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Midpen Open Space celebrates start of construction on critical new Bay Trail segment

EAST PALO ALTO, Calif. [October 11, 2019] — The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District celebrated the start of construction on a critical new segment of the San Francisco Bay Trail today in their Ravenswood Preserve near East Palo Alto with local elected officials, project partners and environmental leaders.

The new trail will close a critical 0.6-mile gap in the Bay Trail between University Avenue and Ravenswood Preserve, connecting 80 contiguous miles of bayfront trail across three counties. Benefits of the project include improved access to nature and outdoor recreation for local residents and new commute routes for cyclists.

The San Francisco Bay Trail is a planned 500-mile walking and cycling path around the entire San Francisco Bay. With over 350 miles in place, the Bay Trail connects communities to parks, open spaces, schools, transit and to each other.

The Ravenswood Bay Trail project is also enhancing surrounding salt marsh wetlands, making them more resilient to the effects of climate change. High tide refuge islands and restored habitat will benefit endangered wildlife in Cooley Marsh including the salt marsh harvest mouse and a shorebird, the Ridgeway's rail.

A new stretch of sidewalk along University Avenue will lead to the preserve where a raised boardwalk, bridge with an overlook and interpretive signs will provide visitors and residents from surrounding neighborhoods safe access to nature along the shores of San Francisco Bay.

“This is truly a celebratory moment, as today marks a major milestone nearly 15 years in the making to close a critical gap in the Bay Trail – one that was first envisioned in 2005 to connect multiple communities and cities to their local bayfront parks and open spaces,” said Midpen General Manager Ana Ruiz. “For this short but mighty trail segment, it took more agencies and organizations than I can count on my ten fingers to receive the approvals and funding support necessary to reach the start of construction.”

The trail is anticipated to open in the summer of 2020, if work can be completed in the narrow construction window constrained by seasonal restrictions for sensitive wildlife species in the area.

“The Ravenswood Bay Trail project is representative of how the Bay Trail becomes a reality,” said Bay Trail Board Member Juan Raigoza. “It is done piece by piece with determination, perseverance and through strong partnerships.”

The estimated cost of planning, designing, engineering, permitting and building the Ravenswood Bay Trail is approximately \$5 million. The project is primarily funded by Midpen's 2014 Measure AA bond measure. Additional support of nearly \$2.8 in grant funds were provided by project partners California Natural Resources

Agency Urban Greening Grant, County of San Mateo Measure K, Santa Clara County Measure A, Facebook, Association of Bay Area Governments and Coastal Conservancy.

More information can be found at [openspace.org/bay-trail](https://www.openspace.org/bay-trail)

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The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District is a public agency created by voters in 1972. Its mission is to acquire and preserve a regional greenbelt of open space land of regional significance in perpetuity, protect and restore the natural environment and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education. Midpen has successfully protected more than 63,000 acres of open space throughout Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties.

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