



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

**La Honda Creek Parking Feasibility Study
Public Access Working Group Meeting**

**La Honda Elementary School
450 Sears Ranch Rd
La Honda, CA 94020**

**November 16, 2019
9:00 AM – 4:00 PM**

MEETING SUMMARY

ROLL CALL

Chair Barbara Hooper called the meeting of the La Honda Public Access Working Group (PAWG or WG) to order at 9:00 a.m.

PAWG Members Present (✓) or Absent (*):

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| Board Directors (Non-Voting Members) | * Curt Riffle, Ward 4 ✓ Larry Hassett, Ward 6 |
| Working Group Members | ✓ Lou Bordi, Ward 6 Representative ✓ Ari Delay, La Honda Community Representative ✓ Art Heinrich, Ward 2 Representative ✓ Barbara Hooper, Ward 6 Representative ✓ Karl Lusebrink, La Honda Community Representative ✓ Kathleen Moazed, La Honda Community Representative ✓ Melany Moore, Ward 1 Representative ✓ Denise Phillips, Ward 7 Representative ✓ Andie Reed, Ward 5 Representative ✓ Sandy Sommer, Ward 4 Representative ✓ Willie Wool, Ward 3 Representative |

District Staff Present:

- ✓ Ana Ruiz, General Manager
- ✓ Susanna Chan, Assistant General Manager
- ✓ Jane Mark, Planning Manager
- ✓ Tina Hugg, Senior Planner
- ✓ Melissa Borgesi, Planner
- ✓ Luke Mulhall, Planning Administrative Assistant
- ✓ Korrine Spinner, Public Affairs Manager
- ✓ Michael Jurich, Land & Facilities Manager
- ✓ Meredith Manning, Senior Planner
- ✓ Xucan Zhou, Planner II
- ✓ Chris Barresi, Area Superintendent

MIG Consultants: Lou Hexter

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were made.

WORKING GROUP BUSINESS

Chair Hooper asked for a motion to approve the October 16, 2019, meeting summary. The PAWG requested changes to the meeting summary and asked staff to bring a revised version of the summary to the next meeting. Ms. Sommer made the motion, and Denise Phillips seconded. The WG unanimously approved the motion.

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| Requesting a red-lined version of the October 16, 2019, meeting summary for PAWG approval at the December 12, 2019, meeting. | Ayes (11) - Lou Bordi, Ari Delay, Art Heinrich, Barbara Hooper, Karl Lusebrink, Kathleen Moazed, Melany Moore, Andie Reed, Sandy Sommer, Denise Phillips, Willie Wool Noes (0) Abstentions (0) Absent (1) - Curt Riffle Non-Voting (1) - Larry Hassett |
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Planner I Melissa Borgesi explained the PAWG would be visiting three potential public access sites (Attachment 2) that were requested by PAWG members and instructed the group to record their observations according to the project objectives and criteria on a provided worksheet.

Senior Planner Tina Hugg described the agenda for the tour, which included a stop at Preserve Gate LH07 south of the Red Barn area, stops at and near the Sears Ranch parking lot area, and a hike from the former residence area a mile north of the existing parking lot that the PAWG visited on October 19, 2019. Staff reminded PAWG members to reserve conversations about the project to times when the entire group is together with members of the public, in order to provide members of the public the opportunity to hear the PAWG’s discussions.

At Preserve Gate LH07 along Highway 84, about a mile south of the Red Barn, the PAWG walked around the area, and staff described its proximity to the central portion of the preserve and La Honda Creek to the west and the potential for future trail connections to the preserve trail system. The group also noted the highway conditions and considered the sight lines and width of the Caltrans right-of-way in this area. While at this location, the PAWG observed bicyclists, motorcycles and vehicles using Highway 84. The group walked further south toward a section of Highway 84 with a wider Caltrans right-of-way shoulder adjacent to a private property currently for sale.

The PAWG viewed two options in the Sears Ranch Road area: at the existing parking lot and near the former residence area one mile north of the lot (for map, see Attachment 2). Using the existing parking lot as an example, District staff discussed typical site improvements associated with new District parking lots including the use of pavement instead of gravel, ADA-accessible vault toilet restrooms, accessible parking spaces and path of travel to the restroom, trailhead infrastructure, signage and, where there are grazing operations, fencing that separates pasture areas from the parking lot. Staff discussed the

requirement to separate cattle from parking areas to avoid conflicts with vehicles and protect the cattle, and the need for more fencing around the entry drive and new parking area if one were constructed further into the preserve. The group looked at a potential site west of the road and existing parking lot. The PAWG walked around this site, observing the flat area where additional parking, including potentially equestrian parking spaces, could be accommodated.

Near the former residence one mile north into the preserve, visited by the PAWG during the October 19, 2019 site tour, the PAWG explored another potential site located in a former corral area downhill and to the west. The existing Harrington Creek Trail borders this site on the north and east sides.

To give the group a sense of what the trail distance and experience might be, the PAWG hiked about a mile northeast from this location into the Preserve along an existing ranch road that could potentially be used to connect to the Allen Road area in the north of the Preserve. This area is currently closed to the public. The group turned around at a gate near La Honda Creek, a spot which is just below and west of the Gate LH07 site the group visited earlier.

At each location, Midpen staff described site constraints and opportunities, highlighting the need for accommodating ranch operations and discussing other issues that would need to be analyzed if any of these sites were included in the future feasibility study phase. Staff answered questions at each site, and that list of questions and answers is included as Attachment 1 to this summary.

Following the tour, the group returned to La Honda Elementary School to share and discuss their initial impressions of the site visits. Regarding Gate LH07, some members expressed concern about the speed of traffic along this segment of Highway 84. Many members enjoyed the space and the trees at this site, as well as its relative proximity to the central area of the Preserve. Others mentioned this location could provide a good staging area and offered potential for trail connection in many directions. Other comments included the noise intrusion from highway traffic and the fact that a part of the existing road goes through private property.

At the Sears Ranch Road area near the existing parking lot, some members liked the flat, safe and easy access. They believed that there would be room for all user groups – hikers, bikers, equestrians, etc., and the area could even serve as a refuge site for Preserve users in case of wildfire. Other members saw opportunities for environmental education in this location, with existing amenities of the barn and pond on the site. Some members expressed concern that this location is far from the central area of the preserve, and there would be impacts on the viewshed here.

At the old corral located one mile north of the Sears Ranch Road parking lot and west of the former residence area, some PAWG members liked that this area serves as a “hub” for converging trails and that it is flat, safe and “out of sight.” One member saw the opportunity to accommodate equestrians here and another suggested there could be an interpretive center and picnic tables in this area. Others suggested capacity at this location could be adjusted based on seasonal demand. Other comments related to the long access road impacting grazing operations and existing hiking trails, and some felt the location was too remote.

Following discussions of sites toured, PAWG members shared their observations of the parking facilities at Allen Road and at El Corte de Madera Creek Open Space Preserve, which had been suggested at the

previous meeting as worth visiting as examples of parking and trailheads offered by the District. Members described the El Corte de Madera Creek facilities as very nice, well-screened from the road, with an appealing character including trees and a split-rail fence. The lot accommodates 65 vehicles plus 4 equestrian trailer stalls. At Allen Road, which is limited to 10 cars by permit only, members appreciated the remote feel, the trees, the views and easy access to trails.

NEXT MEETING HOMEWORK

PAWG members were reminded to submit their impressions from this current site tour on the site assessment worksheet by Wednesday, November 20.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Nigel Webb indicated the Gate LH07 location was better than the Red Barn site. Although it would provide access to the central area of the Preserve, he believed that any access from Highway 84 would still be dangerous. He felt that any access point on Sears Ranch Road would be preferable and indicated a preference for parking facilities at or near the current parking lot rather than locating a parking lot a mile further into the preserve. Mr. Webb also wanted the District to accommodate all user groups, including those with on-leash dogs.

Cindy Crowe-Urgo preferred the Sears Ranch Road access point as it could accommodate all user groups. Ms. Crowe-Urgo expressed concerns regarding safety for any access onto Highway 84 and regarding possible overflow parking onto the shoulder of Highway 84.

Lynette Vega preferred both Sears Ranch access points as they would be minimally intrusive to the community. She felt these sites did not have parking and safety issues like the Red Barn and Gate LH07 sites. Ms. Vega asked the PAWG to take into consideration the impact of the project on the La Honda community regarding traffic, safety, trash, etc.

Ms. Borgesi read aloud written comments provided by Sharon Dooley. Ms. Dooley supported public parking near the Sears Ranch parking lot because there is traffic control (stop sign) on Sears Ranch Road at the junction with Highway 84. She expressed concern regarding overflow parking along the highway and the possible loss of the quiet character of the area.

Eva Knodt urged the group to look for the least disruptive solution that preserves scenic views and allows people to enjoy the beauty.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Hooper adjourned the meeting of the La Honda Public Access Working Group at 4:00 pm.

Tina Hugg, PLA, ASLA
Senior Planner



Midpeninsula Regional
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La Honda Creek Parking Feasibility Study Public Access Working Group Meeting

MEETING SUMMARY

November 16, 2019

Attachment 1 – Questions and Answers

Gate LH07 Stop

1. For the area where Caltrans' right-of-way is wider, is there an opportunity for roadside parking?

Caltrans has historically not permitted new roadside parking areas. However, when the project moves into the feasibility study phase, District staff will approach Caltrans for input on highway improvements being considered including the potential for roadside parking.

2. Would roadside parking encourage meet up locations for race car enthusiasts?

Caltrans has historically not permitted new roadside parking areas. It is not known how such areas would be used if they were allowed by Caltrans.

3. Is the steepness of Sears Ranch Road a factor for horse trailers?

There is no issue for a larger horse trailer and truck to navigate Sears Ranch Road to the existing lot or to a potential parking area near the former residence, located a mile north from the existing lot. There is visibility, and the road is fairly wide with gradual turns and no steep drop-offs.

4. Does the road from Gate LH07 connect to the ranger residence at the Red Barn?

The road does not directly connect to the ranger residence at the Red Barn.

5. When will the Red Barn be painted?

Painting the Red Barn is on the District's work plan in the upcoming year.

6. Can the road at Gate LH07 become a trail?

If the Gate LH07 location is proposed by the PAWG, forwarded to the Board by the Planning and Natural Resources Committee, and approved for further study by the Board, District staff would study how to use the existing road to access the Preserve. There is no public access on a section of the road that passes through private property adjacent to Gate LH07, but there may be a way to construct a trail to the road where it passes back onto District property.

7. Does the District purchase private property?

The District is willing to purchase property on a willing seller basis if the property would benefit natural resources or public access or address other needs that the District may have.

8. Could a lot at Gate LH07 be a secondary lot and not a primary lot?

It is possible for the PAWG to propose a small parking lot at Gate LH07 as part of a package of options that together provide a variety of ways to meet the project goals and objectives.

9. How would emergency vehicles access Gate LH07?

If the Gate LH07 location is proposed by the PAWG, forwarded to the Board by the Planning and Natural Resources Committee, and approved for further study by the Board, conceptual design layouts for the proposed parking lot would be prepared in the feasibility study phase and would be planned to accommodate emergency vehicles.

10. Does the property south of Gate LH07 where the Caltrans' right-of-way appears wider connect to District lands?

That property is bordered on the west, north, and south by another private property, so it does not directly connect to District lands.

Sears Ranch Road – Area West of Parking Lot

1. Is expansion of the Sears Ranch parking lot still being considered?

It is possible for the PAWG to propose an expansion to the Sears Ranch parking lot as part of a package of options that together provide a variety of ways to meet the project goals and objectives.

2. When will there be access to the pond visible from the existing Sears Ranch parking lot?

Other District project teams are working on expanding the trail system in the Preserve following the future phases of trails identified in the 2012 La Honda Master Plan. Direct access to the pond is not currently in the Master Plan, but there are opportunities for other future trails from the Sears Ranch parking lot trailhead.

Sears Ranch Road – Former Corral Area near Former Residence Area (one mile north of existing parking lot)

1. If a parking lot is built in this location, would the District keep the existing Sears Ranch parking lot?

The District would retain the Sears Ranch parking lot.

2. Is there equestrian access at the existing Sears Ranch parking lot?

There is currently no equestrian access at the Sears Ranch parking lot. A change of use to include equestrian access at this location could be an option to explore.

3. Is there another ranch road that goes to the Event Center?

The Harrington Creek Trail connects to the Event Center and contains the only bridge crossing over Harrington Creek.

Hike Northeast to La Honda Creek (2.2 miles round trip)

1. Where does the central area of the Preserve (as defined in the 2012 La Honda Master Plan) begin?

The PAWG hiked 1.1 miles from the former residence area to a gate beyond which La Honda Creek and a road back up to Gate LH07 and Highway 84 are located. At that gate, the group was standing at the southern edge of the central area of the Preserve that was identified in the master plan.

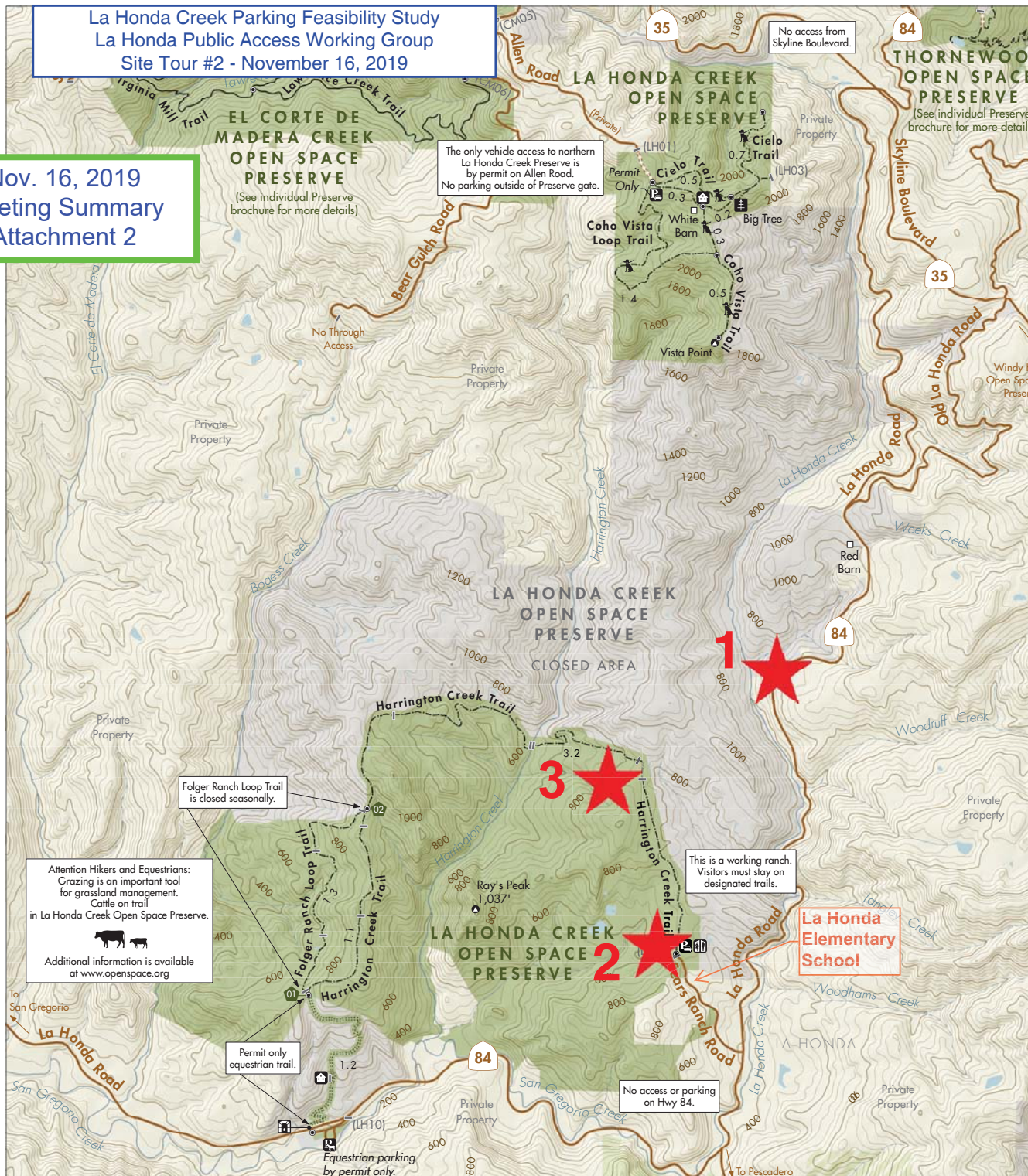
2. When will the area the PAWG hiked through be open to the public?

Other District project teams are working on expanding the trail system in the Preserve following the conceptual trail routes shown in the 2012 La Honda Master Plan. Depending on the complexity of the terrain and length of a trail, the District would require at least a couple of years to plan, design, permit, and construct a new trail.



For More Information
 Visit www.openspace.org
 or call (650) 691-1200

Nov. 16, 2019
 Meeting Summary
 Attachment 2



- ### Map Legend
- Midpen Preserve
 - Closed Area - No Public Access
 - Other Public Land
 - Other Public Land - Restricted Access
 - Private or Leased Land - No Public Access
 - No Public Entry in Midpen Water Areas
 - Road
 - Vehicle Driveway
 - Equestrian Only
 - Hiking, Equestrian
 - Hiking, Bicycling, Equestrian
 - Trail Junction
 - Numbered Trail Junction
 - Gate (#)
 - Parking Lot
 - Equestrian Parking
 - Restroom
 - Point of Interest
 - Notable Flora
 - Tunnel
 - Other Public or Private Building
 - Residence

- 1** Preserve Gate LH07
- 2** Sears Ranch Road: West of existing parking area
- 3** Sears Ranch Road: Approx. 1 mile north of existing parking area

- Dogs on Leash Permitted on Designated Trails
- Bicycles not permitted in this Preserve

In case of emergency, call 911 or 24-hour Ranger Dispatch at (650) 968-4411.

For your safety, and the protection of the preserves:

The preserve is open from dawn until one-half hour after sunset;

Please leave natural features, plants, and animals undisturbed;

Pack it in, pack it out- please do not litter;

Auto burglaries are increasing;

Take valuables with you and lock your vehicle.

