



Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District

# Memorandum

DATE: August 10, 2022

MEMO TO: Board of Directors

THROUGH: Ana M. Ruiz, General Manager *AMR*

FROM: Jane Mark, AICP, Planning Manager  
Melissa Borgesi, Planner II

SUBJECT: Stevens Creek Trail Overview

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On March 24, 2022, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) Board Member Curt Riffle and staff attended the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail (FoSCT) Board of Directors meeting to present an overview and status of the District's work on the regional Stevens Creek Trail. At the request of Director Riffle, staff is sharing a copy of the presentation slides and brief summary of the Stevens Creek Trail activities with the District Board of Directors via this memorandum.

The Stevens Creek Trail is an approximately 27-mile regional trail that is intended to follow Stevens Creek, connecting the San Francisco Bay Trail to the Bay Area Ridge Trail. The trail starts at its connection with the San Francisco Bay Trail at Shoreline Park in Mountain View and extends south through the cities of Sunnyvale and Cupertino. The trail will ultimately connect Stevens Creek County Park and Monte Bello Open Space Preserve (Monte Bello Preserve), ending at the Bay Area Ridge Trail on Highway 35.

The Stevens Creek Trail is identified as a regional trail priority in two of the 2014 Board-approved Vision Plan Priorities Portfolios, including Priority Action/Portfolio #12, *Peninsula/South Bay Cities: Partner to Complete Middle Stevens Creek Trail*, and Priority Action/Portfolio #17, *Regional: Complete Upper Stevens Creek Trail*. Implementation of the middle and upper Stevens Creek Trail connections highlights the collaborative work between the District and other public agencies through which the regional trail runs (cities of Mountain View, Sunnyvale, Cupertino, and Los Altos; Santa Clara County Parks) and other regional trail partners (Bay Area Ridge Trail and San Francisco Bay Trail). The District anticipates working closely with Santa Clara County Parks to close the largest gap within this regional trail, between Monte Bello Preserve and Stevens Creek County Park. The two agencies have acquired key properties that facilitate the future construction of a trail connection with Santa Clara County Parks providing funding contributions towards the purchases.

The District's work and progress on the two priority actions/portfolios related to the Stevens Creek Trail is described in detail below.

Priority Action/Portfolio #12, *Peninsula/ South Bay Cities: Partner to Complete Middle Stevens Creek Trail.*

- The District is supporting the FoSCT restoration work with Valley Water on a fish passage barrier removal project. The District provided local matching funds for a Valley Water grant and is providing technical review of consultant deliverables. The District also met with FoSCT to discuss a possible additional funding contribution if the bids for construction come in over the estimated cost of approximately \$90,000.
- The District partnered with FoSCT to designate trails and implement a pilot signage program for the regional Stevens Creek Trail in Monte Bello Preserve.
  - The District Board approved the designation of the Stevens Creek Nature Trail, White Oak Trail, and Skid Road Trail in Monte Bello Preserve as part of the regional Stevens Creek Trail at their [October 27, 2021 Board meeting](#).
  - District staff actively participated in the FoSCT-led signage working group. The working group consisted of staff and representatives from: the cities of Cupertino, Sunnyvale, and Mountain View; Santa Clara County Parks; Bay Area Ridge Trail and the San Francisco Bay Trail. The group finalized the design and ultimately approved the new medallion signage that will unify the Stevens Creek Trail by being installed throughout the regional trail.
  - In June 2022, once the medallion design was approved by the signage working group, District staff installed the Stevens Creek Trail medallions on the designated trails in Monte Bello Preserve.
  - The District is the first agency to install the new Stevens Creek Trail medallions. Staff provided technical guidance and shared the groundwork of the signage pilot project with Santa Clara County Parks and the other Cities in the signage working group.
- Related to the District's support of partner cities, staff stays informed and provides technical assistance as appropriate to the FoSCT and the City of Cupertino's evaluation of a trail undercrossing at Highway 280 and Highway 85, which is a recommendation in the 2015 [Four Cities Stevens Creek Trail Feasibility Study](#). District staff will engage as appropriate and consistent with Board policy and Priority Action/Portfolio #12.

Priority Action/Portfolio #17, *Regional: Complete Upper Stevens Creek Trail.*

- The District's vision for completing Upper Stevens Creek Trail is to collaborate with Santa Clara County Parks in planning and implementing a regional trail on District preserves and County parkland that ultimately connects the San Francisco Bay Trail and Bay Area Ridge Trail.
- The remaining gaps of the Upper Stevens Creek Trail are a high priority for the cities, County of Santa Clara and the District to complete, with the largest gap located between Monte Bello Preserve, Picchetti Ranch Preserve, and Stevens Creek and Upper Stevens Creek County Parks.
- The proposed extension of the Middle Stevens Creek Trail from the cities to Upper Stevens Canyon is also identified in the Santa Clara Countywide Trails Master Plan and the District's Vision Plan.
- Since 2005, the District and Santa Clara County Parks partnered to jointly purchase and preserve four properties along the north side of Stevens Canyon, with the last property

needed for the trail corridor purchased in October 2014. In total, the partnership has resulted in approximately 290 acres acquired for the Upper Stevens Creek Trail corridor.

- The land between lower Stevens Creek County Park and Monte Bello Preserve has steep terrain, and the site is very challenging with many drainages and crossings to evaluate for the trail connection. Both agencies will need to spend significant time scouting various trail alignment options and conducting technical and environmental studies to better understand the existing conditions and avoid sensitive wildlife, plants and landslide areas before feasible trail route options can be identified.
- Santa Clara County Parks and the District have mutually agreed to prioritize this project as part of the Fiscal Year 2024-25 (FY25) Capital Improvement and Action Plan (CIAP). Work includes identifying trail alignments; completing a trails plan; and completing environmental review, design, permitting and construction of the trail. In the meantime, both agencies continue coordination on pre-planning activities that may include field visits to gain familiarity with the trail corridor, preliminary trails scouting, and development of a partnership agreement between the District and Santa Clara County Parks for planning, construction and maintenance of the future trail. The project will be added to the FY25 CIAP as part of a future year budgeting process. Both agencies target Summer/Fall 2024 (FY25) to start trails assessment and planning work.

#### Attachment

1. Stevens Creek Trail Overview PowerPoint



# Stevens Creek Trail Corridor

## Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District



**Photo Credit:** Monte  
Bello Hiker by Deane Little



# Overview

- 🌿 Overview of Midpen (Director Curt Riffle, Midpen Board of Directors)
  
- 🌿 Midpen Vision Plan / Measure AA Priorities
  - Regional Trails Vision
  - Priority #12 Peninsula & South Bay Cities
  - Priority #17 Regional – Complete Upper Stevens Creek Trail
  
- 🌿 Four Cities Stevens Creek Trail Feasibility Study
  - Trail connections to Rancho San Antonio County Park/ Open Space Preserve



# Midpen Mission



*“To acquire a regional greenbelt of open space land in perpetuity, protect and restore the natural environment, and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.”*



# About Midpen

- Public agency, created in 1972 by a grassroots voter initiative
- 770,000 constituents (2018)
- Elected board: seven directors
- Funded primarily through property tax
- 26 Preserves in Santa Clara, San Mateo and Santa Cruz counties
- Preserved over 65,000 acres, 240+ miles of trails
- Preserves are free and open to the public
- Main office in Los Altos + field offices
- 180 employees and 1,000 volunteers
- \$300 million voter-approved General Obligation Bond passed in 2014 to support public priorities





# Midpen Jurisdiction and 26 Open Space Preserves



#	Preserves
1	Bear Creek Redwoods Opening in 2019
2	Coal Creek
3	El Corte de Madera Creek
4	El Sereno
5	Foothills
6	Fremont Older
7	La Honda Creek
8	Long Ridge
9	Los Trancos
10	Miramontes Ridge
11	Monte Bello
12	Picchetti Ranch
13	Pulgas Ridge
14	Purissima Creek Redwoods
15	Rancho San Antonio
16	Ravenswood
17	Russian Ridge
18	Saratoga Gap
19	Sierra Azul
20	Skyline Ridge
21	St. Joseph's Hill
22	Stevens Creek Shoreline Nature Study Area
23	Teague Hill
24	Thornewood
25	Tunitas Creek
26	Windy Hill



# Free Open Space Activities

- 240 miles of open space **hiking** trails
- 16 preserves with **mountain bike** trails
- 11 preserves are **dog-friendly** (1 off-leash area)
- Black Mountain **Backpack Camp**
- Dozens of free **docent-led hikes**
- **Volunteer** opportunities
- **Equestrian** trails





# Midpen 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

## From 50 to Forever:

### Caring for the land that cares for us

Fifty years ago, our community prioritized clean air and water, healthy habitats for diverse native plants and animals, ecosystems that are resilient to the effects of our changing climate and places for people to connect with nature – that's what Midpen provides in perpetuity.





# Midpen 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Throughout 2022, there will be ample opportunities to commemorate past accomplishments, get excited about future projects and acknowledge many of the people who help bring Midpen's mission to fruition. Special in-person events and virtual activities all year long, include:

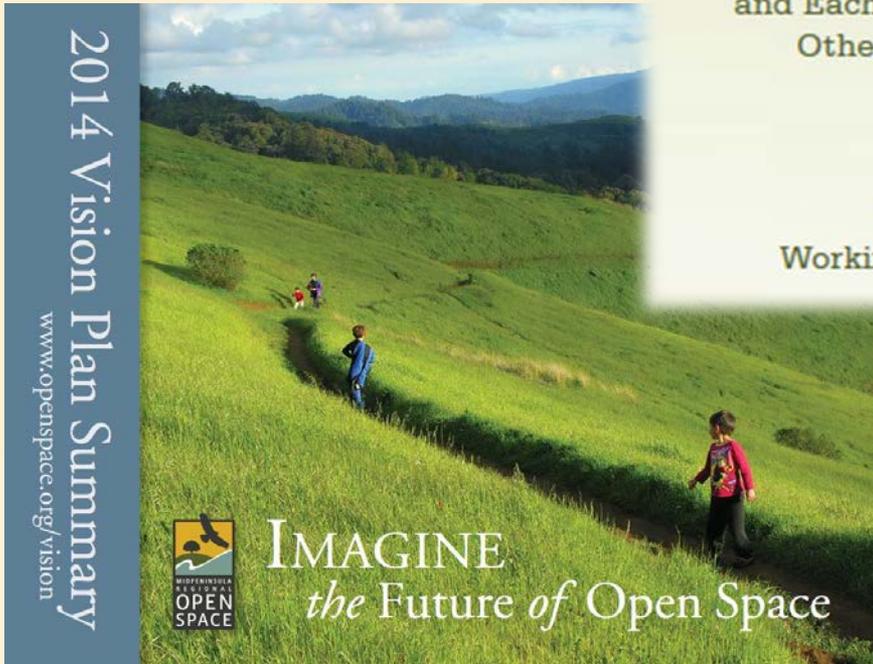
- Bayside family festival on April 30<sup>th</sup> at Ravenswood Preserve
- Coastside community celebration on September 10<sup>th</sup> at Johnston Ranch
- Guided walks, pop-ups and a #SpottedAtMidpen challenge that kicks off in March

*Celebrate with us all year long at [openspace.org/50-years](https://openspace.org/50-years)*





# Midpen Open Space Vision Plan



# Vision Plan Priority Action Portfolios

## Top 25 Portfolios

1. Open Miramontes Ridge
2. Build New Bayfront Trails
3. Complete the Purisima-to-Sea Trail
4. Build Walking, Hiking and Biking Trails at El Corte de Madera Creek
5. Open Upper La Honda Creek Preserve
6. Develop New Trails at Windy Hill
7. Open Driscoll Ranch Area at La Honda Creek
8. Preserve Upper San Gregorio Creek Watershed
9. Open New Trails at Russian Ridge
10. Re-Open Alpine Road at Coal Creek
11. Build Welcome Center at Rancho San Antonio
12. Complete Middle Stevens Creek Trail
13. Expand Grazing at Cloverdale Coastal Ranch
14. Open New Trails throughout the Redwoods
15. Protect More Redwood Forests
16. Create New Access Facilities at Long Ridge
17. Complete Upper Stevens Creek Trail
18. Complete Saratoga-to-Sea Trail
19. Open El Sereno Trails to Dogs and Complete Trail Connections
20. Preserve Safe Wildlife Corridors across Hwy. 17
21. Open Bear Creek Redwoods
22. Open Cathedral Oaks at Sierra Azul
23. Open Mount Umunhum at Sierra Azul
24. Open Rancho de Guadalupe at Sierra Azul
25. Open Loma Prieta Area at Sierra Azul

Visit [www.openspace.org/vision](http://www.openspace.org/vision)  
for full descriptions of all 54 Priority Action Portfolios.





# Measure AA Ballot Language

To improve access to ***hiking and biking opportunities, protect and preserve*** redwood forests, natural ***open spaces***, the scenic beauty of our region and coastline, critical ***wildlife habitat***, restore creeks to ***protect water quality***, and ***reduce forest fire risk***; shall Midpen be authorized to issue up to \$300 million in bonds, at a tax rate not to exceed ***\$3.18 per \$100,000*** of assessed value of property owned, with expenditures verified by an ***independent citizen oversight committee***.



# Measure AA

- 2/3 (67.96%) voter approval in June 2014
- Capital projects only – Top 25 Vision Plan Priorities
- Authorization to issue bonds for up to 30 years
- Independent Bond Oversight Committee verification



# Midpen Vision Plan – Regional Trails

- # Priority Action Portfolio # (Approximate location)
- ↔ Regional Trail Connection Projects (Represents generalized location)
- Midpen lands to be opened
- Midpen open space preserves
- Major city, county, state & federal parks, open space preserves, and publicly-owned watershed lands

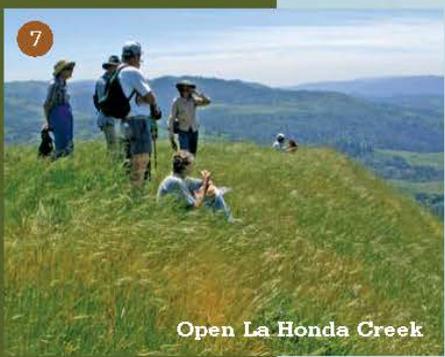
This map shows a long-term, shared vision of a thriving, interconnected regional open space network, accomplished with POST, San Mateo and Santa Clara County, State Parks, and other public and private partners.



Partner to complete gaps in Bay Trail



Complete Purisima-to-Sea Trail



Open La Honda Creek

When the Vision Plan trails are complete, 99% of Midpen residents will live within 5 miles of a regional trail.

Connection to Mount Umunhum Summit—the Highest Point on the Bay Area Ridge Trail

Loma Prieta Public Access and Connection to Nisene Marks State Park



Ellie Van Houtte

Sandy Sommer

Stacy Smith

# 12

## Peninsula and South Bay Cities:

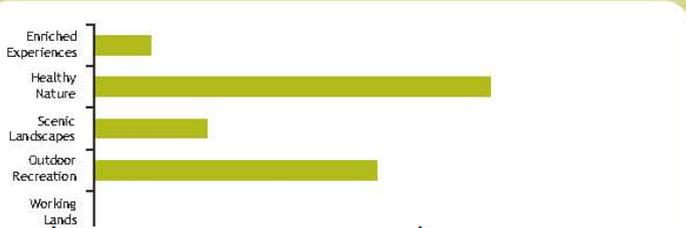
Partner to Complete Middle Stevens Creek Trail



Support work by cities to develop the middle section of the Stevens Creek Trail and enhance neighborhood connections. Encourage stream corridor restoration and steelhead habitat enhancement below dam. Develop interpretive signage.



### Goals Accomplished by This Action



## 12 Peninsula/South Bay Cities: Partner to Complete Middle Stevens Creek Trail

Support work by cities to develop the middle section of the Stevens Creek Trail and enhance neighborhood connections. Support work by partners to complete stream corridor restoration and steelhead habitat enhancement below dam. Develop and install interpretive signage. **\$1,038,000**



# Stevens Creek Corridor – Stream Restoration

## Fish Passage Barrier Removal

- Midpen supporting the Friends' work below the Stevens Creek dam for improved fish passage

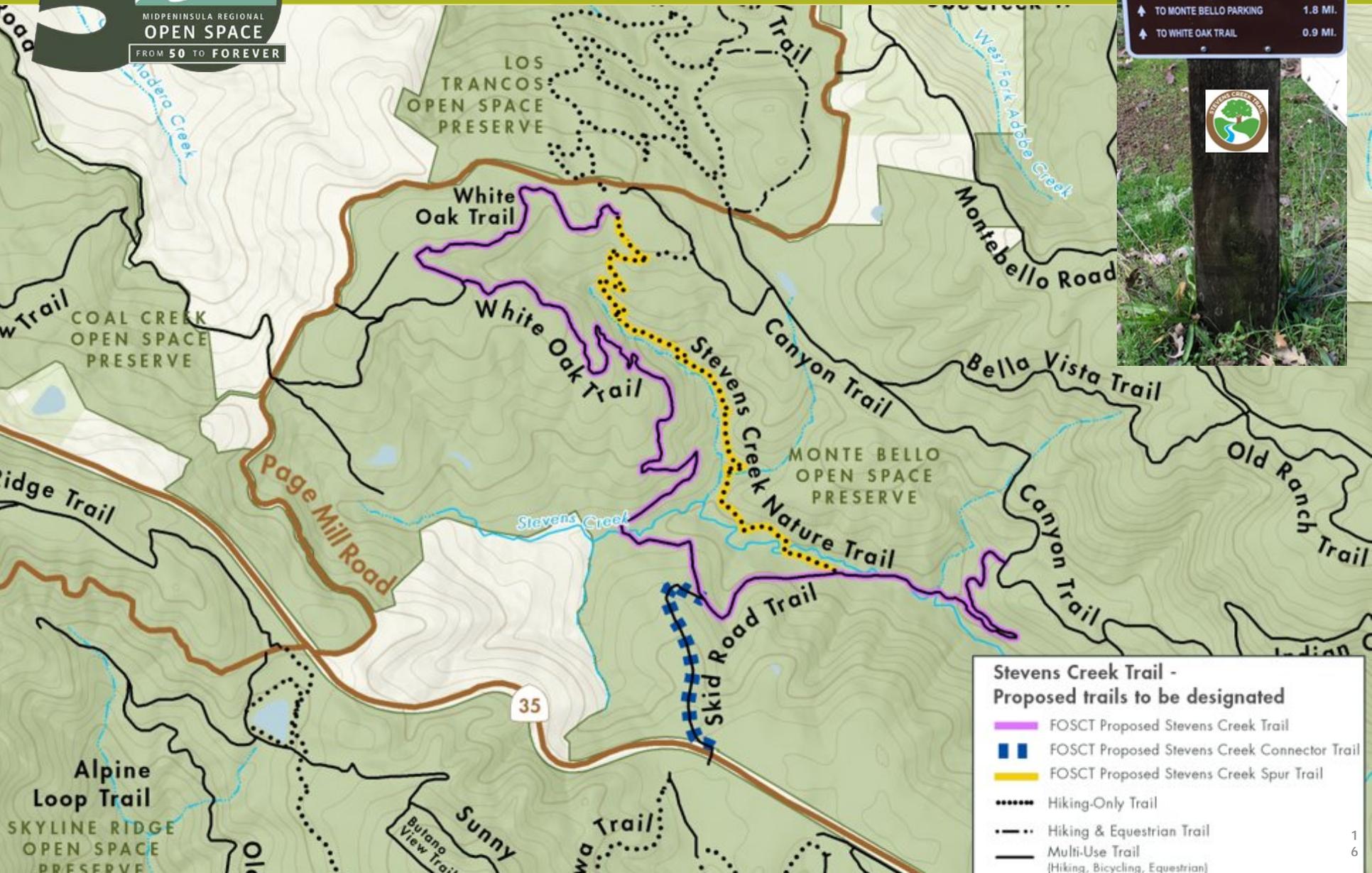


Project	Stevens Creek Fish Passage Enhancements
Program	Water Resources Stewardship - Environmental Enhancement
Project No.	00294001s
Contact	John Bourgeois jbourgeois@valleywater.org



Example of a fish ladder to be modified or reconstructed for improved fish passage

# Stevens Creek Trail Designation at Monte Bello Open Space Preserve



**Stevens Creek Trail - Proposed trails to be designated**

- FOSCT Proposed Stevens Creek Trail
- ■ FOSCT Proposed Stevens Creek Connector Trail
- FOSCT Proposed Stevens Creek Spur Trail
- ⋯ Hiking-Only Trail
- · - Hiking & Equestrian Trail
- Multi-Use Trail (Hiking, Bicycling, Equestrian)



# Middle Stevens Creek Trail

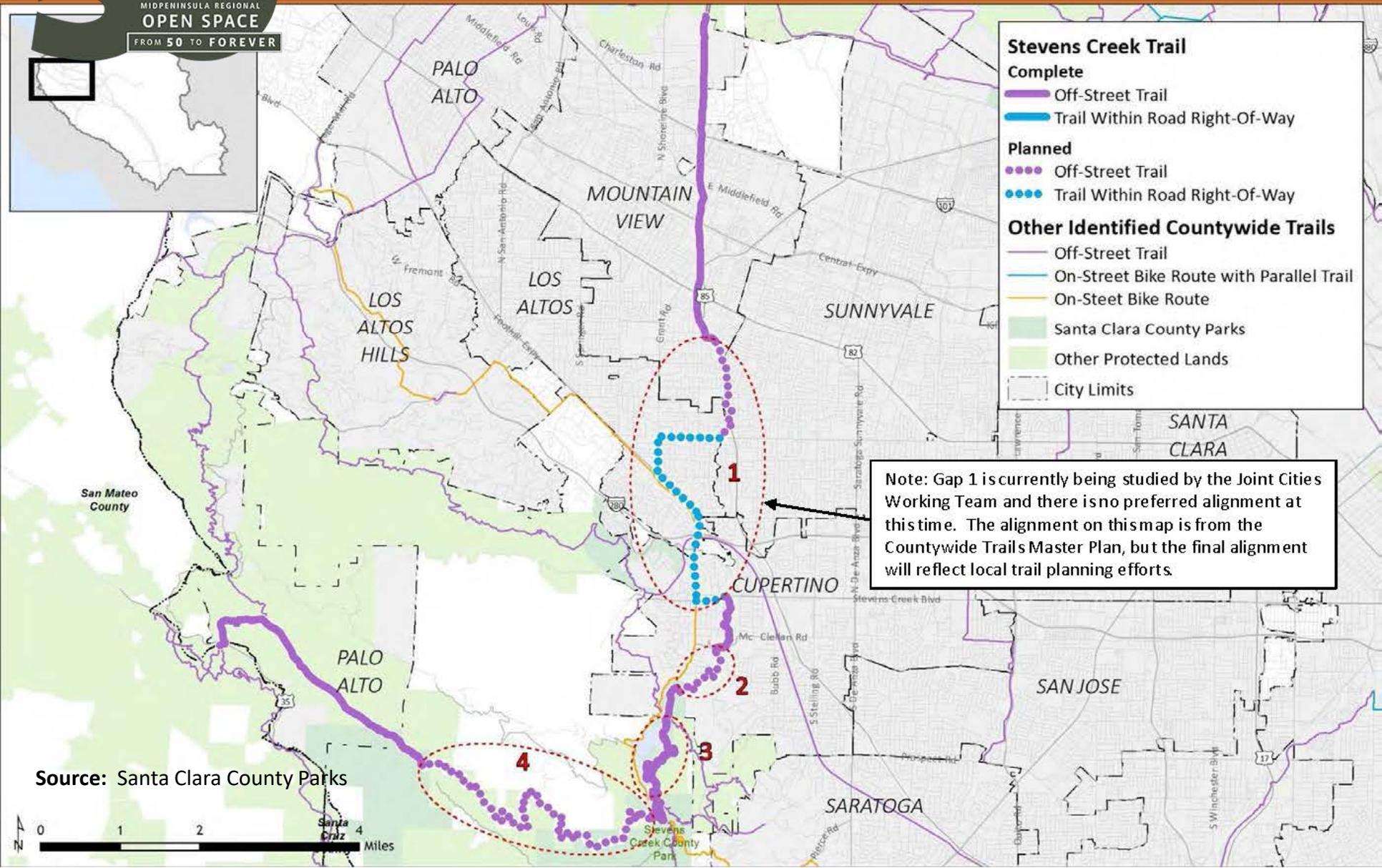


-  Trail Completed
-  Trail Completed/  
Segments Needed
-  Segments In Work
-  Segments To Be Developed
-  SCT Designated As A  
Regional Connector Trail

Source: Friends of Stevens Creek Trail



# Middle and Upper Stevens Creek Trail Gaps



**Stevens Creek Trail**

**Complete**

- Off-Street Trail
- Trail Within Road Right-Of-Way

**Planned**

- Off-Street Trail
- Trail Within Road Right-Of-Way

**Other Identified Countywide Trails**

- Off-Street Trail
- On-Street Bike Route with Parallel Trail
- On-Street Bike Route
- Santa Clara County Parks
- Other Protected Lands
- City Limits

Note: Gap 1 is currently being studied by the Joint Cities Working Team and there is no preferred alignment at this time. The alignment on this map is from the Countywide Trails Master Plan, but the final alignment will reflect local trail planning efforts.

Source: Santa Clara County Parks



# 17

## Regional:

### Complete Upper Stevens Creek Trail



Complete multi-use connection between the Bay Trail & Bay Area Ridge Trail above the reservoir through Picchetti & Lower/Upper Stevens Creek County Parks. Improve Preserve trails and make neighborhood connections. Preserve additional open space as available.



#### Goals Accomplished by This Action

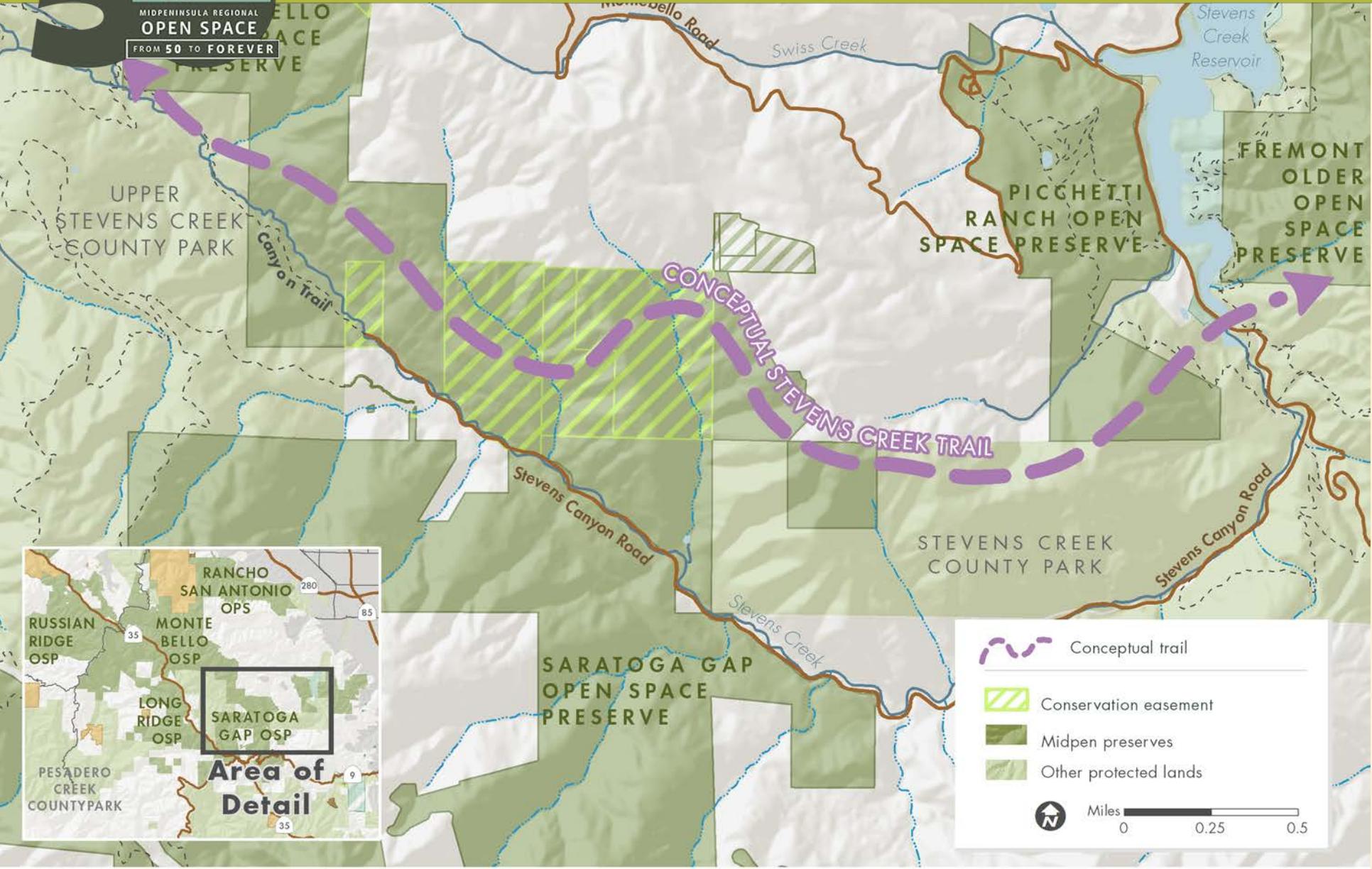


## 17 Regional: Complete Upper Stevens Creek Trail

Complete multi-use connection between the Bay Trail & Bay Area Ridge Trail above the reservoir through Picchetti Ranch Open Space Preserve & Lower/Upper Stevens Creek County Parks. Improve Preserve trails and neighborhood connections. Preserve additional open space as available. \$7,760,000

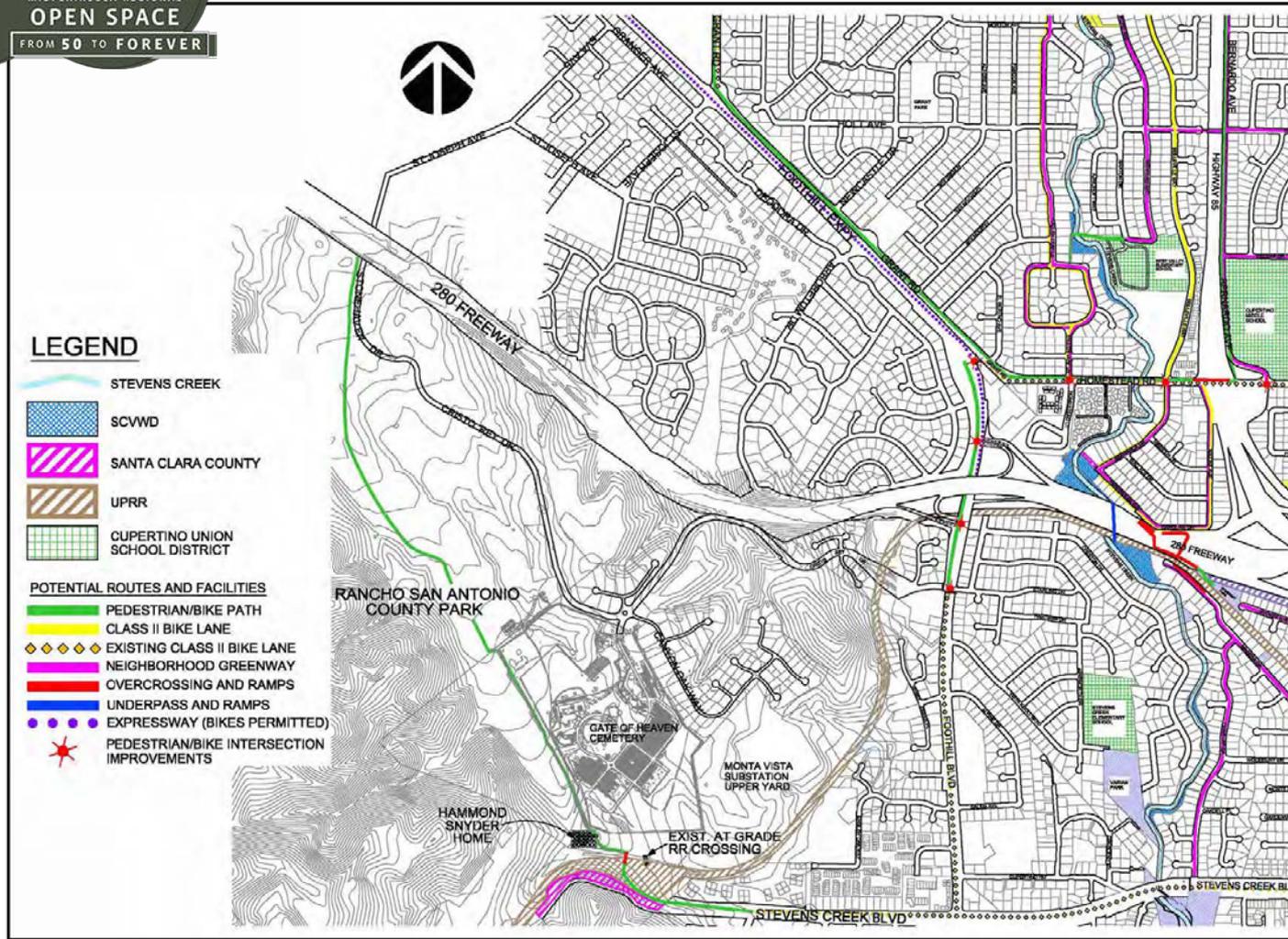


# Upper Stevens Creek Trail: Future Planning





# Trail Connections to Rancho San Antonio County Park/Open Space Preserve



Map 12 – Study Segment 4: Stevens Creek Boulevard Connection to Rancho San Antonio County Park Alignments Map.



# Thank You! Questions?

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Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve