
Citizens' Advisory Committee

Memo-20-12
Meeting 20-04
July 27, 2020

To: Citizens' Advisory Committee
From: Lucas Shellhammer
Subject: Updates and Feedback Requested for Public Access Improvements at Rancho Cañada del Oro and Coyote Ridge Open Space Preserves.

REVENUE/COST

Rancho Cañada del Oro Open Space Preserve Public Access at Llagas Creek

The projected total construction cost for the project is estimated to be \$900,000. Staff is seeking grant opportunities to cover at least a portion of the costs for this project.

Coyote Ridge Open Space Preserve Public Access

The projected total construction cost for the project is estimated to be \$2,500,000. To date \$800,000 has been secured through grant funding. Staff will continue to seek additional funding opportunities for this project.

BACKGROUND

Rancho Cañada del Oro Open Space Preserve Public Access at Llagas Creek

In Fiscal Year 2018/2019, a bridge connection over Llagas Creek at Rancho Cañada del Oro Open Space Preserve, near the existing staging area and Llagas Creek Loop Trail, was identified as a priority capital improvement project. This project would serve to facilitate public and operational access to the 1,858-acre southern portion of the preserve, formerly known as Blair Ranch. Currently, staff is working with a team of consultants to develop a plan for a new accessible interpretative day-use area accessed via a new bridge crossing Llagas Creek to serve hikers, bikers, equestrians, and visitors for educational programming.

To determine project feasibility, site inventories and analyses were conducted between spring and summer of 2019 for biological and cultural resources, hydrology and hydraulics, and geotechnical conditions. The engineering firm, Waterways Consulting, and landscape architecture firm, Restoration Design Group (RDG), have used these studies to develop initial designs for a bridge and day-use area complimenting the existing Llagas Creek Loop Trail and staging area at Casa Loma Road. See Exhibit A, *Project Location and Site Plan*, for general site location and proposed features in relation to the existing staging area.

A public joint Use and Management/Citizens' Advisory Committee Meeting was held on site in April 2018. Members of the Committee and public who attended the meeting found the proposed project to

be in keeping with the intent for access to other areas of the preserve and a desirable addition to the existing staging area and accessible loop trail at Casa Loma Road. A project webpage was created in December 2019 to provide regular project updates to the public. Through the website, there is an opportunity for members of the public to review project information, as well as sign up to receive project updates. An email blast to interested stakeholders and a mailing providing the announcement of the public meetings for this project was provided in advance to allow the public an opportunity to attend the meetings or provide written comments.

Conceptual design alternatives for the Llagas Creek bridge and day-use area were developed and reviewed by an interdepartmental staff and consultant team from January – March 2020. Next steps will be to develop construction documentation and determine permitting and CEQA requirements. Additionally, staff is currently scoping a feasibility study to ascertain the best routing to reach the portion of the preserve formerly known as Blair Ranch while minimizing impacts to natural and cultural resources. Once the bridge and day-use area are completed, visitors will be able to access the southern reaches of the preserve through our self-guided “Open Access Days” program in the short term, with longer term multi-use trail access based on the results of the feasibility study. The schedule for the bridge and day-use area will be based on permitting and CEQA analysis as well as funding and grant awards. Funding for construction is expected in Fiscal Year 2021-2022.

Coyote Ridge Open Space Preserve Public Access

The Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority (Authority) received an award of funding approval from the Gordon & Betty Moore Foundation on November 10, 2014 for \$1,400,000 towards the purchase of the 1,831-acre United Technologies Corporation Coyote Ridge Property, now known as the Coyote Ridge Open Space Preserve (Preserve). On June 3, 2015, the Moore Foundation modified the agreement to reallocate the Foundation’s grant to support \$1,000,000 towards acquisition expenses and \$400,000 towards public access improvements. The Authority applied the Moore Foundation’s grant of \$1,000,000 toward the purchase of the 1,831-acre property in October 2015 and has applied the remaining \$400,000 towards the planning and design costs for the public access improvements. In addition, \$400,000 in funding has been secured through the Metropolitan Transit Commission’s Priority Conservation Area (PCA) grant program.

Coyote Ridge Open Space Preserve will be a new preserve opened to public access by the Open Space Authority. The preserves’ resources, proximity to San Jose, and connection to Coyote Valley presents a unique opportunity for education and interpretation, equitable public access, wildlife connectivity, and conservation. The preserve will include a parking and gathering area accessible by Malech Road, a sustainable trail network, and a staging area with a restroom, trailhead, and interpretive features and signage. Visitors will be able to climb nearly 1,400 feet in elevation through grasslands up to the ridgeline for sweeping views of Santa Clara Valley and spring wildflower displays. Access to the ridgeline will complete a nearly 3-mile segment of the Bay Area Ridge Trail. The goals of this project are to protect rare habitat and sensitive species while providing a high-quality experience through our Open Access Weekend events and docent-led programs. A partnership with the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council will also provide additional guided access to the preserve.

To determine project feasibility, site inventories and analyses were conducted between spring 2019 through summer of 2020 for biological and cultural resources, and topography. The civil engineering firm, Sandis, and landscape architecture firm, Restoration Design Group (RDG), have used these studies to develop initial designs for a staging area and other public access amenities throughout the preserve

including shaded rest areas. See Exhibit B, *Location and Phase 1 Master Plan*, for site location and proposed phase one public access features.

A meeting of the Use and Management Committee as along with members of the public was held in November 2019 with a presentation followed by a field visit to the Malech Road staging area site. Participants were provided with the project context, background, a summary of the analysis and feasibility studies as well as the conceptual design for the project. Members of the Committee and public who attended the meeting found the proposed project to be keeping with the intent to protect resources while providing public access to this unique landscape. A project webpage was created in August 2019 to provide regular project updates to the public. Through the website, there is an opportunity for members of the public to review project information, as well as sign up to receive project updates. An email blast to interested stakeholders and a mailing providing the announcement of the public meetings for this project was provided in advance to allow the public an opportunity to attend the meetings or provide written comments.

Conceptual design alternatives for the Coyote Ridge Open Space Preserve Public Access were developed and reviewed by an interdepartmental staff and consultant team from September 2019 – April 2020. Schematic design was submitted mid-July and is currently being reviewed by staff. Next steps are to begin construction documents, County of Santa Clara permitting, Valley Habitat Agency permitting, and CEQA documentation. Once the staging area is completed, the public will have access to focused areas within the 1,800-acre preserve through the many public facilities included in the design. Construction is anticipated to begin in fall 2021 with public access opening by spring 2022.

DISCUSSION

Rancho Cañada del Oro Llagas Creek Bridge and Day-Use Area

The Bridge and Day-Use Area public access project will provide improved public and operational access to the southern portion of Rancho Cañada del Oro Open Space Preserve. In addition, the design will facilitate the Authority's accessible environmental education programming by providing a series of use areas designed to accommodate groups of varying size. The design incorporates existing natural features and provides additional features such as picnic tables, seating, and interpretive elements. The bridge crossing and meadow day-use area will be designed for accessibility, meeting Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) *Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas*, connecting the existing Llagas Creek Loop Trail (a paved accessible trail) to provide an experience for visitors with a range of abilities. The bridge will also protect stream habitat by eliminating the need to ford the creek.

Staff will provide an update on the project design progress, scope, schedule, and budget including a summary of feedback from the July 23, 2020 Board of Directors meeting. Following the presentation, staff will request feedback and comments from the Citizens' Advisory Committee and members of the public.

Coyote Ridge Open Space Preserve Public Access

The Authority's environmental consultants, including Vollmar Natural Lands Consulting, H.T. Harvey & Associates, and Basin Research Associates, have completed the majority of inventory and analysis including biological and cultural resource surveys.

The Authority is currently working with landscape architecture firm, Restoration Design Group (RDG), to provide schematic site design alternatives for public access improvements. Proposed Phase One improvements include a central gathering place for preserve visitors at the Malech Road parking and

staging area, accessible picnic and overlooks, rehabilitation of existing ranch roads and creation of new trails, and development of trail amenities including rest areas and overlooks with integrated educational interpretation. The lower portion of the preserve, adjacent to the Malech Road staging area, will provide accessible trails and amenities meeting Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) *Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas* public access to provide experiences for visitors with a broad range of abilities. Features will integrate well-designed and compact “light on the land” layouts to minimize grading and disturbance to natural resources. Features in this location will also compliment the Authority’s educational programming targeting Deep Engagement Communities identified in the *Understanding Our Community* report through a longer term goal of providing transportation from schools in underserved communities to visit, experience, and learn about the unique resources at the preserve and to experience wild nature within 10 miles of downtown San Jose. Public access features are clustered at Malech Road for two primary reasons including to reduce impacts on the larger preserve habitat and to allow access to a larger group of visitors who may not have constraints to hiking the ridge. The Authority intends to additionally support programming to provide alternative access options to the ridgeline for users of a range of abilities.

Staff will provide an update on the project design progress, scope, schedule, and budget. Following the presentation staff will request feedback and comments from the Citizens’ Advisory Committee and members of the public.

RECOMMENDATION

This item is to provide the Citizens’ Advisory Committee and members of the public with information on the proposed project and to seek feedback from meeting attendees. A presentation will be provided and added to the project website following the meeting.

Attachment(s): *Exhibit A -- Project Location and Site Plan*
 Exhibit B -- Project Location and Phase 1 Master Plan



Public Comment Received

Meeting: Citizens' Advisory Committee
Date: July 27, 2020
Item: Updates and Feedback Requested for Public Access Improvements at Rancho Cañada del Oro and Coyote Ridge Open Space Preserves

Comments below were received regarding the proposed Public Access Improvements at Coyote Ridge Open Space Preserve only.

Total # Comments: 3

Name:	Organization:	Comment:
Garnetta Annable	CAC Member	Authority should provide access to ridge via Metcalf Road entrance for community members with limited mobility.
Steve Mink	CAC Member	Accessible programming for seniors is important.
Justin Fields	CAC Member	If there is no barrier to keep people out of the staging area at night, there is the potential for vandalism, dumping, etc.

This reflects comments from meeting participants and does not include the full discussion that took place, including member questions and staff responses. For a full audible transcript from the meeting, please contact the Clerk of the Board's Office (clerk@openspaceauthority.org).



Coyote Ridge Open Space Preserve Public Access Project Updates

Meeting of the Citizens' Advisory Committee
July 27, 2020

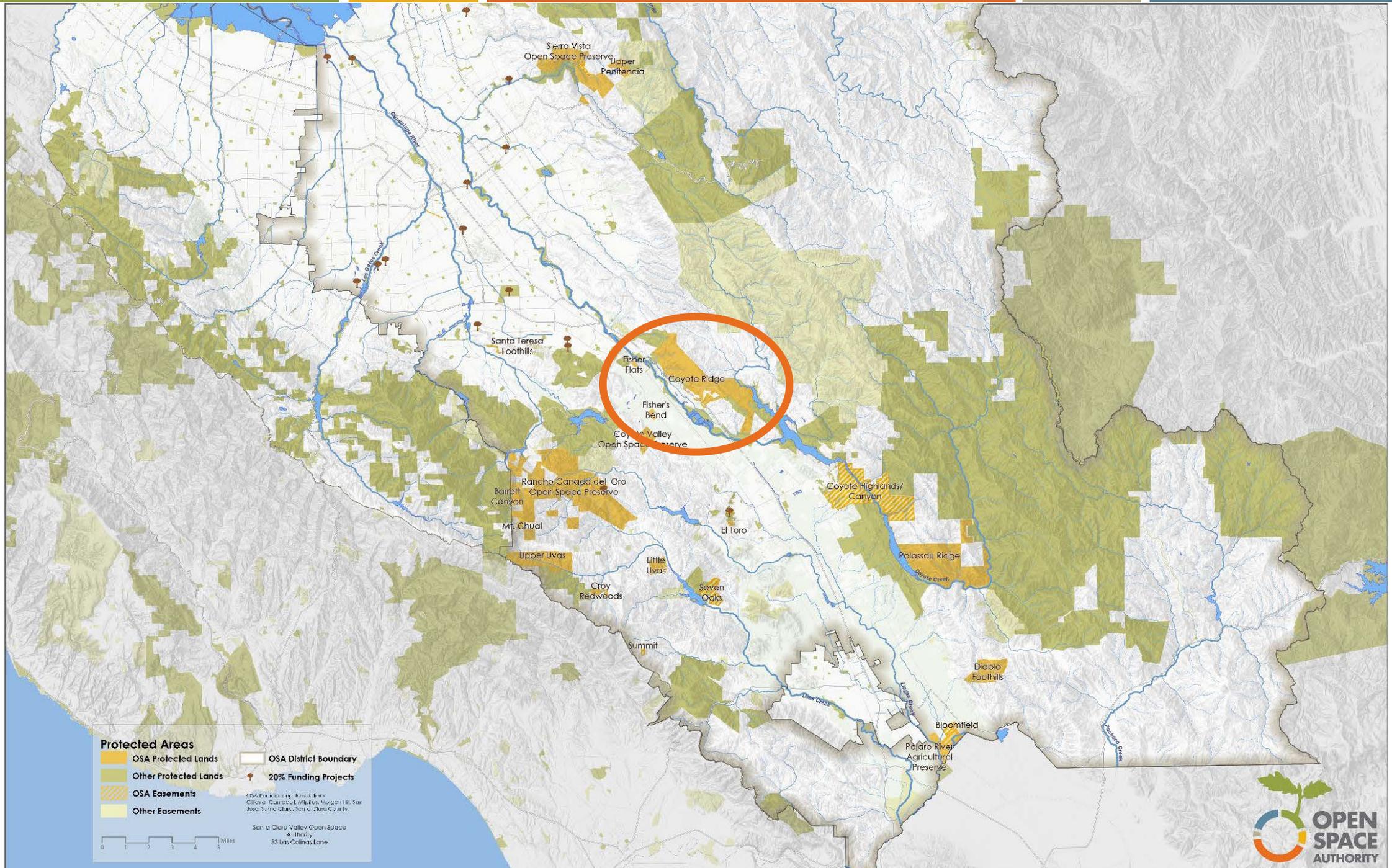
Coyote Ridge Project Goals

- Protect and rehabilitate sensitive habitats and natural communities.
- Open preserve for docent-guided public access in partnership with Bay Area Ridge Trail Council.
- Assist Field Operations in determining feasibility of parking reservation system.
- Create a central gathering place and staging area at Malech Road.
- Develop up to a 7-mile trail network.
- Develop trail amenities including overlooks, rest areas, and interpretation.
- Secure 30-75% of project costs from grant funding.



Coyote Ridge Guiding Feedback

- Provide adequate amenities near Malech Rd. staging area. This will be the only area that many users experience.
- Consolidate the footprint of built features.
- Provide shaded overlooks along Ridge Rd. as a destination, and for use by Bay Area Ridge Trail and other docent events.
- Integrate interpretation into site elements (trellises, etc.) to reduce clutter and number of built items.
- Utilize existing ranch roads - limit new trails construction.
- Invoking farming heritage of Coyote Valley. Palette including weathered steel, wood, and native stone.



Protected Areas

- OSA Protected Lands
- Other Protected Lands
- OSA Easements
- Other Easements

OSA District boundary

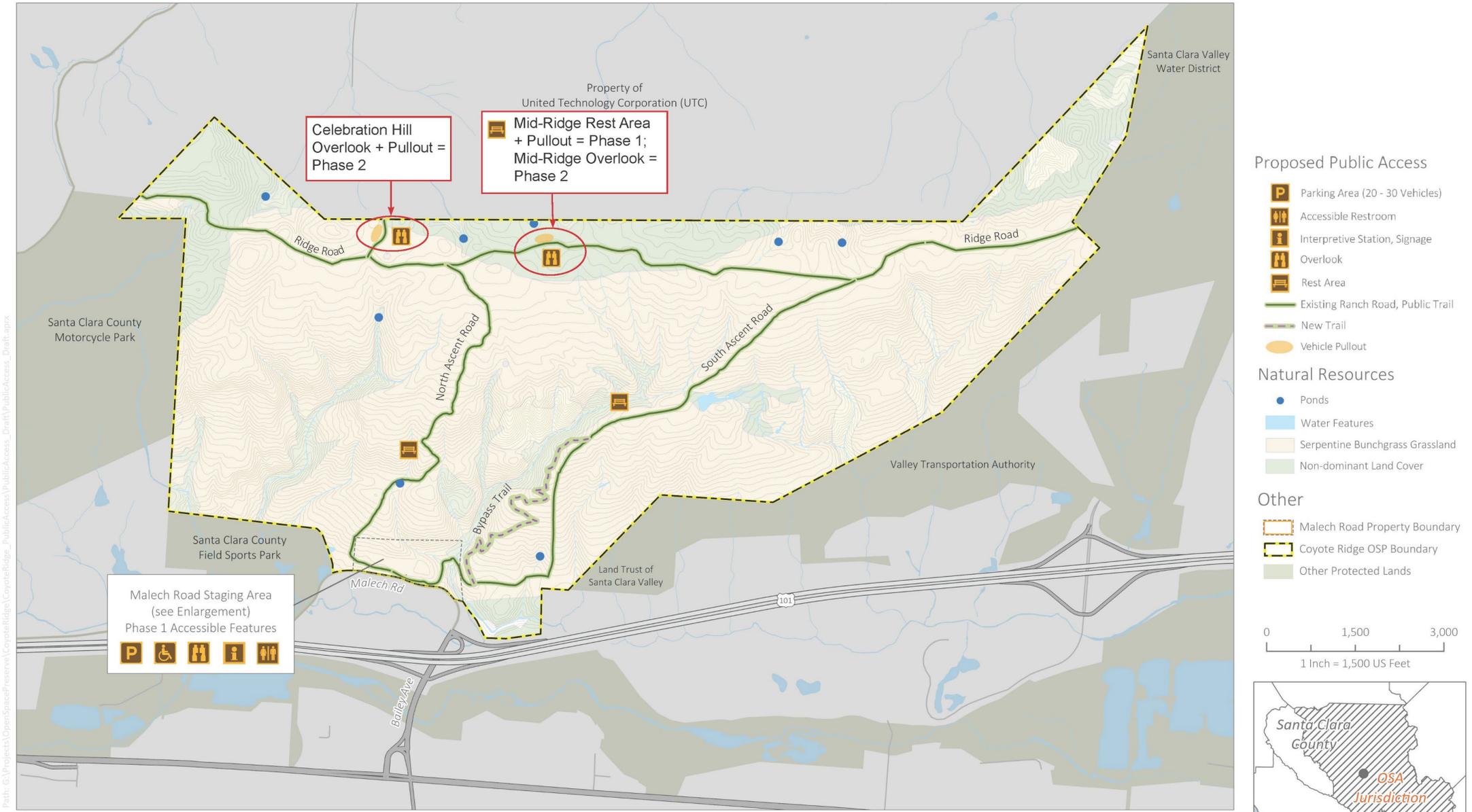
20% Funding Projects

OSA Participating Jurisdictions:
 Cities of Campbell, Gilroy, Morgan Hill, San Jose, Santa Clara, Santa Clara County.

Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority
 33 Las Colinas Lane

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles





Proposed Public Access

- Parking Area (20 - 30 Vehicles)
- Accessible Restroom
- Interpretive Station, Signage
- Overlook
- Rest Area
- Existing Ranch Road, Public Trail
- New Trail
- Vehicle Pullout

Natural Resources

- Ponds
- Water Features
- Serpentine Bunchgrass Grassland
- Non-dominant Land Cover

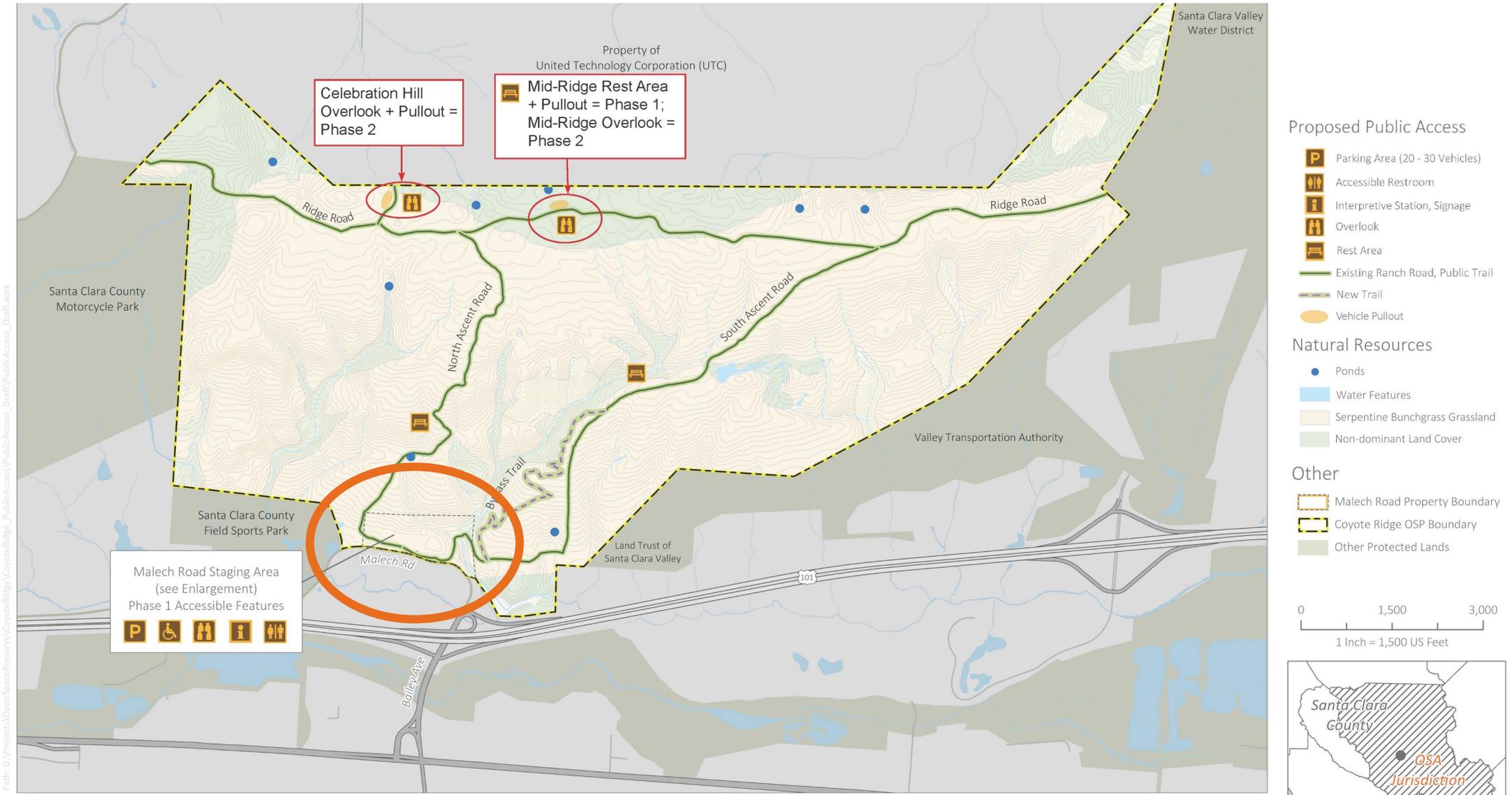
Other

- Malech Road Property Boundary
- Coyote Ridge OSP Boundary
- Other Protected Lands

Malech Road Staging Area
(see Enlargement)
Phase 1 Accessible Features



Malech Road Staging Area



CONNECTOR TO NORTH ASCENT TRAIL

5' typical width,
10% average grade

OVERLOOK

Excellent views above retaining wall, shade structure, trellis, multiple picnic tables

INTERPRETIVE THEME

Wildlife Linkages

INTERPRETIVE PROTOTYPE

Cutouts and signage on lean rail

CUSTOM BUILDING

Vault toilet, storage closet

18' x 9'

CENTRAL GATHERING AREA

Interpretive signage, shade structure
See Page 4

WEST PICNIC AREA

Low retaining wall nestles platform into hillside shade structure, picnic table

EAST PICNIC AREA

Nice views southeast to drainage

OVERFLOW PARKING

22 spaces

PARKING

22 spaces

BICYCLE RACKS

TIMBER BOX STEPS

KNOLL OVERLOOK

Excellent views to valley
Accessible to the top
Direct path with stairs makes a loop
Seatwall incorporated into the overlook

INTERPRETIVE THEME

Endemic species to Coyote Ridge

INTERPRETIVE PROTOTYPE

Lean rail integrated signage

-  ACCESSIBLE SURFACING
-  TWO-RAIL FENCE
-  SINGLE RAIL GUARDRAIL
-  NATIVE BOULDER - REPOSITIONED
-  BENCH
-  PICNIC TABLE
-  WAYFINDING BOLLARD

MALECH ROAD

RETAINING WALL/
ENTRY SIGN

SERVICE PARKING

GATE

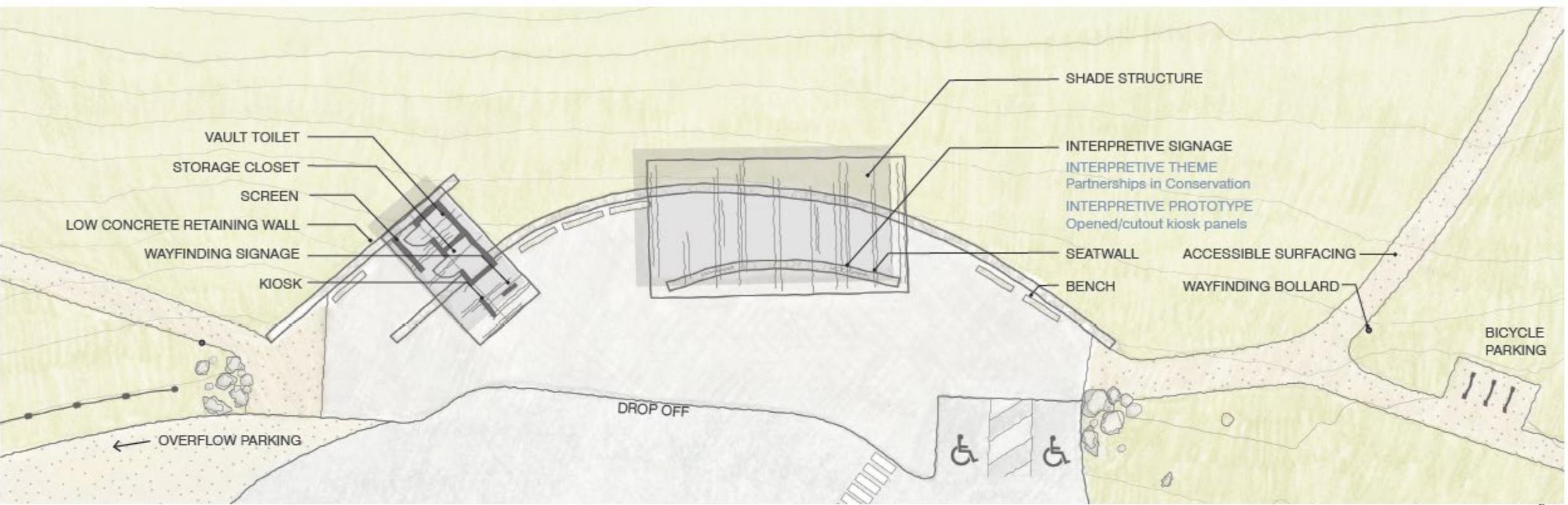
GATE

FUTURE RIDGE TRAIL CONNECTION

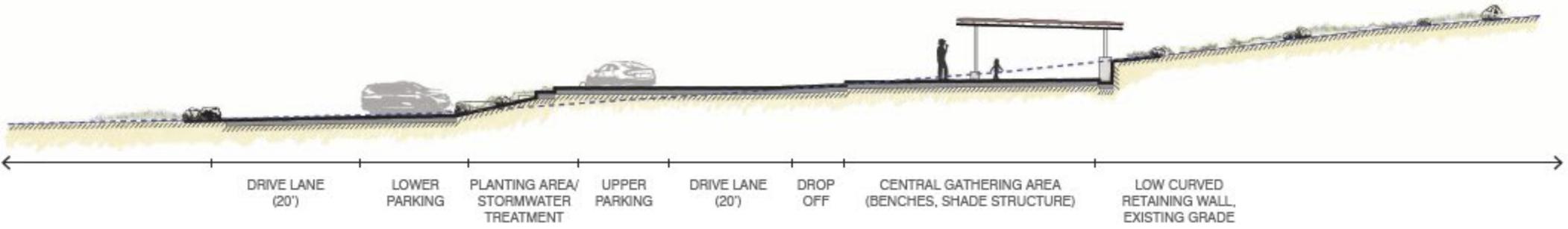
EXISTING RANCH ROAD

PLAN OVERVIEW





STAGING AREA ENLARGEMENT

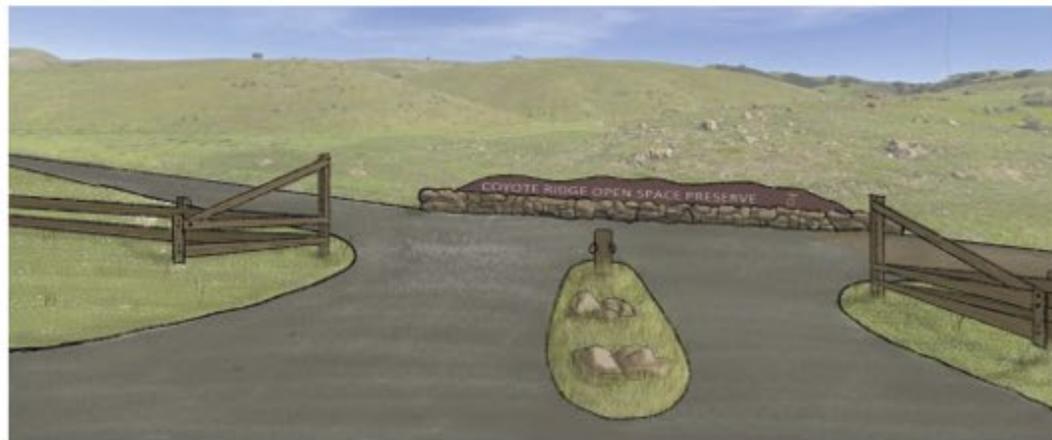


PARKING LOT SECTION





CENTRAL GATHERING AREA PERSPECTIVE



ENTRY GATE AND SIGNAGE PERSPECTIVE



BAY CHECKERSPOT BUTTERFLY PATTERNING SHADOW CAST



WOOD AND METAL MATERIALS INSPIRED BY RANCHING PAST



SINGLE RAIL GUARDRAIL



TWO-RAIL FENCE



WAYFINDING BOLLARD



PARK TREAD



PERMEABLE PAVERS



POROUS CONCRETE

MATERIAL IMAGES

Rest Areas



Proposed Public Access

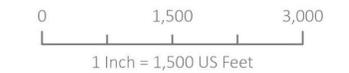
- Parking Area (20 - 30 Vehicles)
- Accessible Restroom
- Interpretive Station, Signage
- Overlook
- Rest Area
- Existing Ranch Road, Public Trail
- New Trail
- Vehicle Pullout

Natural Resources

- Ponds
- Water Features
- Serpentine Bunchgrass Grassland
- Non-dominant Land Cover

Other

- Malech Road Property Boundary
- Coyote Ridge OSP Boundary
- Other Protected Lands



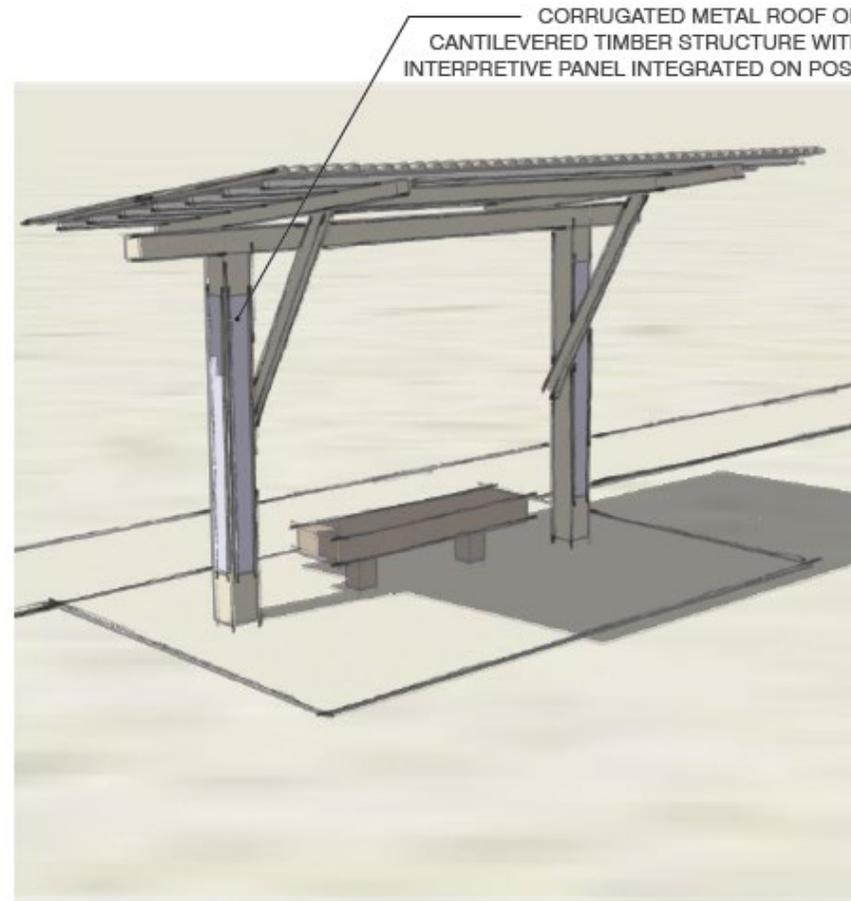
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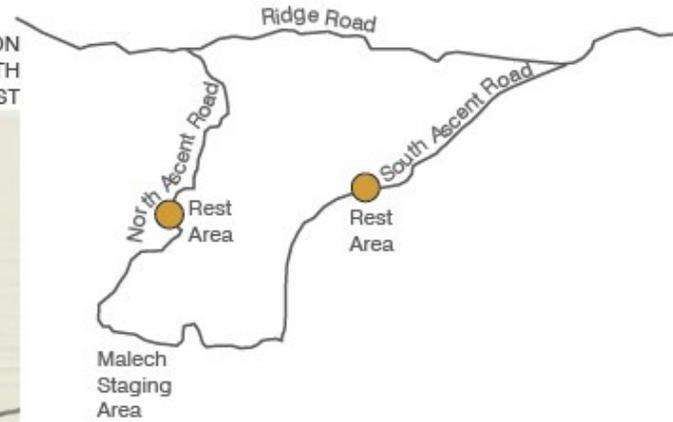
TIMBER BEAMS ON STEEL PEDESTAL
BENCH ALTERNATIVE 2



INTERPRETIVE PANELS ON POSTS



TIMBER SHADE STRUCTURE - TRAIL BEHIND



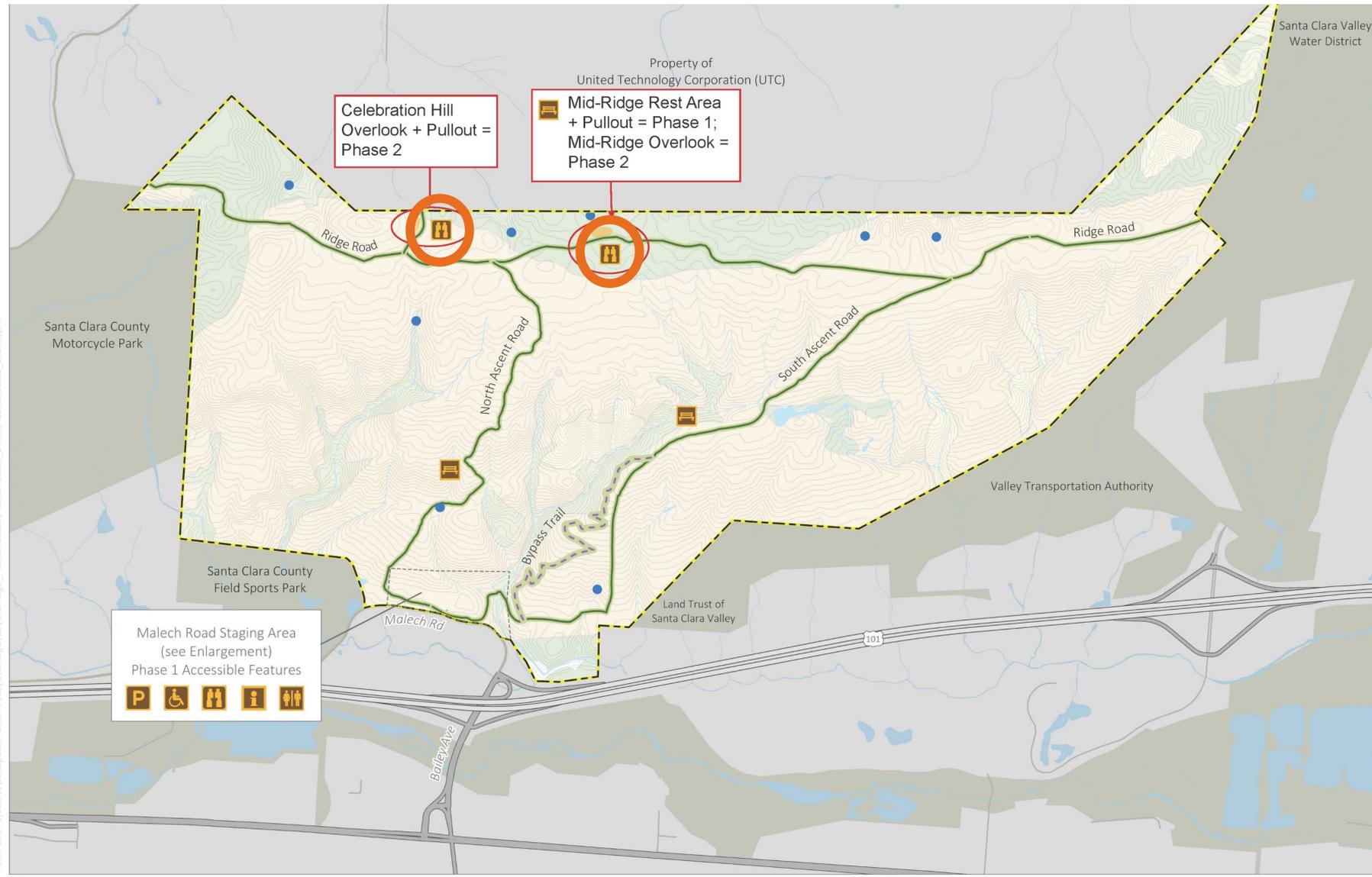
REST AREA LOCATIONS

REST AREA SUMMARY
PERMANENT SHADE STRUCTURE
REPEATABLE PROTOTYPE

INTERPRETIVE THEME
North Ascent - Water/Endemic Species
South Ascent - Endangered Species

INTERPRETIVE PROTOTYPE
Integrated panel

Overlooks – Future Phase



Celebration Hill Overlook + Pullout = Phase 2

Mid-Ridge Rest Area + Pullout = Phase 1; Mid-Ridge Overlook = Phase 2

Malech Road Staging Area (see Enlargement) Phase 1 Accessible Features

-
-
-
-
-

Proposed Public Access

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Natural Resources

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- Non-dominant Land Cover

Other

- Malech Road Property Boundary
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PLAN OVERVIEW



MARKERS INDICATE ARRIVAL TO OVERLOOKS



CUTOUTS CORRESPOND WITH INTERPRETIVE THEME



MATERIALS ARE DURABLE AND DESIGN IS REPRODUCIBLE
MARKERS

SITE SUMMARY
 20-25 PEOPLE
 FLEXIBLE USE FOR GROUPS
 VIEWS TO MOUNT HAMILTON AND OUTCROP
 INTERPRETIVE THEME
 Wildlife Linkages
 Nature Perseveres
 INTERPRETIVE PROTOTYPE
 Astrolabe/oculus at edge of deck





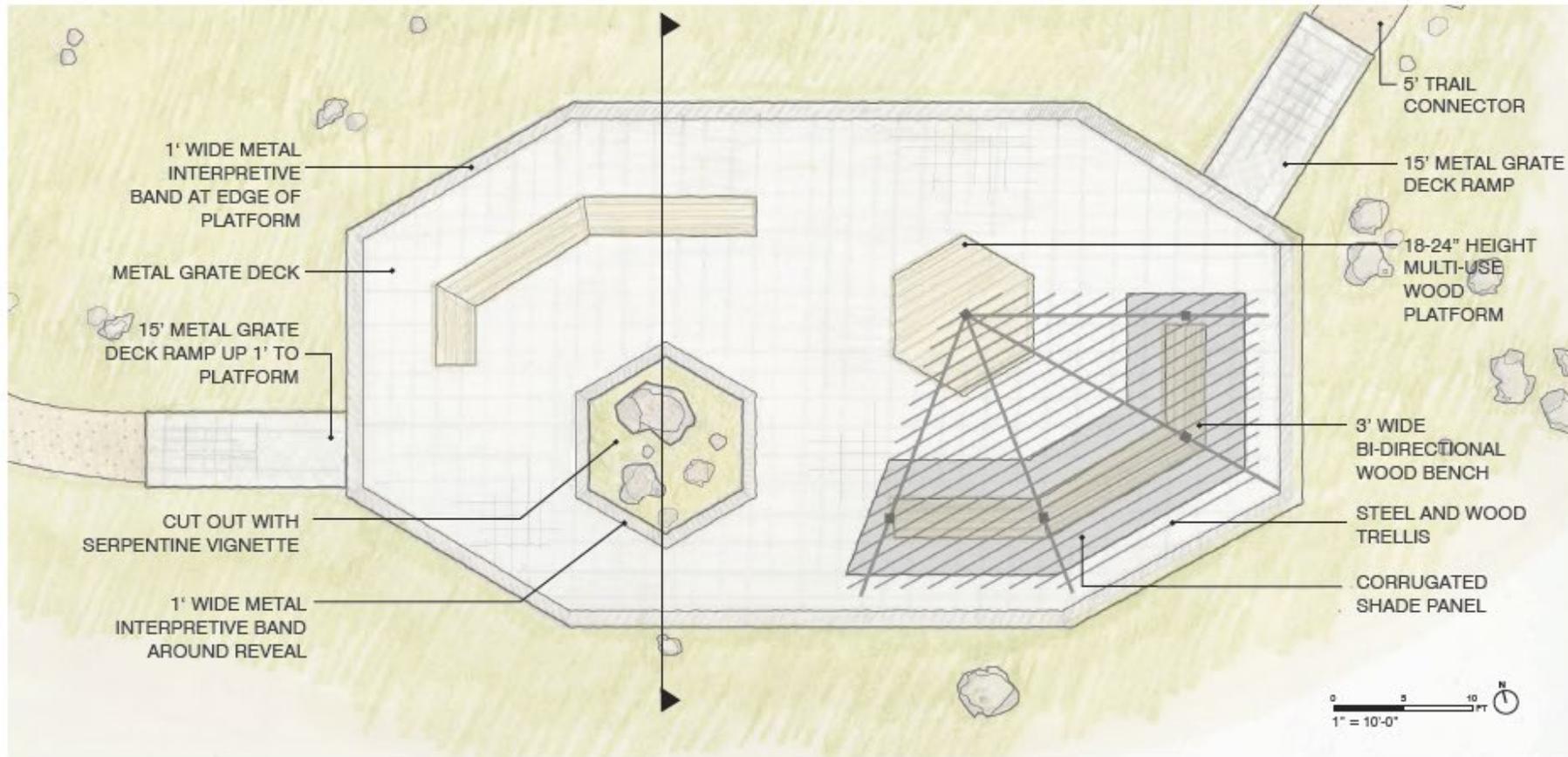
INTERPRETIVE ELEMENTS ENGRAVED AT EDGE OF DECK



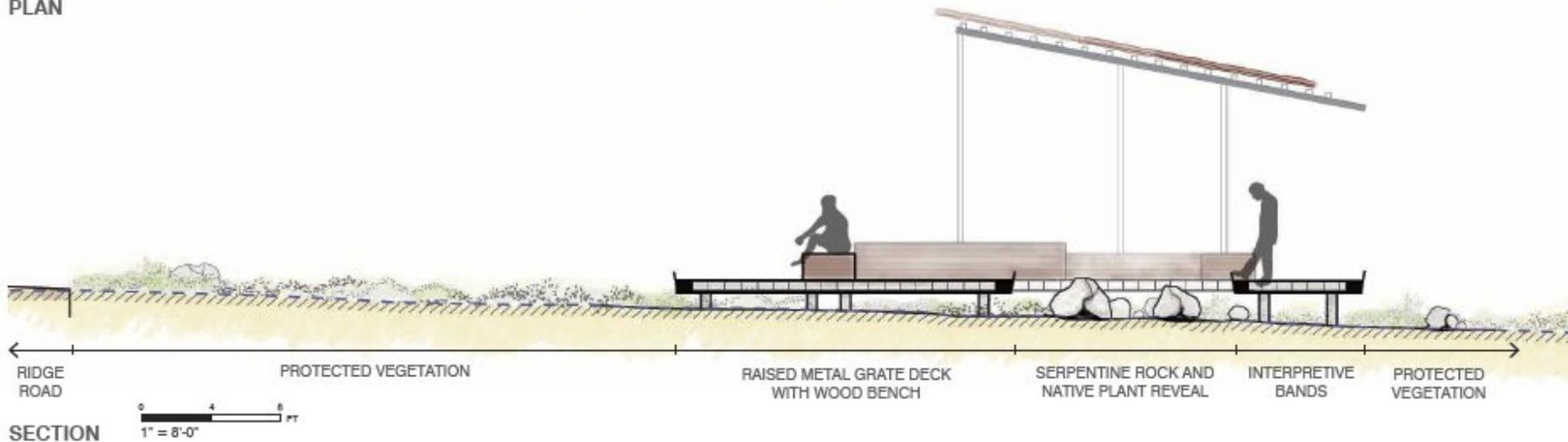
WOOD MULTI-USE PLATFORM ON METAL GRATE DECK



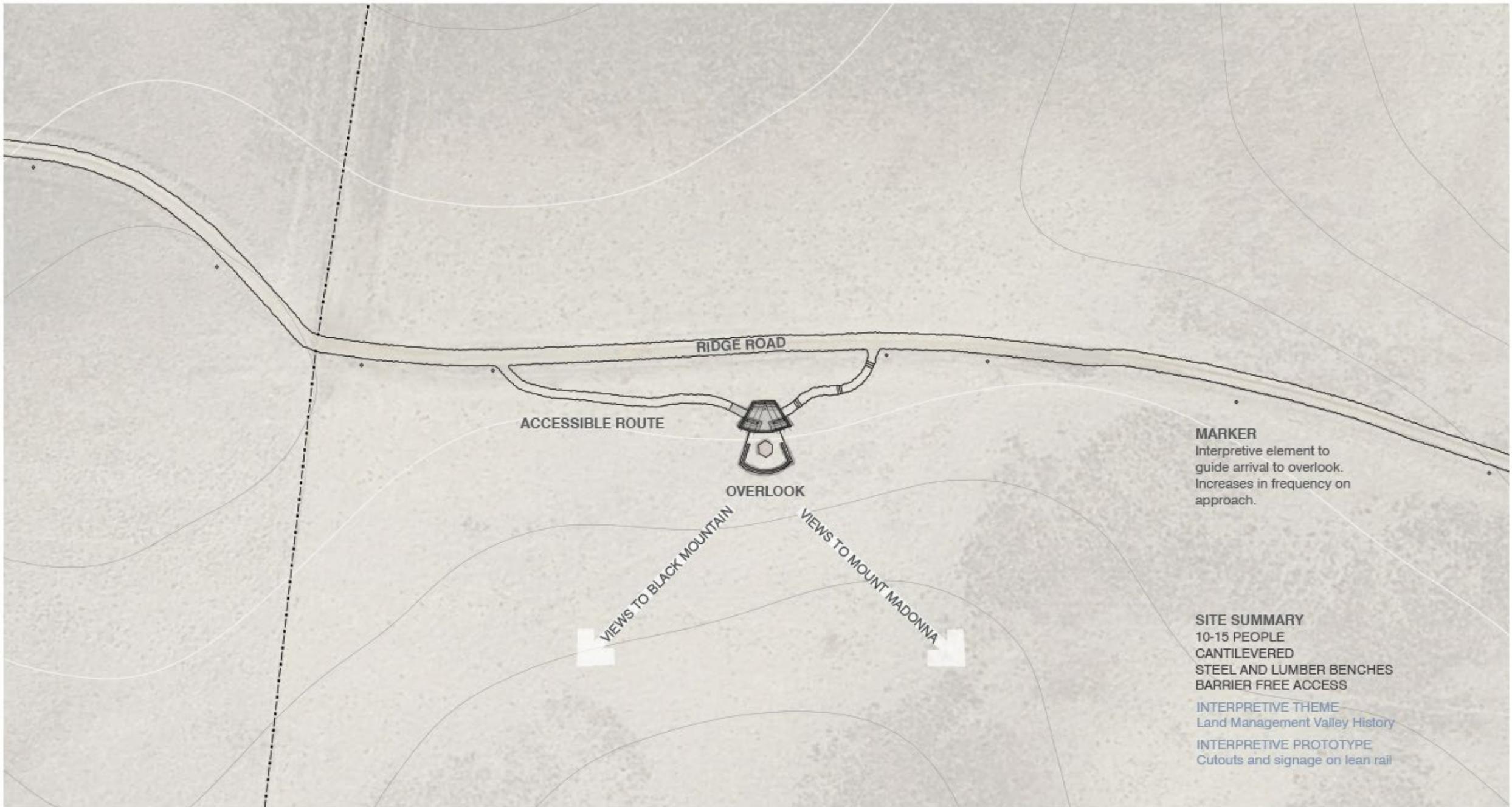
STEEL AND WOOD BENCH ON METAL GRATE DECK



PLAN



SECTION



PLAN OVERVIEW



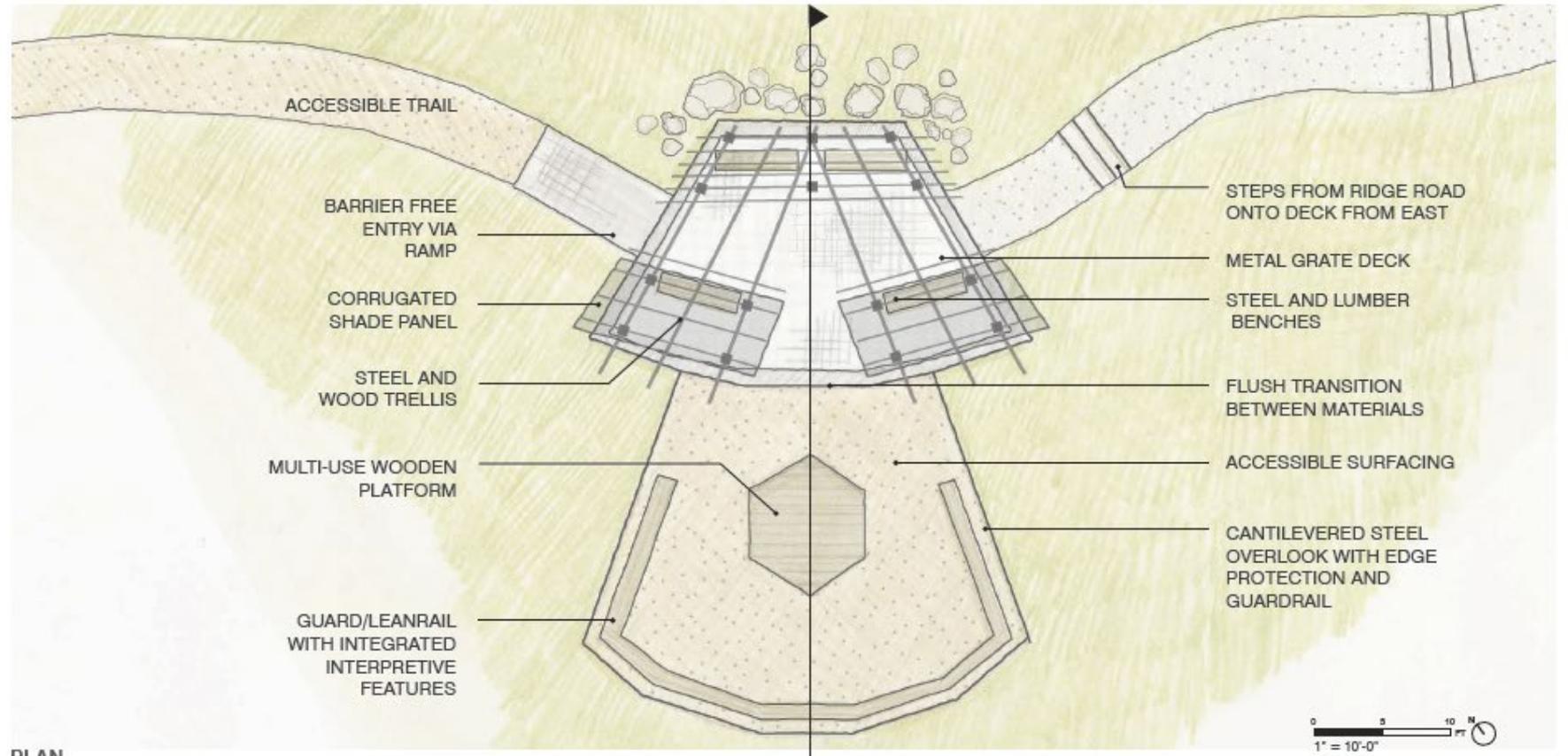
MULTI-USE WOODEN PLATFORM



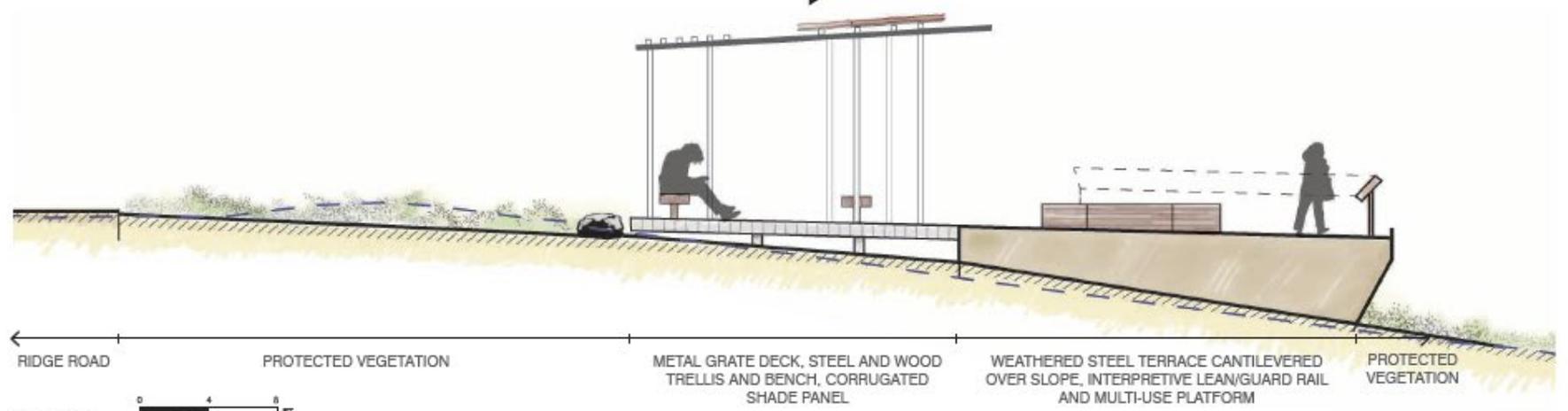
GUARD/LEAN RAIL



INTERPRETIVE CUTOUTS



PLAN



SECTION

Preliminary Project Budget – Phase 1

Project Budget	Amount
Construction Costs (includes contractor markups and design contingency)	\$2,500,000
Escalation and Construction Contingency	\$200,000
CEQA, Permitting, Engineering, Design, Interpretation	\$400,000
County of Santa Clara Permitting	\$200,000
VHA Permitting (partially funded through land-in-lieu conservation easement)	\$400,000
PROPOSED PROJECT BUDGET FY20/21 + 21/22	\$3,700,000

Grants and "Revenue"	Amount
Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation	\$400,000
Priority Conservation Area	\$400,000
VHA Land-in-Lieu (estimated)	\$400,000

Note: estimates are preliminary and subject to change



TIMELINE

SUMMER/FALL 2019

- Project Planning and Design
- Use & Management Committee Meeting – November 14, 2019
- Develop Project Design Alternatives

SUMMER/FALL 2020

- Preferred Alternative/Design Development
- Citizens' Advisory Committee Meeting – July 27, 2020
- Board of Directors Meeting – August 27, 2020
- Initiate Environmental Review

WINTER/SPRING 2021

- Develop Project Permit Applications
- Prepare Design Construction Documents
- Final CEQA Documentation

SUMMER/FALL 2021

- Secure Permits
- Construction Bid Documents and Contract Award
- Begin Construction

Note: schedule is subject to change based on funding and permit requirements.



Discussion