



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

R-18-25
March 20, 2018

AGENDA ITEM 3

AGENDA ITEM

Red Barn Public Access Area Site Plan

ACTING GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION *eur*

Recommend Board approval of the Red Barn Public Access Area Site Plan Alternative 3, as described in the staff report.

SUMMARY

In 2016, the Planning and Natural Resources Committee (Committee) received an overview on the Red Barn Public Access Area Site Plan project (Project) and schedule (R-16-48). This project implements one of the elements in the 2012 Board-approved La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan (R-12-83). On May 9, 2017, the Committee received a presentation of two conceptual design alternatives for the project, referred to as Alternatives 1 & 2 (R-17-56). Since May, additional follow-up studies and public outreach revealed new site constraints and opportunities that warrant modifications to the design. Key findings indicate that the site can accommodate most of the desired program elements, however, inclusion of equestrian trailer parking, while desired, is problematic due to safety concerns and space requirements. Rather than including equestrian parking at the Red Barn site, the Acting General Manager recommends formalizing the equestrian parking at the Event Center, which is located approximately 6.5 miles southwest of the Red Barn site along Highway 84. This site offers adequate traffic line-of-sight for the driveway turnoff, trailer parking space, turning radii, and a safe, direct connection to the Preserve. Sufficient funding remains in the budget to proceed with the project this fiscal year. Expenses are eligible for Measure AA reimbursement.

DISCUSSION

The Red Barn Public Access Area Site Plan Project (Project) facilitates opening the central portion of the Preserve to the public. The site elements identified in the Board-approved Master Plan include the following, with all elements designed to reflect the rural character of the adjacent Red Barn:

- New driveway from Highway 84 (a San Mateo County-designated scenic corridor)
- Parking for passenger vehicles and equestrian trailers
- Picnic area(s)
- Accessible pathways
- A double vault restroom
- Interpretive signage

- Fencing
- Gates
- Trailhead

Site Planning Analysis

Staff presented the initial conceptual design alternatives (Alternatives 1 and 2) to the Committee on May 9, 2017 (R-17-56). Input received at the Committee meeting along with new findings from a follow-up analysis of the opportunities and constraints have further informed and refined the recommended design alternative. At the March 20, 2018 Committee meeting, staff will present a new recommended alternative (Alternative 3) and a phased option for future expanded passenger vehicle parking to address Committee and public feedback. Site analysis to date has evaluated topography, existing tree species and health, biological resources, jurisdictional waters and wetlands, historic significance of the Red Barn, traffic study findings, and Phase I & II environmental site assessments given past uses of the site.

Committee and Public Feedback

At the May 9, 2017 Committee meeting in Los Altos, the project landscape architecture firm, Moore, Iacofano, Goltsman (MIG), Inc., presented two conceptual design alternatives for input. MIG also presented the conceptual design alternatives at a local community workshop in La Honda on May 16, 2017, which was attended by approximately 21 members of the public, and members of the Board. The District received additional public input via an internet-based survey. Attachment 2 provides a summary of the public input received at each meeting and via the survey.

During Committee and public review of the project, the following three main themes emerged as major considerations moving forward:

1. Protection of scenic qualities, especially views of the Red Barn itself.
2. Adequate parking capacity to both accommodate the anticipated high volume of visitor use, and avoid potential overflow parking and traffic impacts on Highway 84.
3. Minimizing potential traffic conflicts along Highway 84 due to visitor ingress and egress to the new parking lot (i.e. slow approach and wide turns for equestrian trailers).

Alternative Plans

To address the three main public concerns of potential visual, parking, and traffic impacts, the District conducted additional studies and analyses for the project. As part of this work, the District explored the possibility of purchasing a nearby property as an alternate location to provide parking for planned public access improvements. However, the landowner declined the District's invitation to discuss a purchase opportunity, removing this option from further consideration.

Conceptual Alternatives 1 and 2, as previously presented, include three equestrian trailer parking spaces within a gravel lot with a paved driveway. Public feedback indicates that this number of equestrian spaces may not be adequate, in part because equestrians often ride in pairs (requiring an even number of spaces), and trailering horses a relatively long distance only to find no parking is undesirable. Moreover, the conceptual cost estimate to include equestrian trailer

spaces is considerably higher because a separate access road/loop is needed to accommodate both an adequate turning radii for a horse trailer and separation from passenger vehicles for safety and circulation.

Following public feedback, staff and MIG re-evaluated the program and space configuration for the Red Barn site, and because of site constraints, explored other alternate equestrian parking sites for the Preserve. Through this work, the project team developed Alternative 3 with an optional second phase to expand further vehicle parking (Alternative 3 – Phase 2). Below is a list of the notable differences between the new Alternative 3 and Alternatives 1 and 2:

Alternative 3

- Relocates equestrian parking to another area of the Preserve.
- Equestrian access to the Red Barn area is via trail.
- Relocates the cattle corral to an area behind the Red Barn to minimize obstruction of views of the barn from both the highway and new parking area (includes grading to drain surface flow away from the creek and into a settling and filtration system to protect downstream water quality; staff would consult with Questa La Honda Guild to ensure site and design protects water quality)
- Increases passenger vehicle parking capacity to 50 spaces
- Adds ten spaces of motorcycle parking

Alternative 3 – Phase 2

- Further increases passenger vehicle parking capacity by an additional 25 spaces for a total of 75 spaces

Table 1 below compares each design alternative based on key project considerations.

Table 1. Conceptual Design Alternatives Comparison

Conceptual Design Alternative	Driveway visible from Hwy 84	Proposed use of foreground area by barn	Number of equestrian trailer spaces	Potential traffic impact from equestrian trailers	Number of passenger vehicle spaces
Alt 1	Yes	Equestrian trailer parking	3*	Yes	25
Alt 2	Yes	Equestrian trailer parking	3*	Yes	30
Alt 3	Yes	Picnic and informal visitor use	0**	No	50
Alt 3 with Phase 2	Yes	Picnic and informal visitor use	0**	No	75

*Currently the Event Center location accommodates (*by permit only*) approximately five (5) trucks and trailers depending on the configuration and length of the trailer.

**In future site planning, which would take into account other potential uses of the Event Center property, the maximum number of truck and trailers would be analyzed with the goal of providing at least five (5+) or more equestrian spaces and include necessary approvals to remove permit system.

Recommended Site Plan - Alternative 3

Based on a review of all the options, the Acting General Manager recommends Alternative 3 to balance the Master Plan goals and considerations for resource protection and public access. Relocating equestrian parking to another location at the Preserve minimizes the aesthetic impacts to the Red Barn and provides the opportunity to locate other low-impact visitor-serving amenities, such as picnicking and interpretive signage, closer to the barn. This design retains the prominence of the Red Barn as a cultural and landscape feature and provides a “visitor space” adjacent to the agricultural structure, adding to the visitor experience that highlights the ranching history of the site.

Along with relocating the cattle corral behind the barn, Alternative 3 protects the scenic view to the maximum extent while also increasing total vehicle and motorcycle parking capacity, which will likely be needed based on recent experiences related to parking demands at other newly opened preserve locations. Staff consulted with the grazing tenant on the proposed relocation of the cattle corral behind the barn and confirmed that the new location would not impact the tenant’s cattle operations, with specific accommodations.

The northernmost corner of the Red Barn site accommodates expanded parking, which due to topography and slope, is largely hidden from the highway. This area is not recommended for equestrian parking because the large turning radii required for equestrian trailers cannot be accommodated in this location without incredible expense. Also, doing so would blend equestrian trailers and passenger vehicles, two uses that are best separated to maximize safety and minimize human disturbance to horses and vice versa (i.e. startling, approaching unsafely).

The Event Center located along Highway 84 and immediately adjacent to the Preserve currently provides permitted equestrian parking of approximately +/- four or five trucks with maximum 20-foot trailers (depending on parking efficiency) at one time. Equestrian trailer parking by permit would remain in the interim while staff evaluates an expansion of trailer parking at this site, other access improvements to better accommodate horse trailers, and any County use permits to formalize this space for general equestrian trailer parking and remove the parking-by-permit system.

New Information and Project Schedule Update

Summer 2017 surveys have confirmed that the Red Barn continues to serve as the only documented maternity roost along the peninsula for the pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), a species of special concern. This species’ maternity season of approximately March 1- September 15 requires special protections during the normal construction season. Moreover, the standard San Mateo County grading moratorium of October 1-April 15 further constrains the potential construction window, as only two weeks of the year fall outside of these two seasonal constraints. Project elements adjacent to the barn that fall within a bat protective buffer area include the new access driveway, retaining wall, road, fencing, gate, and cattle corral. The District will pursue an exemption for the County’s grading moratorium, but it is unknown whether the County will grant one. Research is ongoing to identify effective avoidance measures such as temporary sound barriers and biological monitoring of the roost. The protection of this unique resource will likely add cost to the project. In light of this new information, staff projects the opening of the Red Barn site to public access in 2022 to account for a longer permitting period and the potential need to spread construction activities over two seasons. The targeted

2022 opening date remains consistent with the Board-approved Master Plan Phase II implementation timeline.

FISCAL IMPACT

The FY2017-18 Board-approved Amended Budget for the Red Barn Public Access Site Plan Project (MAA05-005) is \$120,000. This amount is sufficient for the site investigations, technical reports, and conceptual design development. Funds for subsequent project phases, including design development, environmental review, permitting, and construction documentation are included as part of the three-year Capital Improvement Program.

The recommended action has no direct fiscal impact, but future implementation activities will have fiscal impacts. Project implementation costs are eligible for Measure AA reimbursement. The preliminary conceptual-level cost estimate for project construction ranges between \$4 and \$5 million. The remaining portfolio fund balance contains over \$9 million in available funds. The project budget is shown here for context only.

Project #MAA05-005	Prior Year Actuals	FY17-18	FY18-19	FY19-20	FY20-21	Estimated Future Years	Total
Amended Budget		\$120,000					
Spent-to-Date (as of 3/08/2018):	\$216,955	\$39,630					
Encumbrances:		\$30,370					
Budget Remaining		\$50,000	\$374,795	\$363,600	\$230,000	\$5,000,000	\$6,018,395

The following table outlines the Measure AA Portfolio #05 allocation, expenses to date, and remaining portfolio fund balance.

MAA 05 Portfolio Allocation:	\$11,733,000
Life-to-Date Spent (<i>as of 3/08/2018</i>):	\$2,161,925
Total Encumbrances:	\$120,671
Balance Remaining:	\$9,450,404

BOARD COMMITTEE REVIEW

The La Honda Creek Master Plan Ad Hoc Committee met on ten (10) occasions between 2004 and 2009 to guide the planning process and development of final trail use recommendations. The Board approved the Master Plan and adopted the Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration, which includes the proposed Red Barn public access area as part of Phase I & II implementation, at the August 22, 2012 meeting (R-12-83). On April 20, 2016, the Planning and Natural Resources Committee received a brief update on the project status and design schedule (R-16-48). On May 9, 2017, the PNR Committee received a presentation of the two conceptual design alternatives (R-17-56).

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act. Additional notice was provided to the grazing tenant, neighbors living adjacent to the Preserve, and parties interested in Coastal projects, the La Honda Creek Preserve, the Red Barn, and Master Plan.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

This item is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). As stated in the 2012 Master Plan and IS/MND, additional environmental review will be conducted for this project as needed. Additional environmental review would begin once the Board approves the complete CEQA project description in the Summer of 2018.

NEXT STEPS

Milestones	Tentative Schedule
Present preferred alternative to the Board and the CEQA Project Description to initiate CEQA review	Summer 2018
Board adoption of CEQA document and project approval	Summer/Fall 2019
Construction documentation	2019 to 2021
Permitting	2019 to 2021
Construction bidding process	2021
Construction (narrow work window to avoid bat disturbance)	Fall 2021 to Fall 2022
Open to the public	Fall 2022

Attachments:

1. Site location map
2. Public input summary
3. Conceptual Design Alternatives

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Path: P:\Preserve Projects\La Honda Creek\Current Projects\Red Barn Staging Area\graphics\Maps\UHCRedBarn_SiteMap_Letter_Portrait_20171003.mxd

Created By: lchan

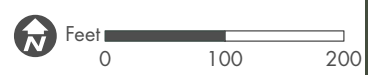
Attachment 1



Red Barn Public Access Area Site Map

-  MROSD Preserve
-  Private Property
-  Project Site
-  Gate

Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District
(MROSD)
October 2017



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



La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Red Barn Public Access Area Conceptual Design Alternatives Public Feedback Summary

5/1/17 Stakeholder meeting: 9 attendees representing neighbors and equestrians

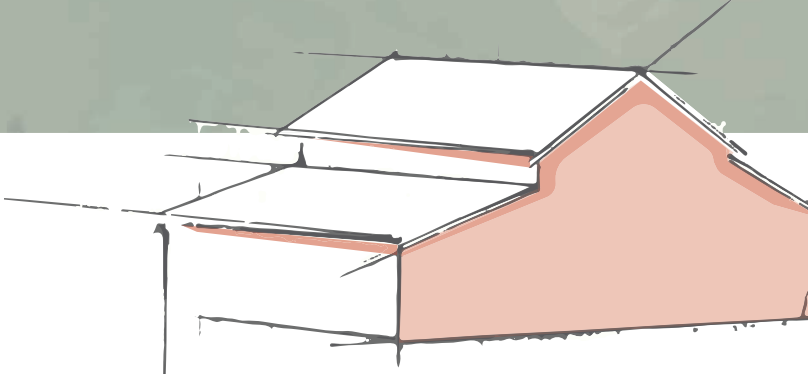
5/9/17 PNR Committee meeting: 2 attendees from the public, La Honda residents

5/16/17 Community Meeting: 21 attendees

5/16/17- 5/22/17 Online survey: 36 submissions

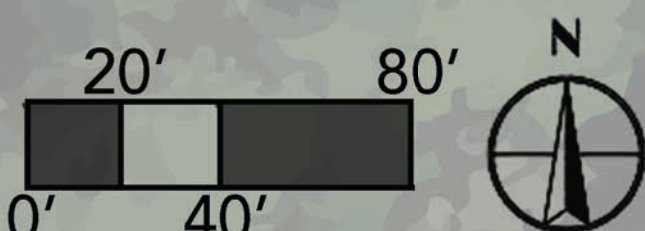
Feedback/Concern	Site Constraint	Design
View of Red Barn from Highway 84 will be changed by the new driveway/site improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red Barn site is the only location where access to central portion of the preserve can be provided Limited area available with adequate line of sight County-designated scenic corridor Sloping topography requires retaining wall for driveway. Line of sight requires driveway to be located as proposed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screen retaining wall and driveway/access road to minimize impact to viewshed Relocate low-impact visitor uses (i.e. picnicking and interpretation) to foreground of the barn Relocate cattle corral behind the barn Visual simulations developed for the driveway
New driveway- potential conflict with highway traffic patterns- illegal speeding and passing. Ingress/egress by equestrian trailers are of particular concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited area available with adequate line of sight Area of Highway 84 with adequate line of sight is due to this being a straight section between curves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic studies conducted in 2007, 2016, and 2017 confirm driveway location meets Caltrans standards for line of sight District will incorporate highway guardrail, pending Caltrans approval Relocate equestrian trailer parking to a different LHC site
Parking capacity (25-30 spaces) not adequate to accommodate expected volume due to popularity Potential for unauthorized overflow parking along Highway 84	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balance of public access site improvements with viewshed protection, grazing infrastructure, biological resources, and sloping topography 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase capacity to 50 standard spaces Add dedicated motorcycle parking Remove equestrian trailer parking Explore "No Parking" zones along Highway 84 Increased enforcement

ALTERNATIVE 1

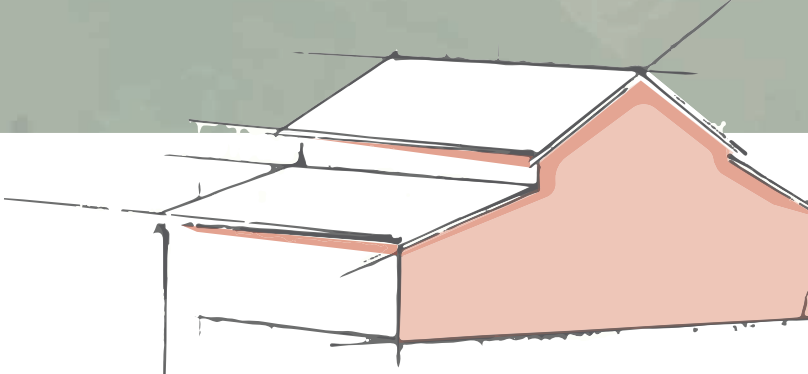


RED BARN PUBLIC ACCESS AREA:
LA HONDA CREEK OPEN SPACE PRESERVE

3 DEC. 2017



ALTERNATIVE 2



RED BARN PUBLIC ACCESS AREA:
LA HONDA CREEK OPEN SPACE PRESERVE

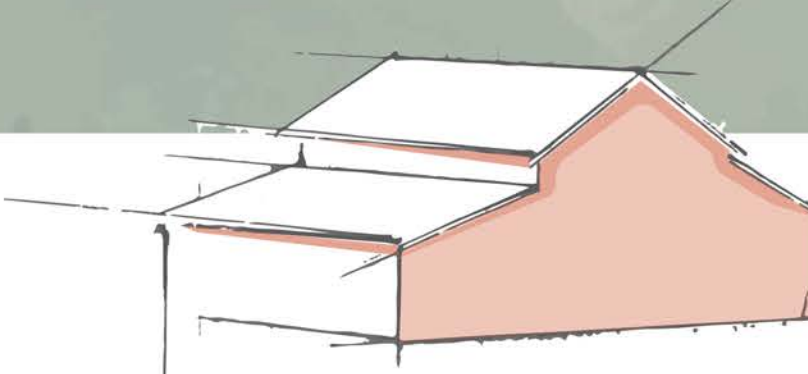
ALTERNATIVE 3 - PHASE 1

OVERVIEW

- 45 STANDARD SPACES
- 4 ACCESSIBLE SPACES
- 1 ACCESSIBLE VAN SPACE

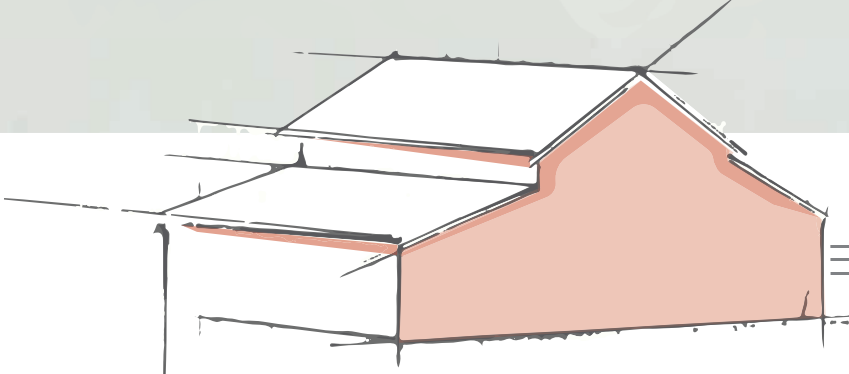
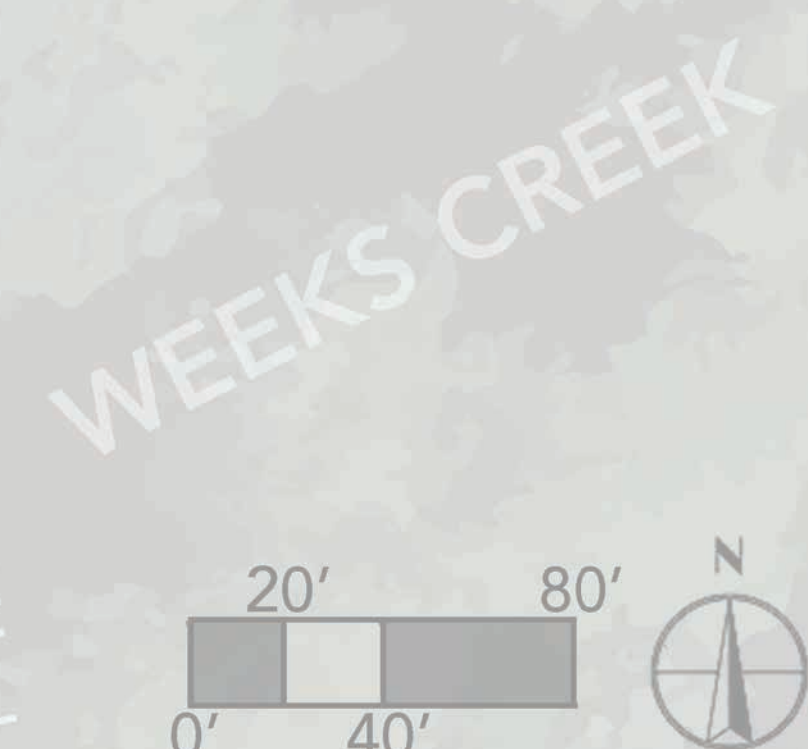
- 50 TOTAL PASSENGER VEHICLE PARKING SPACES

- 10 MOTORCYCLE PARKING SPACES
- 2 BUS PULL-OUT / PARKING SPACES



RED BARN PUBLIC ACCESS AREA:
LA HONDA CREEK OPEN SPACE PRESERVE

ALTERNATIVE 3 - PHASE 2 MODIFICATIONS



ALTERNATIVE 3 - PHASE 2

OVERVIEW

- 70 STANDARD SPACES
- 4 ACCESSIBLE SPACES
- 1 ACCESSIBLE VAN SPACE

- 75 TOTAL PASSENGER VEHICLE PARKING SPACES

- 10 MOTORCYCLE PARKING SPACES
- 2 BUS PULL-OUT / PARKING SPACES



WEEKS CREEK

