

Hicks Creek Mitigation Project

Cooperative Mitigation Agreement

JPB TOPS Committee Meeting
July 29, 2026

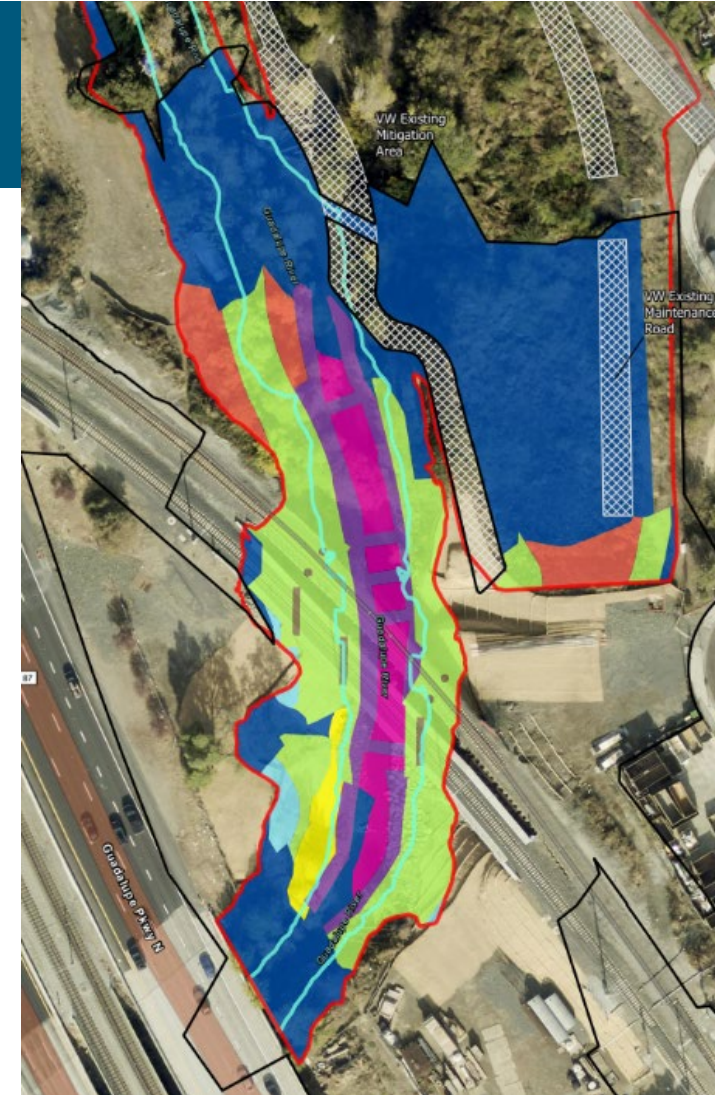


Staff Recommendation

1. Authorize Executive Director or designee to execute Cooperative Agreement between Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board and Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District for the Hicks Creek Mitigation Project
2. Adopt the Third Addendum to the Guadalupe River Bridge Replacement Project Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Hicks Creek Mitigation Project

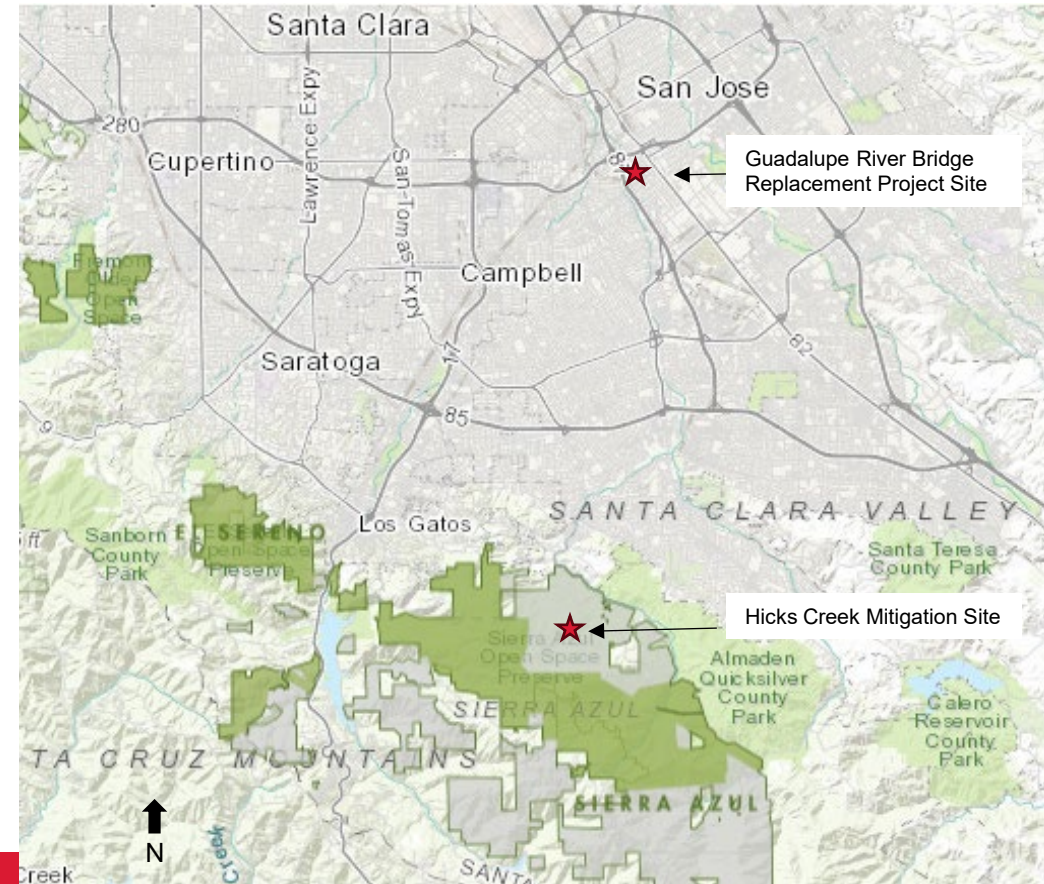
Background

- JPB must mitigate environmental impacts to wetlands and waters caused by the Guadalupe River Bridge Replacement Project (GRBRP).
- Not enough space on-site at GRBRP.
- JPB and Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MidPen) identified an off-site mitigation opportunity along Hicks Creek.
- Regulatory and permitting agencies involved with GRBRP are in support and have incorporated the Hicks Creek Mitigation Project into their approvals.



MidPen and Hicks Creek

- MidPen is an independent public agency with a mission centered on preserving natural lands and restoring wildlife habitat in perpetuity.
- Manages over 19,000 acres of protected open space in the Santa Cruz Mountains and surrounding areas.
- Hicks Creek Mitigation Site is located within a closed area of the Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve, owned by MidPen



Hicks Creek Mitigation Project

- The Hicks Creek Mitigation Project would include:
 - Removal of concrete pads and foundations, wood retaining walls and other features in the channel;
 - Removal of nonnative and invasive species;
 - Restoration of the channel bank and floodplain;
 - Enhancement of the active channel; and
 - Improvement of instream habitats for anadromous fish and other aquatic species.



Concrete channel lining stream bank on Hicks Creek



Remnants of a concrete swimming pool within the Hicks Creek Mitigation Project Site.



Cooperative Mitigation Agreement

Under the proposed Agreement:

MidPen will:

- Grant access to Hicks Creek;
- Not assume any project costs or liability; and
- Assume permanent stewardship once the restoration project successfully meets all regulatory performance standards.

JPB will:

- Fund and implement the project under current approved budget;
- Obtain necessary federal and state permits;
- Be responsible for monitoring the mitigation site; and
- Receive all mitigation credits from the project.

CEQA

- The Hicks Creek Mitigation Project is a component of the JPB's GRBRP under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
- The JPB, as the CEQA lead agency for GRBRP, adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for GRBRP in February 2021.
- Two previous addendums to the MND were adopted by the JPB Board in March 2025 and April 2026.
- The addendum presented today (Addendum No. 3), analyzes the environmental impacts of the Hicks Creek Mitigation Project in accordance with CEQA.
- The addendum concludes that the Hicks Creek Mitigation Project would not have any new or more severe impacts than was previously identified in the GRBRP MND.

Action and Next Steps

Staff Recommendation:

1. Authorize Executive Director or designee to execute Cooperative Agreement between Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board and Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District for the Hicks Creek Mitigation Project.
2. Adopt the Third Addendum to the Guadalupe River Bridge Replacement Project Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Hicks Creek Mitigation Project.

Next Steps:

- Obtain MidPen's approval to the Agreement (anticipated, September 2026).
- Obtain Hicks Creek Mitigation Project permits and authorizations.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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