



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

Memorandum

DATE: September 11, 2019

MEMO TO: Board of Directors

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

FROM: Highway 17 Crossings Project Managers:
Julie Andersen, Senior Resource Management Specialist
Meredith Manning, Senior Planner
Aaron Peth, Planner III,
Sophie Christel, Planner I

SUBJECT: Highway 17 Trail Connections -- Summary of Comments from July 9, 2019 Public Workshop in Los Gatos

SUMMARY

The Highway 17 Crossings Project (Project) near the Lexington Reservoir in Los Gatos is comprised of three elements: 1) wildlife crossing, 2) trail crossing, and 3) east-to-west and north-to-south trail connections, including connections to the Bay Area Ridge Trail. The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) introduced the trail connection element of the Project at a July 9, 2019 public workshop and asked for input in the form of a survey (Attachment 1). This data, along with input from other public workshops and staff and consultant analyses, informs the recommended selection of crossing alternatives to advance into the project's environmental review phase. Staff will present these recommendations at the September 17, 2019 Planning and Natural Resources Committee meeting.

Below is a summary of the public comment received:

- **The most popular crossing alternative was 5/5a (Northern Overcrossing)** according to 54% of respondents who identified a preferred crossing.
- **A large majority of respondents prefer an east-west connection:**
 - when given the choice between an east-west or north-south connection, 69% of respondents selected east-west.
 - when asked for their priority start and end points, 85.1% of respondents described an east-west connection. Specifically, the majority of east-west respondents preferred a connection from Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve (OSP) to El Sereno OSP or Sanborn County Park.

- **Given a list of preferred recreational activities:**
 - pedestrian activities (walking/hiking/running) ranked highest (4.8 out of 6).
 - mountain biking ranked second (4.3 out of 6) and
 - wildlife observation was a close third (4.1 out of 6).
 - the lowest ranked activities were road biking (3.2), dog walking (3.1), and equestrian use (2.0).

For more information regarding comments received, please refer to Attachments 2 and 3.

Attachments:

1. Highway 17 Trails Comment Card/Survey
2. Public comments to survey questions
3. Summary of public written comments
4. Highway 17 Crossings survey results from 2018



Highway 17 Regional Trail Connections – Public Comment

1. Why are you interested in this project? (check all that apply)

- Recreational trail user
 Neighbor
 Partner agency representative
 Wildlife connectivity supporter
 Other: _____

2. Which recreational crossing direction is most important to you? (choose one)

- East/West connection (Bay Area Ridge Trail Connection from Sierra Azul Preserve to El Sereno Preserve/Sanborn County Park)
 North/South connection (Los Gatos Creek Trail connection to Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve)
 Other _____

3. Please rank these activities from most important to least important.

(Rank 1– 7: 1 = most important, 7 = least important)

_____ Walking/Hiking/Running

_____ Road bike cycling

_____ Mountain bike cycling

_____ Equestrian use

_____ Dog walking/hiking/running

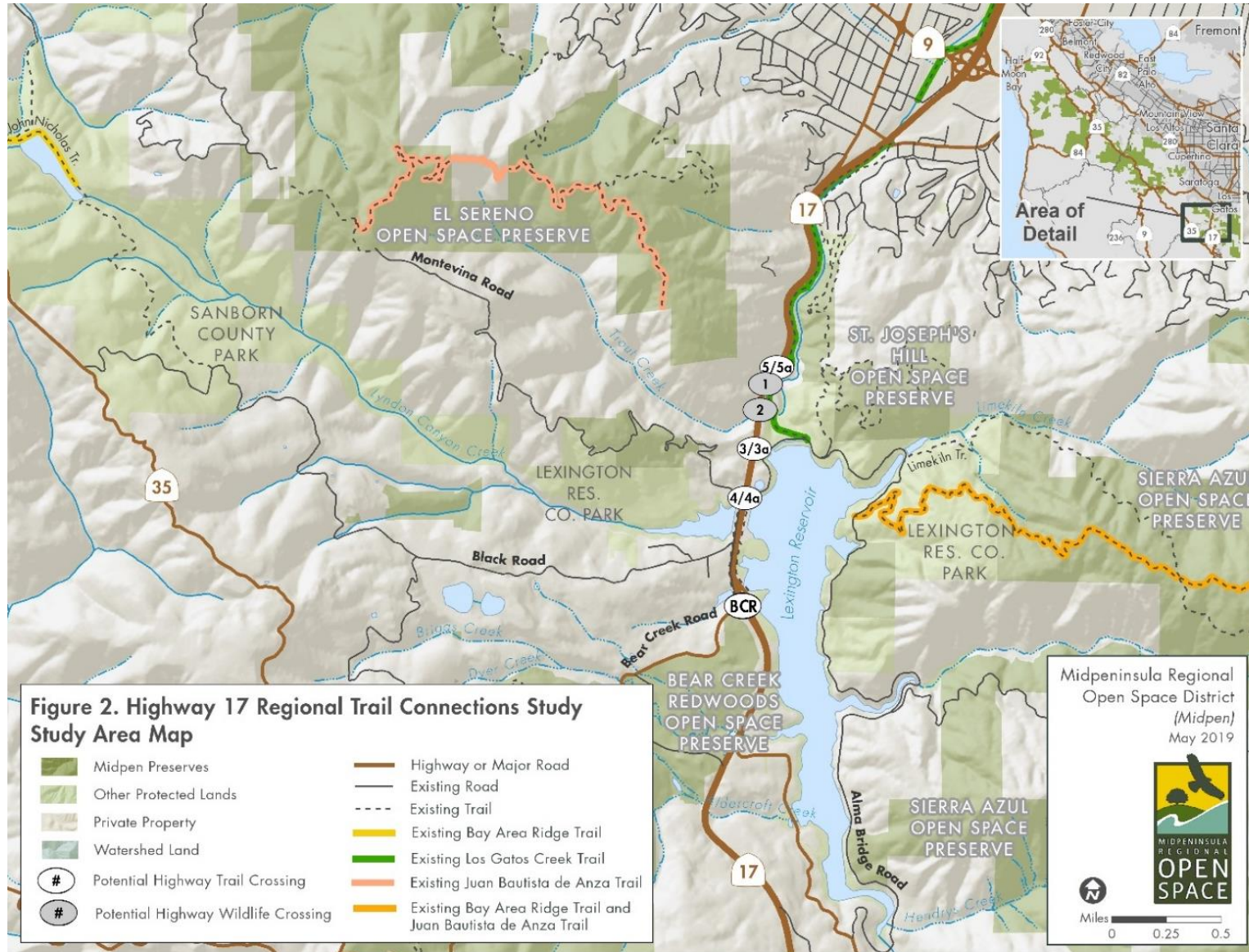
_____ Wildlife observation

_____ Other: _____

4. Do you have any other comments or questions?

Additional question on back →

5. Please draw on the map below to indicate the starting and ending points and crossing most important to you.



Name: _____ Email: _____

Thank you for your input, public comment period ends at 5 p.m. on August 5. For complete project information visit: www.openspace.org/Hwy17Trails

Attachment 2. Public responses to Highway 17 Regional Trails Connections survey

Tables 1 through 4 below consolidate responses from long-form answers and are intended to reflect the intent, not reproduce exact wording, of the comments.

Table 1: Start and End Points Most Important	# of Mentions
East-West Routes	
Sierra Azul to El Sereno/Sanborn	42
Sanborn/El Sereno to St. Joseph's Hill	11
El Sereno to Sanborn	5
Sanborn/El Sereno to Lexington Reservoir	4
Los Gatos Creek Trail to Sanborn/BCR	4
Los Gatos Creek Trail to Sierra Azul	2
El Sereno to Los Gatos Creek Trail	2
Other East-West	5
North-South Routes	
Los Gatos Creek Trail to Old Santa Cruz Hwy	3
Bear Creek Redwoods to Lexington Reservoir	2
BCR to Montevina Road	2
Montevina Road to Los Gatos Creek Trail	2
Other North-South	3
TOTAL East-West	74
TOTAL North-South	13

Table 2: Specific Alignments Mentioned	# of Mentions
Connection L	5
PG&E road (Part of Connection G)	3
Loop around Lexington Reservoir	3
N/S bike connection from at least BCR to Montevina Road	3
Lyndon Canyon	2
Loops from Downtown Los Gatos	2

Attachment 2. Public responses to Highway 17 Regional Trails Connections survey

Table 3: Preferred Crossings	# of Mentions
5/5a	34
4/4a	13
3/3a	8
1	4
2	2
BCR	2

Table 4: Other Comments	# of Comments
General enthusiasm and encouragement	15
Wildlife safety/usability is a top priority	8
Improve trail east of Hwy 17 (Segment L) - bikes use shoulder of Hwy 17, very dangerous	6
Desire for more biking trails generally	6
Concerns about parking	5
Support of multi-use trails/crossings	5
Request for volunteer opportunities/trail work days	2
Concerns about winter bike access/maintenance	2
Suggestions for improved bike infrastructure	2
Support landscaping of overpass	2
Concerns about damage/danger from mountain bikes	2
Consider cost of trail connection, not just crossing	1
Desire for wildlife observation structure	1
Concerns about noise	1
Concerns about human-wildlife interactions	1
Support easy-access/accessible trails	1
Concerns about homeless use of undercrossing	1
Steep alignments may discourage use	1
Avoid having the crossing delay other trail connections	1
Open more closed areas; build/connect more trails	1

Attachment 3. Comment Sheet Summary for Highway 17 Regional Trails Survey

The figures below show the results of the 2019 survey. Figures 1 through 5 provide quantitative graphs of survey responses.

Figure 1: Respondent Interest in Project

Why are you interested in this project? (check all that apply)














Choices	Percentage	Count
Recreational trail user	 92.73%	153
Wildlife connectivity supporter	 50.30%	83
Neighbor	 21.82%	36
Partner agency representative	 6.06%	10
Other	 4.24%	7
Total Entries		165

Figure 2: Preferred Recreational Crossing Direction

Which recreational crossing direction is most important to you? (choose one)

Choices	Percentage	Count
East/West connection (Sierra Azul Preserve to El Sereno Preserve/Sanborn County Park)	 69.09%	114
North/South connection (Los Gatos Creek Trail to Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve)	 25.45%	42
BOTH!	 0.61%	1
Maintain bicycle access to majority of all trails	 0.61%	1
Los Gatos Creek Trail to Old San Jose Rd.	 0.61%	1
Staff recommendation	 0.61%	1
Connect Montevina Road so bikes can also use	 0.61%	1
Other [View]	 2.42%	4
Total		165

Attachment 3. Comment Sheet Summary for Highway 17 Regional Trails Survey

Figure 3: Respondent Most Important Activity

Which activity is most important to you?




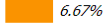
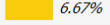









Choices	Percentage	Count
Mountain bike cycling	 41.82%	69
Walking/Hiking/Running	 31.52%	52
Wildlife observation	 7.88%	13
Dog walking/hiking/running	 6.67%	11
Road bike cycling	 6.67%	11
Equestrian use	 2.42%	4
Mountain lions not being dead	 0.61%	1
Other [View]	 2.42%	4
Total		165

Figure 4. Ranked Preferences for Most Important Activity

Figure 4a: Walking/Running/Hiking

Walking/Hiking/Running

Choices (Score)	Percentage	Count
6 - Least Important (6)	 2.42%	4
5 (5)	 3.03%	5
4 (4)	 7.27%	12
3 (3)	 20.61%	34
2 (2)	 29.70%	49
1 - Most Important (1)	 36.97%	61
Total		165
Avg Score		2.2

Attachment 3. Comment Sheet Summary for Highway 17 Regional Trails Survey

Figure 4b: Road Bicycling

Road bike cycling







Choices (Score)	Percentage	Count
6 - Least Important (6)	 26.67%	44
5 (5)	 10.30%	17
4 (4)	 17.58%	29
3 (3)	 16.97%	28
2 (2)	 19.39%	32
1- Most Important (1)	 9.09%	15
Total		165
Avg Score		3.8

Figure 4c: Mountain Bicycling

Mountain bike cycling













Choices (Score)	Percentage	Count
6 - Least Important (6)	 15.76%	26
5 (5)	 10.30%	17
4 (4)	 8.48%	14
3 (3)	 9.70%	16
2 (2)	 9.70%	16
1- Most Important (1)	 46.06%	76
Total		165
Avg Score		2.8

Figure 4d: Equestrian

Equestrian use

Choices (Score)	Percentage	Count
6 - Least Important (6)	 56.97%	94
5 (5)	 15.76%	26
4 (4)	 12.12%	20
3 (3)	 7.27%	12
2 (2)	 3.64%	6
1- Most Important (1)	 4.24%	7
Total		165
Avg Score		5.0

Attachment 3. Comment Sheet Summary for Highway 17 Regional Trails Survey

Figure 4e: Dog Walking/Hiking/Running

Dog walking/hiking/running













Choices (Score)	Percentage	Count
6 - Least Important (6)	 21.21%	35
5 (5)	 21.82%	36
4 (4)	 15.15%	25
3 (3)	 16.97%	28
2 (2)	 13.94%	23
1 - Most Important (1)	 10.91%	18
Total		165
Avg Score		3.9

Figure 4f: Wildlife Observation

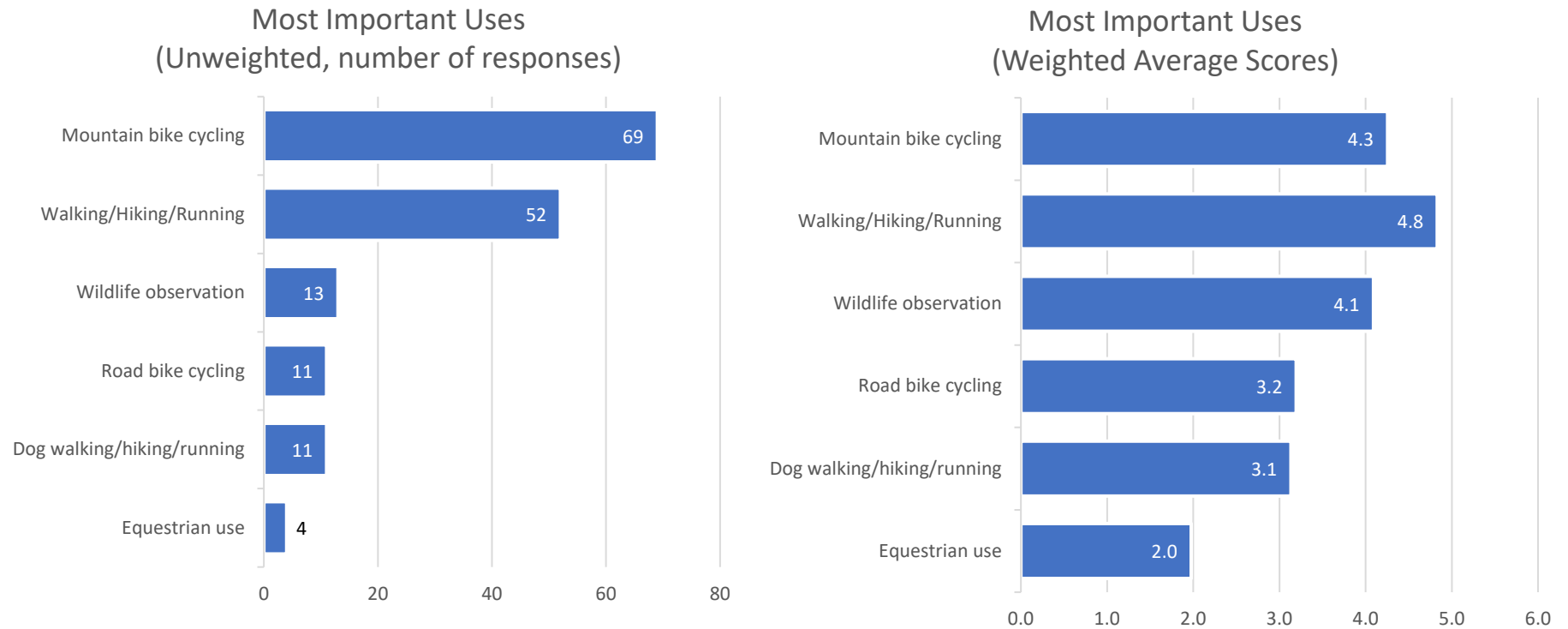
Wildlife observation

Choices (Score)	Percentage	Count
6 - Least Important (6)	 5.45%	9
5 (5)	 10.91%	18
4 (4)	 15.15%	25
3 (3)	 24.24%	40
2 (2)	 26.06%	43
1 - Most Important (1)	 18.18%	30
Total		165
Avg Score		2.9

Attachment 3. Comment Sheet Summary for Highway 17 Regional Trails Survey

Figure 5. Preferred Activities, Weighted and Unweighted

Note: To better visualize the data, the numeric ranking scale is reversed for these charts (1 = Least Important, 6 = Most Important).





Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

Memorandum

DATE: January 31, 2019

MEMO TO: Project File, Midpen and Caltrans Highway 17 Project Team

FROM: Highway 17 Wildlife and Regional Trail Crossing Project Managers: Julie Andersen, Senior Resource Management Specialist and Meredith Manning, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Highway 17 Wildlife and Regional Trail Crossings Summary of Project Comments

On November 7, 2018, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen) hosted a public meeting for the Highway 17 Wildlife and Regional Trail Crossings Project. The project Revised Alternatives Report (RAR) was provided at the meeting and available on the project website at: www.openspace.org/Hwy17. A total of 71 persons attended the public meeting and 96 comments were received during the public comment period on the RAR, which closed on December 7, 2018. These comments supersede those received from a public workshop held in August of 2016 (Attachment 1) when the project had fewer alternatives and are therefore no longer comparable but are included as important public input. The project comment sheet that was provided at the public meeting and available online during the public comment period can be found as Attachment 2.





Below is a summary of responses to each of the questions in either table form and/or a summarized bulleted list:

Comment Sheet Summary:





Question 1.

How important are these aspects of the Project





Functionality for Wildlife

Choices (Score)	Percentage	Count
Not Important (4)	 4.17%	4
Somewhat Important (3)	 1.04%	1
Important (2)	 3.12%	3
Very Important (1)	 91.67%	88
Total		96

Functionality for People





Choices (Score)	Percentage	Count
Not Important (4)	 23.96%	23
Somewhat Important (3)	 21.88%	21
Important (2)	 30.21%	29
Very Important (1)	 23.96%	23
Total		96

Cost/Constructability

Choices (Score)	Percentage	Count
Not Important (4)	 14.58%	14
Somewhat Important (3)	 33.33%	32
Important (2)	 38.54%	37
Very Important (1)	 13.54%	13
Total		96

Question 2.

Which type of crossing is your preference?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Separate wildlife and recreation use crossings	 62.50%	60
Shared wildlife/recreational use crossing	 19.79%	19
One separate and one shared crossing	 9.38%	9
No preference	 8.33%	8
Total		96

Question 3. Why do you prefer this use?




Summarized comments:

Comments supporting separate crossings:	Count
Separate crossings are safer/more effective/less of an impact/more balanced/have a different purpose etc.	28
Eight persons stated if people, dogs, bikes or horses are using a crossing then the wildlife would be less likely/would not use it.	8
Wildlife are more likely to use/use more often, separate crossings.	5
Cost difference for separate crossings is a small percentage of total costs so get the best location for each use.	2
Shared crossings do not meet purpose and need based on criteria- low scores	1
Separate crossings would be an iconic new way to meet the challenge that would be an example to other agencies where wildlife crossings of major roads are needed.	1
Prefer a separate crossing because bikes will most likely be allowed as they should be	1
Would be a mistake to invest multiple millions to address the connectivity issue and relegate wildlife to nocturnal use from shared crossings.	1
Total	47
Comments supporting shared crossings:	
A shared crossing could work/would be less cost/have less impact/simpler	8
Wildlife and people already share open space.	1

Build two shared wildlife and trails crossings	1
If separate and some people prefer the 'wildlife' one, they will use anyway.	1
Wildlife and recreational users will use it at different times. Wildlife tends to move at night and early morning hours.	3
Total	14
General comments (wildlife and recreation):	
Wildlife is most important/priority should be on wildlife. Wildlife should cross safely at easiest point of crossing with the heaviest wildlife use. Decision making should not be diluted by recreational trail use.	15
People can use existing crossing (Bear Creek Road overpass).	5
Do what works best for both wildlife and trail users/support the project experts	4
Minimize human activity at crossings (scents and litter)	3
Prefer wildlife only with no people access	2
A crossing at Trout Creek will not impact existing humans	1
A natural crossing is in keeping with the concept of trails animals and people helping to maintain a passage together.	1
Hard for wildlife and people to coexist	1
Wider crossings and more of them. Like [Highways] 13 or 24 near Tilden Park.	1
This is a critical gap for the Bay Area Ridge Trail. If Midpen does not make this a crossing for recreational use as well as wildlife then the Bay Area Ridge Trail may never be truly complete. Many studies show that this is important for wildlife, but Midpen should not forget the legacy of the Ridge Trail and what it will do for future generations.	1
We need to take more of a stand for wildlife and not always for profit maximization!	1
Nature needs to be undisturbed to the best of our ability	1
Total	36

Question 4.

Do you have a preferred crossing type?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Undercrossing	 44.79%	43
No preference	 38.54%	37
Overcrossing	 16.67%	16
Total		96









Question 5. Why do you prefer this type?

Summarized comments:

Comments supporting undercrossings:	Count
An undercrossing is closer to wildlife's needs	20
An undercrossing because it looks more natural and less intrusive	6
An undercrossing because of cost	5
Undercrossings seem safer	2
An undercrossing is preferred because it is easier for the elderly to cross	1
An undercrossing of at least twelve (12) feet in height is preferred for equestrians because they are quieter	1
A short in length undercrossing is preferred	1
An undercrossing is more feasible	1
Undercrossings because of their constructability	1
An undercrossing because overcrossings are not preferred by mountain lions	1
Total	39
Comments supporting overcrossings:	Count
An overcrossing because it is better for wildlife	4
An overcrossing is more natural	3
An overcrossing because it is more feasible	1
An overcrossing because it provides a better line of site for wildlife	1






An overcrossing would cost less and be faster to build	1
An overcrossing is best for people and wildlife	1
An overcrossing is preferred because there could be issues with homeless people living in an undercrossing	1
An overcrossing is safer for people	1
An overcrossing because it is less disruptive to commuters	1
An overcrossing to create public awareness of the situations wildlife face crossing highways	1
An overcrossing because they are more transparent	1
An overcrossing because it has visual appeal of a car tunnel under terrain	1
An overcrossing will allow larger animals to pass while feeling less exposed or vulnerable	1
Prefer an overcrossing because an undercrossing will be louder from over-head traffic	1
Total	19
Comments supporting both overcrossings and undercrossings:	Count
An undercrossing for wildlife and an overcrossing for recreation	3
An undercrossing for wildlife and a combined over crossing to maximize the opportunities for wildlife to cross	2
Total	5
Comments with no preference:	Count
Whichever crossing type is most effective for wildlife	7
Whichever crossing type is most achievable	2
Terrain and cost should determine the preferred crossing type, once the “best” site is chosen	1
No preference – whichever crossing types are most supported by the project team that has studied the area	1
No preference for crossing type so long as wildlife have their own crossing	1
No preference – prefer crossing with native, inviting vegetation that wildlife will use	1
Whichever type is more cost effective	1
Whichever crossing type works best for the Bay Area Ridge Trail Alignment	1
A recreational crossing should have the least unnecessary elevation changes	1
Total	16

Question 6. Which recreational crossing direction is most important to you? (choose one)

Choices	Percentage	Count
East/West connection (Sierra Azul Preserve to El Sereno Preserve/Sanborn County Park)	 35.42%	34
North/South connection (Los Gatos Creek Trail to Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve)	 35.42%	34
No preference	 9.38%	9
no comment	 2.08%	2
Ravine or Trout Creek	 1.04%	1
Recreational crossing deemed unimportant	 1.04%	1
Trout Creek	 1.04%	1
Other [View]	 14.58%	14
Total		96








Question 7.

Why are you interested in this project?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Wildlife connectivity supporter	 76.04%	73
Recreational trail user	 55.21%	53
Neighbor	 33.33%	32
Partner agency representative	 7.29%	7
Other	 7.29%	7
Total Entries		96

Question 8.

How would you use a recreational trail crossing in this area?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Walking/Hiking/Running	 75.00%	72
Wildlife observation	 53.12%	51
Mountain bike cycling	 30.21%	29
Dog walking/hiking/running	 29.17%	28
Road bike cycling	 20.83%	20
Equestrian use	 11.46%	11
Other	 9.38%	9
Total Entries		96

Question 9. Please draw on the map below to indicate the starting and ending points and crossing most important to you.

Comments on most important crossings:	Count
Crossing 2 (Trout Creek undercrossing) is the most important crossing	10
Crossing 4/4a (Montevina Road undercrossing) is the most important crossing	5
Crossing 3/3a (southern overcrossing) is the most important crossing	4
Crossing 1 (Ravine culvert undercrossing) is the most important crossing	3
Crossing 5/5a (Northern overcrossing) is the most important crossing if land can be secured	1
The existing Lexington Culvert is the preferred wildlife crossing	1
Total	23
Comments on most important North/South routes:	Count
A connection to the Los Gatos Creek Trail allows more people from the city to ride further into the mountains without taking a car	1
Los Gatos Creek Trail connection to Bear Creek Redwoods OSP	1
Total	2
Comments on most important East/West routes:	Count

An East/West connection to link the Bay Area Ridge Trail is most important	2
An East/West connection is most important because it connects the largest amount of usable open space area in existing Preserves	2
Bay Area Ridge Trail route starting at Limekiln Trail in Sierra Azul OSP, passing through St. Joseph's Hill OSP, crossing at Crossing 5/5a, and passing through El Sereno OSP to connect to the existing Ridge Trail in Sanborn County Park	1
Westside connection from the future crossing to El Sereno OSP due to cost	1
East/West connection because it is closer to the Town of Los Gatos	1
Total	7
Other comments on most important routes:	Count
A connection from Bear Creek Redwoods OSP to El Sereno OSP	1
Prefer whichever route would warrant the greatest use	1
Los Gatos Creek Trail connection to El Sereno OSP – many people start their recreation activities on the Creek Trail	1
A paved connection from Alma Bridge Road and Montevina Road to the Bear Creek Overcrossing as an important future project	1
Complete all East/West and North/South connections	1
Make a loop - both East/West and North/South connections are important.	1
Total	6

Question 10. Do you have any other comments or questions?

- See Attachment 3: Compiled Comment Card Questions and Midpen Responses

Public comments heard verbally by the project team at the November 7 public meeting:

- See Attachment 4: Verbal Comments, Questions, and Midpen Responses

Public comments received through the Hwy17@openspace.org email:

Equestrian comments:	Count
One person provided the US Forest Service's Equestrian Design Guidebook and noted that 12 feet high is better than 10 for a tunnel for equestrian use.	1
Members of a local equestrian group (ETRAC) suggested and supported the use of mounting and unmounting blocks on either side of recreational trail crossing alternatives.	5
Mounting blocks could be built to look like benches that could be used for mounting or for sitting, or a log with a flat on top that could be used for mounting. They went on to state that whatever is used should be fixed in place.	1
One equestrian user stated they would not be in favor of the Typical 2 or 3 step plastic "mounting block" variety. Multiple equestrian users stated that they preferred underpasses (quieter and natural surface) and that they desire closed walls on recreational trail only overpasses.	1
One person stated that there could be safety issues with equestrians meeting an animal in an undercrossing.	1

- One person requested a correction to the unit number on their mailing address
 - This person was informed that their information has been added to the project email list to ensure they receive project information in a timely manner
- One person asked to be added to the mailing list in the event donations are needed for the project in the future as they do not want funding to stop the wildlife portion of the project in any way
 - This person was thanked for their support of the project and informed that they have been added to the project mailing list to be notified of future project specific fundraising opportunities.
- One person asked if there was a way to submit public comments online
 - The person was directed to the online comment form that was available on the project website (www.openspace.org/Hwy17) from November 7 to December 7, 2018
- One person offered their Landscape Architect Services to assist with the project.
 - This person was put in contact with the project's current Landscape Architect to discuss opportunities as the project progresses.

- One person requested that that wildlife use data associated with this project be reported by number and species, and that camera trap wildlife photos be made accessible to the public (perhaps on the District website).
 - This person was informed that monitoring is a critical component of the project and that the District is currently working on ways to best store, sort, identify, and present wildlife camera data/photos to the public possibly using volunteers and community science. This person was added to the project mailing list to stay up to date as the project progresses and to be notified of any monitoring results or opportunities.

Stakeholder agency comments

- See Attachment 5- Revised Alternatives Report Stakeholder Comments received and Midpen Responses

List of Attachments:

1. 2016 Summary of Public Comments
2. 2018 Highway 17 Project Comment Card (blank)
3. 2018 Compiled Comment Card Questions and Midpen Responses
4. 2018 Verbal Comments and Questions from the November Public Meeting and Midpen Responses
5. 2018 Stakeholder Agency Comments on Revised Alternatives Report and Midpen Responses



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

Memorandum

DATE: September 23, 2016

MEMO TO: MROSD Board of Directors

THROUGH: Stephen E. Abbors, General Manager

FROM: Julie Andersen, Resource Management Specialist III

SUBJECT: Highway 17 Wildlife Crossing and Bay Area Ridge Trail Crossing Open House, Summary of Public Comments and Next Steps

On August 2, 2016, the Planning and Natural Resources Committee hosted a public meeting for the Highway 17 Wildlife Crossing/Bay Area Ridge Trail Crossing Project. A total of thirty-seven persons attended the public meeting and thirty-six comments were received during the public comment period which closed on September 6, 2016.

- Of the 36 total respondents, the most highly ranked wildlife crossing alternative was the Trout Creek Undercrossing. The most highly ranked recreational trail crossing alternative was the Montevina Rd/Alma Bridge Rd Undercrossing. Overall, respondents were more in favor of a wildlife crossing than a recreational trail crossing.
- See summary of public support for each alternative in Tables 1 & 2 below.

Table 1. Summary of Public Support for Wildlife Alternatives

	Alternative 1: Ravine Undercrossing	Alternative 2: Trout Creek Undercrossing
High	17	28
Medium	7	5
Low	8	2
Not ranked	4	1

(Green = Highest, Red = Lowest)

Table 2. Summary of Public Support for Recreational Trail Alternatives

	Alternative 3: New Overcrossing	Alternative 4: Montevina/Alma Undercrossing
High	3	10
Medium	13	6
Low	12	8
Not ranked	3	3

(Green = Highest, Red = Lowest)

Questions from public comment sheets and responses provided:

- Is there an option to extend the crossing over Highway 17 to pedestrians and add a marked bike line? That is an existing bridge, and might be cheaper?
 - The existing Bear Creek Road crossing is accessible to pedestrians (a sidewalk on the north side) and has marked shoulders which may be used by bicyclists. One of the selection criteria to advance a crossing to formal alternative evaluation was to satisfy requirements for both humans and wildlife. The existing Bear Creek Road Overcrossing was not considered as a potential wildlife crossing; there is too much vehicle traffic and too many paved lanes and conflicting on/off ramps to attract or accommodate wildlife. While a retrofit at this site may better accommodate recreational trail users, it would never serve the secondary function as a crossing for wildlife. For this reason, modifying the existing Bear Creek Road overcrossing was not advanced as a formal project alternative.
- My one concern is how to keep [undercrossings] from becoming a place that would be occupied by the homeless and keep out those it was intended to benefit?
 - Constructed crossing(s) will be patrolled to ensure legitimate uses. According to local law enforcement, sites favored by homeless are often close to urban areas and developed amenities. None of the alternatives meet this proximity criteria, so potential homeless use is expected to be low.
- Undercrossings seem much better than an overcrossing. Isn't the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority well into the planning for one? Suggest cooperating with them for a solution really workable?
 - The Santa Clara Open Space Authority (OSA) is evaluating potential wildlife crossings along Highway 101 within Coyote Valley. The Midpen Highway 17 team is in contact with OSA and other agencies throughout the region working on wildlife crossings. Safe crossings for wildlife are needed at multiple locations and it will take many agencies working together.
- My concern during this time of drought is that there would still be sufficient water available for wildlife in the more populated west side of Bear Creek Road. Presentation Center (1948 B. Creek Road) currently can't draw enough water from Collins Creek to run its emergency pumping system for fire control. Please work on monitoring how much water is being taken for residential wells.

- The Highway 17 wildlife passage project is not intended to change the hydrologic conditions of the area and will not modify water availability to wildlife. Monitoring residential wells is outside the scope of this project, but this comment has been noted.

Additional public comments received through the Hwy17@openspace.org email:

- One person asked for the names and contact information of the Caltrans representatives who were at the August 2, 2016 public meeting.
 - The information was provided and this person was placed on the interested parties list for the project.
- One person asked for more information.
 - They were placed on the interested parties list for the project.
- One person asked to volunteer to work on the project.
 - An email was sent to thank them for their interest and they were placed on the interested parties list for the project. They were also notified that they can contact their elected officials to show support for the project.
- One person stated that they would reach out to their 700 Facebook and Twitter followers to spread the word about the project.
 - An email was sent to thank them for their interest and they were placed on the interested parties list for the project.

Project timeline and next steps:

- February 2016: Project Feasibility and Preliminary Alternatives Report (Report) began, including meetings with the numerous project stakeholders.
- July 2016: Report was completed, presented to the Board with concept level designs for 4 different project locations. (Project Alternatives may be reviewed at: www.openspace.org/Hwy17)
- August 2, 2016: A public meeting was held to gauge public support for each of the alternatives.
- August 24, 2016: Board authorized the District to enter into a Cooperative Agreement with Caltrans to begin the first phase of the Caltrans process (Project Initiation).
- October 12, 2016: Board consideration of contract amendment for consultant team to prepare the needed Caltrans documentation.
- October 18, 2016: Planning and Natural Resources Committee meeting to select and recommend preferred alternatives for Board consideration. Once approved by the full Board and through the Caltrans process, the preferred alternatives will move into the next phase of the project (Environmental Review and Permitting).

Highway 17 Wildlife and Regional Trail Crossings – Public Comment

Attachment 2

1. How important are these aspects of the project?

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Functionality For Wildlife				
Functionality For People				
Cost/Constructability				

2. Which crossing use is your preference?
(choose one)

- Separate wildlife and recreation use crossings
- Shared wildlife/recreational use crossing
- One separate and one shared crossing
- No preference

3. Why do you prefer this use? _____

4. Do you have a preferred crossing type?
(choose one)

- Undercrossing
- Overcrossing
- No preference

5. Why do you prefer this type? _____

6. Which recreational crossing direction is most important to you? (choose one)

- North/South connection (Los Gatos Creek Trail to Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve)
- East/West connection (Sierra Azul Preserve to El Sereno Preserve/Sanborn County Park)
- Other _____

7. Why are you interested in this project? (check all that apply)

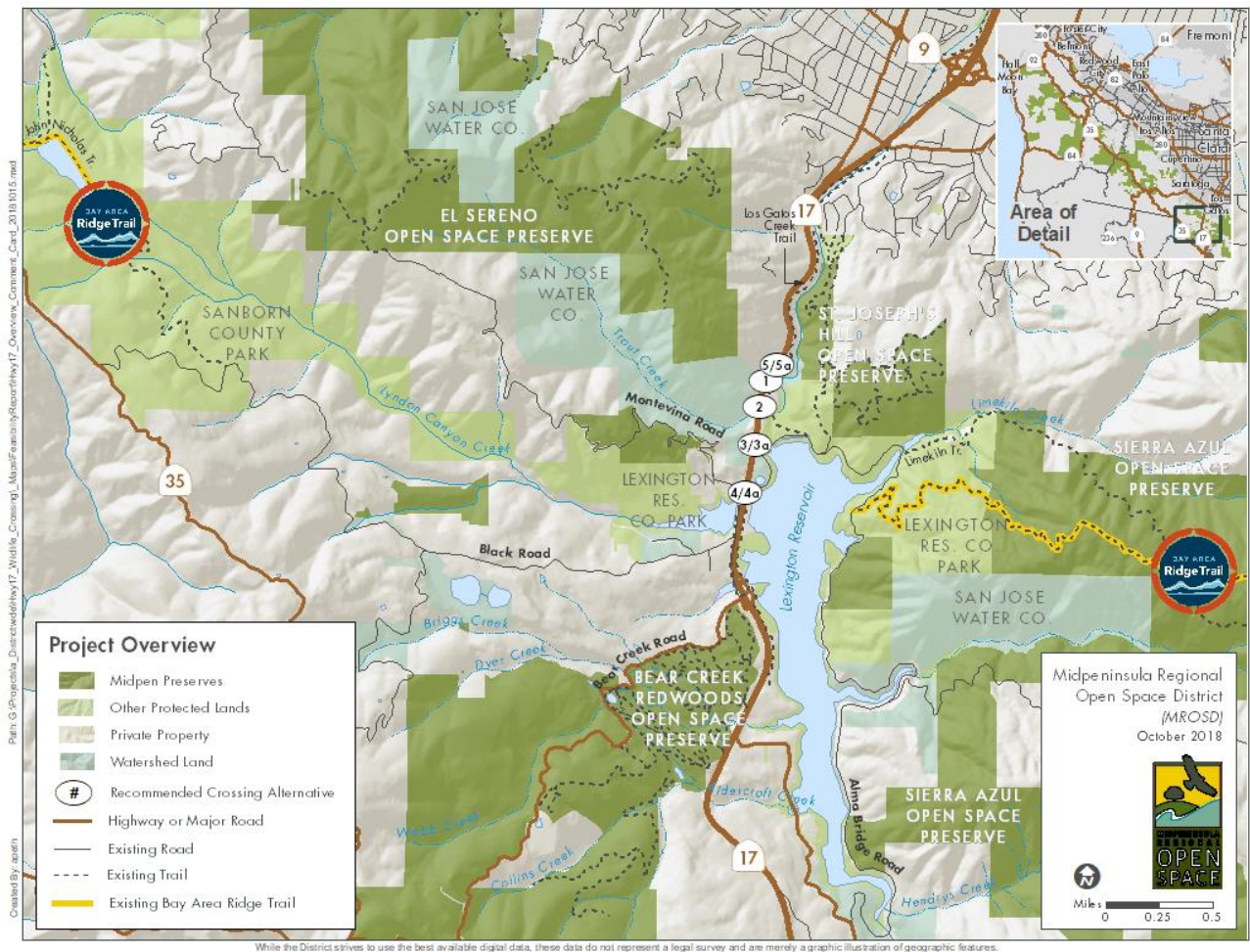
- Recreational trail user
- Neighbor
- Partner agency representative
- Wildlife connectivity supporter
- Other: _____

8. How would you use a recreational trail crossing in this area? (check all that apply)

- Walking/Hiking/Running
- Road bike cycling
- Mountain bike cycling
- Equestrian use
- Dog walking/hiking/running
- Wildlife observation
- Other: _____

Additional questions on back →

9. Please draw on the map below to indicate the starting and ending points and crossing most important to you.



10. Do you have any other comments or questions? _____

Name: _____

Email: _____

Thank you for your input. For complete project information visit: www.openspace.org/Hwy17

Public Meeting Comment Card Questions, Comments, and Midpen Responses

Wildlife and Trail Questions:

1. Q: Wouldn't lights in the Trout Creek culvert work (and be cheaper)?

Wildlife Response:

- Unfortunately, even if lighting were provided, the dimensions and lack of line of sight make it ineffective to regularly pass mountain lions or deer effectively.
- The existing Trout Creek Culvert is 4' (height) x 4' (width) and 333' feet in length with a significant bend in the middle which does not provide clear line of sight.
- Based on extensive research on effective wildlife crossings, the minimum dimensions of a crossings for mountain lions is 13' (height) x 23' (width); and up to 187'-210' (length) with a clear view to habitat on the other side (Clevenger and Huijser 2011), which are not met by the existing culvert.
- Additionally, a lighted crossing can deter wildlife, as it does not provide opportunities to pass through minimally detected (visually) by other animals.

Trail Response:

- No feasible western trail connection is possible to Trout Creek culvert due to steep topography and existing infrastructure near the culvert, even though the crossing's location is close to regional trails on the western and eastern sides of the crossing.
- Therefore, the existing Trout Creek culvert has been identified as a viable crossing for wildlife only (and not regional trail use).

2. Q: Would a second public bridge add that much extra convenience versus one? – Referring to Bear Creek Road Overcrossing

Wildlife Response:

- The current Bear Creek Road Overcrossing is not a suitable shared crossing for wildlife passage as it has a paved surface, no vegetated cover, is exposed to lots of noise and large amounts of vehicle traffic.
- If a second recreational trail crossing were provided there is opportunity to make it a shared crossing for wildlife as well.

Trail Response:

- For recreational trail use, the question is not one of convenience; rather, it is a question of feasible trail connections.
- While the Bear Creek Road overcrossing provides a method for the public to cross Highway 17, it does not provide a feasible connection to solve the existing gap in the Bay Area Ridge Trail from Sierra Azul OSP and Sanborn County Park.

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- The Bear Creek Road overcrossing also does not provide a crossing that separates the public from vehicular traffic.
3. Q: The trail is shared on either side of the crossing, why add confusion to humans or wildlife?

Wildlife Response:

- Ravine Creek (Alternative 1) and Trout Creek (Alternative 2) are the best locations to provide wildlife safe passage, but neither support a regional trail connection due to topography and existing infrastructure.
- Both creeks are areas that show statistical significance in having more wildlife/vehicle collisions than other portions of Highway 17 within the study area.
- For wildlife, Highway 17 is a barrier (animals move parallel to the highway), a source of injury/death (roadkill), or in rare events an animal may make a successful crossing when traffic is limited or not present.
- Animals will continue to attempt to cross and may be injured or killed at these locations if no modification is made.

Trail Response:

- Assuming the question is why attempt to share a crossing with wildlife and humans: wildlife will be less willing to use a crossing also used by humans, dogs, or other users, thereby reducing the effectiveness of the crossing for wildlife. See response to Question 3 above.
- Assuming the question is from a human perspective: Way finding (GPS, Google Earth, and other tools) and physical directional signage included in final crossing designs will help people avoid confusion of which crossing to use if separate crossings are selected.

Wildlife Questions and Responses:

4. Q: Wildlife will use crossings more that are not used by people. I do not know about successful shared crossings – examples?

A:

- There are many examples of shared-use crossing structures throughout North America and the rest of the world. These are typically underpasses that are located in areas with human use/recreation or in suburban-wildland interface.
- Shared-use crossings are generally designed for use by humans and common, generalist wildlife species. Examples of generalist wildlife species include deer, foxes, coyotes, raccoons, skunks, and in some instances bobcats.

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- Common generalist species are adaptable and easily habituated to human activity.
 - How you define a “successful crossing” depends on the specific species you are try to conserve and the original intent of the crossing structure to facilitate passage and reduce vehicular collisions with these species.
 - If you build an underpass in an area where regular human use of the passage is expected and you want to the underpass to accommodate the common generalist species, then success would be defined by co-use of humans and the generalist species.
 - However, in other contexts, species of conservation concern are the focus of road mitigation efforts. Species of conservation concern may not only be rare-occurring but also sensitive to human activity and disturbance. Examples include most wide-ranging large carnivores, e.g., wolves, mountain lions, grizzly bears, lynx etc. For these species, habitat management is a means of conserving their populations, including managing human use and activity in key habitats and at crossing structures which function as a landscape corridor.
 - The Highway 17 project has a primary goal of providing safe passage for both deer (generalist species) and mountain lion (species of conservation concern). The project also includes design criteria to accommodate use by sensitive status species such as reptiles and amphibians found within the project area that may use the crossing structure.
 - The question regarding whether it is acceptable to have human use at wildlife crossings has been around as long as wildlife crossings have been built. However, if the desired goal of the crossing is to pass sensitive species of conservation concern (such as this project) there is strong evidence that human use limits the amount of use by these species. Published data from Banff National Park shows that the greater amount of human activity at crossing the less likely wildlife will use them.
 - Through multivariate analysis the researchers found a strong effect, that higher levels of human use at the crossing structures, the least likely they were to have not only carnivore use but also ungulate (i.e. deer) passage. That first research result was based on 35 months monitoring of 11 Banff underpasses (2000 Clevenger and Waltho). This was a multivariate analysis of species use (8 spp. of large mammals) x 11 explanatory variables of environmental, human use, and design/physical attributes of each crossing structure.
5. Q: What other potential projects are in the works (wildlife crossings) near and around Interstate 280/Highway 92 area?

A: At this time, Midpen is not aware of any wildlife crossing projects near or around Interstate 280/Highway 92.

Q: Wasn't a wildlife crossing the original objective?

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A:

- The Highway 17 Wildlife and Regional Trails Project was identified during Midpen's 2014 Vision Plan process that defined projects and resource allocations for the next 30-50 years.
- The constituency within Midpen's boundary voted to support both a wildlife crossing and a Ridge Trail crossing of Highway 17 and identified these in the top 25-priority project list.
- In 2016 voters approved a bond measure (Measure AA) that allocated 14 million dollars to Midpen to begin implementation of both wildlife and regional trail crossing projects.
- Midpen is evaluating these crossings together as they may have impacts that affect the feasibility, design criteria, and effectiveness of each other.
- Working on both crossings together also provides the opportunity to prepare a single California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) environmental document for the crossings, which requires significant human and financial resources to develop and finalize.

6. Q: Why would we want a crossing that serves humans better than the wildlife we're trying to protect? And why would we want to set up a situation in which humans could have a standoff with a mountain lion above a major highway?

A:

- Mountain lion and human interactions, while rare, may occur. Midpen works with California Department of Fish and Wildlife to respond to any public safety concerns. Midpen Biologists work through a series of established wildlife response protocols to determine if trail closures or other actions are needed.
- A wide shared crossing, with adequate line of sight is similar to (or better than) many other trails, such as the nearby Jones Trail or Los Gatos Creek Trail, already in existence that are currently shared by humans and wildlife.
- Based on public interest for both a wildlife crossing and a dedicated regional trail crossing (see response to Question 5 above), Midpen is striving to provide crossings for both humans and wildlife.
- Separate crossings would provide wildlife a crossing away from humans and a crossing either dedicated to recreational trail use or shared with wildlife.
- Shared crossings would be wide (22' to 42') with a clear line of sight, natural vegetation, and including fencing or sound walls to reduce ambient highway noise.
- The likelihood of mountain lion-human encounters on a crossing is rare. Mountain lions are mostly nocturnal, occasionally crepuscular (active during dawn and dusk), and rarely diurnal (active during daytime) particularly in areas of regular human use. Data clearly shows that mountain lions typically use crossing structures at night, thus at hours when humans are not recreating at these places.

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Mountain lions are elusive and secretive animals; they are rarely seen, and regularly avoid areas of human activity and disturbance. When encountered, either the mountain lion or the human tend to retreat to avoid one another.

- Because the likelihood of human-mountain lion encounter is rare, the crossing structures on Highway 17 do not need to be designed such that humans and mountain lions avoid a stand-off or have space to pass each other.
- The crossings, while designed to safely pass large animals, are not specifically designed for wildlife and humans to pass one another. In the event of an encounter, avoidance by retreating in the opposite direction (wildlife and/or human) is the anticipated response.
- A recreational trail-only crossing for humans would be undesirable for use by mountain lions in most situations (too narrow, no vegetative cover, human and canine scents, possibly inadequate line of sight for wildlife).

7. Q: Did objectives blur when considering recreational use?

A: See response to Question 5 above.

8. Q: How was the roadkill data collected?

A:

- Roadkill data was collected by: 1) Caltrans maintenance staff, 2) consultant data, which was collected by driving the length of Highway 17 weekly (in both directions) and documenting observed roadkill, and 3) the California Roadkill Observation System which is publically reported.
- Roadkill data was paired with consultant wildlife camera data as well as mountain lion collar data collected by UC Santa Cruz to pinpoint where animals attempt to cross Highway 17.
- Roadkill data collected after a crossing is built can be compared with this baseline data to partially determine effectiveness of the new crossing.

9. Q: Would wildlife actually use an overpass?

A:

- Yes. Wildlife overpasses (and underpasses) in many states and even other countries are effective at providing safe wildlife passage if designed to accommodate the target species (wide enough, high enough, correct length, surface, sound deterrents etc.)
- Some examples of successful wildlife overpasses include:
 - [Interstate 90 at Snoqualmie Pass, Washington State](#)
 - [Trans-Canada Highway in Banff National Park, Canada](#)
 - [Interstate 80 at Parleys Canyon, Utah](#)
 - [State Route 77, Oracle Road, Arizona](#)

- [Highway 9, between Silverthorne and Kremmling, Colorado](#)

10. Q: How many people are injured in collisions with deer?

A: These numbers are not available at the study area level of detail but across a broader region, the number varies from year to year and from state to state. “In the United States alone, millions of collisions with deer cause thousands of human casualties and more than six billion U.S. dollars in medical, property, and municipal damages each year” (Huijser, Duffield, Clevenger, Ament, & McGowen, 2009). Tony Clevenger, one of the authors cited here, is on the project team.

Trail Questions:

11. Q: It seems very clear that Alternative 1 or Alternative 2 would be the best wildlife crossing, by a vast margin, and the cost for either one is reasonable and within budget. Funds could be raised for a recreational trail crossing to be built after the wildlife crossing. The wildlife crossing is critical for wildlife and humans and should be built first.

A:

- The wildlife and regional trail crossings are identified as projects in the Mipden Vision Plan and the Measure AA Bond language (see response to Question 5).
- Under the current schedule, the construction of the wildlife and regional trail crossings will be staggered with the construction of the wildlife crossing potentially beginning before the regional trail crossing, subject to Caltrans review and approval.

12. Q: With the trail crossings and build-out of trails is there consideration being given to eliminating mountain biking/biking in general due to the encouragement of erosion that comes with those bike activities?

A:

- No. The existing trail system around the proposed regional trail crossing area allows for mountain biking, including: El Sereno, Bear Creek Redwoods, St. Joseph’s Hill, and Sierra Azul Open Space Preserves; Lexington and Sanborn County Parks; and the Los Gatos Creek Trail.
- Mountain biking would be an allowed use at the proposed regional trail crossing to connect the miles of multi-use trails in the surrounding area.
- Proper trail design and maintenance will help reduce erosion caused by use of trails by mountain bikers, equestrians, and hikers.
- Trails will not be sited in locations that would have a significant impact to the environment.
- Although it is a widely-asked question, none of the experiments to date show a clear correlation between bicycle use and erosion and by comparison, equestrian

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use (as opposed to bicycles) has been linked to higher erosion rates on trails (2010, Quinn and Chernoff).

13. Q: Undercrossings save pedestrians from being hit by a car.

A:

- Both overcrossings and undercrossings will separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic on Highway 17 and the Bear Creek Road overcrossing.
- With careful designs in place, both an overcrossing and undercrossing will be safer for pedestrians and other trail users than the current conditions.

14. Q: North/South and East/West connections already exist.

A:

- While the Bear Creek Road Overcrossing does provide a public crossing over Highway 17, it does not provide a feasible connection to solve the existing gap in the Bay Area Ridge Trail (see response to Question 2).
- Creating a regional trail crossing would connect miles of existing trails and provide a safe crossing that separates users from vehicular traffic.

15. Q: It seems like there are already ample places in the area for people to hike. Allowing dogs in a wildlife crossing seems counterproductive as they are often off leash and may scare the animals.

A:

- While there is an extensive trail system in the area, Highway 17 represents a significant gap for recreational trail users, including those using the Bay Area Ridge Trail (see response to Question 2).
- Separate crossings (wildlife only crossing and a separate trail crossing) would provide a dog-free area for wildlife to cross.
- However if this is not the preferred Alternative(s) selected, a shared crossing will be designed to minimize wildlife conflict with recreational users (see response to Question 6).

16. Q: How will you protect residents from being disturbed by trail walkers who stray onto their property?

A:

- Midpen and other partner agency rangers routinely patrol recreational trails and work with neighbors to respond to concerns including trespass.
- There is no guarantee that trespassing will not occur; however, Midpen will work with potentially affected landowners according to the [Good Neighbor Policy](#) to

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install fences and directional signage where appropriate to minimize this potential.

- Midpen owns and manages over 250 miles of trails on over 63,000 acres of land throughout the Santa Cruz Mountains region, and has a longstanding history of maintaining good relations with our neighbors.
- Preserve lands adjacent to the study area have been owned by Midpen since 1975 (El Sereno OSP) and 1982 (St. Joseph's Hill OSP) prior to more recent development. These public lands were originally acquired with the intent to provide habitat connectivity as well as low intensity public recreation.

Administrative Questions:

17. Q: All the alternative concepts/overcrossings show a large concrete structure. In the interest of speed and cost, can a nice, prefab steel bridge type of structure be employed?

A: Caltrans standards do not allow for a steel or prefab bridge structure over a state highway, partly for structural stability reasons and partly for maintenance reasons. Caltrans bridge standards require a reinforced concrete structure that may involve large steel girders.

18. Q: Who makes the final decision?

A:

- It is Caltrans' responsibility to determine which Alternatives would be supported as viable options to provide wildlife and regional trail connections (currently under review) across Highway 17, which is a state highway and therefore under Caltrans' purview.
- Once these viable options are identified by Caltrans, Midpen staff will work with consultants, stakeholders, and the public to provide recommendations to the Midpen Board of Directors.
- The Midpen Board of Directors will consider these viable options for advancement to the next stage of the project, which is the CEQA review process.
- During environmental review, preferred alternative(s) are identified.
- If an alternative successfully passes through the review process, they would advance to design and engineering and eventually be constructed (dependent on funding).

19. Q: What would the traffic impact of construction be?

A: During construction, some impacts to traffic are expected, although construction would most likely be concentrated during evening and off-peak commute times and will minimize lane closures.

20. Q: Can the wildlife structures be built to accommodate bat species?

A: Midpen considered including features for bats, but determined it would be undesirable to attract bats to the overcrossings due to bat guano (droppings) falling onto vehicles and the roadway below. Similarly for shared undercrossings (wildlife and recreational trail users), it would be undesirable to attract bats due to guano falling onto recreational trail users and the trail below. The current undercrossing concepts are designed to meet Caltrans standards and have a flat roof (no girders) that would not facilitate use by bats. Adding box-like structures having the correct thermal conditions is difficult without girders. Attaching bat boxes to the underside would result in less passage height (min 10 feet vs. 12 feet) available to the main target species (deer and mountain lions) making the crossings less desirable for use by those species. There may be an opportunity to provide built structures for crevice roosting bats along the walls, but large open undercrossings may not provide adequate thermal conditions for local bat species.

General Comments and Responses:

21. Comment: An undercrossing should be tall enough for a mounted rider. However, equestrians could dismount if there are mounting blocks on each end of the crossing.

Response : Undercrossings will be 12 feet in height and mounting blocks will be considered at each end of recreational trail crossings.

22. Comment: People can use the Bear Creek Road Overcrossing – improving the connection for road bikes from Los Gatos Creek Trail to Bear Creek Road Overcrossing is desired.

Response: Providing additional recreational trail crossing opportunities will not preclude people from using the Bear Creek Road Overcrossing. Recommended recreational use improvements to this overcrossing are included in the Revised Alternatives Report in Section 7- Standalone Projects to Improve Existing Crossings.

23. Comment: If not included in fence plan, I would suggest including "aprons" at bottom to improve function for small taxa and/or burrowers and resistance to erosion-related problems.

Response: Considerations for small taxa, burrowers, and to prevent erosion-related problems will be considered when developing the final fence plan.

24. Comment: Build the wildlife crossing first, then raise funds for recreational crossing if there is sufficient demand.

Response: The project schedule in the Revised Alternatives Report indicates beginning construction of the wildlife phase of the project first. Funding opportunities for both the wildlife and recreational trail portion of the project are described in detail in Appendix E of the Revised Alternatives Report.

Verbal Comments, Questions and Responses November 7, 2018 Public Meeting:

General Comments

1. I thought this was the Santa Cruz project; I donated money and did not even know this project was going on.
2. Glad to see that you are planning for reptiles and amphibians as well.
3. Horses will prefer an undercrossing to an overcrossing. Undercrossing height should be 12 feet to allow for equestrian use.
4. I am concerned that bicyclists will speed down the hill and over Crossing #5.
5. This is a great project. I hope you can get it done soon.
6. I've seen a lot of road kill on Highway 17. It makes me very sad to see this.
7. It seems like the spillway will be a huge barrier to wildlife. I think 1 and 2 are the better wildlife crossing alternatives to allow wildlife to not cross even more manmade structures.
8. The Trout Creek crossing and the Ravine crossing seem like the best options for wildlife. These crossings seem like they will be used more by animals than any other crossing.

Questions (Q) and Responses (A)

Wildlife

1. Q: Are there any special status reptile and amphibian species in the area? Are California tiger salamander present?

A: California tiger salamander have not been documented in the area but there are historic records of them near Bear Creek Redwoods. Other Special Status reptile and amphibian species in the area include western pond turtle, California giant salamander, Santa Cruz black salamander, California red-legged frog and coast horned lizard.

2. Q: Would smaller wildlife like reptiles and amphibians be able to use the crossing? How would they be directed to the crossings?

A: Yes the crossings could be used by smaller wildlife. Directional fencing will be used to guide animals, including reptiles and amphibians, to the crossing and away from the roadway.

3. Q: What kinds of wildlife have been killed along this stretch of highway.

A: Deer are commonly hit here. Mountain lions, bobcats, coyotes, western pond turtle, skunks, and raccoons have also been killed crossing in this area. This is a clear problem for both wildlife and public safety.

4. Q: Is there any worry that predators will concentrate around the crossing to better capture prey that might be coming across?

A: Predators sometimes use natural and artificial structures to aid in the capture of prey. However, mountain lions in particular are generally wary of hunting in close proximity to human activity. Because of this it is unlikely that the crossing would be used in such a way.

5. Q: Where are the mountain lions living in the area?

A: The Santa Cruz Mountains is great habitat for mountain lions and they exist throughout the area. Everywhere I go I see mountain lion signs like scrapes, scat, and tracks. Lions are very illusive by nature and seeing one is a rare and exciting occurrence. You may have never seen a mountain lion but I can just about guarantee, if you've been hiking in the area, one has seen you.

6. Q: What do I do if I see a mountain lion?

A: Make yourself large, don't run, get children close, wave your arms and make noise, and back away slowly. If a lion approaches you throw something at it without bending over to pick it up. If you're attacked, fight back. Lion attacks are extremely rare. You took a greater risk driving your car here today than you do hiking in lion habitat.

7. Q: Can wildlife use the crossings designed for trail users?

A: The combined crossing alternatives, 3 4 and 5, would be able to accommodate both trail users and wildlife. The alternatives that are just for trail crossings may be used occasionally by smaller wildlife but larger species like deer and lions are much less likely to use them.

8. Q: Will this project affect my commute?

A: During construction there may be some impacts to traffic on 17. Work will be scheduled in a way to minimize these impacts. In the long run, this project will make commuting on Highway 17 more safe by reducing collisions with wildlife.

9. Q: Why combine access for wildlife with pedestrians? By doing so you eliminate diurnal wildlife movement and limit movement to nocturnal animals.

A: Ideally the crossings would not be combined. That situation might occur only if the separate crossing options were determined to be infeasible during subsequent Caltrans and environmental studies.

10. Q: Why is Alternative 1, Ravine Creek, preferred over Alternative 2, Trout Creek?

A: A preferred Alternative has not been selected yet, but Ravine Creek does not have the conflict with significant water collection and supply facilities that exist at Trout Creek.

11. Q: What's a "jump out" and how does it work?

A: A jump out is part of the system of wildlife fencing; an escape ramp. It is a 4 to 6 foot high earth ramp on the highway side of the anticipated 8 to 10 foot tall fencing, typically held up by a wood retaining wall. These ramps are located near the on/off ramps and at intervals in between. If large animals (deer or mountain lion) get past the electromats onto the highway, the ramp allows them to jump back over the fence.

12. Q (from Caltrans Biologist): How did you decide on the proposed dimensions for the wildlife crossings?

A: The Caltrans Biologist was directed to the project Biological consultant, Tony Clevenger, to discuss structure dimensions based on his extensive work with the Western Transportation Institute constructing and monitoring successful wildlife crossing projects for a variety of species.

13. Q: Will people feel the charge from the electromats?

A: If they walk on them barefoot, as opposed to with rubber soles, yes; it would cause discomfort, but not injury. These electromats are proposed at all the on/off ramps to deter wildlife (and domestic animals) from getting onto the highway. There will be warning signs/symbols at each location.

Regional Trails

1. Q: Why is it important to provide a regional trail crossing? It seems that providing a wildlife only crossing is of greater importance, with the limited funding. Bicyclists can use Bear Creek Road overcrossing and ride up Black Road to access the multi-use trails at Sanborn County Park.

A: As part of a separate planning effort, the District has been evaluating multiple options for the regional trails connections that will connect to the trail crossing. In the District's analyses of the regional trail connections, we have found that there are opportunities to provide off-road multi-use trail routes that will take cyclists off Black Road, which would be a challenging road for inexperienced cyclists to use. There will be a separate report and presentation on the regional trails connections in the future.

2. Q: Two residents who live adjacent to Lexington Reservoir were not aware that the District has been working on plans, designs and construction of a new parking lot and trails at Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve. They were very happy to hear that

this preserve will be open in the near future. One of these residents had helped the Sierra Club during the campaign to save the property from the golf course development.

A: Thanked the local residents for their support in preserving Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve, and hope they can attend the Spring opening of the preserve next year. The residents provided their phone number and email address for District staff to call to discuss their past work with the Sierra Club in the effort to save the property from development.

3. Q: Two cyclists asked if the District evaluated trail connections through Lyndon Canyon to connect to the trails at Sanborn County Park.

A: The District has been working with Santa Clara County Parks on evaluating the regional trail connections from the Highway 17 trail crossing to trails on the west side of the freeway. In prior trail scouting of Lyndon Canyon, they found that the canyon was very steep and would require many crossings to be built over the multiple drainages, which becomes a long-term maintenance problem for the trail alignment. At this time, it is not feasible to consider trails through Lyndon Canyon.

4. Q: Why not stick with Bear Creek Road for a pedestrian crossing and not spend any money for pedestrians, and construct only a wildlife crossing?

A: That is an option, but the crossing is distant from the anticipated alignment of the Bay Area Ridge Trail/Anza Historic Trail and the connecting routes and overcrossing expose trail users to a lot of traffic.

5. Q (received twice): When did trails come in? This was all about wildlife, when did trails get added?

A: Both the Vision Plan and Measure AA Bond language specify both wildlife passage and regional trail connections (Ridge Trail specifically). Some people are interested in wildlife, some in trails, and some in both. Our project is to provide opportunities for both.

6. Q: What will the height be of the [recreational] undercrossing?

A: Undercrossings 4 and 4a will be 12 feet in height.

7. Q: How will Crossing 4 and 4a connect to the Los Gatos Creek Trail?

A: Crossing 4 and 4a would require a cantilevered trail and a new bridge over the existing dam spillway to separate trail users from vehicular traffic on Alma Bridge Rd.

General

1. Q: Will the speed limit for Montevina Road be reduced, especially for the traffic heading south?

A: That is something that would need to be worked out with the local residents and others who use the road, as well as with the County Roads Department, if this option is pursued.

Reviewer Name	Document reference	Partner or Agency Comments:	Midpen Responses:	Type of Comment:
Peninsula Open Space Trust	Page 2	Page 2 (map) – Suggest making arrows bidirectional	Map has been updated.	Administrative
	Page 9	Strongly recommend separate/dedicated wildlife-only crossing structure in order to optimize performance for wildlife passage.	Language has been updated to read: "A separate wildlife only crossing structure would optimize performance to provide the most opportunity for unimpaired wildlife passage across the landscape with limited human interaction."	Wildlife
	Pages 36-37	Acknowledging that these renderings are for conceptual illustration only, if the Montevina trail only alternative is selected and cost/funding allows, suggest incorporating wildlife design considerations e.g. fencing/sound wall in order to maximize potential functionality for wildlife as a co-benefit.	Sound walls are included for all combined wildlife and trail crossings. At this time, a sound wall is not included at recreation trail only crossings for cost savings purposes. This assumes that wildlife will have their own dedicated crossing (with sound walls) at another location.	Wildlife
	Pages 38-42	Question Regarding the combined trail and wildlife overcrossing. Are there precedents/case studies where a crossing structure with such a pronounced turn/jog in structure was regularly used by the target species?	This configuration is not preferable or equivalent to a straight crossing and would be expected to have reduced performance. Wildlife using this type of configuration are typically more common generalist species that are adapted to human modified environments. We would not want this to be the preferred design for use by the target wildlife species (mountain lion and deer) unless other alternatives are not viable.	Wildlife
	Page 53	Suggest additional consultation with experts to inform whether there are options to include "cover" elements or other design features to encourage use by small and/or refugia-seeking taxa who might utilize the platform and/or existing culvert.	The following bullet has been added: • Consult with wildlife experts to ensure the correct amount and type of vegetative cover or other design features are incorporated to encourage use by small and/or cover seeking wildlife.	Wildlife
	Page 57	Minor – noting extra words of "style" and "could" in bullets 2 and 4, respectively.	Extra words removed.	Administrative
	Page 59	Scope should include ends of extent of directional fencing (e.g. roadkill and/or camera monitoring), based on previous research that has found this important for adaptive management of extent/design (and to inform overall evaluation in crossing structure effectiveness for reducing wildlife vehicle collisions/wildlife mortality on the highway).	Scope has been updated to clarify the connection of results of roadkill surveys with the potential need to adaptively manage modifications to improve the effectiveness of the crossings and associated wildlife directional fencing.	Wildlife

Reviewer Name	Document reference	Partner or Agency Comments:	Midpen Responses:	Type of Comment:
	Appendicies (Appendix A) Page	Related Plans, Studies and Projects -- At end of section, consider including the Coyote Valley Landscape Linkage: A Vision for a Resilient, Multibenefit Landscape, which notes (p. 44) that at a regional scale, the long-term success of wildlife passage infrastructure investments along Highway 17, are directly tied to future conservation actions in Coyote Valley as wildlife need to travel not only within the Santa Cruz Mountains but also to and from the Diablo and Gabilan ranges.	This language has been added.	Wildlife/Administrative
	Appendicies (Appendix A) Page	Noting importance of including these design considerations/features (as appropriate) to optimize use.	Language has been added on page 18 stressing the importance of incorporating design considerations/features (as appropriate) to optimize use of the structures by the target species (mountain lion and deer), as well as by special status species.	Wildlife/Administrative
	General Comment 1	Alternatives 2, 3, 4 and 5 may require temporary and/or permanent access on District property and may also include construction of improvements on District property. Work on District right of way or that may impact District facilities/improvements requires issuance of a District permit prior to the start of construction. Additionally, for on-going maintenance access an agreement would be required. For public access, i.e. trail connections, Santa Clara County Parks would need to own and operate the facility in conformance with the Master Partnership Agreement for Use of Certain District Lands, Reservoirs and Recharge Ponds or another public agency would need to take ownership and enter into a Joint Use Agreement with the District.	"Midpen will enter into an Operation and Management Agreement (OMA) with affected agency partners for public improvements and access deemed necessary and beneficial to all parties. Scope will include but will not be limited to: construction, management, operation, repair, patrol, and enforcement of said improvements and public access. Existing interagency agreements, such as Master Partnership and Joint Use Agreements, will be considered to provide a cohesive system of management and prevent duplication of services and among agency partners. Necessary permit authority will be obtained for any construction occuring on or potentially impacting partner agency properties, facilities, or use." - Added Pg. 59	Trails
	General Comment 2	Figure 18 needs to show the property lines.	Updated Figure.	Administrative
	General Comment 3	Table 5 on page 49 notes that Alternatives 3, 4 and 5 may require trail improvements at or near the dam and spillway. For any alternatives that propose work near the dam or spillway close coordination with the District will be required to determine feasibility. Please note that as part of the District approval process, work at the dam and spillway may require approval and permits from the Division of Dam Safety.	The District will continue to work with the SCVWD as the project progresses. See also response to General Comment 1 above.	Trails
	General Comment 4	The description of the stand-alone projects to improve existing crossings in Section 7 doesn't include any information regarding right of way needs and approvals to conduct the proposed work.	These standalone projects have not been advanced to Caltrans but each one on its own has value to either regional wildlife or recreational trail connectivity. Each would require a project proponent to advance beyond thier basic identification in this report. Language has been added in Section 7 stating that: "Additional work, such as identification of a project proponent, right of way needs, and outside agency approvals would be needed to further advance these projects."	Administrative

Reviewer Name	Document reference	Partner or Agency Comments:	Midpen Responses:	Type of Comment:
SCVWD	General Comment 5	Table 7 on page 61 includes the District as one of the responsible parties for the regional trail connections. While the District would need to be involved with and approve any new trail connections on District property or that affect District facilities, the District would not be responsible for operations or maintenance of trails as that would fall to the County or other public agency operating the trail under agreement with the District.	Table updated to address comment	Trails
	General Comment 6	As some of the work proposed may require District permits, the District should be considered a responsible agency under CEQA.	Midpen will consider the SCVWD a responsible agency under CEQA.	Administrative
	General Comment 7	Regarding project right of way certification required by Caltrans, please note that approval for any work on District property and on-going use will be by permit and with an agreement, if necessary, not by transfer of any land rights.	Noted - see previous response to SCVWD Comment 1 and added response on pg. 59.	Trails
	General Comment 8	Page 3 of Appendix A notes that part of the Los Gatos Creek trail is located on San Jose Water Company property and the District has an easement. There is a portion of trail from Alma Bridge north to the connection of the spillway to Los Gatos Creek that is located on District property. The District is not aware of a trail section on San Jose Water property where the District has an easement.	Noted. Removed from report.	Trails
	General Comment 9	The discussion in Appendix B, Alternative 4, notes that construction of a bridge over the spillway and a cantilevered trail section along the reservoir may be needed for trail connectivity. Further discussions are needed regarding the feasibility of these improvements and potential impacts on reservoir maintenance and operation.	Details regarding the cantilevered trail and bridge over the spillway will be discussed in the Highway 17 Regional Trail Connections Report (separate report) associated with the Highway 17 Regional Trail Connections Project (separate, but parallel planning project).	Trails
	General Comment 10	It is not clear on page 10 of Appendix D why a gate is proposed in the fencing along the spillway. Unless this is a proposed replacement of an existing District gate, placement of a gate leading onto the spillway is not appropriate.	Figure updated, gate removed.	Administrative

Reviewer Name	Document reference	Partner or Agency Comments:	Midpen Responses:	Type of Comment:
	General Comment 11 (by separate email)	The Santa Clara Valley Water District is missing as a stakeholder on the web site.	The SCVWD has been added as a stakeholder to the project website.	Administrative
SCC Roads	General Comment 1	Any additional traffic striping being proposed, signage or trail connection affecting the County right-of-way roadway will need to be maintain by the Open Space Authority by the means of a Maintenance Indemnification Agreement. The County would have no means to maintain these additional items in our right-of-way.	Noted - see previous response to SCVWD Comment 1 and added response on pg. 59.	Trails