

# Highway 17 Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Project



## PROJECT INFORMATION

### PROPOSED PROJECT

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in partnership with the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County and the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission is proposing to construct a wildlife undercrossing on State Route 17 near Laurel Road in Santa Cruz County. Two core wildlife habitat areas on either side of Highway 17 at Laurel Road have been identified in several landscape-scale wildlife connectivity modeling efforts as a critical linkage for mountain lion and other wildlife species. Using GPS/radio telemetry, wildlife cameras, and roadkill data, the curve at Laurel Road has been identified as one of the locations along the Highway 17 corridor where a wildlife crossing structure would provide the greatest benefit. At the project location, 460 acres of mostly undeveloped land on both sides of the highway have been preserved in a conservation easement by the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of the project is to connect important wildlife habitat on both sides of the highway and provide for safe movement of wildlife under Highway 17.

### NEED

High Annual Average Daily Traffic volumes (61,500 vehicles per day) combined with a concrete median barrier and a lack of adequate culvert or bridge undercrossings contributes to a high frequency of animal-vehicle collisions along Highway 17.

### TIMELINE

Construction is anticipated to begin in the Fall of 2021.

### PROJECT COST

The current construction estimate for the proposed project is \$5.6 million. Some of the construction funding has been secured through the voter approved 2016 Santa Cruz County Tax Measure D. The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County is also raising funds for the project.





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## QUESTIONS

- For more project related information, contact Aaron Henkel, Caltrans Project Manager by email: [aaron.henkel@dot.ca.gov](mailto:aaron.henkel@dot.ca.gov) or by phone: (805) 549-3084
- For more environmental related information, contact Cecilia Boudreau, Associate Environmental Planner by email: [cecilia.boudreau@dot.ca.gov](mailto:cecilia.boudreau@dot.ca.gov) or by phone: (805) 549-3376

