



Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District

R-16-18  
Meeting 16-04  
February 10, 2016

## **AGENDA ITEM 6**

### **AGENDA ITEM**

Award of Contract for Highway 17 Wildlife Passage Structures and Bay Area Ridge Trail Crossing: Conceptual Design and Feasibility Study

### **GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION**

Authorize the General Manager to enter into a contract with TrailPeople located in Benicia, California for a not to exceed amount of \$120,000. This is for the conceptual design and feasibility study for the wildlife and Bay Area Ridge Trail crossings at Highway 17 in Los Gatos near Bear Creek Redwoods, Sierra Azul, St. Joseph's Hill, Felton Station and El Sereno Open Space Preserves.

### **SUMMARY**

A Request for Proposals and Qualifications was issued on November 10, 2015. Five well qualified firms submitted proposals on January 4, 2016. The top three highest ranking firms were interviewed by a panel consisting of three Midpen staff members with representatives from Planning, Natural Resources, and the Engineering and Construction Departments as well as an outside wildlife connectivity expert from Caltrans. After interviews were completed, the consultant that exhibited the highest professional rigor in response to the RFPQ and interview questions was a team lead by TrailPeople.

### **MEASURE AA**

A 5-year Measure AA Project List was approved by the Board at their October 29, 2014 meeting and includes Project #20 South Bay Foothills: Wildlife Passage and Ridge Trail Improvements. This proposed agreement serves the goals of Projects #20-1 and #20-2 by addressing restoration in the conceptual design and feasibility study of the Highway 17 wildlife and Bay Area Ridge Trail crossing(s) through preliminary scoping, design, CEQA and permitting analysis.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Background**

Research into the need for a wildlife crossing in the Highway 17 area of the District began in 2008 through a grant award to DeAnza Community College. Studies and research on this problem continued and the importance of wildlife corridors for healthy wildlife populations increased as a regional issue. With the significant support for the project through the Vision Plan and successful funding through the passage of Measure AA, the District is now prepared to address the Highway 17 wildlife corridor and Bay Area Ridge Trail crossing.

The project consists of two components: 1) improve wildlife access across Highway 17 and 2) connect the Bay Area Ridge Trail across Highway 17. For the wildlife crossing component, the selected consultant will present a concept level plan and structure(s) designs to reduce wildlife mortality and improve permeability for wildlife across Highway 17 between Los Gatos and Lexington Hills. The primary focus species are mountain lion and deer with a secondary focus on other wildlife. Their recommendations will be based on ongoing research, literature related to wildlife crossings, engineering documents for the existing structures, species specific requirements, physical opportunities and constraints within the project area and on other successful wildlife crossing projects.

The selected consultant will also provide a concept level plan and design recommendations for a Bay Area Ridge Trail crossing of Highway 17, exploring different options from new construction, to re-use and/or modification of existing facilities possibly in combination or in singularity with the above mentioned wildlife crossings.

A conceptual design and feasibility study will help Midpen to: understand construction opportunities and constraints, select a preferred alternative(s), clarify features of the preferred alternative(s), identify next steps and how interested parties can be involved, and will provide a preliminary schedule and cost to implement the preferred alternative(s). In addition to concept level design, the selected consultant will also generate planning level cost and schedule estimates to implement the preferred alternative(s).

An assessment of the conceptual design possibilities is needed for Midpen to engage project partners in the planning and implementation of this project. An extensive list of project partners includes: Caltrans, Pathways for Wildlife, Santa Clara County Parks, Peninsula Open Space Trust, and Santa Clara County Valley Transportation Authority and many others.

### **Consultant Selection**

The Request for Proposals and Qualifications was issued on November 10, 2015 and was sent to over 50 persons at 50 different firms including expertise in biological resources, hydrology, engineering, geology, environmental consulting, and landscape architecture, all key disciplines anticipated to be needed to successfully complete a feasibility study. The list of consultants notified was generated with input from project partners as well as research into the type of expertise needed for such a project. Recipients were encouraged to share the Request for Proposals and Qualifications and form teams with the needed subject matter experts.

A pre-proposal meeting was held at the Project site on December 2, 2015 and was attended by 23 persons from 17 firms. Proposals were due on January 5, 2016, and five qualified proposals were received and reviewed by the interview panel.

Upon review of the proposals and the consultants' qualifications, three consultant teams were selected for interviews. Based on their initial response to the RFPQ and clarifying responses provided during the subsequent interview, staff recommends entering into an agreement with TrailPeople.

TrailPeople's team includes: Western Transportation Institute (WTI), a world renowned group based out of Montana State University who are subject matter experts in wildlife crossing

conceptual design and performance assessment. WTI will build upon and supplement knowledge provided by Pathways for Wildlife, a local wildlife research organization and one of the original catalysts for a proposed Highway 17 wildlife crossing. The Trail People team also includes Biggs Cardosa & Associates for structural engineering expertise, as well as Cal Engineering & Geology to provide geological analysis. Mark Thomas & Company, a civil engineering firm will be contributing construction and traffic management expertise. David J. Powers and Associates will provide advice on biological and other environmental studies, as well as environmental and permitting recommendations. Trail People's in-house landscape architecture, planning and design team will facilitate overall project management, project communication, and lead the Bay Area Ridge Trail crossing analysis.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

\$120,000 has been included in the FY 2015-16 Natural Resources Department budget under project MAA 20-1. The Base Price for the contract with TrailPeople is \$100,000.

The RFP/Q included optional items that total \$20,000. The contract award authorizes the General Manager to enter into a contract for an amount not to exceed \$120,000, of which \$20,000 will be held in reserve and will be used only if additional detailed evaluations, such as hydrologic or geologic studies, or additional design options are necessary.

### **BOARD COMMITTEE REVIEW**

The results of this feasibility and conceptual design study are anticipated to be reviewed with the Planning and Natural Resources Committee in the first quarter of FY2016-17.

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act. No additional notice is required. However, notification, including this report, will also be sent to important stakeholders and project partners who have been supporting or involved in the development of this project over the past few years, including project partners instrumental to date. A notification mailing was sent on February 19, 2016.

### **CEQA COMPLIANCE**

This item is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act. The conceptual design and feasibility study will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment [CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c)(2)].

### **NEXT STEPS**

If approved for award of contract for the Highway 17 Wildlife Passage Structures and Bay Area Ridge Trail Crossing: Conceptual Design and Feasibility Study, TrailPeople will begin initial analysis of the study area (Attachment 1). Over the next six months, TrailPeople will complete needed site visits and analysis to develop conceptual design recommendations for future wildlife and Bay Area Ridge Trail crossing(s) within the study area. Trail People will then provide concept level plans and design recommendations for potential wildlife crossing(s) and a Bay Area Ridge Trail crossing of Highway 17 to engage the District and project partners in selection

of a preferred alternative. Once a preferred Alternative is selected, TrailPeople will provide a site plan, conceptual design plan and planning level cost and schedule estimates to facilitate progress into the next stages of more detailed planning, design, and implementation.

Attachment

1. Map of Study Area.

Responsible Department Head:

Kirk Lenington, Natural Resources

Prepared by:

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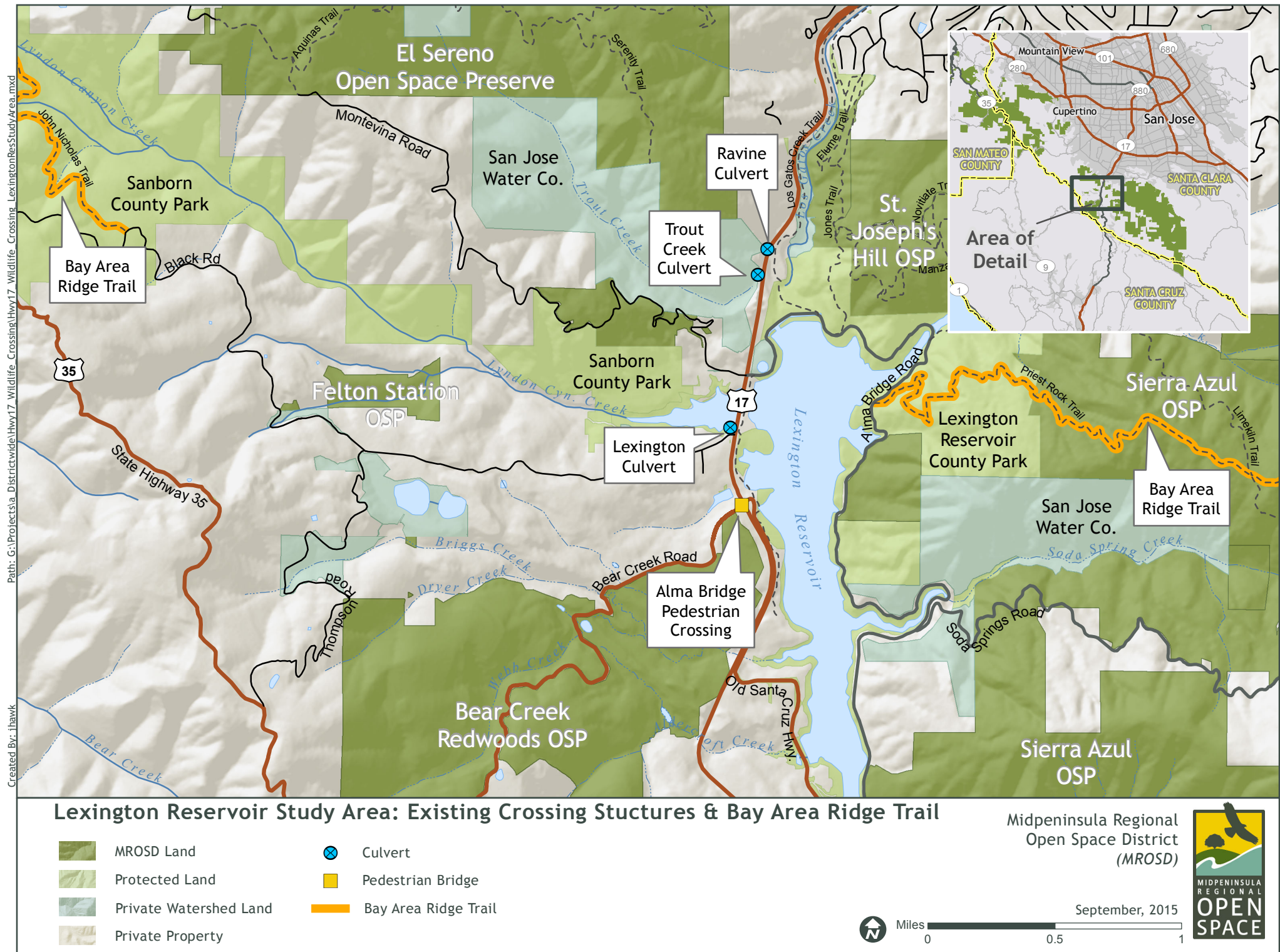
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FIGURE 3.



While the District strives to use the best available digital data, this data does not represent a legal survey and is merely a graphic illustration of geographic features.