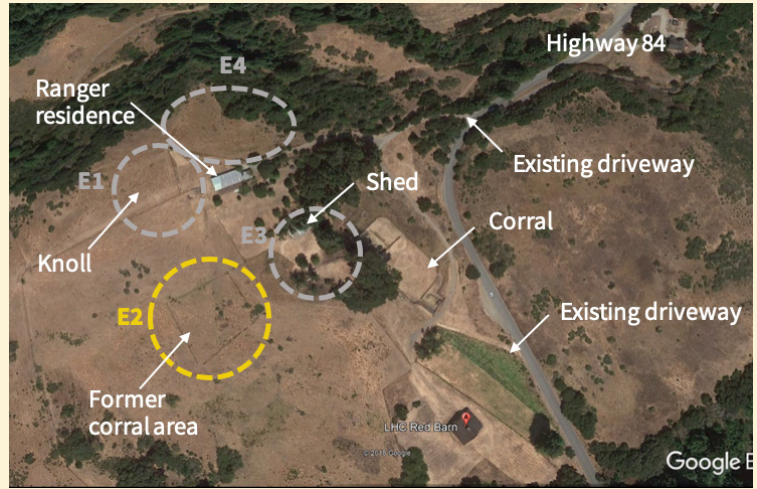
ASSESSMENT OF SITES

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

Site E2

Red Barn Area

Corral Area Below and West of Red Barn



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

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

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

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

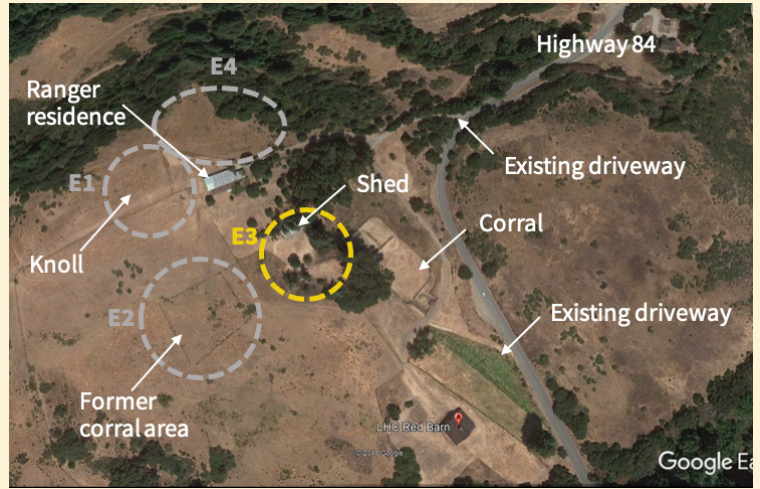
ASSESSMENT OF SITES

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

Site E3

Red Barn Area

Area Near Shed Below Ranger Residence



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

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

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

ASSESSMENT OF SITES

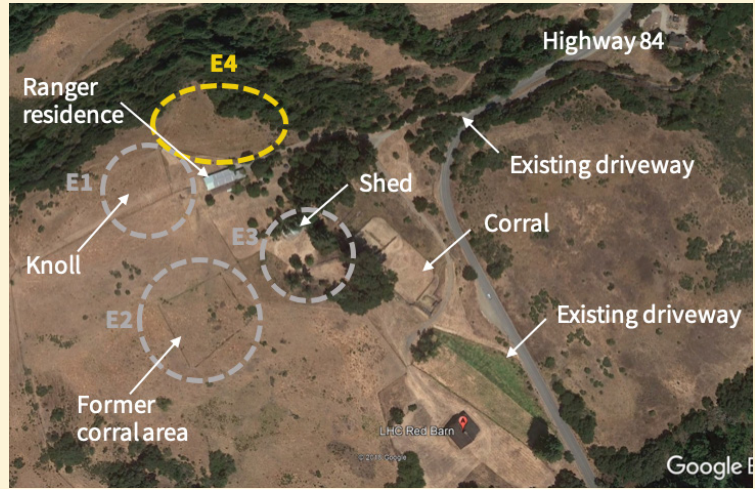
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**Note: The parentheses after some comments indicates the number of similar mentions: (ii) = 2 mentions*

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

Site E4

Red Barn Area North of Ranger Residence



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

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

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

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

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

ASSESSMENT OF SITES

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

LIMITED ACCESS AND DISTRIBUTION OF USE OPTIONS

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

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

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



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



04



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

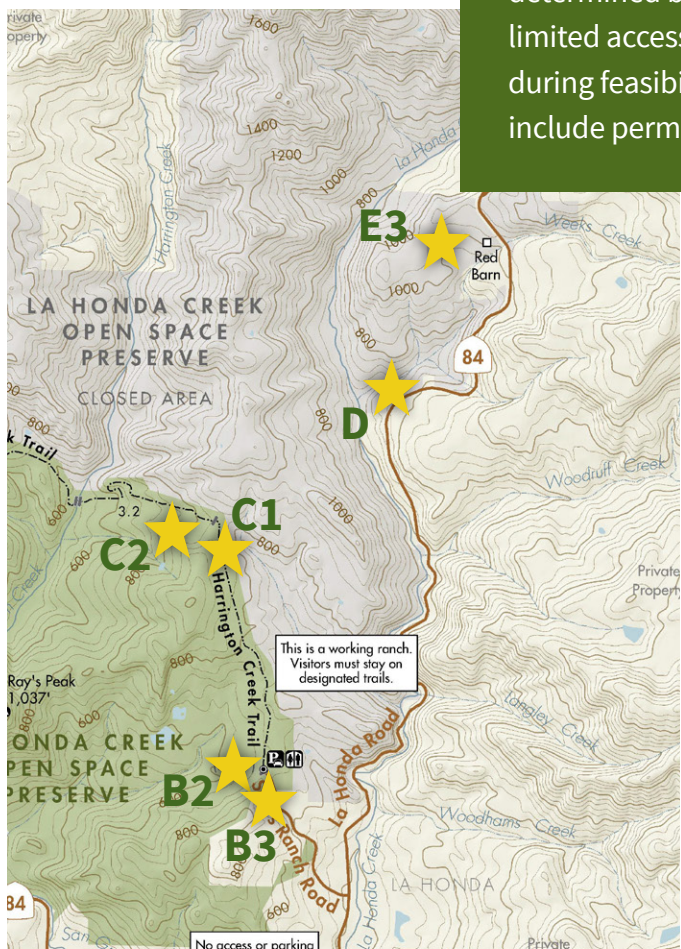
Suitable location for picnic, family-friendly, equestrian-serving and interpretive amenities only (type, location, and quantity to be determined during feasibility study phase)

Site D – Preserve Gate LH07

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

Site E3 – Red Barn Area

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



OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE PNR COMMITTEE

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

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

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

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

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

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



Photo Credit: Randy Weber

05



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

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

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



Appendices

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

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INVENTORY OF MEETING DOCUMENTS

Appendix



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MEETING AGENDAS AND SUMMARIES

Appendix B

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PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED THROUGH MARCH 5, 2020

Appendix C

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PAWG COMMUNICATION THROUGH MARCH 5, 2020

Appendix D

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KEY DECISIONMAKING INFORMATION

Appendix

E

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SITE ASSESSMENT SUMMARIES AND FORMS

Appendix

F

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GENERAL INFORMATION DOCUMENTS

Appendix

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