



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

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

**Administrative Office
330 Distel Circle
Los Altos, CA 94022**

**December 12, 2019
6:30 PM – 9:30 PM**

MEETING SUMMARY

ROLL CALL

Vice-Chair Denise Phillips called the meeting of the La Honda Public Access Working Group (PAWG) to order at 6:35 p.m.

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

Board Directors (Non-Voting Members)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Curt Riffle, Ward 4 ✓ Larry Hassett, Ward 6
Working Group Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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 Skinner, Public Affairs Manager

MIG Consultants: Lou Hexter, Ana Padilla

PUBLIC COMMENT

Joel Gartland, a District resident, hiker, cyclist, and Bay Area Ridge Trail Volunteer, asked the group to think about the bigger picture in creating more multi-use connections to link Silicon Valley to the Golden Gate. He requested the District continue its good work on staging areas as well.

Sue Kelso, a District resident and Bay Area Ridge Trail Volunteer, expressed her excitement to have new trails for connections along the bay and looks forward to new connections in the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve (Preserve).

WORKING GROUP BUSINESS

Senior Planner Tina Hugg and Meeting Facilitator Lou Hexter reviewed the PAWG’s goals and objectives, including providing the process for Planning and Natural Resources (PNR) Committee and Board of Directors review of potential access options and consideration of the options for further study. Director Riffle affirmed the PAWG is tasked with doing a preliminary assessment of which sites or options they feel merit further study, and the PAWG members must do so with an open mind in order to advance the discussion.

Vice-Chair Denise Phillips asked for a motion to approve the October 16, 2019, meeting summary.

Kathleen Moazed thought part of the October 16 meeting summary had some redundant language about the description of one of the sites.

Vice-Chair Philips thought that it was important to have the repeated language so to accurately reflect the meeting’s discussion.

Ms. Moazed also asked if the section describing the wetlands area can be restated to be clearer.

Melany Moore made a motion to approve the amended minutes, and Ari Delay seconded the motion. The majority of the PAWG approved the motion.

Approval of October 19, 2019, PAWG Meeting Summary	Ayes (10) - Lou Bordi, Ari Delay, Art Heinrich, Barbara Hooper, Karl Lusebrink, Melany Moore, Andie Reed, Sandy Sommer, Denise Phillips, Willie Wool Noes (1) - Kathleen Moazed Abstentions (0) Absent (0) Non-Voting (2) - Larry Hassett, Curt Riffle
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Vice-Chair Denise Phillips asked for a motion to approve the November 16, 2019, meeting summary.

Ms. Moazed thought that Sharon Dooley’s comment about the traffic concerns needed more clarification to indicate that Ms. Dooley is concerned about overflow parking at the Red Barn site specifically.

Mr. Delay made the motion to approve the amended minutes, and Barbara Hooper seconded the motion.

The PAWG unanimously approved the motion with the proposed edits to more clearly reflect Ms. Dooley’s comment.

Approval of the November 16, 2019, PAWG Meeting Summary	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 (0) Non-Voting (2) - Larry Hassett, Curt Riffle
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The Bay Area Ridge Trail Council (Council) provided a presentation about their goals to complete a 550-mile regional trail encircling the San Francisco Bay and the role the Preserve plays in closing gaps within the trail. The Bay Area Ridge Trail is currently 70% complete in San Mateo County with the Preserve containing one of the last remaining gaps. Liz Westbrook, Trail Director of the Council, described how San Mateo County is unique because it has bayfront, ocean front, and redwood environments and currently contains the longest continuous stretch of publicly available trails in the southern portion of the trail. The Council is currently working to close gaps near Purisima Creek and El Corte de Madera Creek Open Space Preserves and wants to support the PAWG in creating access and connections in the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve.

One of the PAWG members recalled during the development of the La Honda Creek Preserve Master Plan that the District would provide bicycle access once there are connections on both sides of the Preserve, and asked how important is it to provide access or a trailhead to the central area of the Preserve.

District staff confirmed the Master Plan includes the goal of providing access to Bay Area Ridge Trail users at a central area trailhead, previously identified at the Red Barn.

Following the Bay Area Ridge Trail presentation, Mr. Hexter asked each PAWG member to state any opportunities or flaws for each site that the group had visited, which are summarized below.

A. Event Center – Several PAWG members acknowledged this location does not provide convenient access to the center of the Preserve. Many believe there is an opportunity to update the facility and structures, provide future public access here, and expand multi-use recreation. PAWG members viewed this location as being especially appropriate for equestrian users but would also like to see it as a staging area for hikers and bikers. There are opportunities for trail users to see ocean views.

B1. Sears Ranch Road Parking Area – Expansion of Existing Lot – Some of the PAWG members expressed that the location is too far south from the central area of the Preserve and discussed the potential for increasing the current capacity of the lot as demand grows. Others commented that this location is a nice, safe facility and does provide Preserve access. PAWG members noted that there is safe

access from Highway 84. Some expressed the location could be better screened from properties that overlook the site.

B2. Sears Ranch Road Parking Area – Site West of Existing Parking Area – Some of the PAWG members indicated the location is too far south from the central area of the Preserve. Several members liked this area for staging for equestrian users and their trailers. One member suggested this could be a viable location as a safe refuge in the event of a community evacuation. As with option B1, members noted there is safe access from Highway 84.

C1. Sears Ranch Road – Former Residence Area (1 mile from existing lot) – Some members thought options C1 and C2 provide acceptable access to the central area of the Preserve; however, other members did not agree. The site may have potential for an educational facility or interpretive center and offered good Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access and opportunities for low-intensity recreation and seasonal usage. Members thought it was a safe access point but were conflicted about bringing cars further into the Preserve. One member suggested opening this location only during high-demand times. Some were concerned about access to this remote location for rangers and first responders. Some were also concerned with the compatibility with the existing cattle grazing.

C.2 Sears Ranch Road - Cattle Corral – Former Residence Area (1 mile from existing lot) – Some members indicated that the main advantage to this location over option C1 is the ability to screen parking facilities from the trail area. Some members felt that vehicle parking should be kept at the perimeter (options B1 and B2), and this location would be good for picnic and interpretive facilities.

D. Preserve Gate LH07 (West Access Gate) – Most PAWG members indicated that the site would provide central access to the Preserve. Many thought it was worth exploring as an opportunity to access trails and suggested this location for a smaller lot, potentially with limited permit-use only. Members expressed concerns about ingress/egress safety related to Highway 84 and about negative impacts on the wildlife and creek habitat.

E1. Red Barn – Area Behind Ranger Residence – PAWG members agreed that the site would provide access to the central part of the Preserve, but many expressed concerns that access from Highway 84 would be dangerous. Some members suggested that any parking lot should be small, accessed by using permits or docent tours, so people can view the Red Barn.

E2. Red Barn – Area Down Slope from Red Barn – Similar to option E1, PAWG members agreed that the site would provide access to the central part of the preserve but were concerned about safe access from Highway 84. Most members were concerned about building any staging facility near the Red Barn due to aesthetic impacts. The majority of the group indicated that this option should not be considered.

Following these discussions, interest was expressed in conducting another site tour to investigate an additional option suggested by Karl Lusebrink near Gate LH15 and to return to the area behind the ranger residence near the Red Barn. It was decided that PAWG members interested in viewing these sites could contact the District to arrange for permitted access.

NEXT MEETING HOMEWORK

The next PAWG Meeting is at La Honda Elementary School on February 6, 2020 and PAWG members should begin considering what suites of options they are interested in discussing further. In advance of the next meeting, PAWG members can also visit Gate LH15 and request permits to re-visit the area behind the ranger residence at the Red Barn site. Due to the change in the February 6, 2020 meeting location, the District will mail out meeting notices.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Sharon Dooley, a La Honda community member, shared her concerns about traffic safety along Highway 84. She expressed that having smaller lots along the highway could create overflow issues and make the road unsafe. She was concerned about a lack of traffic enforcement.

Bob Rosenberg, a La Honda community member and retired firefighter, described how access off Highway 84 is unsafe. He stated that while the area near the Red Barn would provide central access, ingress and egress from the Highway 84 is not a good idea.

Bob Dooley, a La Honda community member, asked the PAWG to look for a location with safe access. He suggested the District consider restoring the pond next to the Red Barn and stated that any parking in the Red Barn area would need to be small and strategic. Mr. Dooley supported one of the Sears Ranch Road options due to safe access from the highway and urged the District to conduct a traffic study.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice-Chair Phillips adjourned the meeting of the La Honda Public Access Working Group at 10:06 pm.



Tina Hugg, PLA, ASLA
Senior Planner