



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-18-66
Meeting 18-27
June 27, 2018

AGENDA ITEM 12

AGENDA ITEM

Highway 17 Wildlife and Regional Trail Crossings Project Alternatives and Caltrans Project Study Report

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Authorize the General Manager to advance eight alternatives to the Caltrans Project Study Report and Project Development Support (PSR-PDS) phase for the Highway 17 Wildlife and Regional Trail Crossings Project.
2. Authorize the General Manager to amend a contract with TrailPeople to bring all eight alternatives through the next phase of the Caltrans process, adding \$86,645 to the contract for a total not-to-exceed amount of \$386,305.

SUMMARY

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) staff evaluated multiple locations along Highway 17 as part of feasibility studies to construct dedicated wildlife and regional trail crossings within the project study area (see Attachment 1). On July 27, 2016, staff presented four alternatives to the Board of Directors (Board). Since that time, staff have continued to work with the public, project stakeholders, and partner agencies, and have conducted additional field investigations, resulting in four additional project alternatives, for a total of eight. On June 5, 2018, the Planning and Natural Resources Committee (R-18-54) reviewed the proposed eight project alternatives, including the four new alternatives. The Committee unanimously supported the Acting General Manager's recommendation to advance all eight alternatives to the full Board for consideration at the June 27, 2018 meeting. The General Manager recommends advancing and including these eight alternatives in the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Project Study Report and Project Development Support (PSR-PDS) phase.

To complete this work, a contract amendment with TrailPeople in the amount of \$86,645 is recommended. At the completion of this phase of work, an environmental document will be prepared that will support the selection of the preferred crossing alternative(s) to meet project objectives of providing safe wildlife and recreational trail crossings of Highway 17. The suite of project alternatives include both separate and combined crossing for wildlife and regional trail users. Sufficient funds are included in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017-18 and proposed FY2018-19 budgets to proceed with the Caltrans process with support from TrailPeople.

DISCUSSION

Proposed Wildlife and Regional Trail Crossing Alternatives

Four preliminary alternatives and crossing criteria were presented the public, project stakeholders, and partner agencies at an August 2, 2016 public meeting for the project. Since that time, staff have continued to work to address data gaps and address identified concerns through additional field investigations, resulting in four additional project alternatives. Eight final alternatives meet some or all of the project criteria originally identified in the Preliminary Alternatives Report (See Table 1).

Table 1. Project Criteria

Wildlife Crossing Criteria:
1) Close proximity to the identified wildlife corridor
2) Appropriate dimensions and design features
3) Habitat connectivity
4) Line of sight
5) Less human exposure
Regional Trails Crossing Criteria:
1) Proximity to regional trail connections
2) Appropriate dimensions
3) Non-motorized recreation and transportation connections
4) Emergency and maintenance vehicle access

A Preliminary Alternatives Report fully evaluated the four original alternatives. An update to this report is in progress to include the additional four new alternatives. Staff recently evaluated all eight alternatives against the project criteria based on current information (See Table 2). This table will be revised as the project progresses and more information is learned about each alternative.

Table 2. Project Alternatives and Criteria Met

Project Alternatives:	Wildlife Criteria met	Regional Trails Criteria met
1. Ravine Creek Undercrossing (wildlife only)	1,2,3,5	Not suitable for trail
2. Trout Creek Undercrossing (wildlife only)	1,2,3,4,5	Not suitable for trail
3. Southern Overcrossing (combined wildlife and trails)	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4
3a. Southern Overcrossing NEW (trail only)	Not suitable for large wildlife	1,2,3
4. Montevina Undercrossing (combined wildlife and trails)	2,3,4	1,2,3,4
4a. Montevina Undercrossing NEW (trail only)	Not suitable for large wildlife	1,2,3
5. Northern Overcrossing NEW (combined wildlife and trails)	1,2,3	1,2,3,4
5a) Northern Overcrossing NEW (trail only)	Not suitable for large wildlife	1,2,3

NEW Alternatives shown in bold

Contract Amendment – Additional Wildlife and Regional Trail Crossing Project Alternatives

The project consultant, TrailPeople, was originally contracted to bring four project alternatives through the Caltrans PSR-PDS process (R-16-126). During the public and agency review process, four additional alternatives were identified. After careful review, all eight alternatives are recommended to advance through the Caltrans process.

Due to the increased number of project alternatives, a contract amendment with TrailPeople is recommended to complete the analysis of each alternative, refine the criteria, conduct an additional public meeting, and complete the Caltrans PSR-PDS.

This project will result in infrastructure improvements to the State Highway system. As such, it is subject to the Caltrans planning and environmental review process, the first stage of which is the PSR-PDS. This process will define the project's scope, costs, and schedule and obtain conceptual approval for the project within Caltrans. On November 9, 2016, the Board authorized a Resolution to enter into a Cooperative Agreement with Caltrans to fund Caltrans oversight of the PSR-PDS (R-16-147). Alternatives may be eliminated from further project consideration if, during more detail review, they are determined to not meet Caltrans standards or result in a condition that cannot be mitigated (such as a potential restriction of building on top of engineered roadway cut-banks). Otherwise, all alternatives will advance to a subsequent Caltrans phase: Project Approval and Environmental Document (PAED). In the overall Caltrans process, selection of a preferred project alternative occurs after both the PSR-PDS and PAED phases are complete.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Measure AA (MAA) Expenditure Plan allocates \$13.96 million for the Wildlife Passage/Ridge Trail Improvements projects in Portfolio 20 to provide safe wildlife passage and a dedicated Ridge Trail crossing of Highway 17. The westernmost future trail connections from Sanborn County Park to El Sereno Open Space Preserve are also MAA eligible under MAA 19-1: El Sereno Trails and Wildlife Corridors. All other costs to implement trail segments to connect a future Highway 17 crossing to El Sereno Open Space Preserve and to the existing Ridge Trail in Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve would be funded through the General Fund.

The rough order of magnitude costs currently associated with implementation of the wildlife and regional trail crossings project ranges from \$6.6 to \$16.9 million (2016 dollars) for each wildlife and regional trail crossing(s) (either two separate or one larger combined crossing). Using an industry supplied cost escalator of 20 percent, the estimated project costs in 2021 would be \$8 to \$18.1 million for each crossing. The estimates will be refined and updated during the Caltrans PSR-PDS phase and included in the TrailPeople contract amendment scope of work (if approved).

Allocated funding identified in MAA 20 is adequate to bring the wildlife and recreational trail crossing project through full design, and fund a portion of the construction costs. Additional partner and/or grant funding is required to complete the construction of the crossing(s) and associated connector trails. Potential funding sources have already been identified and include: Caltrans (Active Transportation and Environmental and Enhancement Grants), Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, National Fish and Wildlife Federation, Wildlife Conservation Board, Prop 68 per capita allocations (if passed by the voters in June), private donors, and/or a combination of the above.

In order to advance the eight project alternatives through the Caltrans PSR-PDS process, a contract amendment for TrailPeople in the amount of \$86,645 is recommended. If approved, this would bring the total contract amount to \$386,305 (of which \$132,855 has been spent to date).

The FY2018-19 proposed budget includes \$410,000 for the Highway 17 Wildlife Corridor and Bay Area Ridge Trail Projects (MAA 20-001 and MAA 20-002), which is sufficient to cover the recommended action. Expenditures for the TrailPeople Contract Amendment are split evenly between the two projects (MAA 20-001 and MAA 20-002).

	PRIOR YEAR ACTUALS	FY17-18	FY18-19	FY19-20	FY20-21	TOTAL
MAA 20-001 (Wildlife Corridor) Budget	\$191,657	\$258,160	\$228,579	\$152,500	\$309,500	\$1,140,396
Spent to Date (as of 5/11/18):		\$362				\$362
Encumbered:		\$4,500				\$4,500
Proposed Contract Amendment:			\$43,323			\$43,323
Budget Remaining (Proposed):	\$191,657	\$253,298	\$185,256	\$152,500	\$309,500	\$1,092,211

	PRIOR YEAR ACTUALS	FY17-18	FY18-19	FY19-20	FY20-21	TOTAL
MAA 20-002 (Bay Area Ridge Trail) Budget	\$317	\$184,800	\$201,970	\$152,500	\$309,500	\$849,087
Spent to Date (as of 5/11/18):		\$0				\$0
Encumbered:		\$5,000				\$5,000
Proposed Contract Amendment:			\$43,323			\$43,323
Budget Remaining (Proposed):	\$317	\$179,800	\$158,647	\$152,500	\$309,500	\$800,764

The following table outlines the Measure AA Portfolio budget, costs to date, and the fiscal impact related to MAA 20: Wildlife Passage and Ridge Trail Improvements:

MAA 20 Portfolio - South Bay Foothills: Wildlife Passage/Ridge Trail Improvements Allocation:	\$13,966,000
Life-to-Date Spent (as of 5/11/18):	\$192,336
Encumbrances:	\$9,500
Proposed TrailPeople Contract Amendment:	\$86,645
Balance Remaining (Proposed):	\$13,677,519

BOARD COMMITTEE REVIEW

On June 5, 2018, the Planning and Natural Resources Committee (R-18-54) reviewed the proposed eight project alternatives, including the four new alternatives. The Committee unanimously supported the Acting General Manager's recommendation to advance all eight alternatives to the full Board for consideration at the June 27, 2018 meeting. The first Planning and Natural Resources Committee Meeting for this project was held on August 2, 2016 (R-16-95) in conjunction with a public meeting for the project. The Committee reviewed the Preliminary Alternatives Report and four preliminary crossing alternatives. The Committee also received public feedback and engaged with regional partners and stakeholder agencies.

This fall, staff will conduct a second public meeting for the project. This public meeting is required by Caltrans. This meeting will provide the public an opportunity to review and comment on the new project alternatives developed since the last public meeting in August 2016.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act. Public Notice was sent to the project interested parties list on June 22, 2018 and is posted on the District's webpage.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

At this time, the project is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). At the completion of the Caltrans PSR-PDS phase, the next phase of the project (PAED) will be the environmental review (CEQA and the federal equivalent, NEPA, if seeking federal funds). The environmental review will guide selection of the preferred project alternative. CEQA and environmental review is anticipated to begin in Fiscal Year 2019-20 upon completion of the PSR-PDS.

NEXT STEPS

If authorized by the Board, the General Manager will amend the contract with TrailPeople to complete analysis of the additional alternatives. Staff would then continue to work with the consultant team and Caltrans to prepare the PSR-PDS. A second public meeting, required by Caltrans, is scheduled for fall 2018. Upon completion of the PSR-PDS, the next phase of the project will be environmental review (CEQA). CEQA review may be undertaken by Midpen using a competitively selected consultant, by Caltrans directly, or using a combination of the two approaches. The decision for which entity will lead the next phase will be determined during the PSR-PDS phase, and an additional co-operative agreement for the next phase of the project would be presented to the Board for approval. Upon completion of CEQA review, a preferred alternative would be selected to then proceed with project permitting and design.

Attachment

1. Map of Crossing Alternatives locations

Responsible Department Head:

Kirk Lenington, Natural Resources Department and
Jane Mark, AICP, Planning Department

Prepared by:

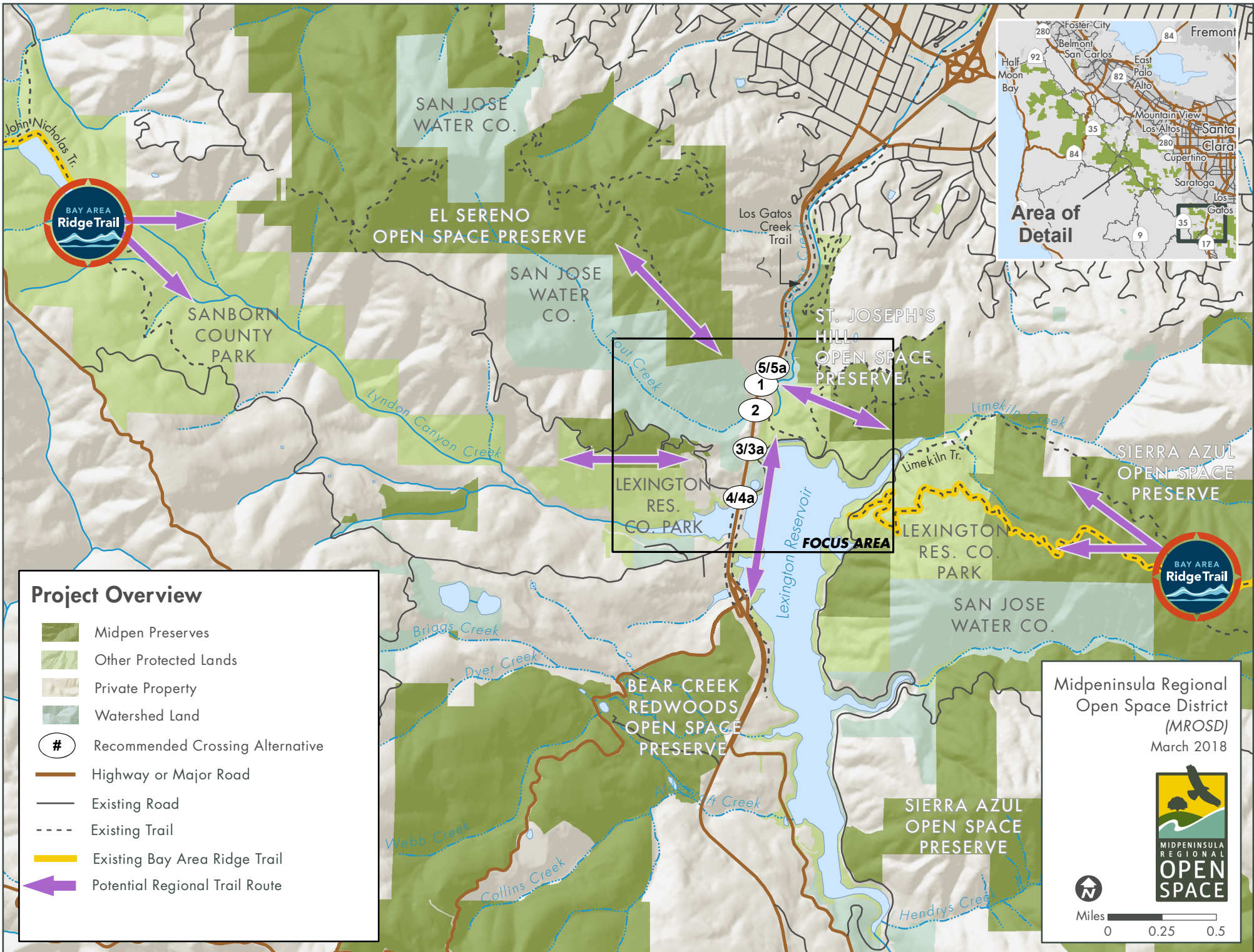
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Created By: jhawk



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.