



County of Santa Clara

Roads and Airports Department

101 Skyport Drive
San Jose, California 95110-1302
1-408-573-2400

November 1, 2024

SUBJECT: Alma Bridge Road Project Newt Neighbor/Stakeholder Update Letter

Greetings Alma Bridge Road Neighbors and Project Stakeholders,

Santa Clara County Roads (Roads) is partnering with the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen) to improve connectivity for California newts and other small to medium-size wildlife across Alma Bridge Road near Lexington Reservoir. As interested parties and neighbors, our SCC Roads and Midpen team would like to provide you with the following update on our work to date and on work underway.

We are happy to report that Phase 1 of the project was completed in 2023! Phase I included feasibility investigations, identification of design options, and selection of an environmental clearance path to pursue the improvements that will provide safe passage for small and mid-size wildlife across the road. More specifically, over the past 10 months, we have completed the following:

- Tree surveys, aquatic resources delineation, vegetation community mapping, rare plant surveys, topography survey, and cultural resources surveys. These surveys are essential for gaining a comprehensive understanding of the project area.
- Native American Tribal consultation.
- 15% engineering design for two possible small to medium size wildlife crossing design options.
- An online outreach meeting with bicyclists to seek early input on specific concerns/issues with road design.
- Adoption of an ordinance by the County Board of Supervisors establishing a 25-mph speed limit on Alma Bridge Road from Highway 17 Right-of-Way to Aldercroft Heights Road in response to the results of a traffic study. (Ordinance No. NS-1015.68; Adopted 10-8-2024).

We thank our interdisciplinary stakeholder group of partner agencies, neighbors, environmental advocates, and recreational users who have been engaged in this project and who reviewed and supported the Phase 1 work.

Phase 2 of the project is well underway! During this phase, we will be conducting numerous technical studies, moving the engineering design up to 65%, obtaining environmental review clearance, and submitting environmental permit applications. More specifically, here is a snapshot of what is coming next:

- Conducting geotechnical investigations along the roadway.
- Advancing one of two possible design options further into design.
- Completing 65% engineering designs.
- Applying for an exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for environmental clearance.
- Preparing applications to secure permits from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, the San Francisco Regional Water Control Board, and the County of Santa Clara.
- Proactively seeking additional grant funding to advance the project into final design and construction.

Meanwhile an independent, volunteer-run effort, known as the Newt Patrol, who has provided input and data to the Roads and Midpen team continues to actively monitor newt activity and mortality along the road during rainy seasons.

For more information about the wildlife crossing partnership effort, please go online to: openspace.org/newt-passage

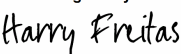
If you have any questions or comments about the project, please contact:

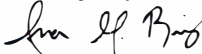
- Ben Aghegnehu, Principal Planner Santa Clara County Roads and Airports
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As a final note:

The rainy season is just around the corner, meaning newts will be on the move! To help protect these migrating amphibians, we encourage neighbors and recreational users to minimize vehicle travel on Alma Bridge Road before, during, and after rain events whenever possible. This will reduce the number of vehicles on the road and help support successful newt crossings during the rainy season. Meanwhile, the Roads and Midpen team continues to advance plans for future roadway modifications to improve habitat connectivity and reduce ongoing newt mortality.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

Harry Freitas
Director
Santa Clara County Roads and Airports

DocuSigned by:

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Ana Ruiz
General Manager
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District



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Project Area Map

