

Welcome!

The meeting will begin shortly

**Highway 17 Wildlife and Regional Trail Crossings
Virtual Community Meeting
March 7, 2024
6pm – 7pm**

Agenda

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| 1) Welcome & Introductions | 6:00 – 6:05pm |
| 2) Presentation by Midpen Staff | 6:05 – 6:40 pm |
| 3) Public Comments/General Q&A | 6:40 – 7:00 pm |

This meeting is being held via Zoom Webinar and will be recorded



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Zoom Functions and Q&A

- You will be placed on mute until we open the meeting for Q&A following staff's presentation.
- If you would like to ask a question during open forum, use the "Raise Hand" feature at the bottom of your Zoom tool bar.
 - Attendees will be called upon by staff and unmuted to speak.
 - Participants who call in can press "*9" to Raise Hand.
 - If you are unable to use the "Raise Hand" feature type your question in the Q&A feature located at the bottom of your screen.
- For technical issues please type your question/issue in the "Q&A" feature located at the bottom of your screen, and staff will respond.



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Welcome & Introductions

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Staff

- Jared Hart, Senior Planner
- Julie Andersen, Senior Resources Management Specialist
- Mattea Ottoboni, Planner II

Consultant Team

- AECOM
- HDR/WRECO
- Cogstone Resource Management
- Tony Clevenger

Project Development Team

- Caltrans
- VTA



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Agenda

Purpose: Provide a summary and receive comments on the environmental review conducted by Midpen and Caltrans on the Highway 17 Wildlife and Regional Trail Crossings and Trail Connections Project (Highway 17 Crossings Project).

- 1) Background
- 2) Project Components
- 3) Environmental Review
(CEQA/NEPA)
- 4) Questions and Discussion



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BACKGROUND



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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.”



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Midpen Boundaries



#	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	Purisima 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



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Project Partners and Stakeholders



SANTA CLARA
COUNTY PARKS



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Project Purpose and Need

Purpose:

- Improve wildlife passage, habitat connectivity, and regional trail connections in the project area.

Need:

- Maintain healthy wildlife populations through habitat connectivity
- Address wildlife mortality and motorist safety
- Provide more efficient non-automotive recreational access across Highway 17



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Project History

2016

- Project coordination initiated with Caltrans
- Public Meeting #1
- Preliminary Alternatives Report

2019

- Public Meetings #2 and #3 (2018 and 2019)
- Revised Alternatives Report
- Completion of Caltrans Project Study Report – Project Development Support (PSR-PDS) phase

2020

- Begin preliminary design and environmental analysis (Caltrans Project Approval & Environmental Document (PA&ED) phase)

2023

- Public Meeting #4
- Environmental Document preparation
- Continue Caltrans PA&ED phase

2024

- Draft Environmental Document Circulation
- Public Meeting #5
- Approval of Final Environmental Document
- Begin Caltrans Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (PS&E) Phase



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Project Location

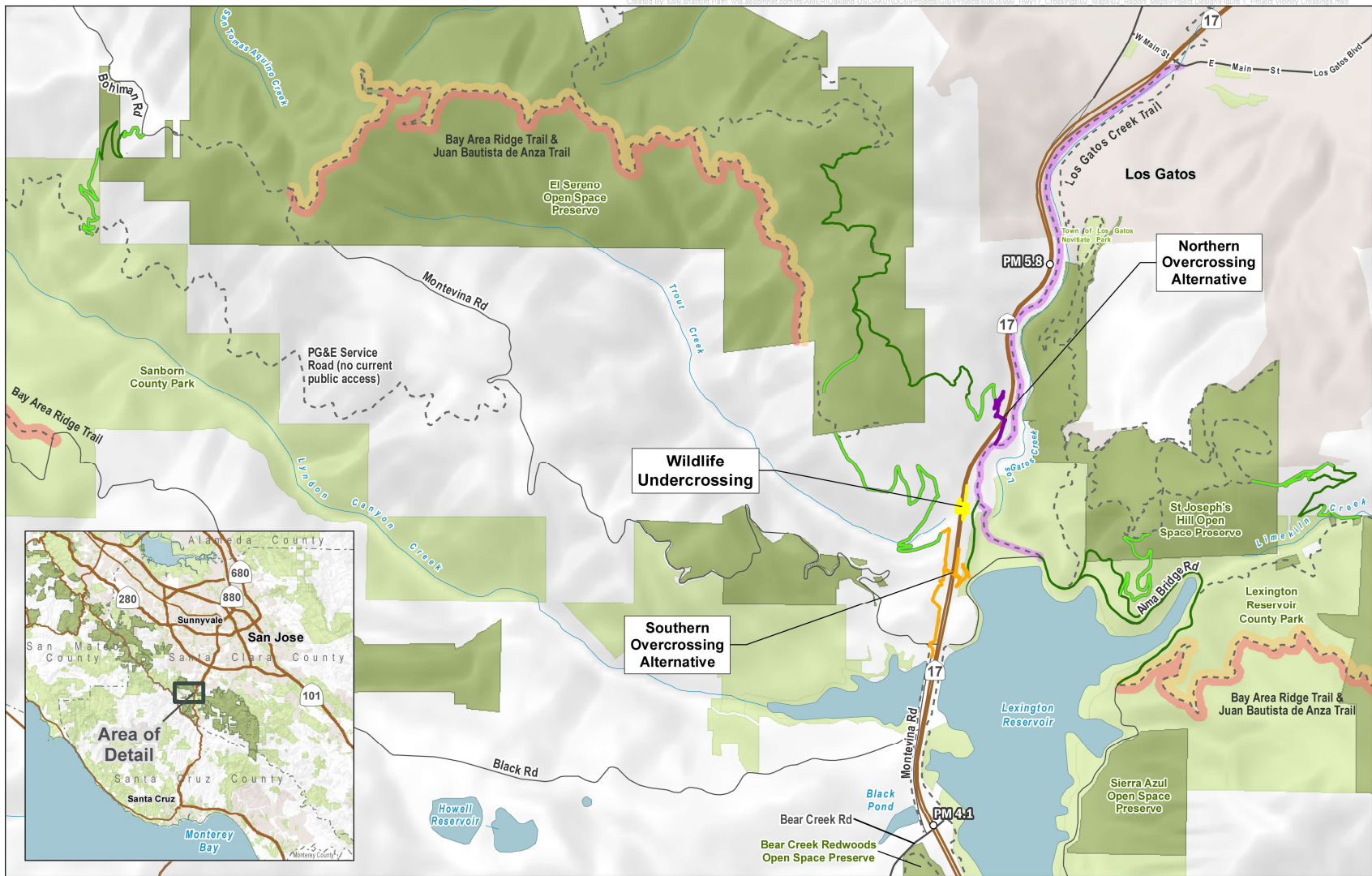


Figure 1.1-1: Project Vicinity

- Project Post Mile

— River/Stream

■ Midpen Open Space

■ Other Protected Land
- Proposed Crossings**

■ Southern Overcrossing Alternative

■ Northern Overcrossing Alternative

■ Wildlife Undercrossing
- Trails**

— Proposed Trail

— Existing Trail - Proposed Improvements

--- Existing Road or Trail
- Bay Area Ridge Trail

— Bay Area Ridge Trail & Juan Bautista de Anza Trail

— Los Gatos Creek Trail

Note: Not all proposed trails will be built



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District
(Midpen)
5/1/2023



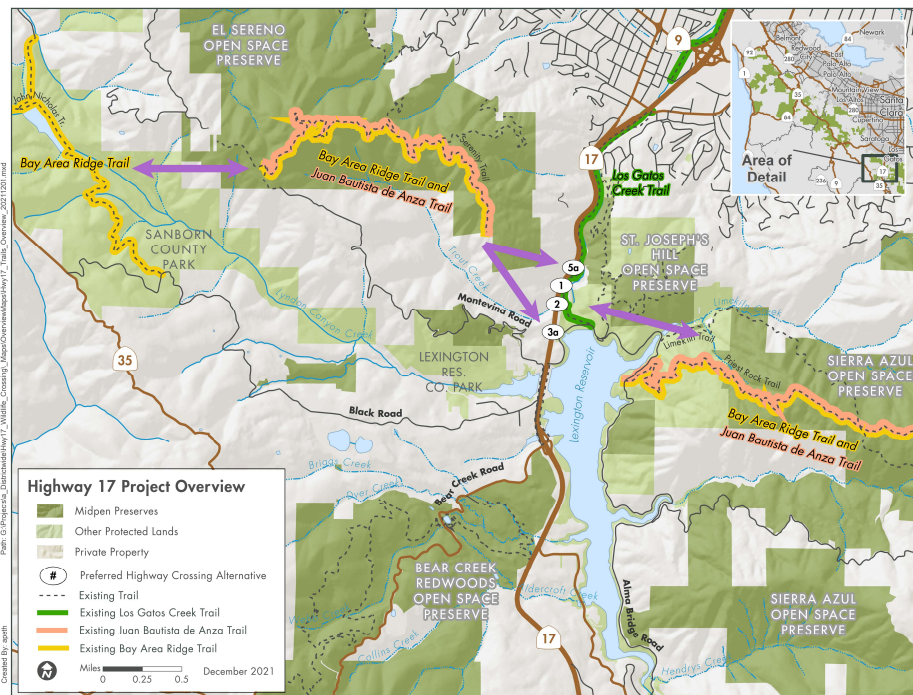
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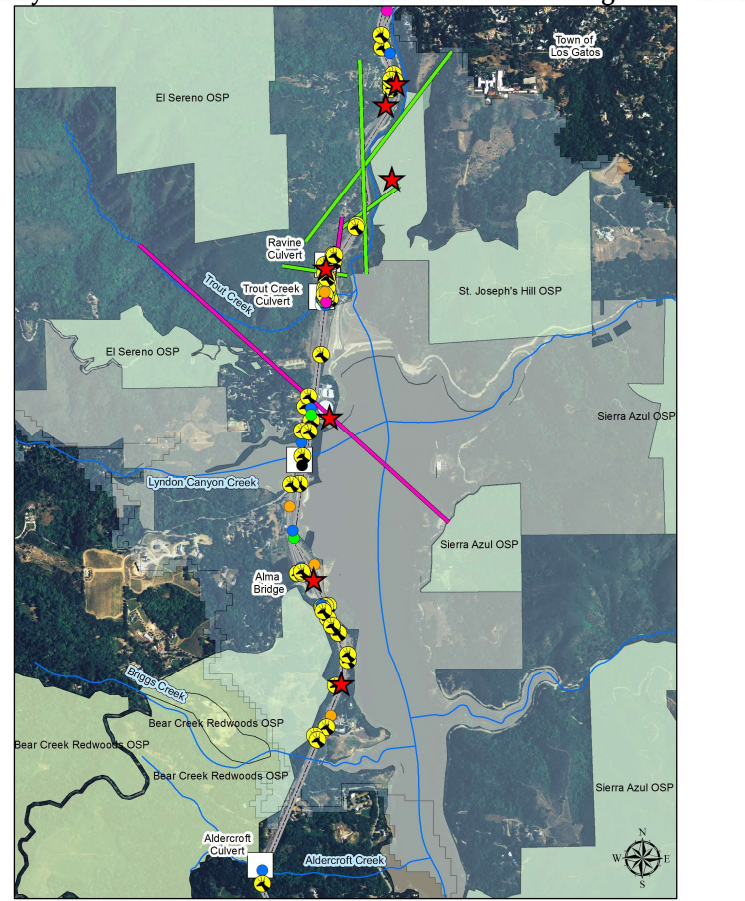
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While the District strives to use the best available digital data, these data do not represent a legal survey and are merely a graphic illustration of geographic features.

Why Here?



Highway 17 Roadkill Data & UCSC Mountain lion Crossings 2000-2017.

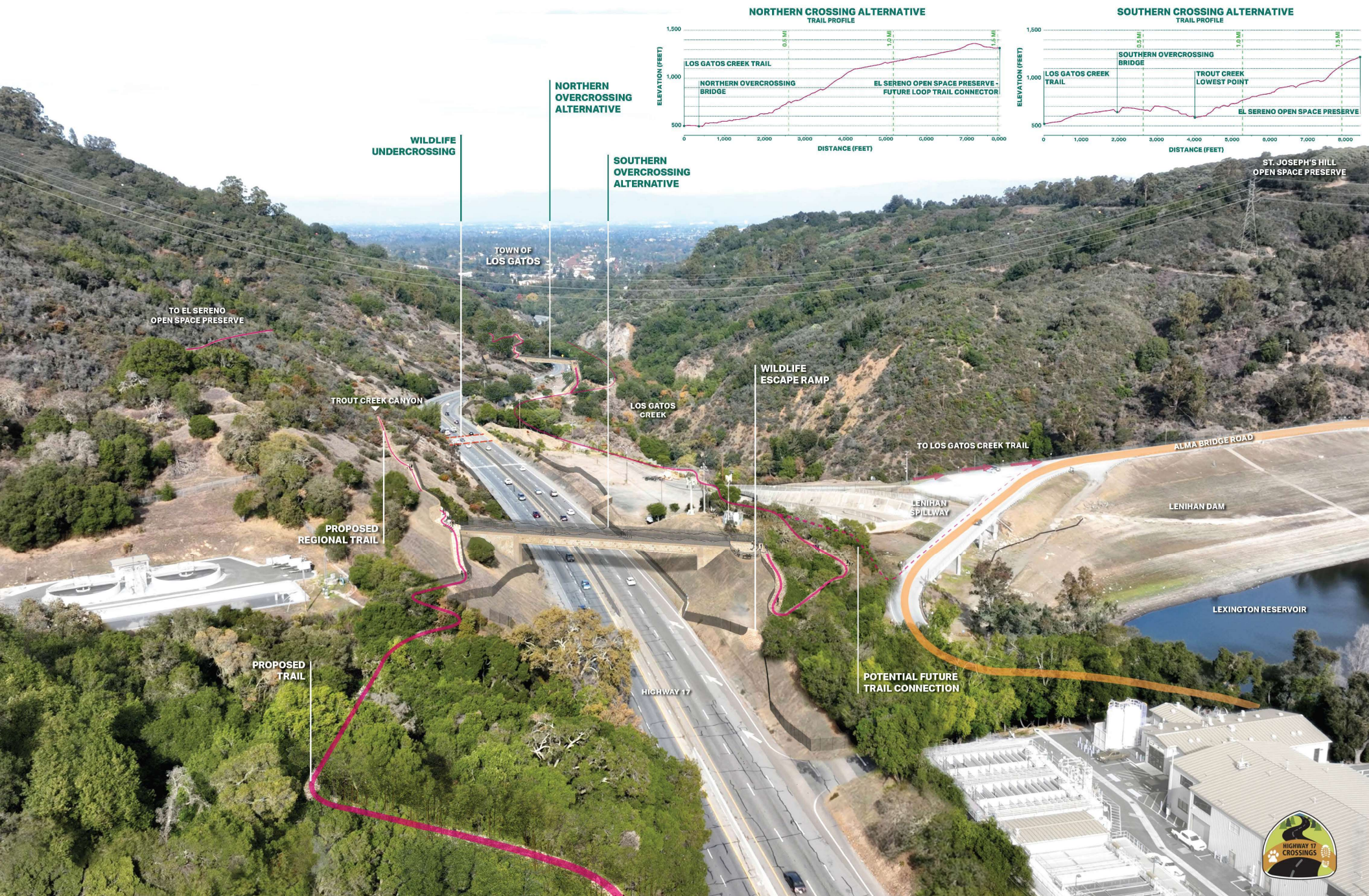


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PROJECT COMPONENTS



Project Components

- ❁ Wildlife Undercrossing with wildlife directional fencing and escape ramps, electrified mats, and sound walls
- ❁ Regional Trail Overcrossing – one alternative to be selected (Northern OR Southern)
- ❁ New or improved existing trail connections
- ❁ Mitigation Credit Agreement



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Wildlife Undercrossing



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Wildlife Undercrossing



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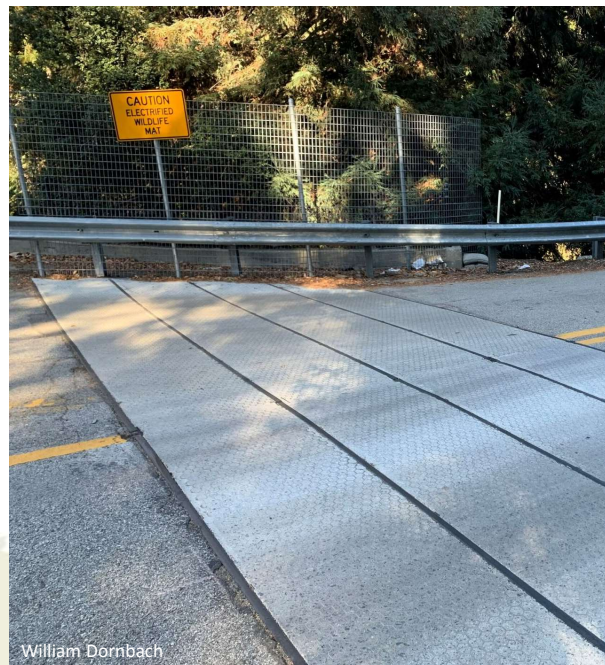
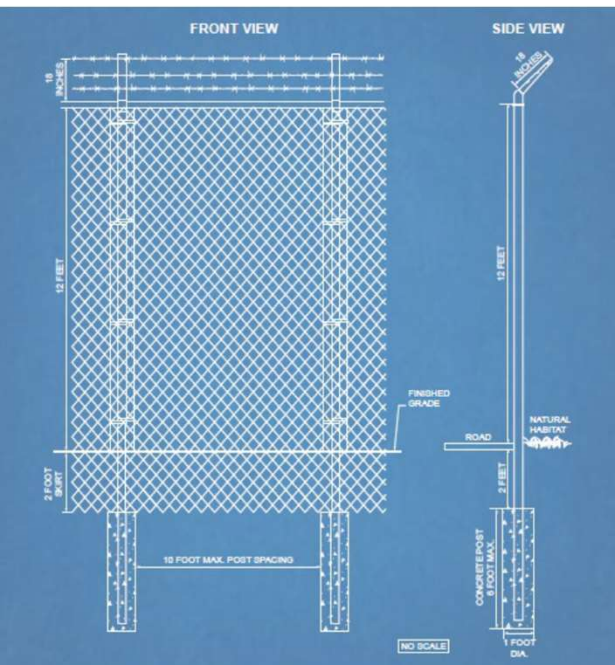


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Wildlife Fencing



V. McFall, D. Feremenga, W. Vickers, and P. Huber



William Dornbach



William Dornbach



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Wildlife Escape Ramps



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Mitigation Credit Agreement (MCA)

- ✿ MCAs create credits that may be used as compensatory mitigation for impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act
- ✿ Excess credits generated can help fund the project and/or ongoing maintenance
- ✿ Midpen working with California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and other stakeholders



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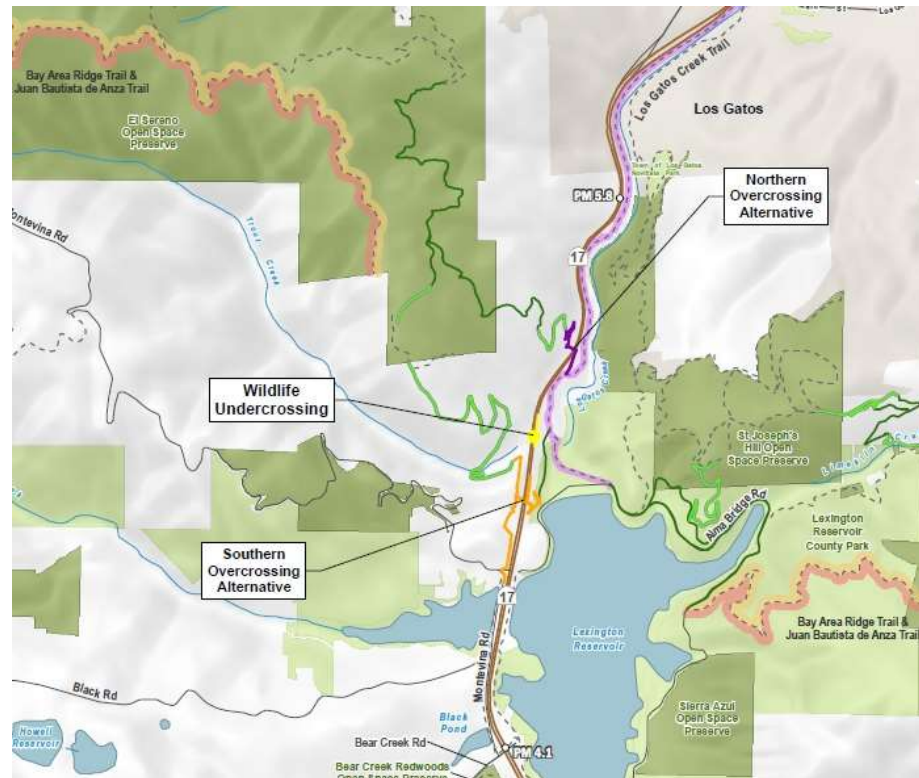


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Trail Overcrossing Alternatives

Two Alternatives (only ONE will be constructed):

- Southern Alternative
- Northern Alternative



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Northern Overcrossing Alternative



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.



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Northern Overcrossing Alternative



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Southern Overcrossing Alternative



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Southern Overcrossing Alternative



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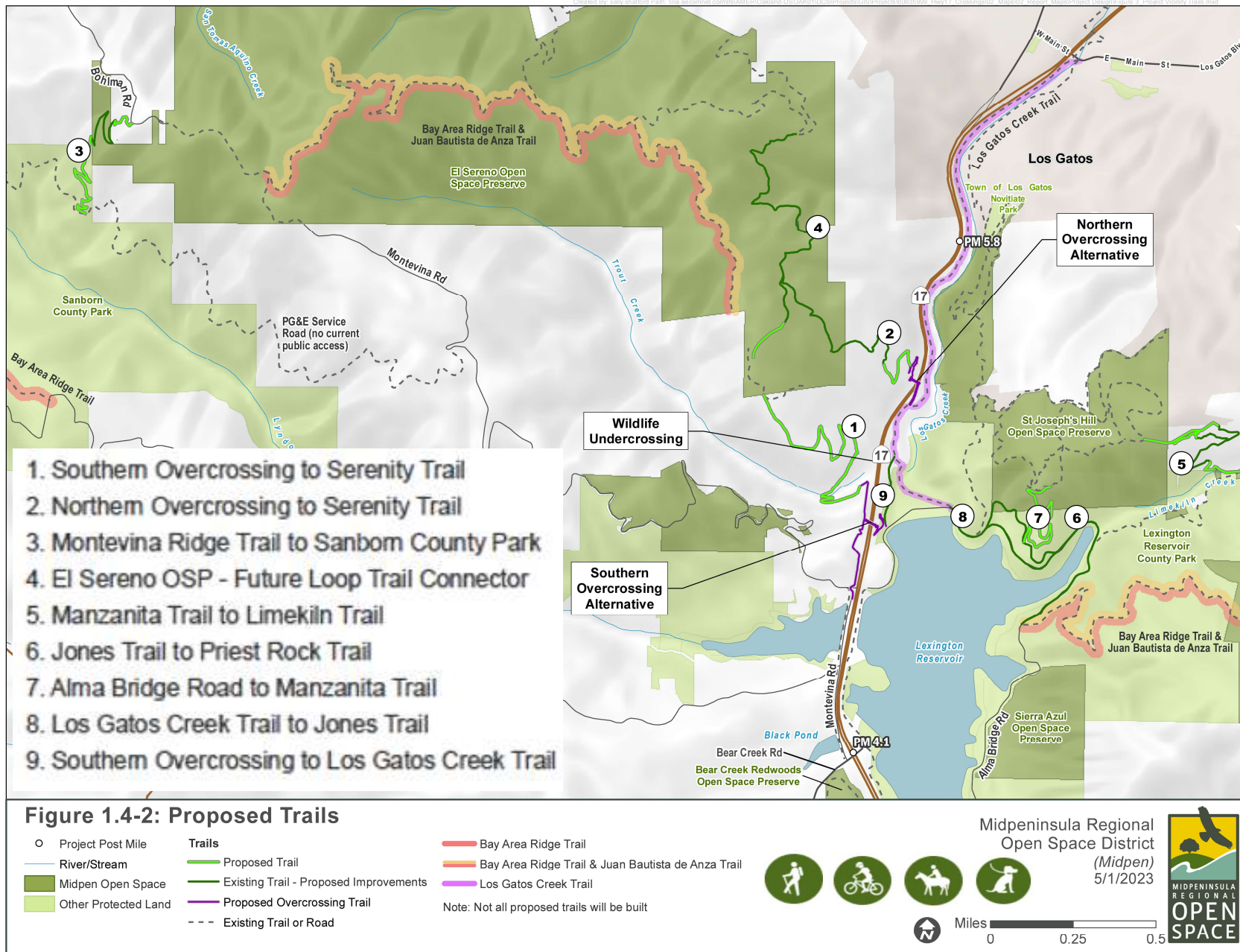
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Potential Trail Connections



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Highway 17 Wildlife and Regional Trail Crossings and Trail Connections Project

SANTA CLARA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
DISTRICT 04-SCL-17 (PM 4.1/5.8)
EA 04-2K580/EFIS 0416000453

Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment



Prepared by
the State of California, Department of Transportation
and the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

The environmental review, consultation, and any other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by Caltrans pursuant to 23 USC 327 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated May 27, 2022, and executed by FHWA and Caltrans.



February 2024



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Environmental Review

- ❖ CEQA – California Environmental Quality Act (Midpen)
- ❖ NEPA - National Environmental Policy Act (Caltrans)
- ❖ Disclose information about effects proposed project could have on the environment
- ❖ Identify avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures



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CEQA/NEPA Process Overview

Preliminary review/Define project

Initial Study (IS)/*Environmental Assessment (EA)**

Negative Declaration (ND)/Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) or
Environmental Impact Report
*Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or Environmental Impact
Statement (EIS)**

Public and Agency Review

Project Consideration/Approval



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* NEPA documents

Effects Found not to be Significant

The Initial Study determined that the project would result in no impacts or less than significant impacts on the following resources:

- Existing and Future Land Use
- Coastal Zone
- Wild and Scenic Rivers
- Parks and Recreational Facilities
- Farmlands/Timberlands
- Growth
- Community Character
- Relocations and Property Acquisitions
- Environmental Justice/Equity
- Utilities and Emergency Services



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Effects Found not to be Significant, cont.

- Traffic and Transportation
- Visual/Aesthetics
- Cultural Resources and Tribal Cultural Resources
- Hydrology and Floodplain
- Water Quality
- Geology, Soils, Seismicity and Topography
- Mineral Resources
- Paleontology
- Hazardous Waste
- Air Quality
- Noise and Vibration
- Energy
- Natural Communities
- Plant and Animal Species
- Invasive Species
- Cumulative Impacts
- Greenhouse Gases
- Wildfire



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Impacts Mitigated to Less than Significant

Potentially significant impacts identified. Implementation of feasible mitigation measures would reduce impacts to a less than significant level for:

- Wetlands and Other Waters
- Threatened and Endangered Species (California red-legged frog)



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Public Review Process

- Draft IS-MND/EA available at:
openspace.org/public-notice
- Public Comment Period:
February 20 – March 22, 2024
- Public meeting to receive comments (March 7, 2024)
- Written or emailed comments accepted:
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
Attn: Jared Hart, Senior Planner
5050 El Camino Real
Los Altos, CA 94022
hwyl7@openspace.org



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Next Steps/Project Schedule

Task/Phase	Timeframe
Community Engagement	Winter 2024
CEQA/NEPA Circulation (Public Comment Period)	Winter/Spring 2024
Complete Preliminary Design and Environmental Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midpen Board selection of preferred overcrossing alternative • Midpen Board Certification of CEQA document • Caltrans NEPA document and Project Report approval 	Spring/Summer 2024
Permitting and Final Design	2024 – 2026
Crossings Construction	2027 – 2028
Trails Construction	2024 – TBD



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COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

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Next Steps

- 🌿 Draft IS-MND/EA Comment Period: February 20 – March 22, 2024

Send written or emailed comments to:

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Attn: Jared Hart, Senior Planner

5050 El Camino Real

Los Altos, CA 94022

hwy17@openspace.org

- 🌿 Midpen Board Consideration of Preferred Overcrossing Alternative (April 10, 2024)
- 🌿 Midpen Board Consideration of Certification of Final IS-MND (Spring 2024)



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THANK YOU!



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