



MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

La Honda Creek Preserve Parking and Trailhead Access Feasibility Study

La Honda Public Access Working Group
September 12, 2019



Agenda

- Welcome and Agenda Overview
- Working Group Business
 - Public Comment
 - Recap Working Group purpose and charge/ goals and objectives
 - Select Chair and Vice-Chair
 - Review and approve August 22 Meeting summary
 - Background information
 - District mission, Strategic Plan, Vision Plan, Measure AA
 - Planning process and La Honda Creek Master Plan overview
 - Site conditions
 - Items for next meeting
 - Previous homework
 - New homework and October 19 site tour
 - Public Comment

• Adjournment



Midpen Background





Midpen 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.”



About Midpen Open Space

- Public agency, created in 1972 by a grassroots voter initiative
- Elected board: seven directors
- Funded primarily through property tax
- 26 preserves in Santa Clara, San Mateo and Santa Cruz counties
- Nearly 64,000 acres, 240+ miles of trails
- Preserves are free and open to the public
- Main office in Los Altos + field offices
- 180 employees, 600 volunteers





Midpen Jurisdiction and Open Space Preserves



#	Preserves
1	Bear Creek Redwoods Opening in 2019
2	Coal Creek
3	El Corte de Madera Creek
4	El Sereno
5	Foothills
6	Fremont Older
7	La Honda Creek
8	Long Ridge
9	Los Trancos
10	Miramontes Ridge
11	Monte Bello
12	Picchetti Ranch
13	Pulgas Ridge
14	Purissima Creek Redwoods
15	Rancho San Antonio
16	Ravenswood
17	Russian Ridge
18	Saratoga Gap
19	Sierra Azul
20	Skyline Ridge
21	St. Joseph's Hill
22	Stevens Creek Shoreline Nature Study Area
23	Teague Hill
24	Thornewood
25	Tunitas Creek
26	Windy Hill



Free Open Space Activities

- ✿ +240 miles of **hiking** trails
- ✿ 16 preserves with **mtn bicycling** trails
- ✿ 11 **dog-friendly** preserves (1 off-leash area)
- ✿ Black Mountain **Backpack Camp**
- ✿ 100+ free **docent-led hikes**
- ✿ **Volunteer** opportunities
- ✿ **Geocaching** challenge
- ✿ **Equestrian** trails



PRESERVE CIRCUIT
GEO-CHALLENGE



Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
330 Daniel Circle
San Anis, California 94022-1424
Phone: 650-491-1200 • Fax: 650-491-0485
E-mail: info@open-space.org
Web site: www.open-space.org





Outdoor Education Areas

🌿 Daniels Nature Center

- Skyline Ridge Preserve
- Learn about pond habitats
- Explore Alpine Pond
- Open on weekends, spring-fall



🌿 Deer Hollow Farm

- Rancho San Antonio Preserve
- Working historic farm
- Goats, chickens, pigs & more



🌿 Picchetti Winery

- Picchetti Ranch Preserve
- Active winery / wine-tasting
- Historic site





Fiscal Year 2019-20 Strategic Goals

- Goal 1 – Promote, establish, and implement a regional environmental protection vision with partners
- Goal 2 – Connect people to open space and a regional environmental protection vision
- Goal 3 – Strengthen organizational capacity to fulfill the mission
- Goal 4 – Position the District for long-term financial sustainability to fulfill the District’s mission on behalf of the public



2014 Vision Plan Summary

www.openspace.org/vision



IMAGINE
the Future of Open Space



2014 Vision Plan

- ✿ Informed by science
- ✿ Guided by robust public engagement and input
- ✿ 32-member Citizen Advisory Committee
- ✿ 54 Priority Actions;
public priorities: access, acquisition and restoration



Imagine the Future of Open Space

- Protect **redwood forests**
- Ensure **clean water** and protect salmon habitat
- Add over **200 miles** of new trails
- Open **20,000 acres** of land
- Create **13 new staging/parking areas**
- Provide outdoor education opportunities at **14 locations**
- Preserve over **50,000 acres** of additional open space
- Enhance wetlands and ponds for rare wildlife at **10 preserves**
- Create **wildlife corridors** in an increasingly urbanized region
- Improve ranches and rangelands at **4 preserves**





2014 Measure AA

- Top 25 VP Priority Actions → Measure AA Expenditure Plan
- Voter approval of Measure AA in 2014 (67.96%);
\$300M General Obligation Bond
- Capital projects only
- Authorization to bond for up to 30 years
- Bond Oversight Committee verification

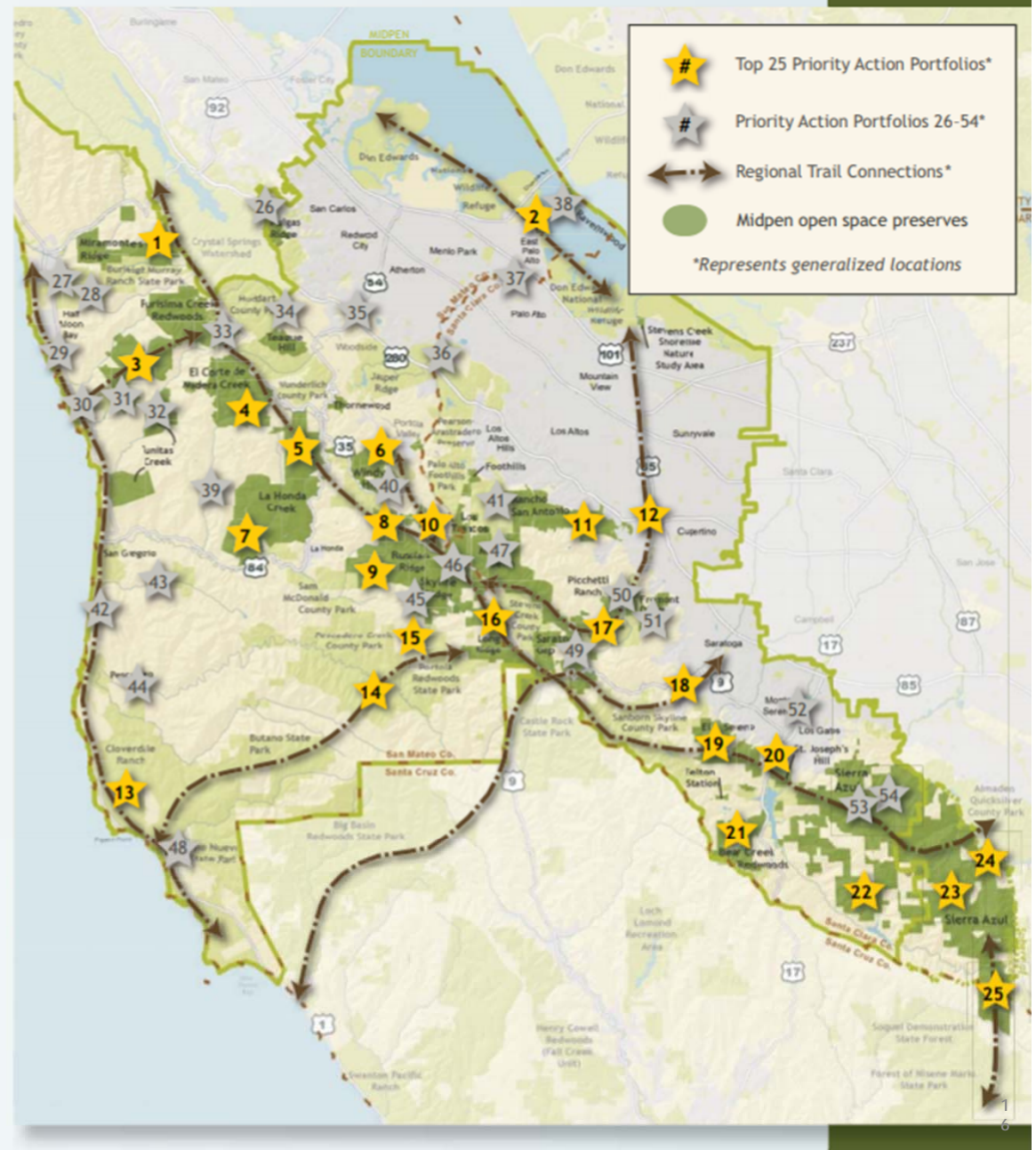


Vision Plan Priority Action Portfolios

Top 25 Portfolios

1. Open Miramontes Ridge
2. Build New Bayfront Trails
3. Complete the Purisima-to-Sea Trail
4. Build Walking, Hiking and Biking Trails at El Corte de Madera Creek
5. Open Upper La Honda Creek Preserve
6. Develop New Trails at Windy Hill
7. Open Driscoll Ranch Area at La Honda Creek
8. Preserve Upper San Gregorio Creek Watershed
9. Open New Trails at Russian Ridge
10. Re-Open Alpine Road at Coal Creek
11. Build Welcome Center at Rancho San Antonio
12. Complete Middle Stevens Creek Trail
13. Expand Grazing at Cloverdale Coastal Ranch
14. Open New Trails throughout the Redwoods
15. Protect More Redwood Forests
16. Create New Access Facilities at Long Ridge
17. Complete Upper Stevens Creek Trail
18. Complete Saratoga-to-Sea Trail
19. Open El Sereno Trails to Dogs and Complete Trail Connections
20. Preserve Safe Wildlife Corridors across Hwy. 17
21. Open Bear Creek Redwoods
22. Open Cathedral Oaks at Sierra Azul
23. Open Mount Umunhum at Sierra Azul
24. Open Rancho de Guadalupe at Sierra Azul
25. Open Loma Prieta Area at Sierra Azul

Visit www.openspace.org/vision for full descriptions of all 54 Priority Action Portfolios.



5

La Honda Creek:

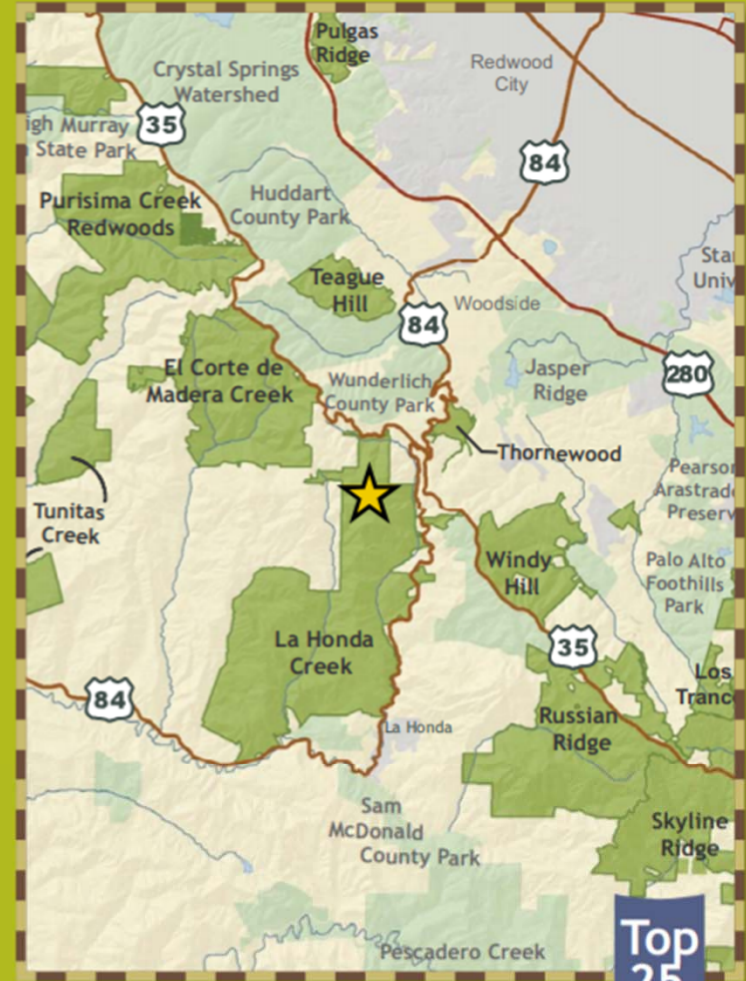
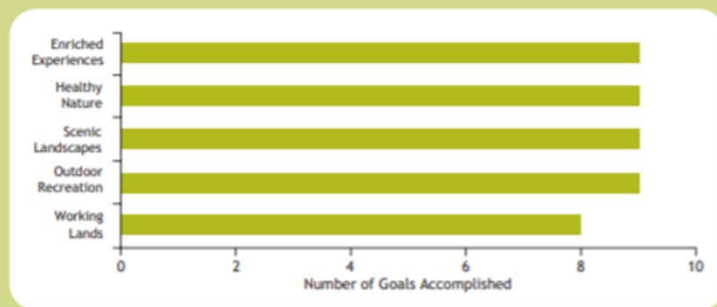
Upper Area Recreation, Habitat Restoration, and Conservation Grazing Projects



Open Upper Area; provide biking/hiking trails, dog access, staging areas. Develop Red Barn area as educational destination. Plan new activities such as night hikes, community events. Provide loop & connector trails. Improve habitat for rare species. Expand conservation grazing to manage grasslands; improve fencing, cattle watering methods to protect streams.



Goals Accomplished by This Action





Measure AA Portfolio 5: (Upper) La Honda Creek

5 La Honda Creek: Upper Area Recreation, Habitat Restoration and Conservation Grazing Projects

Open upper half of the preserve to public; provide biking/hiking/equestrian trails, dog access, and staging areas. Provide loop & connector trails. Restore habitat for rare species. Improve fencing, corrals, and water systems to reintroduce conservation grazing. **\$11,733,000**

- Opening the upper La Honda Creek to the public
- Multi-use trails; loop trails; connector trails
- Staging areas
- Habitat restoration
- Agricultural support infrastructure



La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve and Planning Processes



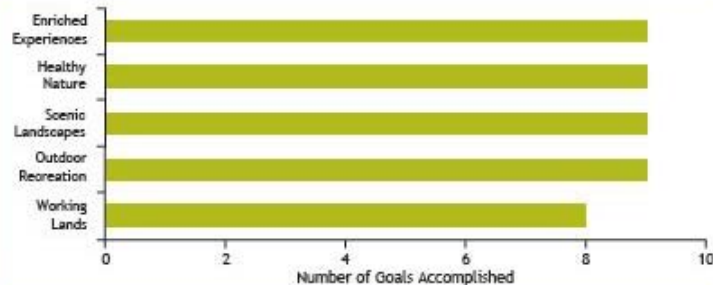


MEASURE AA Portfolio #5: La Honda Creek: Upper Area Recreation, Habitat Restoration, and Conservation Grazing Projects \$11.7 M

Open Upper Area; provide biking/hiking trails, dog access, staging areas. Develop Red Barn area as educational destination. Plan new activities such as night hikes, community events. Provide loop & connector trails. Improve habitat for rare species. Expand conservation grazing to manage grasslands; improve fencing, cattle watering methods to protect streams.



Goals Accomplished by This Action



Top 25

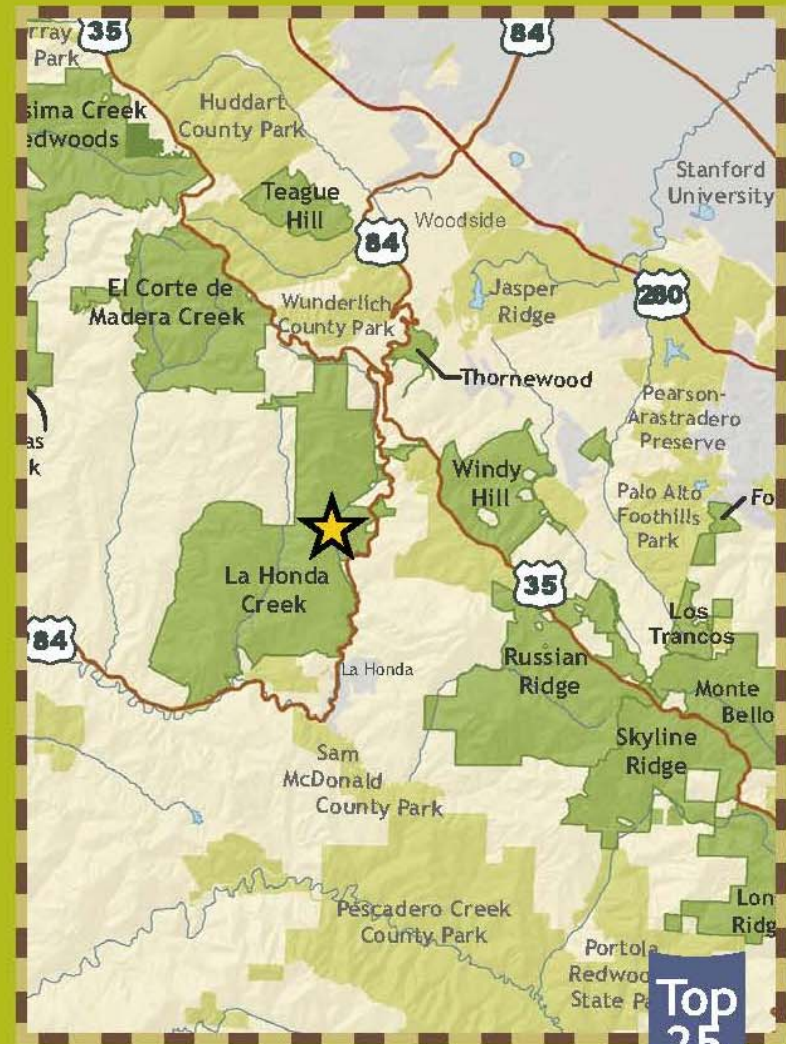
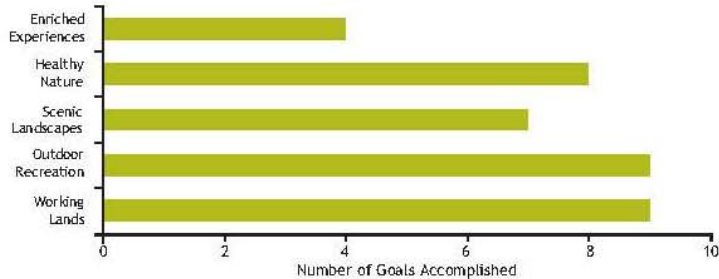


MEASURE AA Portfolio #7: Driscoll Ranch Public Access, Endangered Wildlife Protection and Conservation Grazing \$14.825 M

Open Driscoll Ranch Area, provide biking/hiking trails, limited dog access, parking areas, interpretive materials. Provide loop & connector trails. Improve habitat for red-legged frogs. Restore La Honda Creek; remove fish migration barriers. Develop volunteer restoration program. Continue conservation grazing to manage grasslands; improve fencing, corrals, cattle watering methods. Develop and introduce fire management strategies to reduce fuel & fire risk.



Goals Accomplished by This Action



Top 25



La Honda 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...



Planning Process: La Honda Creek Master Plan

Fall 2004

Public Participation / Stakeholder Engagement

August 2012

Project
Initiation

Inventory &
Analysis

Plan
Development

Environmental
Review

Plan Review
and Adoption

- Vision
- Goals
- Public tours
- Stakeholder interviews

- Existing conditions
- Comprehensive roads/ trails assessment
- Policy analysis
- Opportunities and constraints
- Public workshops
- Stakeholder interviews

- Public tours

- Programming
- Public tours
- Stakeholders meetings
- Focus groups
- Master Plan alternatives
- Draft Plan
- Board committee review

- Technical studies
- CEQA analyses
- Proposed Master Plan (Project)
- Public open houses
- Board committee review

- Public hearings



Planning Process: La Honda Creek Master Plan

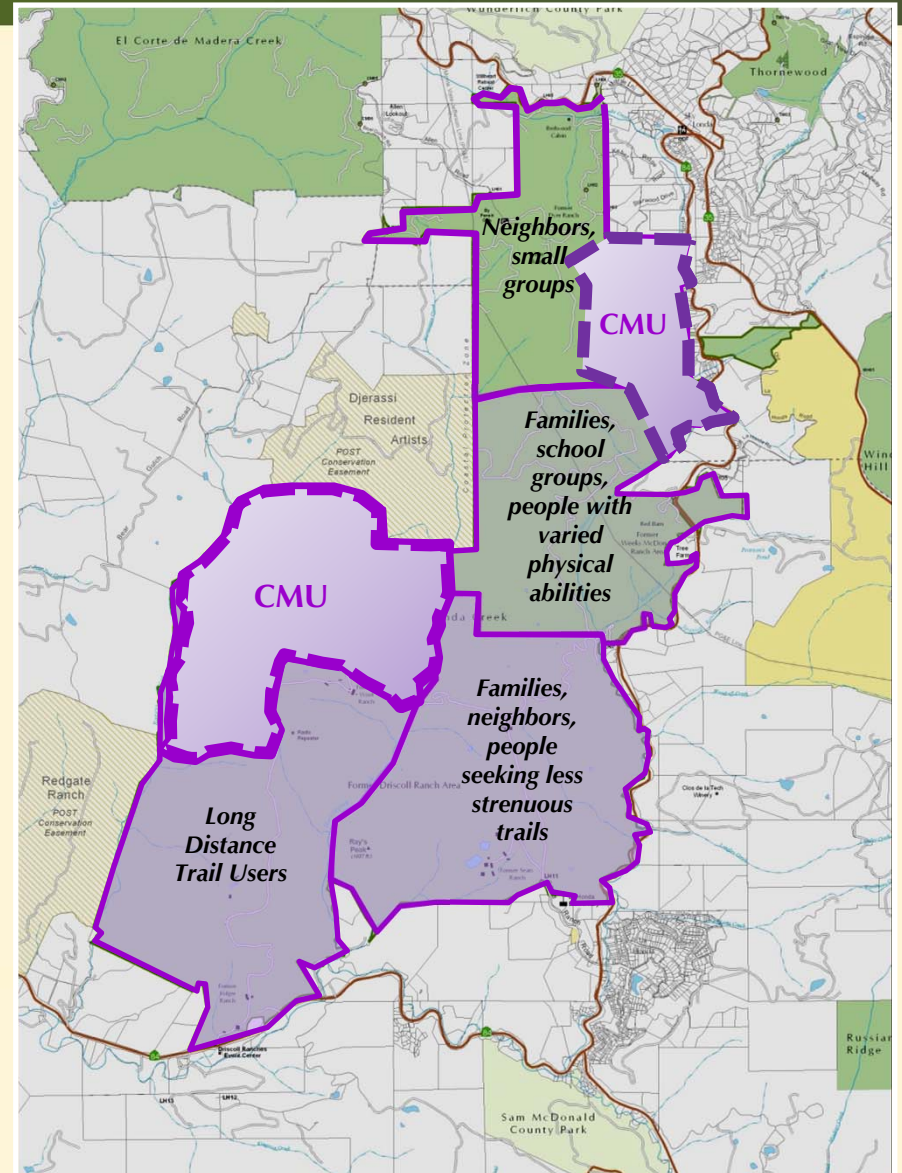
- Tours of preserve
- Committee meetings





Public Access, Recreation and Environmental Education

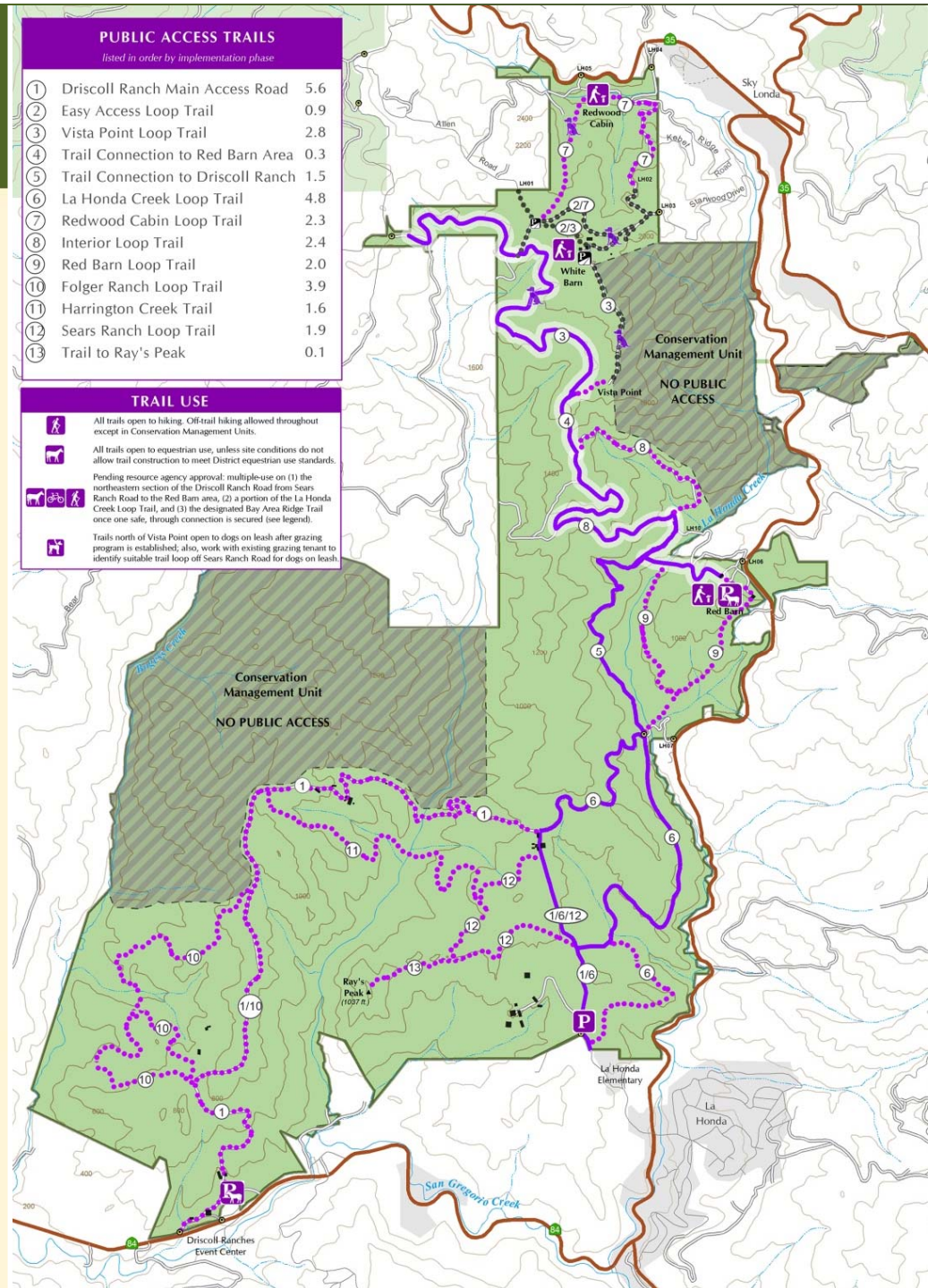
Overarching goal to expand public access *where appropriate* so as to maintain resource integrity and avoid conflicts with existing uses.





Trails

- Trail mileage increased from 3.7 miles to 29.7 miles
- Multiple trail loops
- Key destinations
- Easy access trails
- Connection between upper and lower areas
- Bay Area Ridge Trail alignment**
- Hiking and equestrian use
- Bicycle and dog use on select trails (contingent on resource agency approval)
- Conservation Management Unit (CMU) Areas

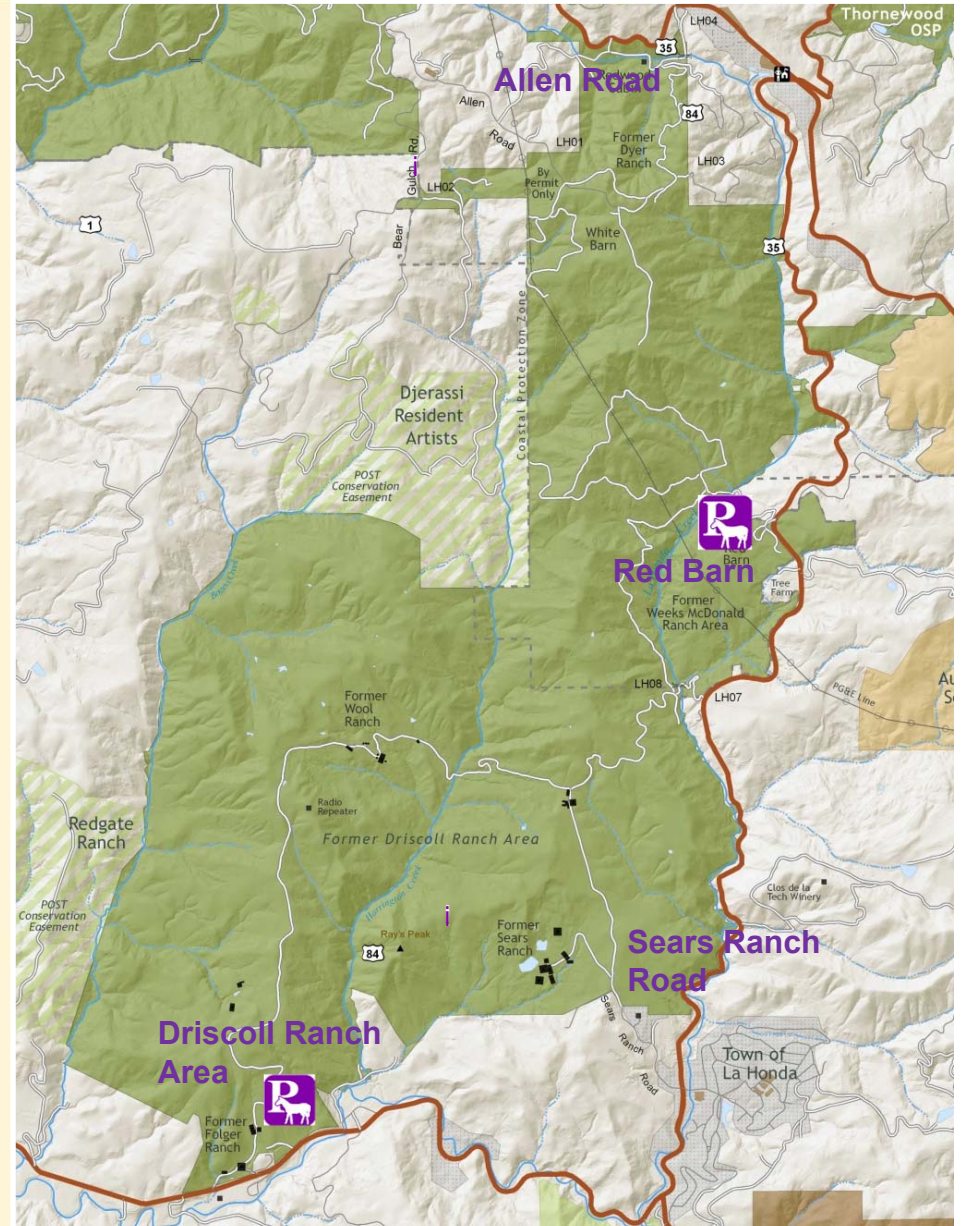




Parking and Trailhead Areas

GOAL: Expand and Improve the available parking

- **Allen Road Permit Parking Enhancements**
- **Red Barn Parking Area**
- **Sears Ranch Parking Area**
- **Driscoll Ranch Parking Area (now Event Center)**





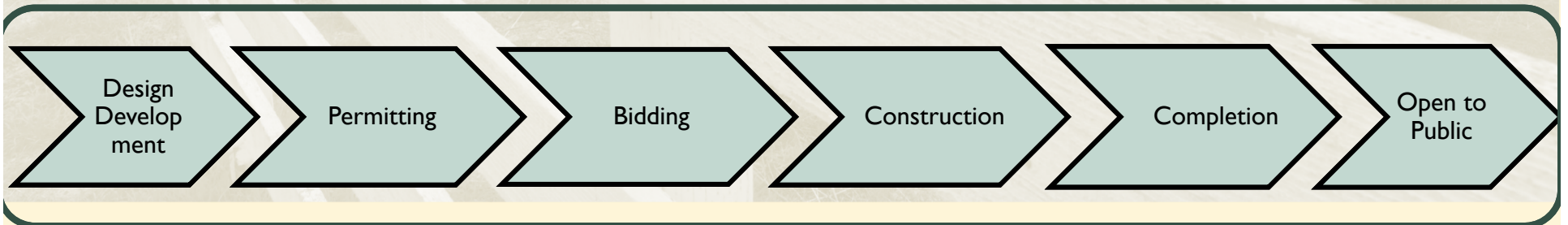
Site Plan Development and Implementation

PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PHASE



- Board committee review
 - Public/stakeholder engagement
 - Regulatory agency outreach
- Board committee review
 - Public/stakeholder engagement
- Additional technical studies
 - Public comment
 - Regulatory agency review (Caltrans, CHP)
 - Board committee review

DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION PHASE





La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve





Project Site Conditions



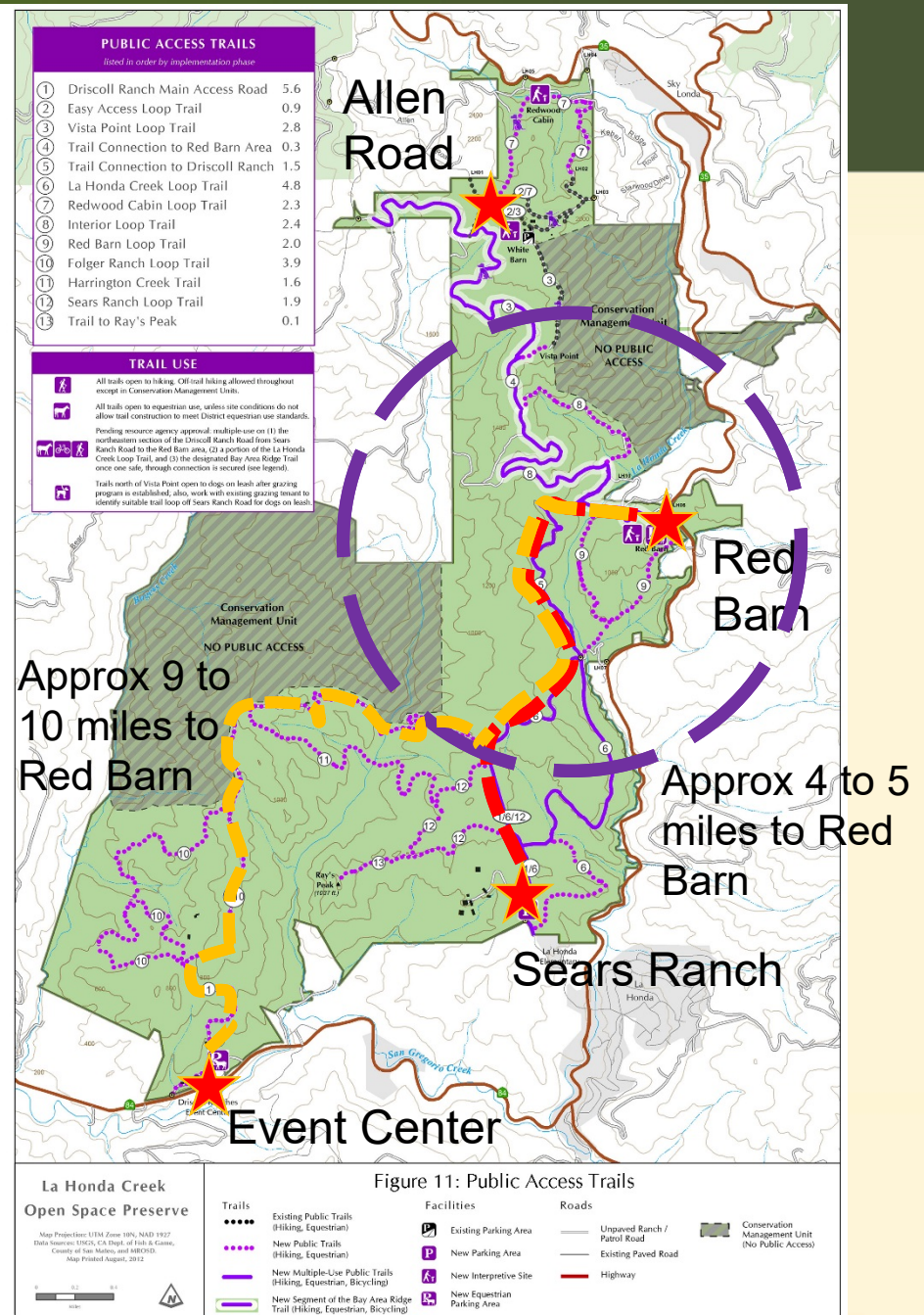


La Honda Parking and Trailhead Access Feasibility Study Project Goals and Objectives

- ✿ Establish new public access in the central portion of the 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.
- ✿ Include amenities that facilitate environmental education.
- ✿ Protect scenic views of and from the site.



Access to the Central Area of the Preserve

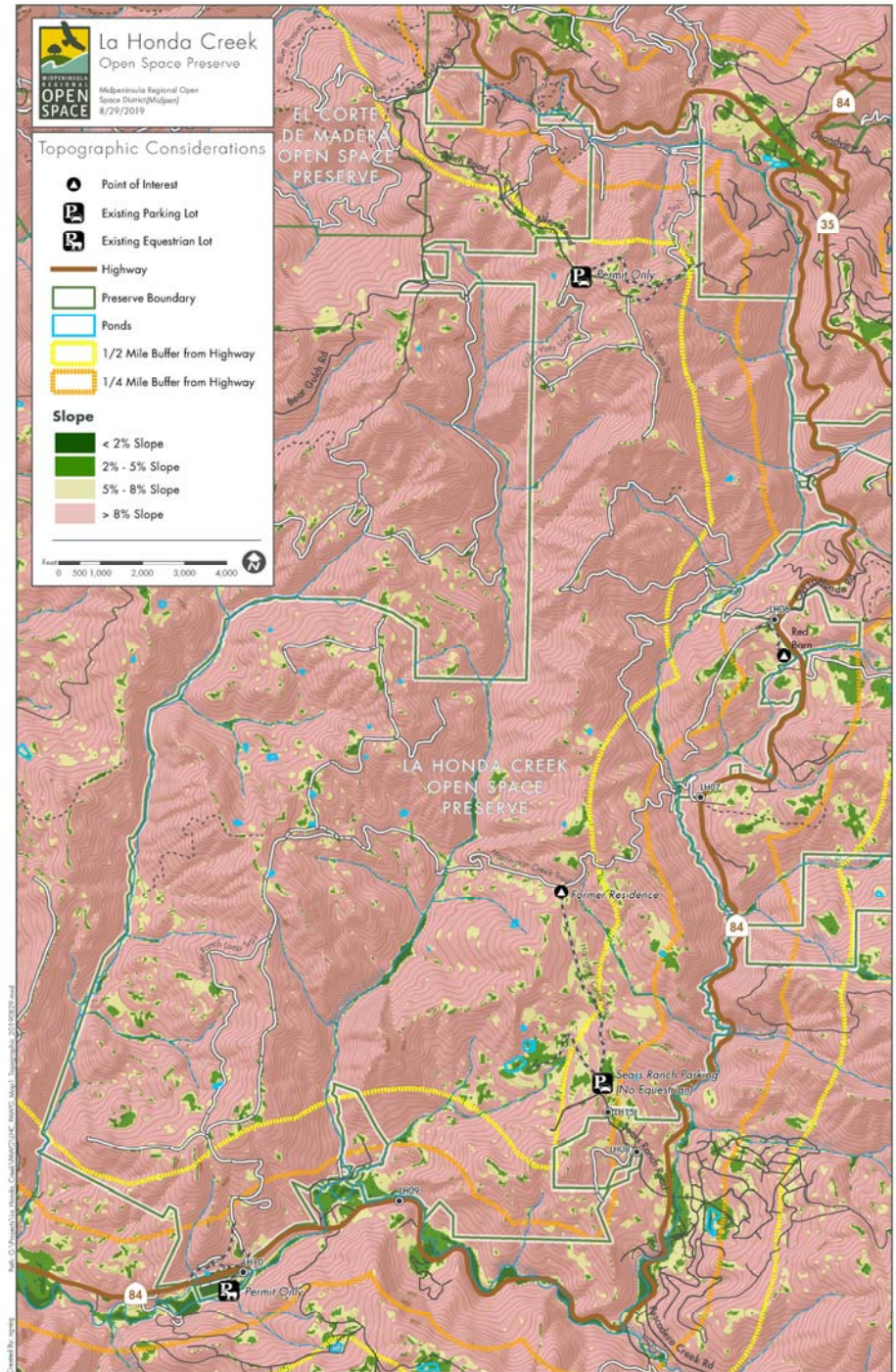


Site Assessment Criteria

Adequate line of sight at entrance	Use conflicts (grazing, staff facilities, etc.)
Safe ingress/egress	Disturbed habitat/area
Ability to meet desired parking capacity	Minimize impacts to sensitive natural and cultural resources/habitats
Minimize amount of grading required	Species (plants, wildlife)
Amount of tree/vegetation removal	Soil stability (landslides)
Ability to connect to trail system or regional trail	Hydrology (creeks, drainages)
Level of use on connecting trails or within preserve	Hazardous materials
Opportunities for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility	Infrastructure required (bridges, retaining walls)
Proximity to existing preserve parking	Aesthetics/viewshed
Located away from residential/commercial/intersections	Patrol/safety
History of prior use	Other major concerns/issues to resolve

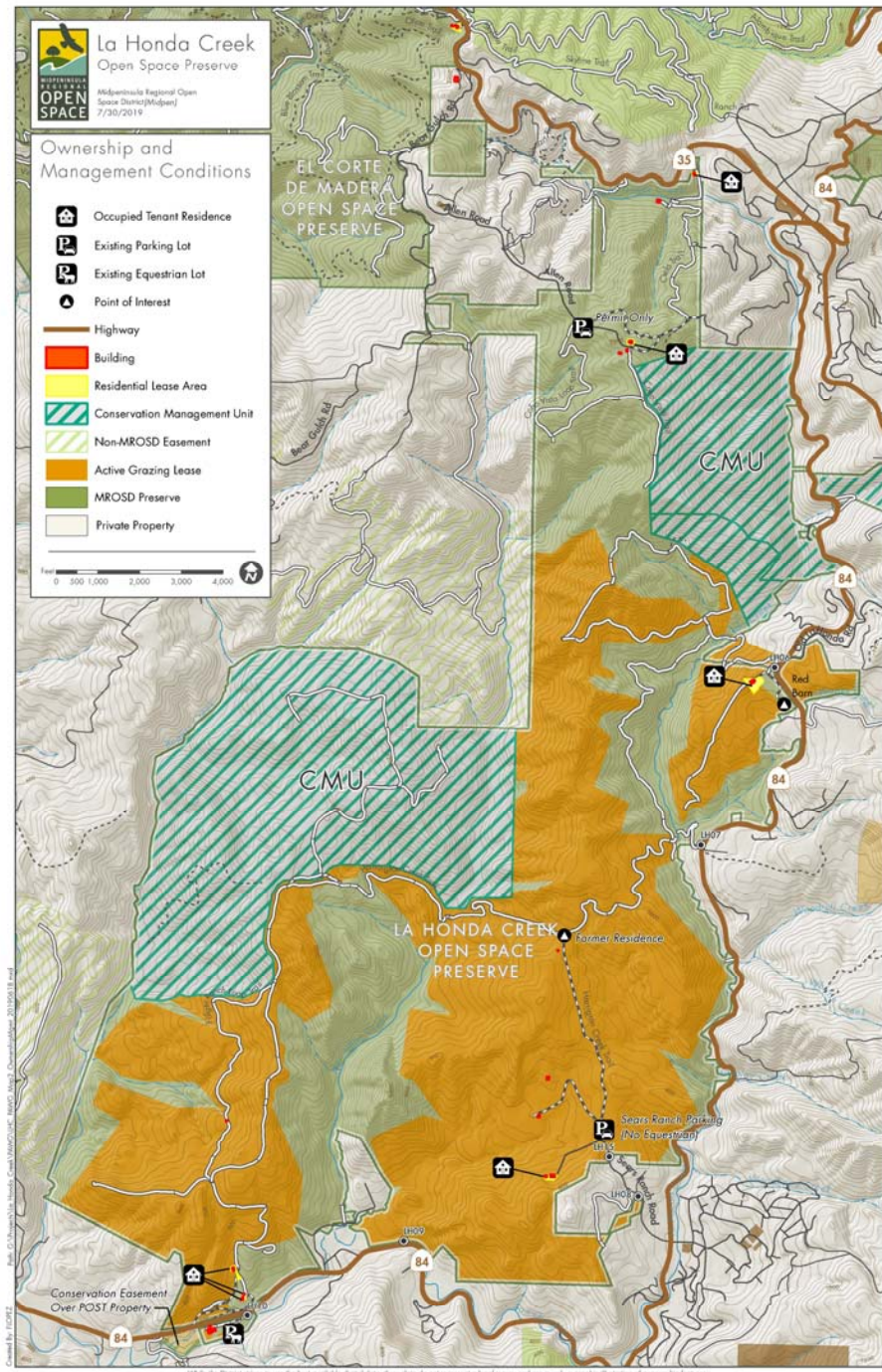


Site Conditions: Topographic



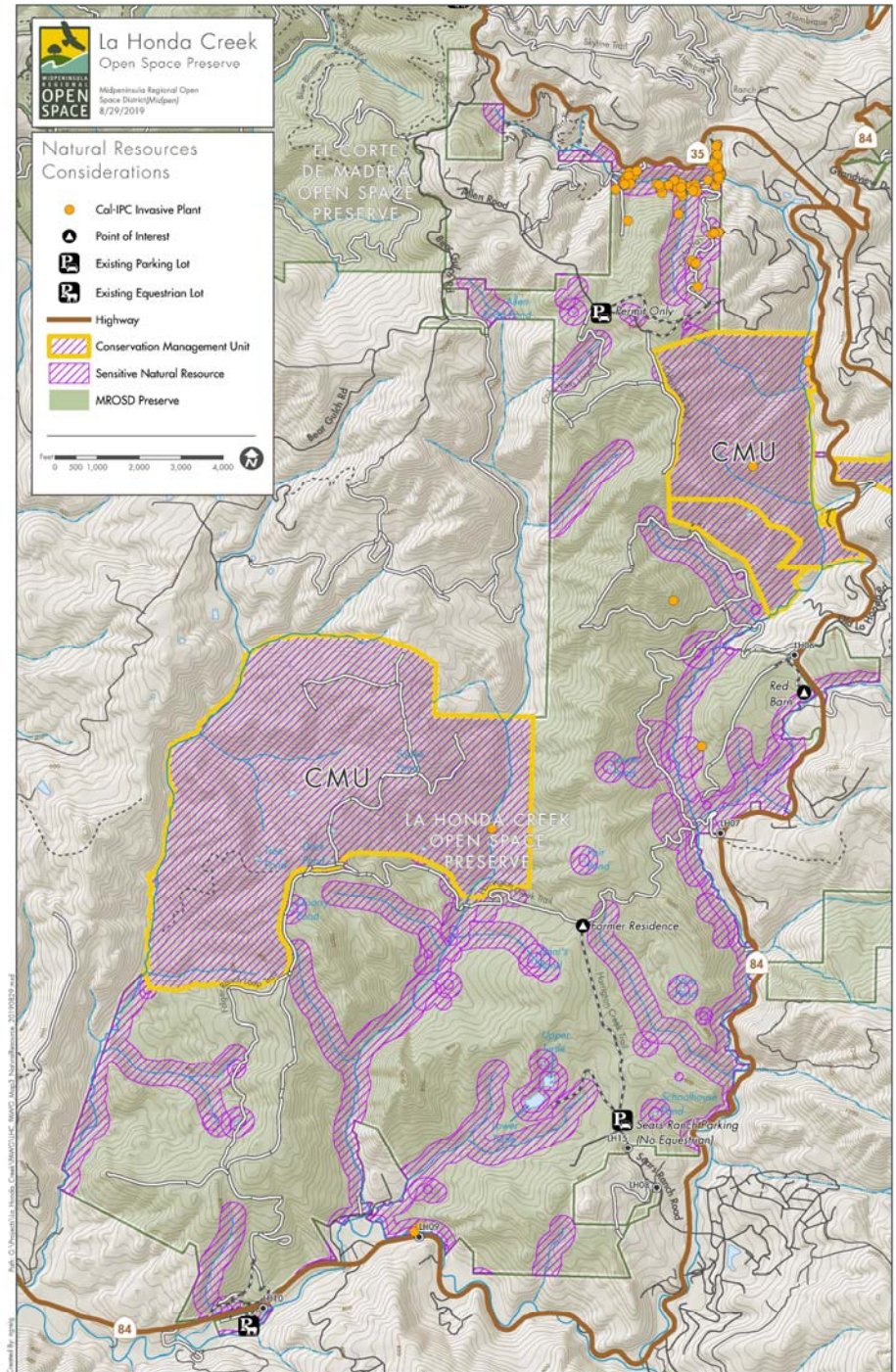


Site Conditions: Ownership and Mngmt



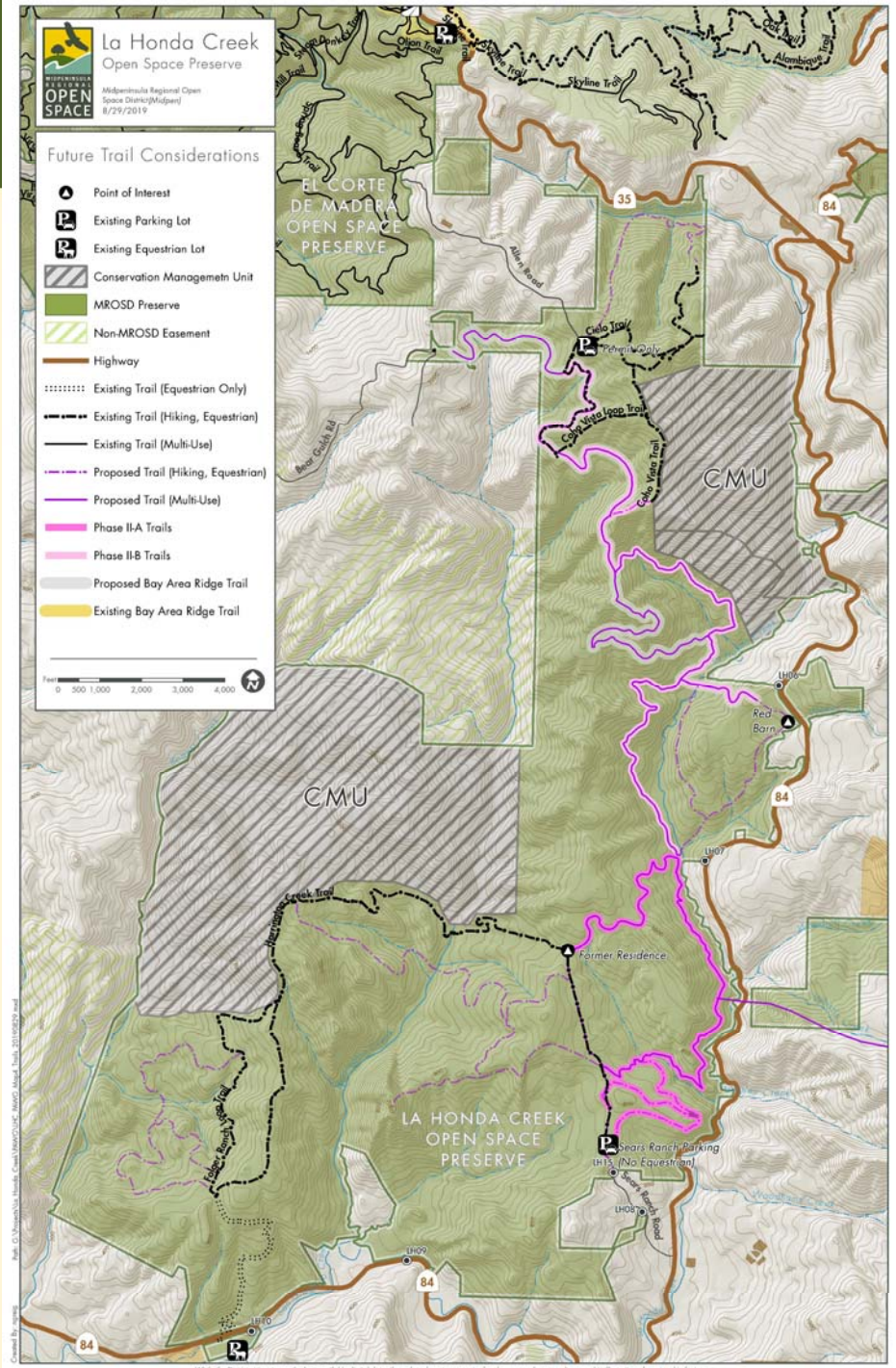


Site Conditions: Natural Resources





Site Conditions: Future Trail



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.



Items for Next Meeting



Previous Homework Assignment



Next Steps



Public Comment