



HIGHWAY 17 WILDLIFE AND REGIONAL TRAILS PROJECT



August 22, 2023

Project Purpose

- 🌿 Improve wildlife passage, habitat connectivity, and regional trail connections in the vicinity of State Route 17 in the project area.



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Project Overview



MIDPENINSULA
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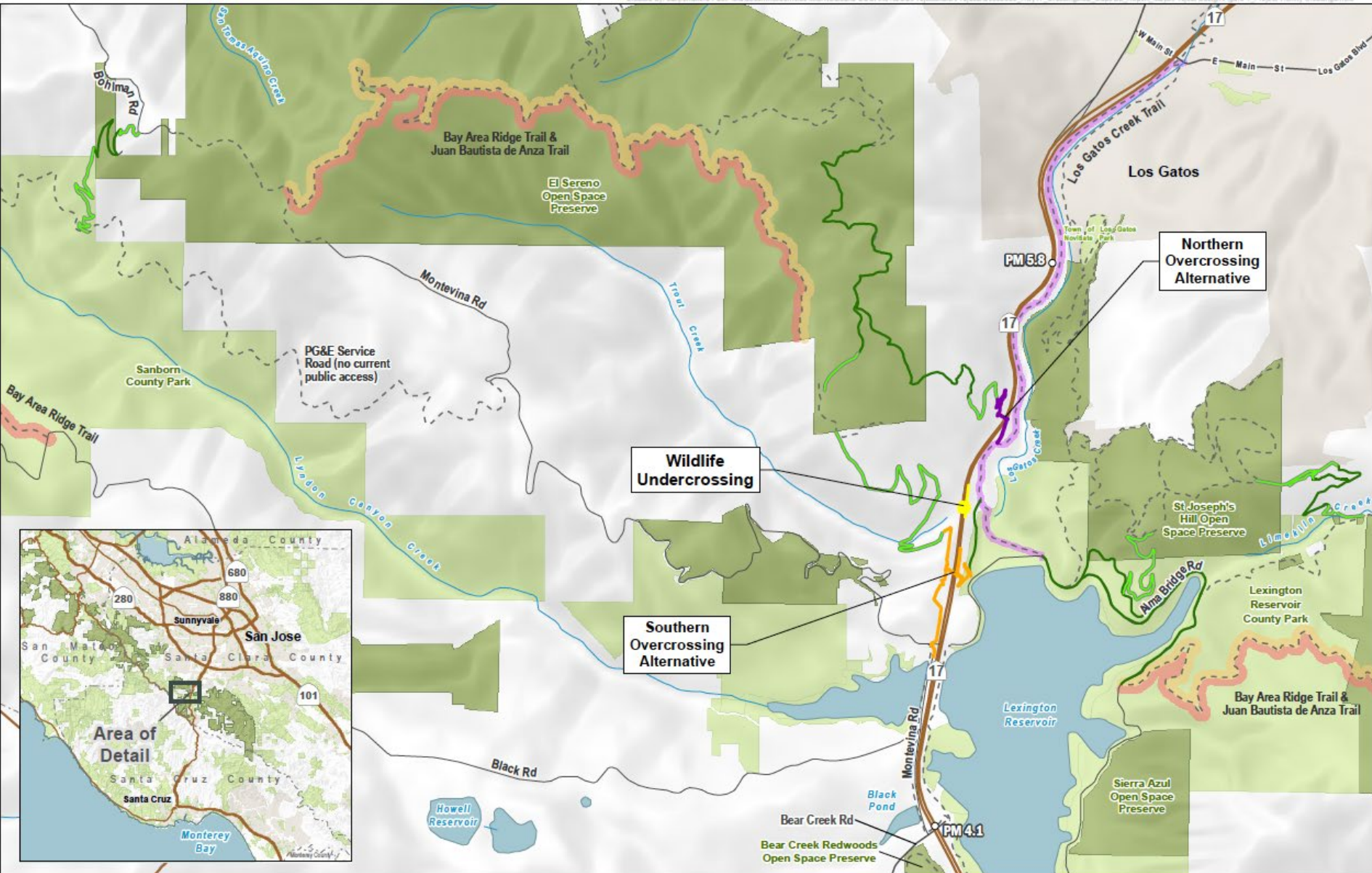
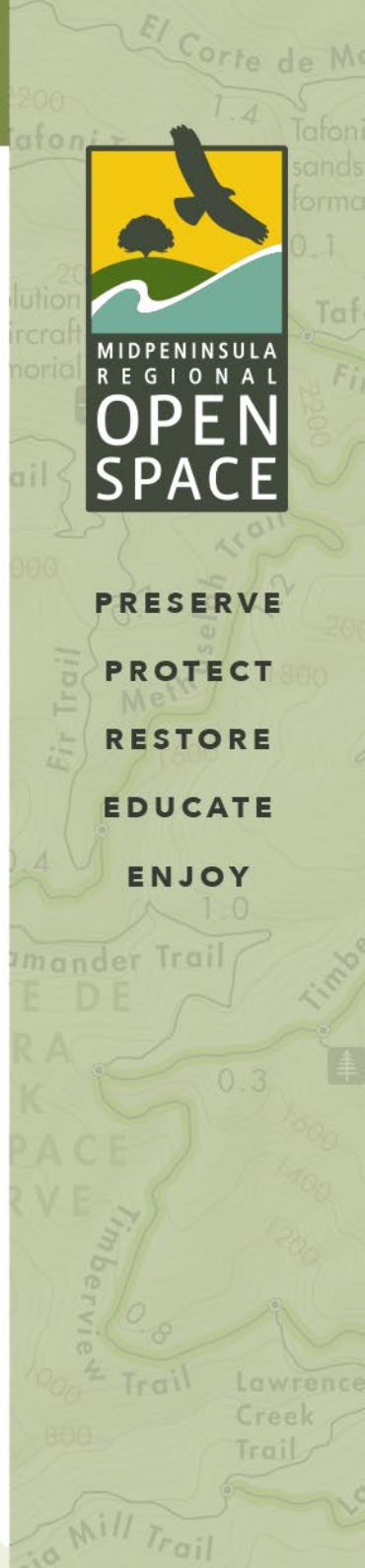


Figure 1: Project Vicinity

○ Project Post Mile	Proposed Crossings	Trails	— Bay Area Ridge Trail
— River/Stream	— Southern Overcrossing Alternative	— Proposed Trail	— Bay Area Ridge Trail & Juan Bautista de Anza Trail
■ Midpen Open Space	— Northern Overcrossing Alternative	— Existing Trail - Proposed Improvements	— Los Gatos Creek Trail
■ Other Protected Land	— Wildlife Undercrossing	--- Existing Trail	

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen)
1/6/2023

Miles 0 0.25 0.5

Project Partners & Stakeholders

Partners

- Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District- Project Proponent/CEQA Lead Agency/
Funding Partner
- Caltrans- ROW owner/operator/NEPA Lead Agency
- Valley Transportation Authority- Project Delivery Partner
- Metropolitan Transportation Commission (Funding Exchange)
- State of California/State Parks (Funding)
- Wildlife Conservation Board (Funding)
- Peninsula Open Space Trust (Funding)
- Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation (Funding)
- The Nature Conservancy (Funding/Research)
- Pathways for Wildlife (Research)
- UC Santa Cruz Puma Project (Research)
- San Jose Water Company (Landowner/manager)

Stakeholders

- Wildlife and Recreational Trail Users
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Valley Water
- Town of Los Gatos
- Santa Clara County (Parks and Roads)
- Bay Area Ridge Trail
- Juan Bautista de Anza Trail (National Park Service)
- Committee for Green Foothills



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Project Components

- 🌿 Wildlife undercrossing, soundwalls, directional fencing, escape ramps, and electrified mats
- 🌿 Trail Overcrossing— one alternative to be selected (northern OR southern)
- 🌿 Trail Connections
- 🌿 Mitigation Credit Agreement (maybe?)
- 🌿 Funding



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Wildlife Undercrossing



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Wildlife Undercrossing

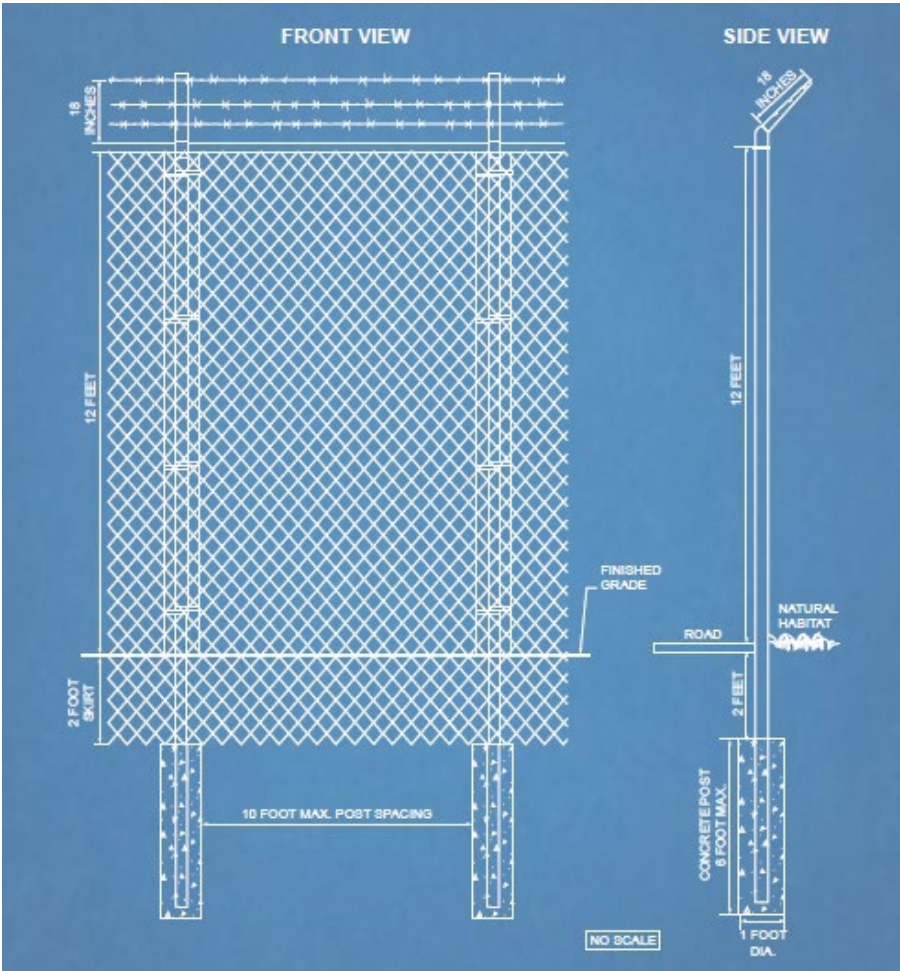


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Wildlife Fencing and Jump Outs



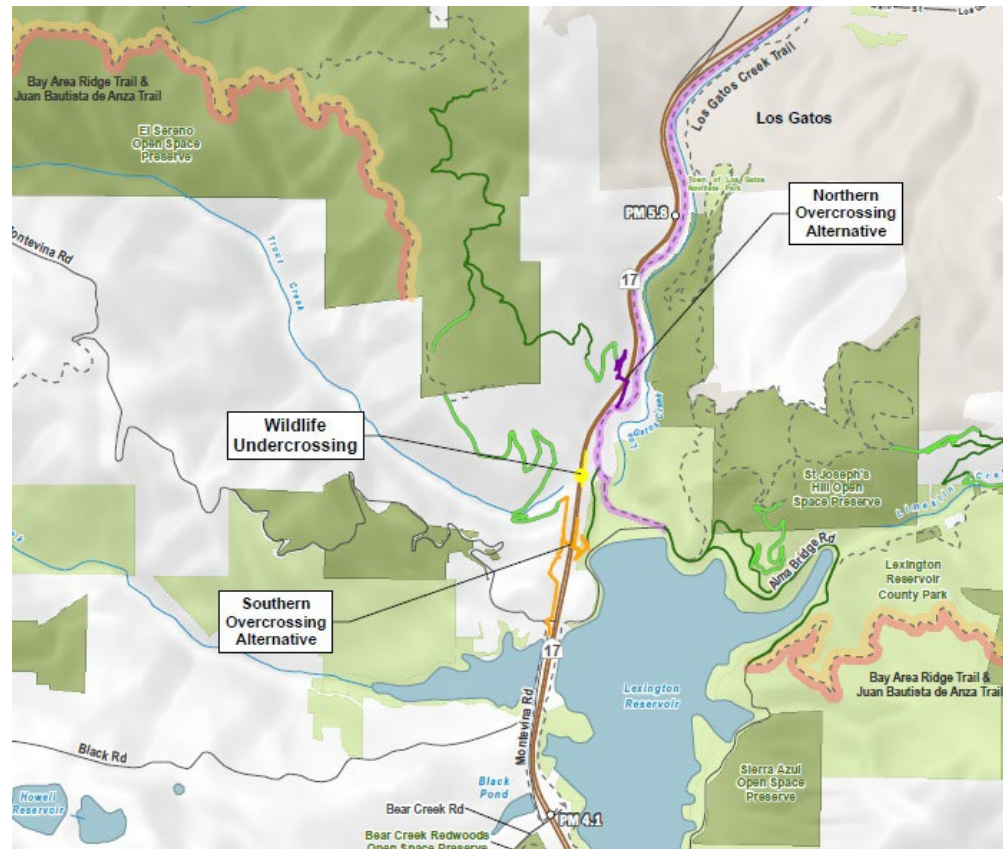
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Trail Overcrossing Alternatives

Two Alternatives (only ONE will be constructed):

- Northern alternative
- Southern alternative



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Northern Overcrossing Alternative



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Northern Overcrossing Alternative



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Southern Overcrossing Alternative



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Southern Overcrossing Alternative



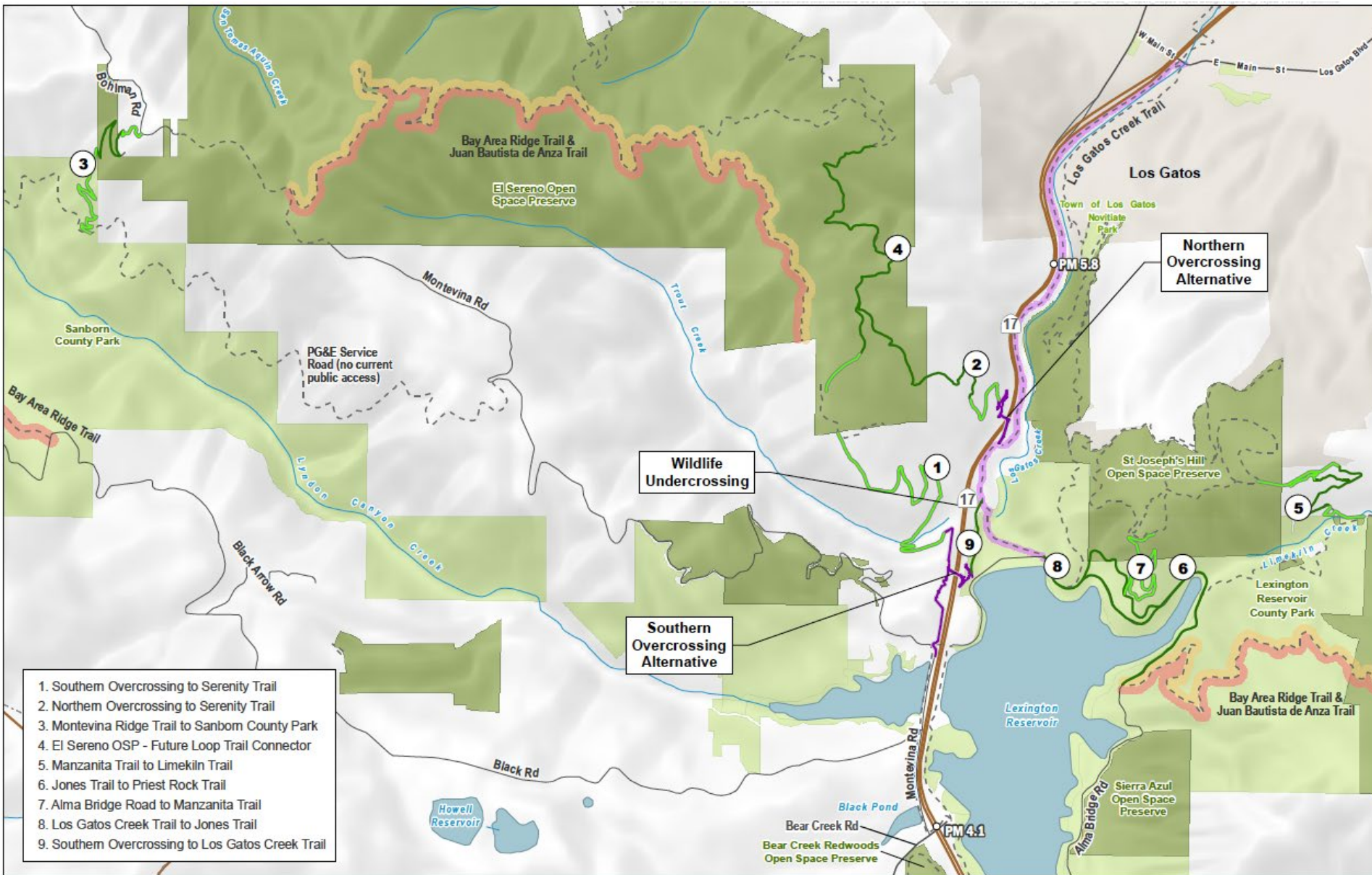
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Potential Trail Connections Being Analyzed



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1. Southern Overcrossing to Serenity Trail
2. Northern Overcrossing to Serenity Trail
3. Montevina Ridge Trail to Sanborn County Park
4. El Sereno OSP - Future Loop Trail Connector
5. Manzanita Trail to Limekiln Trail
6. Jones Trail to Priest Rock Trail
7. Alma Bridge Road to Manzanita Trail
8. Los Gatos Creek Trail to Jones Trail
9. Southern Overcrossing to Los Gatos Creek Trail

Figure 3: Proposed Trails

○ Project Post Mile	Trails	— Bay Area Ridge Trail
— River/Stream	— Proposed Trail	— Bay Area Ridge Trail & Juan Bautista de Anza Trail
 Midpen Open Space	— Existing Trail - Proposed Improvements	— Los Gatos Creek Trail
 Other Protected Land	— Proposed Overcrossing Trail	- - - Existing Trail

Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District
(Midpen)
1/6/2023



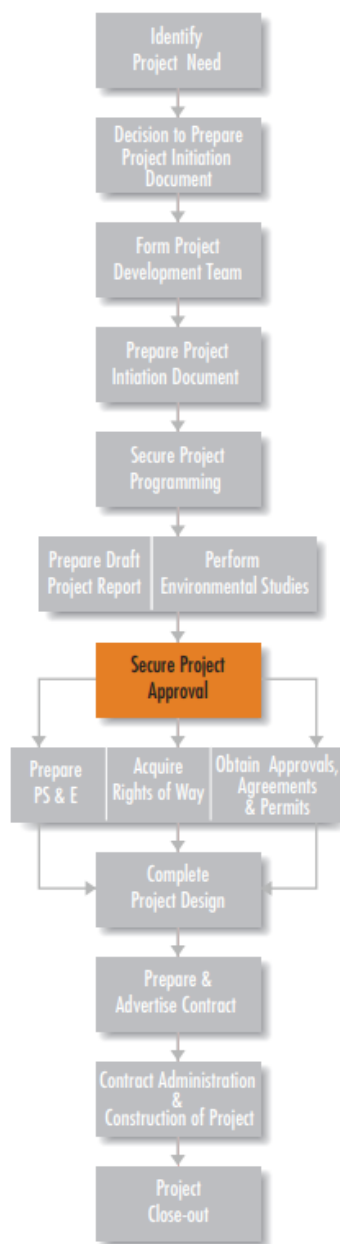
Mitigation Credit Agreement (MCA)

- 🌿 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 CDFW and other stakeholders to determine credits/viability for this project



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Caltrans Process



a public meeting. The environmental document must outline the need and purpose and the reasons why certain alternatives were set aside. All significant adverse effects of each reasonable alternative must be identified along with mitigation measures for each effect. The environmental document provides a record of the decision-making process in selecting the preferred alternative. Alternatives must be formally considered when an EIS or EIR is prepared or an adverse impact is expected on:

- Endangered species
- Public parks, recreation areas, Historic sites, or wildlife and waterfowl refuges
- Aquatic ecosystems, including wetlands and Floodplains
- Farmlands or agricultural preserves
- A hazardous waste site

Before starting the DPR and Draft ED, the project team reviews the project alternatives and considers the need for environmental mitigation. Excessive mitigation costs or long-term mitigation maintenance may be a factor in discarding alternatives. Effects that must be considered include those on the natural environment, architectural and cultural issues, social issues, and hazardous materials, involving as many as a dozen separate studies. Projects must comply with an extensive list of applicable environmental laws. Compliance is usually established in the ED after review by applicable agencies.

SECURE PROJECT APPROVAL

PROJECT APPROVAL/ENVIRONMENTAL APPROVAL

Once the environmental studies for the practicable alternatives are complete, the Draft ED is approved, and together with an approved DPR, the project is circulated for public comment. A preferred alternative is not usually recommended at this stage; however, if one is presented, a discussion of the preferred alternative should document factors considered in its selection.

The least environmentally damaging practicable alternative that satisfies the project's purpose and need must be identified when a Draft ED is prepared. The impact of a 'no-build' project is included in the Draft ED and may be chosen as the preferred alternative if supported by engineering and environmental studies.



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Project Schedule & Next Steps

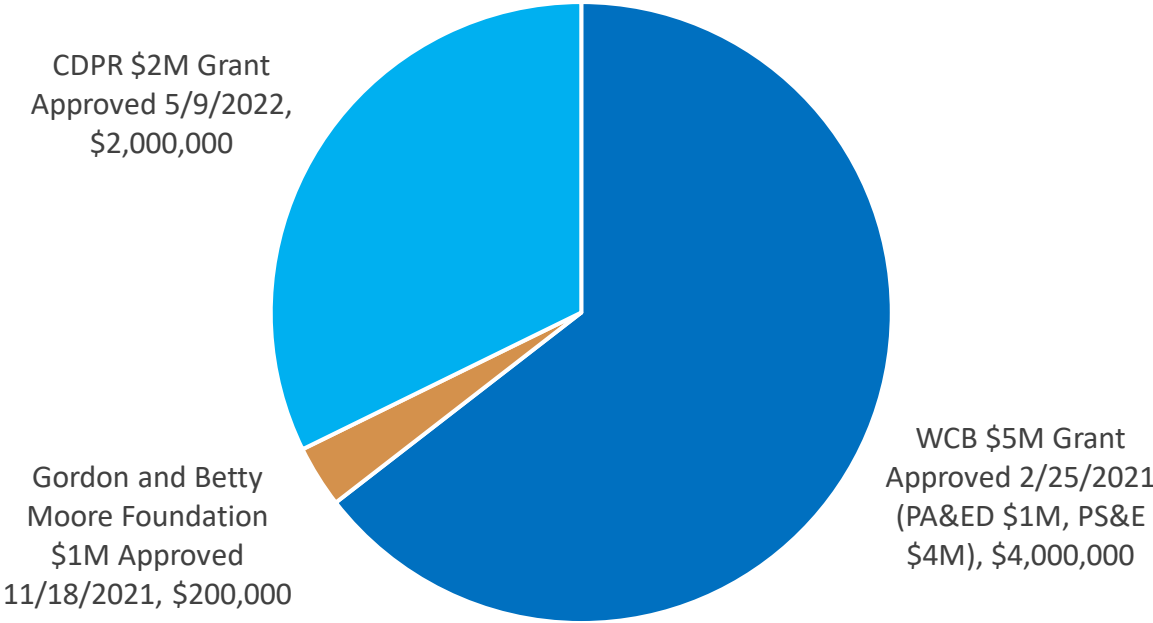
Task/Phase	Timeframe
Project Initiation Document (PSR&PDS)	Completed 2020
CEQA/NEPA/DPR Circulation	Fall 2023/ Winter 2024
Complete Preliminary Design and Environmental Review (PA&ED) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Midpen Board selection of preferred overcrossing and Certification of CEQA• Caltrans final environmental (NEPA) and Project Report approval	Fall 2023/ Winter 2024
Permitting and Final Design (PS&E)	2024 – 2026
Crossing Construction	2026 – 2028
Trails Construction	2024 – TBD



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Funding – PS&E

Plans, Specifications & Estimates Phase Fully Funded ~\$6.2M



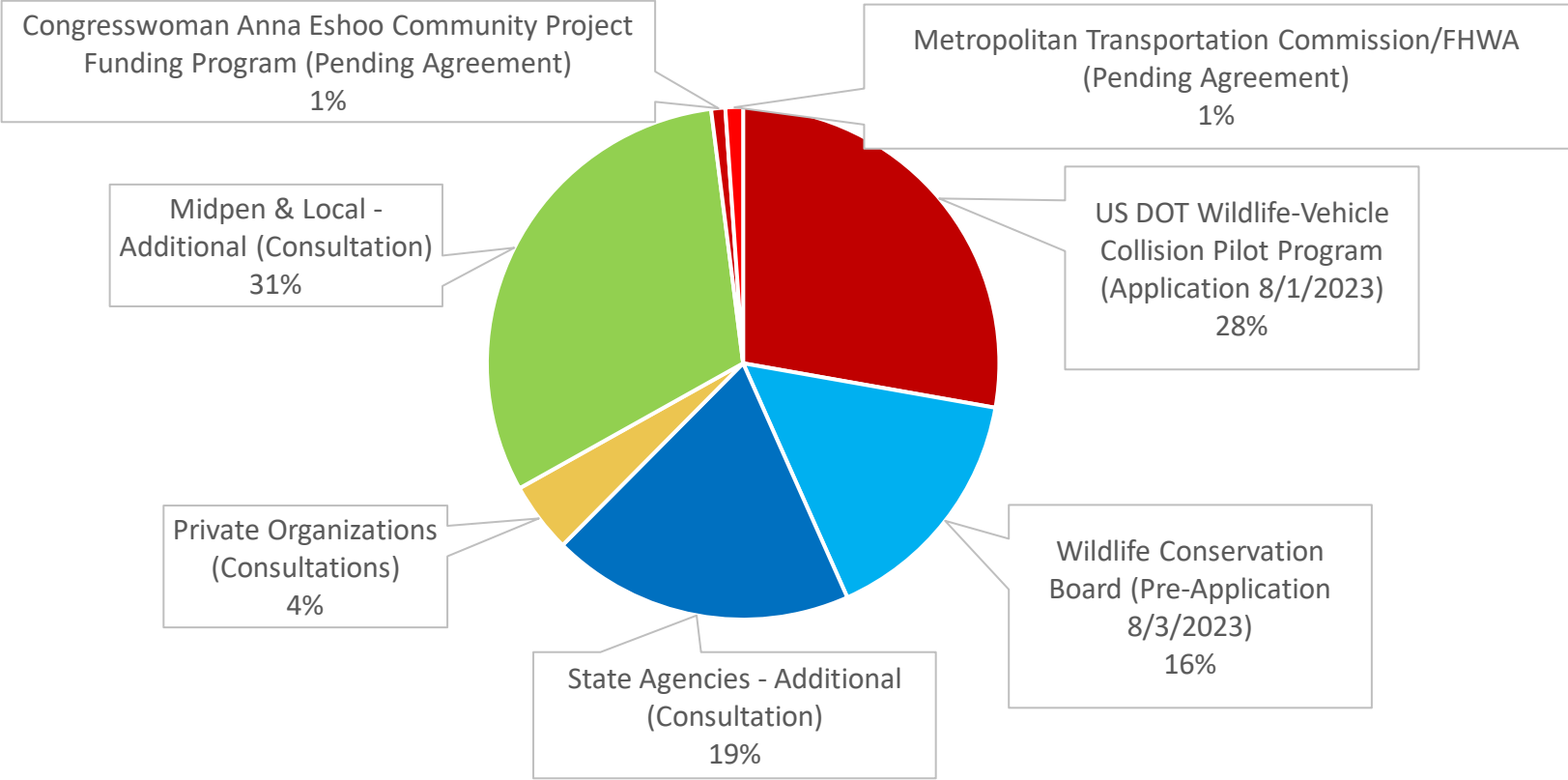
- WCB \$5M Grant Approved 2/25/2021 (PA&ED \$1M, PS&E \$4M)
- Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation \$1M Approved 11/18/2021
- CDPR \$2M Grant Approved 5/9/2022



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Funding - Construction

Construction Phase Estimated Cost \$35M - \$41M



- US DOT Wildlife-Vehicle Collision Pilot Program (Application 8/1/2023)
- Wildlife Conservation Board (Pre-Application 8/3/2023)
- State Agencies - Additional (Consultation)
- Private Organizations (Consultations)
- Midpen & Local - Additional (Consultation)
- Congresswoman Anna Eshoo Community Project Funding Program
- Metropolitan Transportation Commission/FHWA



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Conclusion/Lessons Learned

- 🌿 Project partners are essential
- 🌿 Know your target species, build for them, accommodate others when possible
- 🌿 Multiple alternatives makes for a longer environmental review process
- 🌿 Funding isn't easy, but more \$ for wildlife crossings available
- 🌿 Communicate often with partners, stakeholders, and the public



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