



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

Hawthorns Area Public Access Working Group Meeting #7

MEETING SUMMARY

June 13, 2024

6:00pm – 9:00pm

The meeting was opened at 6:02pm.

The meeting was opened by Senior Planner Tina Hugg with brief remarks, including that a number of public comments had been received that will be taken into account during the course of the meeting and that the PAWG is advisory to the PNR. PAWG Co-Chairs are Rachel Oslund and Helen Quinn. Tina thanked the PAWG members for their continued conscientious work.

Cathy Garrett reviewed the agenda for the meeting.

ROLL CALL

Rachel Oslund officially called the meeting to order and conducted the roll call.

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

Board Liaison	✓ Margaret MacNiven, Ward 6
Town Liaison	✓ Sarah Wernikoff
Interest Area Representative	✓ Bryna Chang ✓ Tyler Feld ✓ Charlie Krenz ✓ Rachel Oslund ✓ David Smernoff ✓ Karen Vahtra
Ward stakeholders	✓ Ward 1: Scott Mosher (arrived 6:30 pm) ✓ Ward 2: Vivian Neou ✓ Ward 3: Willie Wool ✓ Ward 4: Sandy Sommer ✓ Ward 5: Jeff Greenfield ✓ Ward 6: Helen Quinn ✓ Ward 7: Kerry De Benedetti

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| ✓ Jane Mark, Planning Manager | ✓ Chris Barresi, Area Superintendent |
| ✓ Tina Hugg, Senior Planner | ✓ Marie Lanka, Grants Management Analyst I |
| ✓ Ashley Mac, Planner III | ✓ Sherilyn Reinhart, Administrative Assistant |
| ✓ Galli Basson, Planner III | ✓ Craig Beckman, Skyline Area Manager |
| ✓ Arianna Camponuri, Ecologist | |

PGAdesign Facilitator: Cathy Garrett

CSW|ST2 Design Consultant: Paul Stevenson

Parametrix Traffic Consultant: Andrew Lee

WORKING GROUP BUSINESS

1. PUBLIC COMMENTS

In addition to several written public comments received prior to the PAWG meeting, shared with the PAWG members, there were five commentors in the first Public Comment period of this meeting. Topics commented on included:

- Midpen's process and staff were complimented.
- Concern was expressed for possible degradation of flora, fauna and meadow habitat, particularly due to some of the additional proposed trail alignments that was introduced during the PAWG process.
- The internal loop trail appears to meet the Good Neighbor Policy while the parking area and its size was questioned.
- The potential of a four-way stop (in Option 10) would help mitigate safety concerns and the Safe Route to School.
- Concern was expressed that more study is needed for Option 10.
- Opposition for Trail Segments #15, #16, #17 was heard from residents of Portola Valley Ranch. Trail connections from the Hawthorns property to Portola Valley Ranch could potentially impact residents if Hawthorns visitors access Saddleback Drive, Sweet Springs Trail or other connecting streets. Potential impacts of concern are sights, sounds, access over private property, and trash. One suggestion was to consider implementing these trail segments at a later date when Hawthorns usage is better understood.
- Concern for wildlife including their movements at night.

2. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MEETING SUMMARY

Rachel Oslund asked for input on the meeting summary for PAWG meeting #6. Karen Vahtra requested two refinements:

1. On page 6, the second paragraph under Item 6. Karen recommended a minor edit that would read "He also noted that when motorists and cyclists are riding unimpeded, they do not expect to see driveway signage and pavement markings, which are recommended calming measures to slow traffic speeds and alert motorists and cyclists."
2. On page 8, change the reference from "Golden Oak Drive" to "Willowbrook Drive".

Charlie Krenz moved to approve. Kerry De Benedetti seconded. With exception of two members, Tyler Feld and David Smirnoff who abstained, PAWG approved the PAWG Meeting Summary with the two amendments.

3. RECAP OF PRIOR MEETING DISCUSSION AND REVIEW OF CONCEPT DESIGN ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

Ashely Mac, Planner III, reviewed the new/updated Concept Design Alternatives; Option 9 is a refinement of a previous version of Option 9 and the new Option 10. These were shared with the PAWG members and included in the PAWG 7 meeting packet. For both options, there were plans and cross-sections plus a comparison chart that noted high level tree removal, amount of paving, and a rough comparative cost estimate. Traffic safety and natural resources protection were two key values previously voiced by the PAWG that fed into the following overview. To allow the development of Options 9 and 10, Midpen received concurrence from POST, who enforces compliance with the requirements of the conservation easement, to move forward with either if impacts are minimized or avoided.

Since Options 7 and 8 have been thoroughly discussed at previous PAWG meetings, they were not reviewed in detail at this meeting.

Updated Option 9

Pros: Traffic safety on Alpine Road at this location is better than for Option 8's proposed driveway location.

Parking is located on the perimeter of the property along Alpine Road, limiting impacts to natural resources.

The turnaround area extending into the Unimproved area of the Conservation Easement, as suggested by the PAWG, provides sufficient space for 50 cars.

The existing driveway entrance is utilized.

Cons: Very extensive retaining wall due to steep topography adjacent to the existing driveway entrance that was noted for the PAWG on site.

Significant cut into the hillside as evident in the cross-sections. These result in the need for retaining walls.

Option 10

Pros: Improved traffic safety on Alpine Road over all other options due to a four-way intersection at Portola Road with the proposed driveway into the parking area.

Parking is located on the perimeter of the property limiting impacts to natural resources.

More balanced cut and fill compared to Option 9. A proposed berm along Alpine Road would shield views of the parking area.

Cons: The turnaround of the parking area may be visible from Alpine Road, and screening may be needed to minimize visibility on Alpine Road.

4. PAWG DISCUSSION OF OPTIONS 9 AND 10

Questions and comments addressed included:

- Option 10 does not need a retaining wall on the uphill side of the turnaround.
- More grading is needed to allow the creation of the new drive location for Option 10 because Option 9 utilizes the existing driveway, which is already graded to meet Alpine Road.
- For Option 10 the nearest edge of the parking area is about 25 feet from the edge of Alpine Road.
- New trees will be considered to reduce visual impacts in compliance with Woodside Fire's requirements.
- In relation to Option 10, Sarah Wernikoff observed that approximately one-third of middle school students from the nearby school, cross the area where the new driveway into the preserve would be. Many students are picked up near this location. Andrew Lee, traffic engineer from Parametrix, noted that based on the traffic counts and related traffic data, the two peak usage times (school and preserve use) occur at different times of day. School peak usage is weekday mornings and afternoons. The preserve's peak is on weekends.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Co-chair Rachel Oslund opened the second public comment period. One member of the public provided comment. Topics included:

- Request that the placement of the parking area comply with the requirements of the Scenic Corridor.
- For Option 10, the notion of a buffer of trees is well-liked, as approved by the Fire authorities.
- Encourage the Town of Portola Valley to bring all potentially concerned parties together to have an informational Town Hall meeting.

Attachment 5

At the close of the second Public Comment period, a short break was called. The PAWG reconvened at 7:05pm.

6. PAWG DISCUSSION AND SELECTION OF RECOMMENDATIONS TO BE FORWARDED TO THE PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE (PNR)

The proposed sequence of voting broke the components of the public access at the Hawthorns property into parts. These include:

- 1) Internal Trail System
- 2) Trail Connections with Surrounding Town Trails and Pathways
- 3) Opportunities for Regional Trail Connections
- 4) Proposed Trail Uses
- 5) Concept Parking Designs

The intention was to ensure the PAWG had sufficient time to discuss any questions and had time to vote on the components within the above-listed items. The PAWG was encouraged to bring up outstanding topics for discussion as each component was brought up.

As discussed previously, the PAWG was reminded that they could put forward multiple recommendations to the PNR. Comments and recommendations that the PAWG wished to accompany the voting were noted in the meeting. The PAWG was further reminded that their recommendations will be submitted to the PNR, whose recommendations will then be forwarded to the full Board for final decision-making. All information presented to and discussed by the PAWG, including all written public comments submitted during the PAWG process, will be shared with both the PNR and the Board.

The project team encouraged the public who are interested in the Hawthorns Area Plan and its progress to continue attending future meetings related to this project.

The previously reviewed Gradients of Agreement guided the voting process. The Gradients of Agreement are a mechanism for testing the level of agreement on a proposal that expands on the traditional “yes” or “no” voting. The Gradients of Agreement include:

1. I can say an unqualified “yes” to the recommendation
2. I find the proposal acceptable. It appears to be the best of the available options at this time.
3. I can live with the proposal, although I am not especially enthusiastic about it.
4. I do not fully agree with the proposal, but I am willing to stand aside, remain neutral, so the process can move forward.
5. I do not fully agree with the proposal. 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 proposal, and I will work actively to oppose it.

Under this approach, values from 1 to 4 on the Gradients of Agreement are considered supportive of a recommendation. Full consensus is reached if all members rate the item between a 1 and 4 on the Gradients of Agreement scale. Majority consensus is reached if a simple majority of all members vote between 1 and 4 on the Gradients of Agreement scale.

Refer to **Attachment 1** for details of the PAWG’s final voting results. Refer to **Attachment 2** for pictures of the PAWG voting in progress during the meeting, which includes all voting results listed in Attachment 1. Both attachments provide a concise result supporting specific recommendations as well as additional data related to the level of support (i.e., more “1” votes than “3” or “4” votes) and who supported each recommendation. Overall, the PAWG supported opening the Hawthorns Area to a broad range of public access uses. Notably, many topics received unanimous votes, demonstrating a strong accord among the PAWG members.

Attachment 5

The following lists a brief summary of the vote by topic along with the PAWG's comments that they requested accompany their recommendations.

1) Internal Trail System

Voting by the PAWG first addressed each segment of the internal trail system.

Vote summary:

- Unanimously, the PAWG voted to support the conceptual trail layout as shown on the current plan, including Segments #2 through #9 plus #11 and #12 and a bench location at Bench B. This constitutes the internal loop trail.
- The PAWG reached majority consensus on Benches at locations A and C, with one person voted "5" constituting a "no" vote and all others in support.

PAWG comments to supplement the vote and recommendations:

- As far as grading will permit, Trail Segments #3 and #4 should be spaced sufficiently apart to minimize visual and sound impacts of users on each trail segment.
- Adjust the trail alignment as needed to accommodate the ultimately selected staging area.

2) Trail Connections with Surrounding Town Trails and Pathways

Vote summary:

- Unanimously, the PAWG voted to support the conceptual trail connections from the loop trail to Alpine Trail including Segments #1, #10 and #14.
- Trail Segment #15 were not approved by the PAWG. The trail would have connected to the Town's Sweet Spring Trail. The segment is short, at a lower elevation and closer to Alpine Trail.
- The PAWG requested two separate votes for Trail Segments #16 and #17: the first to implement them now and the second to consider implementing them in the future, when Hawthorns is open to the public and the nature and level of trail use within Hawthorns is better understood. The phased approach was in response to feedback from the Portola Valley Ranch neighborhood regarding impacts to their residents.
- Trail Segment #16 was supported but with a divided vote. This trail provides a connection from the Hawthorns loop trail to the Town's Sweet Springs Trail, located within Portola Valley Ranch. The first vote received majority consensus, but the second vote was approved unanimously.
- Trail Segment #17 was supported for a future phase only. The proposed trail would connect to the Town's Sweet Spring Trail, crossing an open meadow that is visible from portions of Portola Valley Ranch. The first vote for Trail Segment #17 failed to secure majority support, but the second vote received majority consensus.

PAWG comments to supplement the vote and recommendations:

- When the conceptual trail alignments are further refined that they be adjusted to minimize impacts on neighboring homes, specifically to increase the distance between trails and houses in Portola Valley Ranch. The intent is to meet Midpen's Good Neighbor Policy as far as feasible while providing public access.
- Any connection to Sweet Springs Trail to be moved further northwest and away from Pomponio Court, which is an existing private trail connects to Sweet Springs Trail.

3) Opportunities For Regional Trail Connections

Vote summary:

- Unanimously, the PAWG voted to acknowledge and support the Town's Trails and Pathways Committee's request for a desire of future connection between the Los Trancos Trail on Los Trancos Road through the Hawthorns property to Valley Oak Street.
- Similarly, the PAWG unanimously voted to acknowledge and support a future regional connection to Arastradero Preserve (over Los Trancos Creek) and to Foothills Nature Preserve.

PAWG comments to supplement the vote and recommendations:

- The PAWG specifically discussed creating and supporting the larger vision of making these regional connections while being cognizant that they require access over land that Midpen does not own or control. They acknowledged that these possible future connections will require partnerships with other landowners but nevertheless wanted to voice and convey their support for any such efforts to the PNR and the Board. The request included adding text to the graphics on the plan that shows the desired regional connections.

4) Proposed Trail Uses

Vote summary:

- The PAWG voted unanimously and was in full support of allowing multi-use access on all trails within the Hawthorns property except Trail Segments #15, #16, and #17. The uses include: hikers, equestrians, dogs on leash, and bicyclists.
- For Trail Segments #15, #16, and #17, assuming one of them is implemented, the PAWG unanimously supported use by hikers, equestrians, and dogs on leash. A majority of the PAWG voted to exclude bicyclists from Trail Segments #15, #16, and #17.

PAWG comments to supplement the vote and recommendations:

- None.

5) Concept Parking Design

A considerable amount of homework went into coming up with possible parking area options. The PAWG helped develop and review ten options since their first meeting. Options 7, 8, 9 and 10 were the four concept parking options short-listed for voting. Options 7 and 8 were selected during the informal voting at Meeting #5. Option 9 grew directly out of input provided by PAWG members. Option 10 also built upon PAWG comments and was developed between PAWG meetings #6 and #7. Both Options 9 and 10 keep the parking area around the perimeter of the preserve along Alpine Road.

Prior to formally voting, the PAWG reviewed the tables that summarized their collective input on Parking Options 7 – 10. As part of the PAWG’s homework prior to the meeting, PAWG members had individually assessed the four concept design options using criteria per the Board approved visions and goals for the project. Refer to **Attachment 3** for details of PAWG’s Assessment of Conceptual Parking Design Options 7 – 10.

Vote summary:

- Concept Parking Options 9 and 10 were supported by the PAWG, with Option 10 receiving a higher level of approval and full consensus: eleven of thirteen voted “1”, two of thirteen voted “2”.
- Concept Parking Options 7 and 8 were resoundingly not supported by the PAWG.
- The PAWG requested to add two more items for voting related to parking – the maximum amount of parking spaces and a phased approach. The PAWG voted unanimously to support a maximum of 50 parking spaces and a phased approach.

PAWG comments to supplement the vote and recommendations:

- Until the ultimate number of parking spaces is settled on, there is likely to be some uncertainty as to the level of use of the Hawthorns area. If it has capacity, the parking area may robustly support regional connectivity, possible staging for road cycling, and those visiting nearby preserves, as well as those visiting the Hawthorns area. The parking analysis prepared by Parametrix recommended 25 to 68 parking spaces for a preserve of this size. In the context of this discussion, the PAWG felt that 50 parking spaces was a reasonable upper limit and suggested that when the extent of the use is studied and better understood it may be possible to reduce the total number of parking spaces needed. One further comment was that

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this is the purview of the PNR and that they are the correct body to decide the appropriate number of parking spaces at Hawthorns.

- There will likely be concerns from the Town about possible conflicts with the pickup and movement of school-aged children in relation to the driveway location in Option 10. See Item 4, PAWG Discussion of Options 9 and 10.
- Provide bike parking within the parking area.

7. CLOSING COMMENTS

Cathy concluded that the PAWG recommendations were thoughtful and well-crafted and benefited enormously from the power of many minds. She noted appreciation for Director MacNiven and Mayor Wernikoff in addition to all the members of the PAWG.

Director Margaret MacNiven thanked the PAWG for their conscientious work. She also thanked the co-chairs, Rachel Oslund and Helen Quinn for their leadership, and the Midpen planners and consultants for a great job done. She felt the recommendations were now ready to bring to the PNR.

Sarah Wernikoff commended Midpen for running an extraordinary process. It was very thorough, meticulous and inclusive. She also thanked all community members that engaged. There was so much data collected that contributed to a well-considered outcome.

Tina Hugg noted that the next steps involve taking the PAWG's recommendations to the PNR, which is Midpen's standard process. Items may be returned to the PAWG for additional information or input based on PNR feedback. Pending PNR's feedback, PAWG's recommendations will be presented to the Board. This will occur as a Study Session with no action taken, to allow the Board to receive public input. The recommendations will also be presented to the Town Council and Town Ad Hoc Committee, after which, the Board will make the final policy decision.

Co-chairs Helen Quinn and Rachel Oslund will represent the PAWG at the PNR and Board meetings. The PNR report will include the concept design ideas that the PAWG reviewed, public feedback, and the final vote results.

Tina thanked the PAWG and wished all a happy summer.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting #7 of the Hawthorns Area Public Access Working Group was adjourned at 8:42 pm.

Attachment 1: Hawthorns Area PAWG Meeting #7 Voting Results

Attachment 2: Photos of Voting during PAWG meeting #7

Attachment 3: PAWG Assessment of Conceptual Parking Design Options