

HIGHWAY 17 WILDLIFE AND REGIONAL TRAIL CROSSING

Southern Santa Clara County Gap Closure



**BAY AREA TRAILS
COLLABORATIVE**



Rendering of Southern Overcrossing (AECOM)

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Highway 17 Wildlife and Regional Trail Crossings Project will connect more than 30,000 acres of protected public lands east and west of State Highway 17 in southern Santa Clara County and close a significant gap in the region's developing trail network. Two separate crossings will be constructed—one to provide safe movement for recreational trail users over the highway (see rendering), and one to help animals seeking food, mates and habitat in the Santa Cruz Mountains find safe passage under the highway. The project will also develop new, critical connections to existing regional trail networks, including the Bay Area Ridge Trail, the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail and other multiuse trails currently in development. Additional connections to regional public open space and parks in the Santa Cruz Mountains are also part of the larger trails plan.

A "Top 25 Priority" of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's (Midpen's) Open Space Vision Plan, the project requires a high level of collaboration with Caltrans and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, as well as other key partners, including—but not limited to—the San Jose Water Company, the Bay Area Ridge Trail and Santa Clara County Parks. Measure AA, a \$300 million bond approved by Bay Area voters in 2014, will provide partial funding in the amount of \$15 million for the project.

The Highway 17 Project is one of 12 projects that the Bay Area Trails Collaborative has prioritized as critical to completing its 2,600-mile regional trail network connecting the San Francisco Bay Area. The Bay Area Trails Collaborative is a Rails to Trails Conservancy TrailNation™ project—a nationwide initiative to create model trail networks and ultimately connect the country by trail.

PROJECT DATA

- **Total Project Miles:** 6 to 8
- **Project Costs:**
 - Wildlife and regional trail crossings: \$24.1 million to \$26.5 million (2023 dollars)
 - Wildlife directional fencing: \$3.3 million (regardless of alternative) (2023 dollars)
- **Project Funding:**
 - \$5 million grant from the California Wildlife Conservation Board
 - \$2 million grant from the California Department of Parks and Recreation
 - \$1 million grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
 - \$15 million Midpen Measure AA funding; remaining funds unsecured

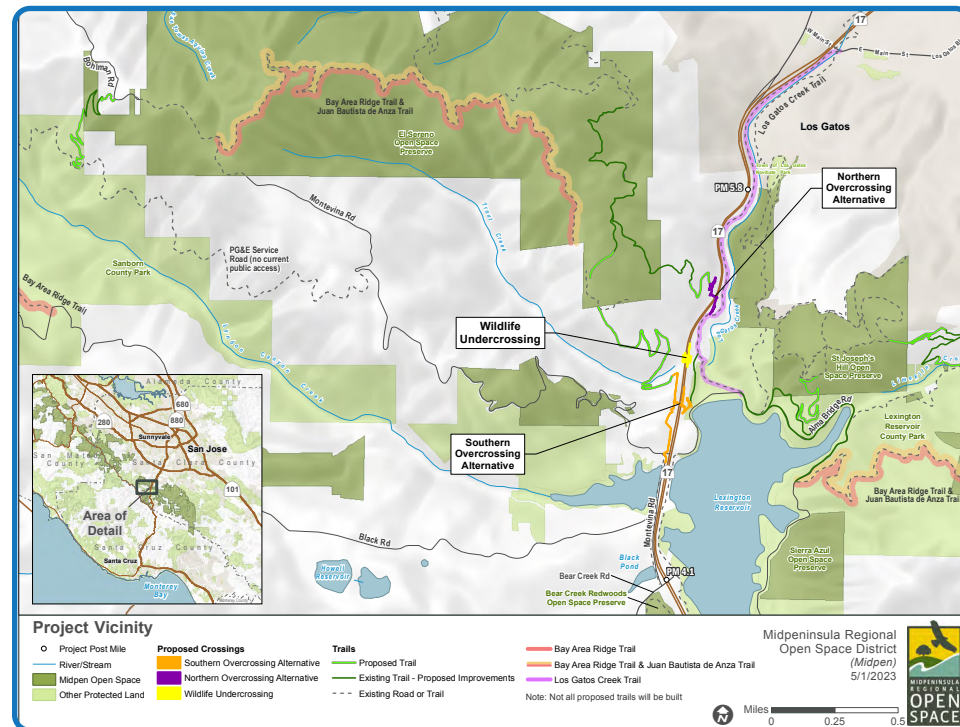
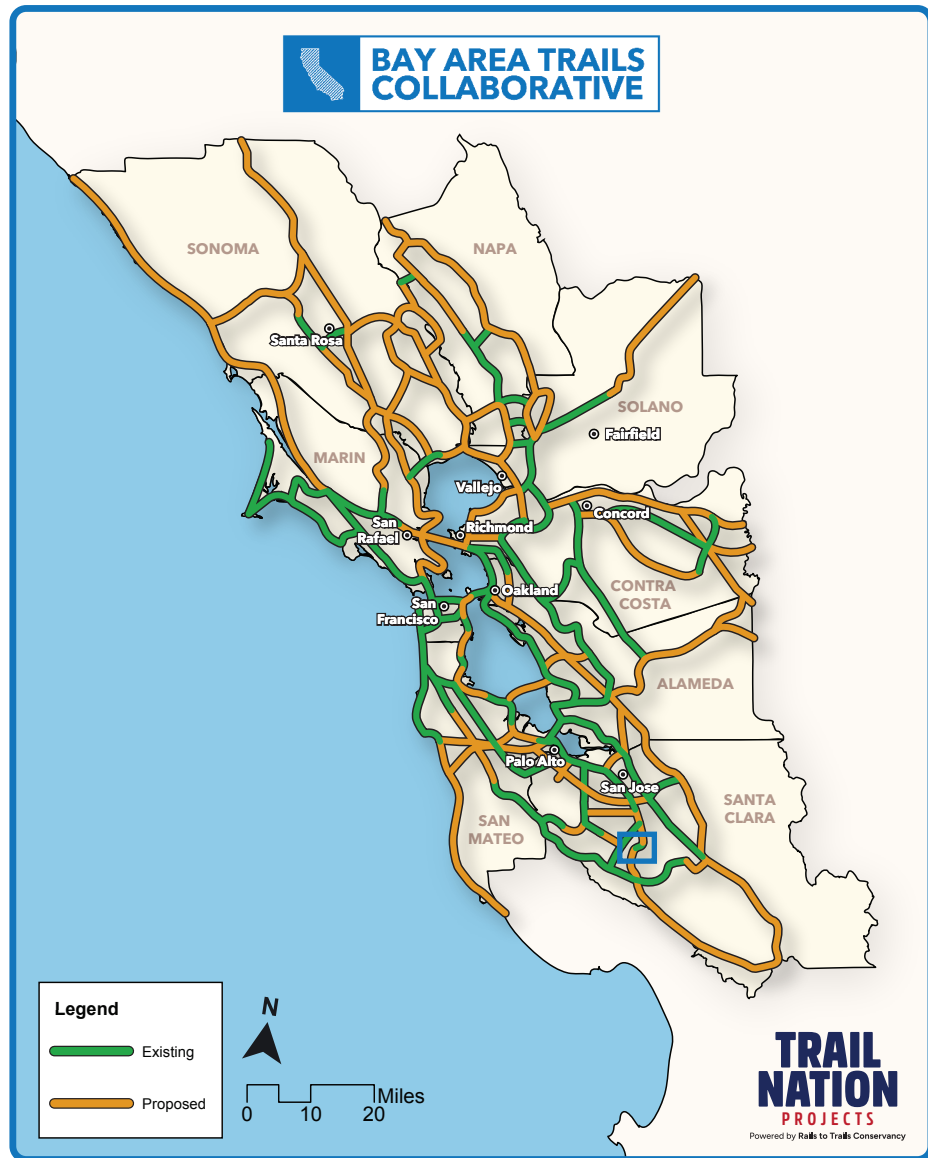
TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT

Connecting Open Space: The project links approximately 30,000 acres of protected public lands east and west of Highway 17—including Midpen preserves (El Sereno, St Joseph's Hill and Sierra Azul) and Santa Clara County Parks (Lexington Reservoir, Sanborn and Almaden Quicksilver).

Closing Critical Gaps in the Regional Trail Network: The creation of additional trail segments will help close a major gap in the Bay Area Ridge Trail and ultimately establish a contiguous 50-mile section of trail from Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve to Almaden Quicksilver County Park.

Providing for Safe Movement of Wildlife and Recreational Trail Users: This area is a road-kill "hot spot." Since 2008, one or more mountain lions have been killed each year by vehicle collisions on Highway 17 near the project area—in addition to 100 other animals, including deer, bobcats, foxes and coyotes, over the past decade. This project will meet the needs of both animals and recreational trail users by establishing a nonmotorized pathway across this high-speed, heavily trafficked highway.

HIGHWAY 17 TRAIL CROSSING



PROJECT ACTION PLAN

- Conduct environmental review (CEQA, NEPA)
- Develop construction plans, specifications and estimate
- Secure public access rights for crossing and trails
- Secure remaining funding

PROJECT CONTACTS

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