



Highway 17 Wildlife Crossing

Project Description

Construction of a wildlife undercrossing on Highway 17 near Laurel Road in Santa Cruz County to link core wildlife habitat areas on either side of the highway and to allow animals to travel beneath the highway. Mountain lions, bobcats, deer and other wildlife are using the crossing, reducing car crashes with wildlife. The main crossing was constructed in 2022 and 2023. Caltrans has since installed additional fencing to guide wildlife to the crossing and is completing re-vegetation of the area.

55,000-66,000 vehicles travel over Highway 17 between Santa Cruz and Santa Clara Counties each day (over 20 million vehicles a year). The dense traffic, concrete median barriers, and lack of culvert undercrossings or bridges made Highway 17 a barrier for wildlife moving through the Santa Cruz Mountains. Wildlife had most frequently been trying to cross Highway 17 near Laurel Road.

Caltrans, the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission, the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, and resource agencies partnered to construct this project.



Project Highlights

- ▶ Provides safe passage for wildlife to cross under Highway 17 near Laurel Road in the Santa Cruz Mountains
- ▶ Bridges two core wildlife habitat areas on each side of Highway 17
- ▶ Traffic volumes of over 60,000 vehicles per day, combined with a concrete median barrier and a lack of adequate culvert or bridge undercrossings contribute to animal-vehicle collisions.
- ▶ Collaborative project between the Regional Transportation Commission, Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, and Caltrans
- ▶ Primary construction completed in 2023, final vegetation work underway

Project Delivery Strategy

Caltrans led the project delivery. The pre-construction phases were funded with Caltrans State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOP) funds and the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County. The RTC used Measure D funds to leverage additional SHOPP and Land Trust funds for construction. <https://sccrtc.org/projects/streets-highways/highway-17/>



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Total Programming

Estimated Total Cost	\$12.5M
Funding Sources	
Measure D (Neighborhood)*	\$5M
Other Secured**	\$7.5M

*Includes loan payments (principal and interest)
 **Includes Land Trust and SHOPP funds.

Project Status/Schedule

Construction of crossing was completed in 2023. Final fencing and vegetation work continues through 2025.



Funding Partners

