
R-20-67
Meeting 20-14
July 23, 2020

AGENDA ITEM #2

To: Board of Directors
Open Space Authority

From: Andrea Mackenzie
General Manager

SUBJECT

Rancho Cañada del Oro Open Space Preserve Public Access at Llagas Creek: Update and Feedback Requested

REVENUE/COST

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.

BACKGROUND

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 Map*, for 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.

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 determining 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 the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis as well as funding and grant awards. Funding for construction is expected in Fiscal Year 2021/2022.

DISCUSSION

The Rancho Cañada del Oro Llagas Creek Bridge and Day-Use Area public access project will provide improved public and operational access. 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. Following the presentation staff will request feedback and comments from the Board of Directors and members of the public. Staff will also seek feedback from the Citizens’ Advisory Committee and public attendees at the upcoming meeting on July 27, 2020.

RECOMMENDATION

This item is to provide the Board 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.

Prepared by:
Lucas Shellhammer

Attachment(s): Exhibit A – Project Location Map



Public Comment Received

Meeting: Board of Directors
Date: July 23, 2020
Item: Rancho Cañada del Oro Open Space Preserve Public Access at Llagas Creek:
Update and Feedback

Total # Comments: 4

Name:	Organization:	Comment:
Ted Stroll	Individual	Suggests that current road network at Blair Ranch is very steep and sun-baked. Recommends establishing a new trail out to pond/reservoir with turtles and then switch back up.
John Parker	Santa Cruz Mountain Bikers	Support for project providing public access to backcountry.
Virginia Holtz	Former Board Member	Support for project and creative design that provides for users of different abilities and interests to engage the senses not just as a walking trail.
Melissa Hippard	Santa Clara County Parks	Support for project.

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).

The background of the slide is a wide-angle photograph of a natural landscape. It features rolling hills with a mix of dry, golden-brown grass and patches of lush green trees. The terrain is hilly and undulating, with some areas appearing more densely wooded than others. In the far distance, a layer of white fog or low clouds fills the valleys between the hills, creating a sense of depth. The sky is a clear, vibrant blue, suggesting a bright, sunny day. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic, typical of a natural preserve.

Rancho Cañada del Oro Open Space Preserve Llagas Creek Bridge and Day-use Area Project Updates

Meeting of the Board of Directors
July 23, 2020



Agenda

Bridge and Day Use Area Design

Overview

- Llagas Creek Bridge
- Day-use area

Trail Access and Use Feasibility

- Sustainable trail access to former Blair Ranch

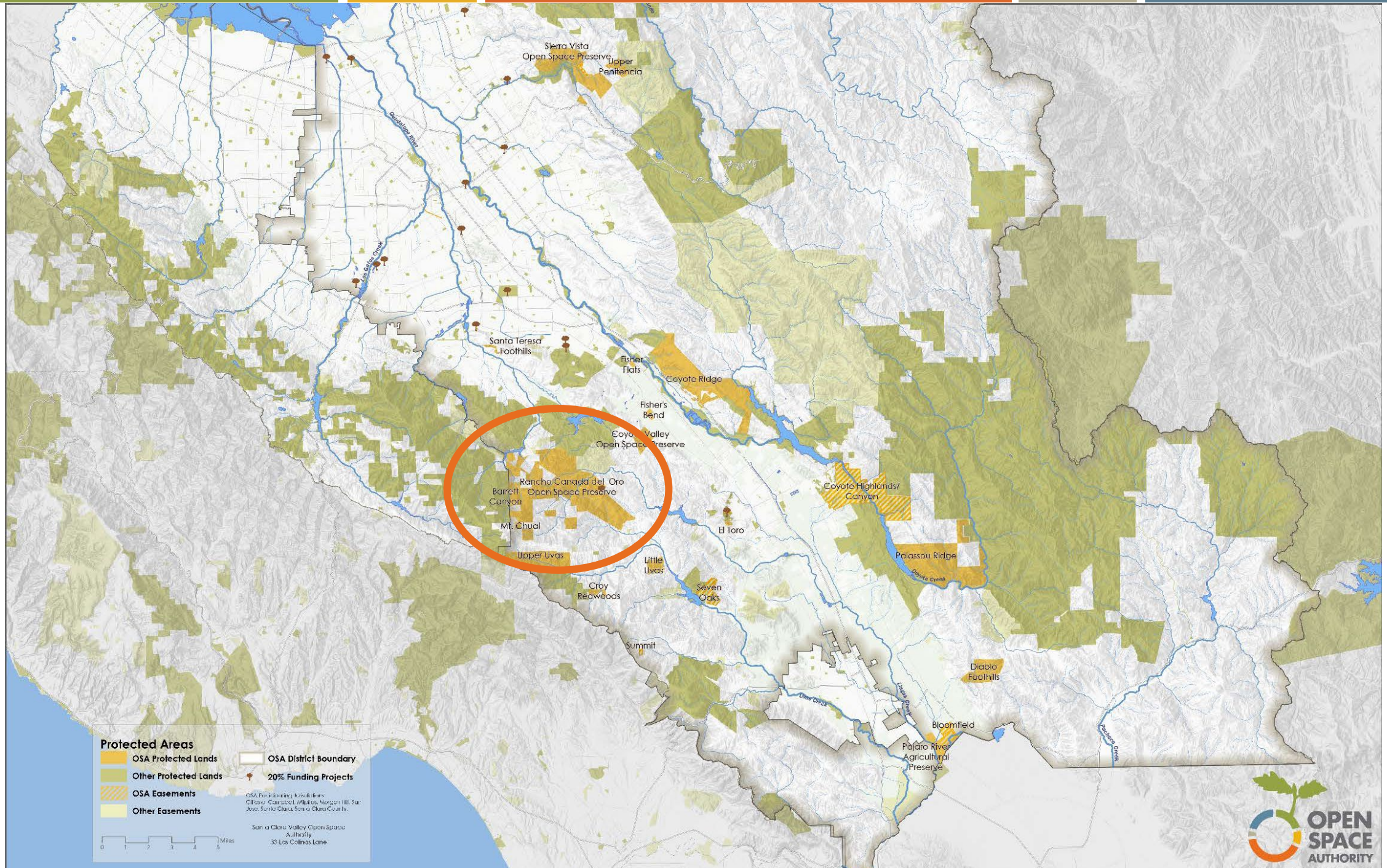
Funding and Schedule

Discussion and Feedback



Project Goals

- Install a bridge over Llagas Creek to Provide improved access (public and operational) to meadow day-use area and former Blair Ranch property.
- Create an ABA accessible interpretive trail and day-use area at south meadow.
- Provide flexible use areas to accommodate a variety of environmental education programs.
- Explore options for additional future public access to Blair Ranch with Trail Access and Use Feasibility Study.



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.

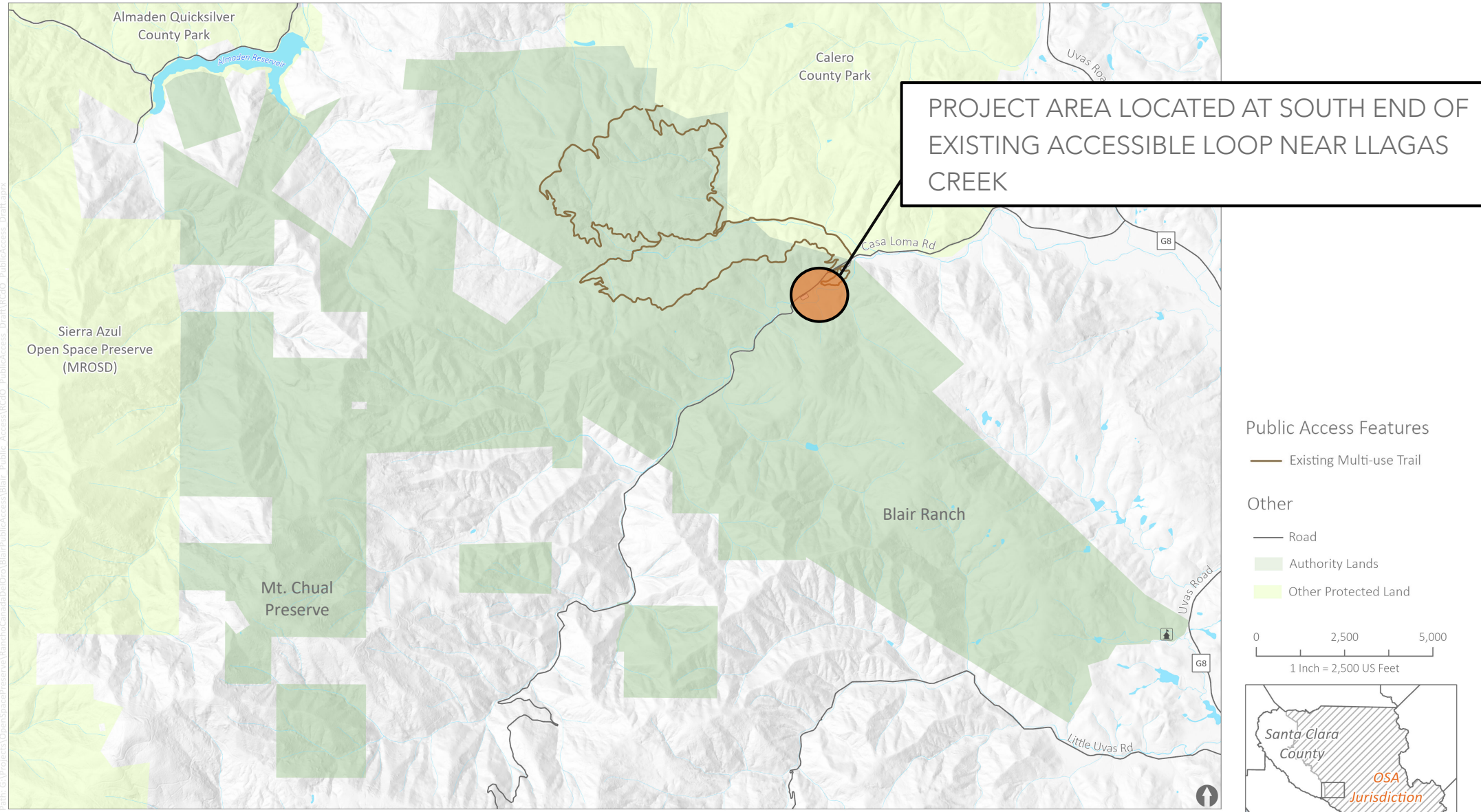
Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority
 33 Las Colinas Lane

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles



RANCHO CAÑADA DEL ORO OPEN SPACE PRESERVE

Preserve Map



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Public Access Features

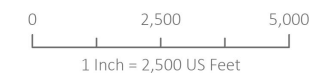
Existing Multi-use Trail

Other

Road






Authority Lands

Other Protected Land








Proposed Project Features

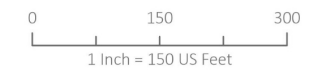
-  Interpretation
-  Day-Use Features
-  Trail Access Routes
-  Bridge Crossing
-  Limit of Work

Existing Public Access Features

-  Trail
-  Road
-  Staging Area

Other

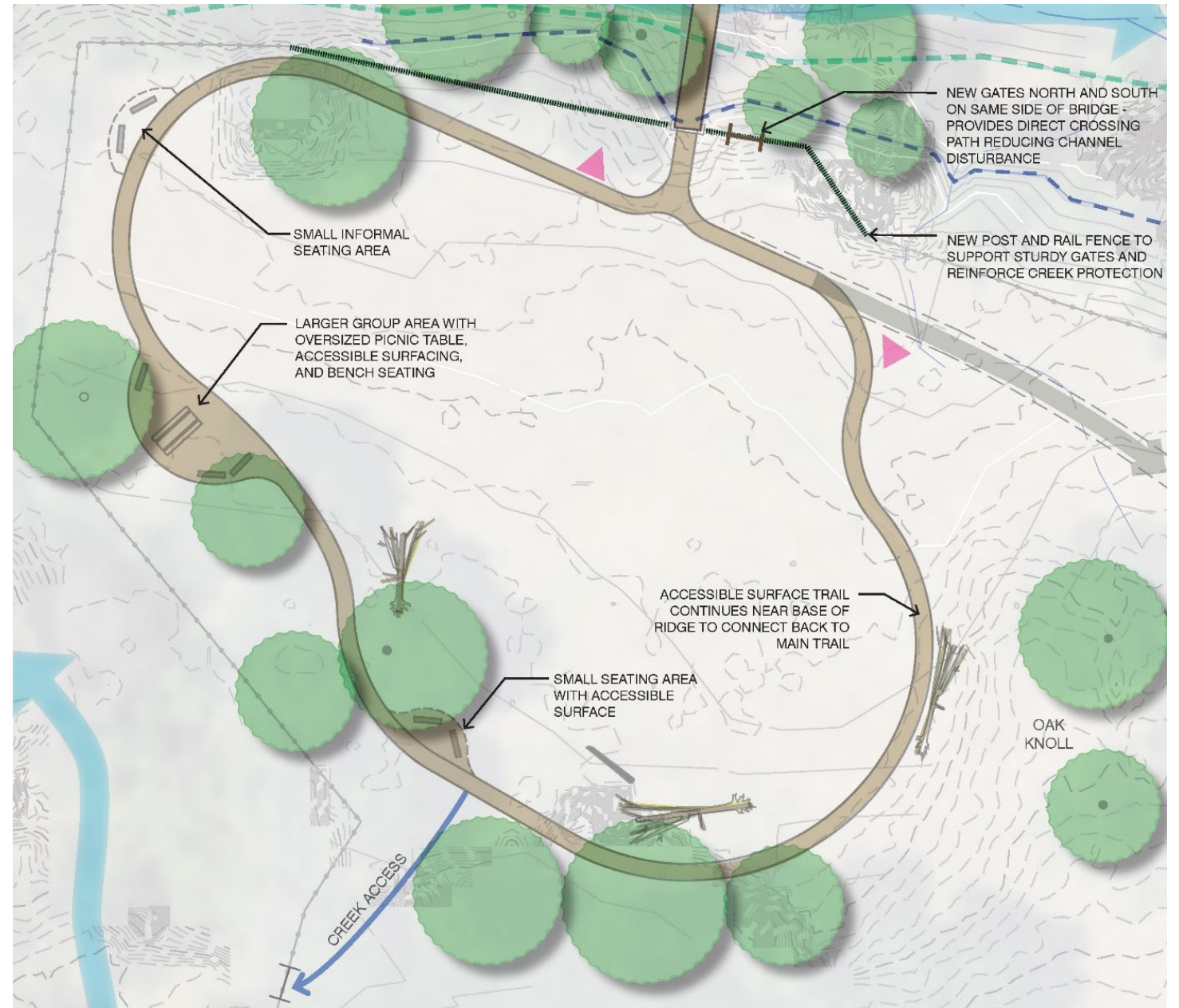
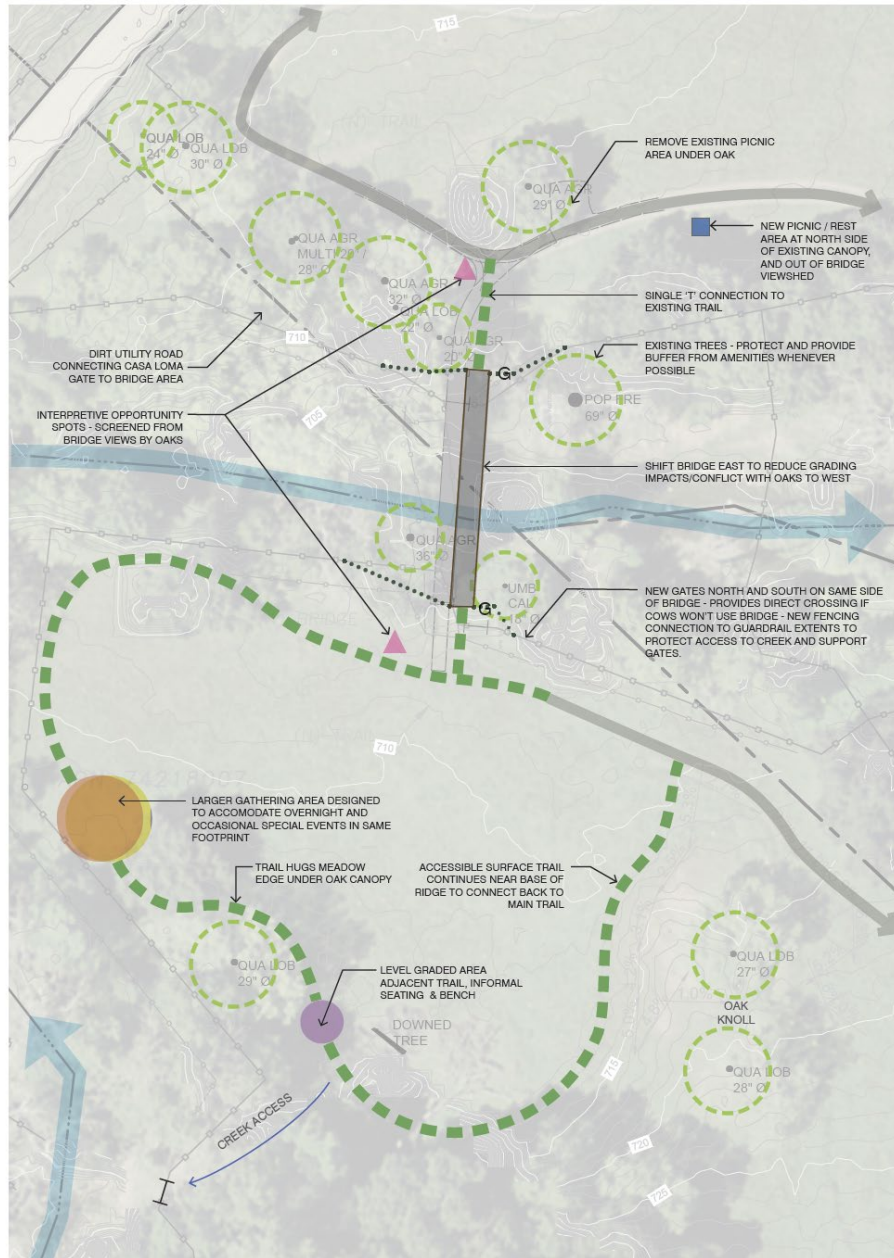
-  Preserve Boundary
-  Other Protected Land



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Bridge and Meadow Location





Llagas Creek Bridge



Proposed Design

- Span = 100 feet
- Width = 8 feet
- Rail Height = 54 inches
- Concrete Decking
- Weathered Steel Finish
- Bowstring Truss

Visitor Experience



TREE CANOPY



LLAGAS CREEK



DOWNED TREES AND SNAGS



RELATIVELY FLAT MEADOW

Visitor Programming



LARGE ACCESSIBLE GROUP PICNIC TABLE



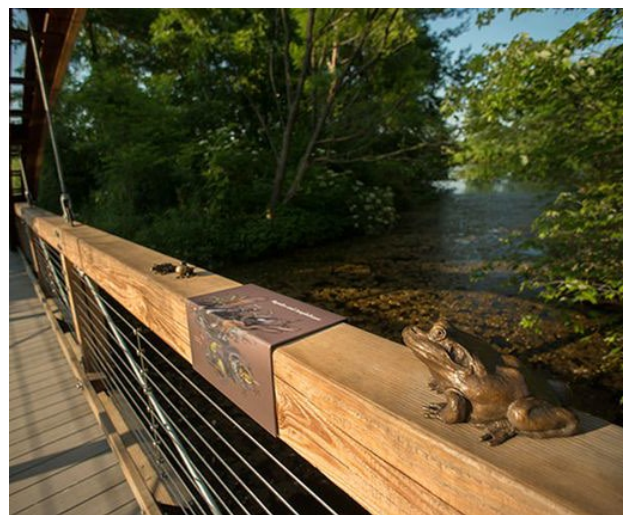
DOWNED TREE WITH TRAIL CUT THROUGH

Program

- Large Picnic / Educational Table
- Temporary / Permanent Seating
- Pop-up Events and Uses
- Riparian Education
- Informal seating on downed trees – reused
- Trail meanders through canopy and meadow



QUIET AREA WITH INFORMAL SEATING



INTEGRATED INTERPRETATION



VARIETY OF SPACES AND EXPERIENCES TO SUPPORT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

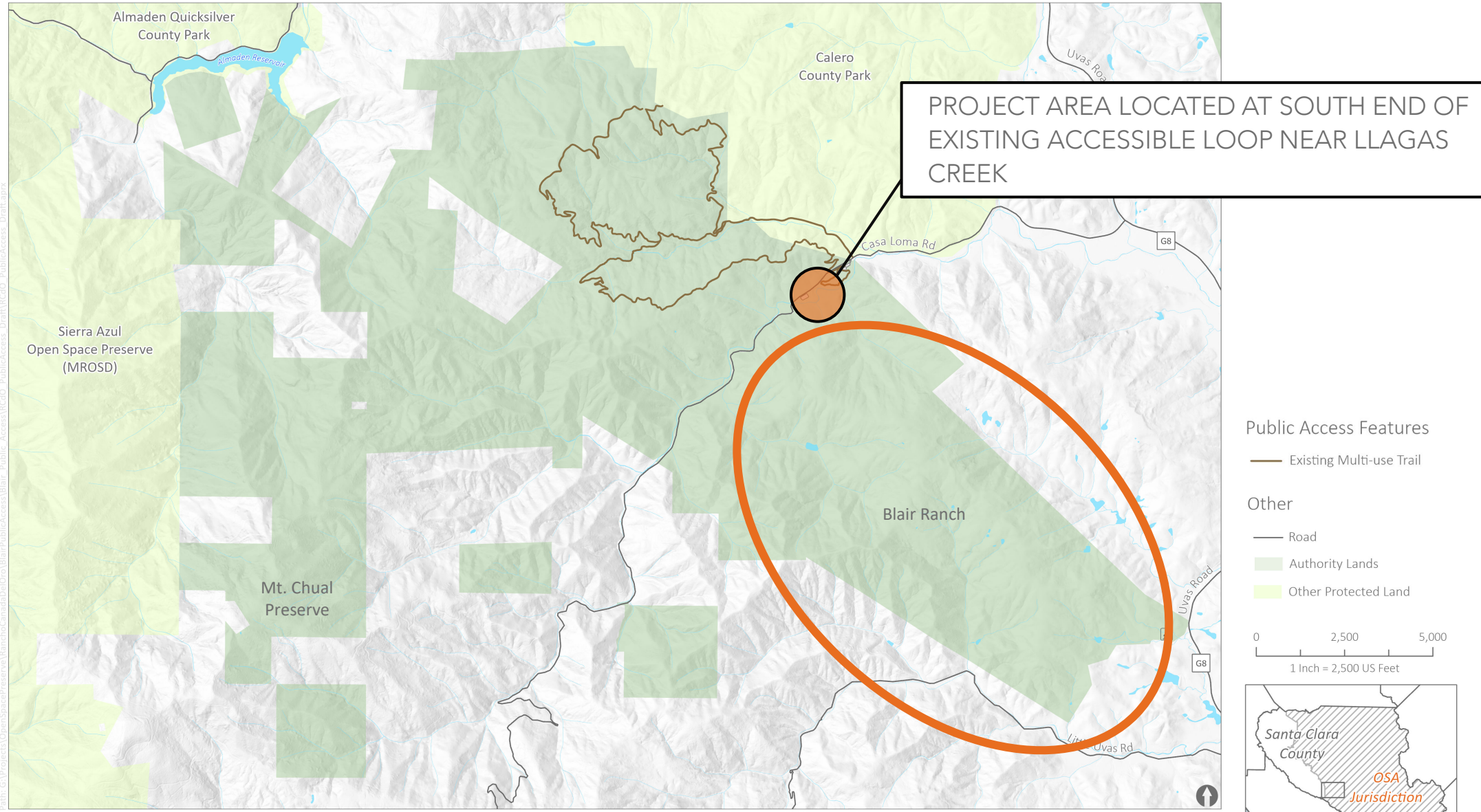


Blair Ranch Trail Feasibility Study



RANCHO CAÑADA DEL ORO OPEN SPACE PRESERVE

Preserve Map



Public Access Features

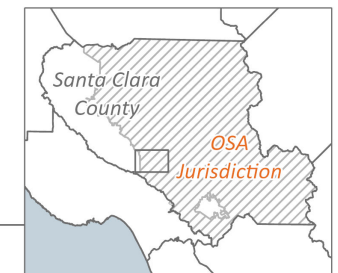
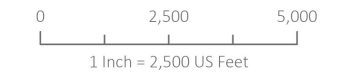
— Existing Multi-use Trail

Other

— Road

■ Authority Lands

■ Other Protected Land



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Preliminary Project Cost Estimate

Project Feature	Cost
Bridge Installation	\$350,000
Day-use Trail and Features	\$250,000
Design and Interpretation	\$150,000
Site Analysis, Permitting	\$300,000
CEQA	\$120,000
TOTAL	\$1,200,000

Note: estimates are preliminary and subject to change



LLAGAS CREEK BRIDGE & BLAIR RANCH BACKCOUNTRY ACCESS TIMELINE

FALL/WINTER 2019-2020

- Site Analysis
- Project Planning and Design
- Project Design Alternatives

SPRING/SUMMER 2020

- Board of Directors Meeting - July 23, 2020
- Citizens' Advisory Committee Meeting - July 27, 2020

FALL/WINTER 2020-2021

- Begin Trail Access Feasibility Study
- Preferred Alternative/Design Development
- Permitting and Environmental Review
- Public Meeting Project Update

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

A wide-angle landscape photograph showing rolling hills. The foreground is dominated by tall, golden-brown grass. The middle ground features several hills with patches of green trees and shrubs. In the background, more hills are visible, some with a light mist or fog in the valleys. The sky is a clear, bright blue. The text "Thank you" is overlaid in the upper right corner.

Thank you