

DATE: May 11, 2017

PRESERVE: Alto Bowl Open Space Preserve

PROJECT: Bob Middagh and Gasline Trail Improvements Project

STAFF: Jon Campo and James Raives

Project Summary

The proposed project would implement trail improvements in the Alto Bowl Open Space Preserve, located near the cities of Mill Valley and Corte Madera. The project would implement changes to the Bob Middagh Trail and Gasline Trail.

The Bob Middagh Trail improvements include:

- Realignment of 1,952 feet of new trail
- Decommissioning of 938 feet of existing trail
- Installation of four sloped climbing turns
- Installation of three rock retention walls
- Construction of one rock armor swale 20 feet wide by ten feet long
- Replacement of two failing culverts
- Changing the use designation to allow equestrians, hikers, and bikers use

After completion of the project, the Bob Middagh Trail would be 3,461 feet long at, approximately five feet wide. This would result in a net increase of 1,016 feet of trail. The trail would include reverse grade dips approximately every 80 feet with five to ten percent grade and two percent outslope. The trail would be open to hikers, bikers, and equestrians.

The Gas Line Trail Improvements include:

- Construction of 2,090 feet of new trail with a five-foot width, including 1,610 feet of the realigned Gas Line Trail and 480 feet of the realigned Horse Hill Trail
- Decommissioning of 1,554.2 feet of existing trail, including 788.2 feet of the old Gas Line trail, 256.0 feet of social trails on ridge top, and 510.0 feet of the existing Horse Hill Trail
- Installation of two switchback turns
- Placement of one 36-inch by 20-foot long HDPE Culvert
- Construction of one ramp at a 110 feet long
- Removal of one coast live oak with an 8 inch diameter at breast height

After completion of the project, the MCOSD would realign the Gas Line Trail to be 1,610 feet long at, approximately five feet wide. This would result in a net increase of 822 feet of trail. The trail would include reverse grade dips approximately every 80 feet with five to ten percent grade and two percent outslope. The trail would be open to hikers and equestrians.

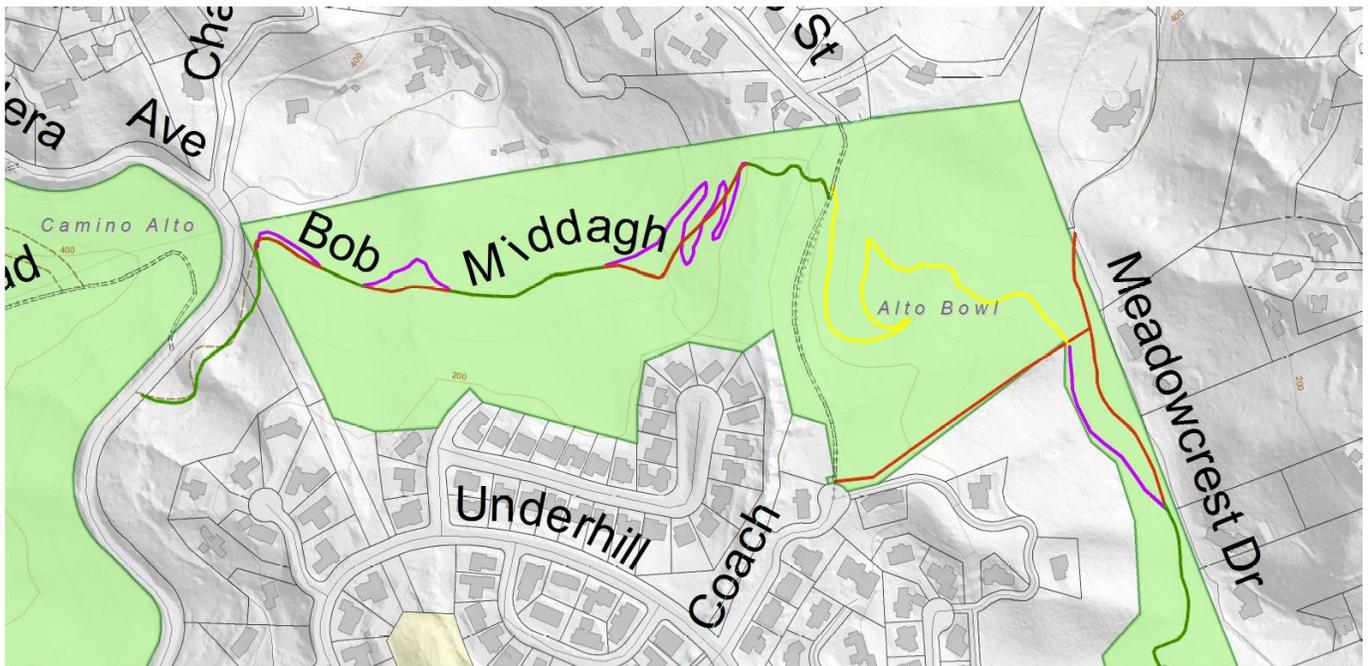
See Attachments 1, 2, and 3 for a complete project description and trail details.

Figure 1: Project Map

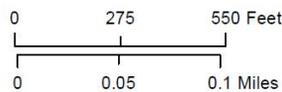


BOB MIDDAGH / GASLINE

Alto Bowl OSP



- Existing Trail
- New Trail
- Trail Realignment
- Decommission



Background

The Marin County Open Space District (MCOSD) road and trail projects are part of a science-based, public inclusive, comprehensive Road and Trail Management Plan (RTMP), which addresses the complex challenges of the MCOSD roads and trails. The MCOSD developed the plan over the course of four years based on extensive outreach and public input.

The MCOSD designs and implements its road and trail projects to reduce the environmental impact of the road and trail network and enhance visitor experience and safety. The RTMP establishes a process whereby members of the public, working alone or in coordination with others, can submit proposals for projects that would advance the goals of the plan. Proposed projects must demonstrate familiarity and compliance with the RTMP's adopted standards and procedures.

Public Comments

On March 22, 2015, the MCOSD hosted a community workshop in Mill Valley on the proposed projects in the Alto Bowl Open Space Preserve and solicited comments and feedback on trail designations and priorities in Region 1, where the project is located.

On August 25, 2016, the MCOSD held a meeting on the proposed project to provide information and solicit comments. A 30-day formal comment period on both projects followed the meeting. This comment period closed September 24, 2016.

The MCOSD collected comments from over 400 individuals during the comment period. The vast majority of these communications focused on the proposed change in use to the Bob Middagh Trail and

approximately 82 percent of the commenters had a favorable opinion of the proposed change. Approximately 18 percent expressed unfavorable opinions about the proposed change. Comments included the following stated concerns:

- Provides an area for kids and families to ride mountain bikes
- Creates a safe connection to the Camino Alto Preserve
- Reduces sedimentation into the watershed
- Complies with the MCOSD's multiple use design standards
- Displaces of other users
- Interferes with historic horse use
- Rewards bicyclists for illegal trail riding
- Affects the rate and severity of trail erosion
- Affects plants, wildlife, and other natural resources
- Destroys the peaceful nature of the trail
- Problems with enforcing speed limits
- Costs of making the proposed improvements
- Doubts about the importance of this trail as a connector
- Already sufficient bicycle trails in other preserves in the area

Environmental Review

The MCOSD prepared an evaluation that determined that pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Section 15162, the 2014 RTMP EIR adequately analyzes proposed project, and the project does not require subsequent environmental review (see Attachment 4). The MCOSD filed a notice of determination with the Marin County Clerk and the state office of Planning and Research on May 12, 2017, in compliance with CEQA (Attachment 5).

Consistency Analysis

Countywide Plan Consistency

The proposed project is consistent with the Marin Countywide Plan (CWP) for the following reasons:

- A. The project is consistent with the CWP woodland preservation policy (BIO-1.3) because the project would not entail the irreplaceable removal of a substantial number of mature, native trees.
- B. The project is consistent with the CWP special-status species protection policy (BIO-2.2) because the project would not remove habitat for special-status species of plants or animals.
- C. The project is consistent with the CWP natural transition and connection policies (BIO 2.3 and BIO 2.4) because the project would not substantially alter the margins along riparian corridors, wetlands, baylands, or woodlands.
- D. The project is consistent with the CWP stream and wetland conservation policies (BIO-3.1 and CWP BIO-4.1) because the proposed trail would not encroach into any Stream Conservation Areas or Wetland Conservation Areas other than to support the continued use of the existing trails and culvert repairs.
- E. The project is consistent with CWP water quality policies as the project would reduce soil erosion (WR-1.3, WR-2.2, WR-2.3) because the project would reduce the trail's slope and improve drainage.
- F. The project is consistent with CWP seismic hazard policies (CWP Policies EH-2.1, EH-2.3, and CD-2.8) because the project site is not constrained by unusual geotechnical problems, such as existing fault traces.
- G. The project is consistent with CWP trail policies (TRL-1.1 and-1.2) because it would enhance and expand the existing countywide trail system, improve access to or between public lands, and enhancing public trail use opportunities for all user groups.

Marin County Open Space District Strategic Plan

- A. The project is consistent with the Goals 1 and 2 because it would expand the network of trails in a manner that protects, restores, and preserves the natural systems of the preserve and implement land management best management practices.
- B. The project is consistent with Goal 3 because it would improve accessibility to the Alto Bowl preserve and provide a connection for the local communities that would facilitate bicycle transportation and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Road and Trail Management Plan Consistency

The proposed project is consistent with the Road and Trail Management Plan (RTMP) for the following reasons:

- A. The project would improve access and provide a range of desired user experiences within the Alto Bowl Preserve by improving the trail conditions, reducing slopes, and improving drainage for year-round access (Policy 1).
- B. The project would improve sustainability and address visitor conflicts by realigning the trail to have a slope of less than 10 percent, install drainage improvements, improving sight lines, and establishing clear signage (Policy 2, 4, 7, and 9).
- C. The project would minimize impacts to sensitive resources by designing the alignment to avoid sensitive species, improving drainage, reduce sedimentation to the local waterways, and maintain habitat for wildlife (Policy 3).
- D. The project would enhance road and trail connectivity by providing a link between the communities of Corte Madera and Mill Valley (Policy 5).

Action

Marin County Open Space District hereby approves the Bob Middagh and Gas Line Trail Projects. This decision certifies the proposed project's conformance with the Marin CWP, the MCOSD Strategic Plan, and the Marin County Parks Road and Trail Management Plan. Building Permit, additional permits and/or approvals may be required from federal and state agencies, and the MCOSD shall obtain the approvals prior to construction.



Max Korten, General Manager
Marin County Open Space District

5/11/17

Date

Attachments:

- 1. CEQA Consistency Analysis
- 2. Notice of Determination