

ATTACHMENT 3

Supporting Narrative, Maps, and Data

Baseline general methodology:

- Integrates with the 2008-adopted PCAs, where new PCAs would promote and close remaining gaps with contiguous open space/parklands, critical wildlife linkages and regional trail connectivity;
- Encompass areas prioritized in MROSD's Open Space Vision Plan 2014 for future land conservation, stewardship actions and public access; and
- Reflect areas of high importance to biodiversity, water quality and supply, agriculture, community health, regional recreation, and climate change resiliency; and receive broad consensus and support from local jurisdictions and partner agencies.

Supporting Narrative – PCAs in County of San Mateo

#	Proposed PCA Name	Supporting Narrative
SM1	Miramontes	<p>The proposed Miramontes PCA has tremendous natural resource value, agricultural value, and exceptional opportunities for regional trail connections.</p> <p><u>Natural Landscapes:</u> Within this PCA, Mills Creek and Pilarcitos Creek watersheds contain relatively intact habitat that is home to many special status species. Among these are critical habitat for the California red-legged frog, steelhead trout, and sensitive and biologically highly-significant native plant communities, such as California annual grasslands.</p> <p><u>Agricultural Lands:</u> Midpen is actively working to support San Mateo County's local agricultural economy by reintroducing conservation-based cattle grazing where appropriate. In San Mateo County, demand surpasses supply for grazing lands, contiguous grazing lands are sparse, and ranch infrastructure is largely degraded. Miramontes PCA contains contiguous grasslands suitable for conservation grazing (FMMP) and former ranches that have infrastructure in need of upgrading. This region has been identified in Midpen's Open Space Vision Plan (Vision Plan) as a priority area in which to preserve and enhance existing large contiguous grazing and to improve farming and grazing infrastructure (e.g. fences, corrals, water).</p> <p><u>Regional Recreation:</u> This area has the opportunity to provide much needed access to the foothill areas of the northern San Mateo County coast and complete gaps in regional trail connections. This coastal area contains limited foothill recreational access and Miramontes Open Space Preserve, which is currently closed to the public,</p>



		<p>has the ability to alleviate these limitations and potentially provide a network of trails that would offer trail loops, east-west connections from skyline-to-the sea, and north-south connections between a series of state, county, and Midpen preserve lands.</p>
SM2	North Skyline	<p>The proposed North Skyline PCA has exceptional natural resource value and opportunities for regional trail connections.</p> <p><u>Natural Landscapes:</u> Preservation of the San Gregorio Creek and El Corte de Madera Creek watersheds is a priority identified in the Midpen's Vision Plan. San Gregorio Creek is one of three streams within San Mateo County that support endangered coho salmon and El Corte de Madera Creek is identified in the Coho Salmon Recovery Plan as Phase 1 expansion for coho salmon.</p> <p>To balance the health of these watersheds with existing and proposed recreational uses in El Corte de Madera Creek Open Space Preserve, Midpen partnered with the National Marine Fisheries Service, California Department of Fish and Game (now California Fish and Wildlife), and the Regional Water Quality Control Board to create a comprehensive Watershed Protection Program. There are crucial trail and water quality improvements, as detailed in the Watershed Protection Program, that are needed to protect this watershed.</p> <p>In addition, this PCA includes redwood forests that contain known nesting habitat for the endangered marbled murrelet. To support marbled murrelet, it is critical to develop and implement a predator management program on Midpen preserves that includes public outreach and education, retraining or depredation of corvids, and assisting partners with redesigning their garbage structures to protect the murrelet. Preserving additional open space in this region is vital for protecting this priority watershed area and important redwood forest.</p> <p><u>Regional Recreation:</u> Within Purisima Creek Open Space Preserve there is a need to address parking shortages at this popular preserve, repair bridges, and provide ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessibility to the Redwood Trail and picnic areas. ADA improvements in this preserve would provide a premier nature experience to populations with accessibility issues.</p> <p>Within El Corte de Madera Creek Open Space Preserve, there is an opportunity to enhance existing trails by developing and implementing plans for single-use biking/hiking trails, completing Bay Area Ridge Trail gaps, and improving the trail system near a newly developed staging area.</p>
SM3	Teague Hill	<p>This PCA offers an opportunity to protect key natural resources and enhance existing trails and regional trail connections.</p> <p><u>Natural Landscapes:</u> This PCA encompasses West Union Creek, Bear Gulch, and Bear Creek watersheds, all of which are identified in the Coho Salmon Recovery Plan as Phase 3 expansion for coho salmon. West Union Creek also currently contains threatened steelhead trout and redwood forests that may provide nesting habitat for federally and state endangered marbled murrelet. This is a key opportunity to further protect these rich resources, as almost half of this PCA is unprotected. And there are abundant opportunities to implement watershed and creek restoration and enhancement projects to improve water quality and</p>



		<p>aquatic habitat value.</p> <p><u>Regional Recreation:</u> Teague Hill Open Space Preserve, located in this PCA, is currently closed to the public. There is an existing network of trails that, with proper planning, could provide increased access to this area, including trail connections to Huddart and Wunderlich County Parks. The County of San Mateo is also working to complete elements of its master plans for Huddart and Wunderlich County Parks. These parks provide camping, trails, as well as children’s play areas to the greater Silicon Valley.</p>
SM4	Southern San Mateo Coast	<p>The southern San Mateo County coast has been identified as an important conservation area priority in the Midpen’s Vision Plan for its natural landscapes, important agricultural lands, and recreational opportunities.</p> <p><u>Natural Landscapes:</u> This PCA includes abundant native grasslands and is dotted with numerous, springs and ponds that support California red-legged frog. This area also includes one of the very few known populations of the San Francisco garter snake, a state and federally-listed endangered species. Preservation of this site and surrounding open space will be crucial to ensure the survival of this local population.</p> <p>In addition, this PCA contains the only three streams in San Mateo County that support the federally-endangered coho salmon and the threatened steelhead trout. It also contains numerous watersheds that are core focus areas of the coho salmon recovery plan. Over half of this area still remains unprotected.</p> <p><u>Agricultural Lands:</u> Based on FMMP data 54% of this PCA is made up of land suitable for grazing, many of which are large tracts of contiguous grazing lands. This is crucial for supporting agriculture in the region, because moving animals around is expensive and contiguous grazing land is in high demand.</p> <p>Preserving and supporting grazing within this region is crucial for supporting the much needed contiguous grazing lands on San Mateo Coast.</p> <p>In San Mateo County there is more demand than supply for grazing lands, contiguous grazing lands are sparse, and ranch infrastructure is largely degraded. The area within this PCA contains grasslands suitable for conservation grazing (FMMP) that are large enough to provide contiguous grazing lands. Former ranches in this area have ranch-based infrastructure in need of upgrading. Midpen is actively working to support San Mateo County’s local agricultural economy by reintroducing conservation-based cattle grazing where appropriate.</p> <p><u>Regional Recreation:</u> Existing trail connections between skyline and the coast is limited in this region. There are opportunities in this region to create these much needed connections.</p>
SM5	Windy Hill	<p><u>Natural Landscapes:</u> This proposed PCA contains several sensitive vegetation communities as identified by California Department of Fish and Wildlife vegetation ranking. These include, California Buckeye Series, California Native Grasses, and Valley Oak Woodland. In addition, there are a number of water features that provided</p>



		<p>habitat for endangered and threatened species. Sausal pond resides within this PCA and is home to the California Red-legged Frog. Pond enhancements are needed to sustain this population. Los Trancos Creek runs through this PCA and supports Steelhead Trout. There are many opportunities to for creek restoration and water quality improvements.</p> <p><u>Regional Recreation:</u> This PCA includes one of the few cycling connections from the valley floor to the Santa Cruz mountains ridgeline, which allow cyclists to access the entire Santa Cruz mountains trail system. In addition, this connection at Alpine Road alleviates safety issues by providing cyclists an alternative route to the winding mountain roads. There are large maintenance projects that need to be undertaken to ensure the continued use of this connection.</p> <p>Sausal Pond provides many opportunities for interpretation that would education visitors on the native aquatic wildlife species present. Construction of a viewing platform and associated interpretive exhibits would greatly improve the educational experience at the pond.</p> <p>In addition, there are opportunities to increase the multi-use trails at Windy Hill, which is a popular destination for dog walkers and mountain bikers alike. Opportunities exist to increase this preserve’s trail connectivity to Portola Valley and Palo Alto trials.</p>
SM6	South Skyline	<p><u>Natural Landscapes:</u> This PCA is abundant with Special Status Species (marbled murrelet, California red-legged frog, American badger, California mountain kingsnake, arcuate bush-mallow, and San Francisco garter snake) and biologically sensitive habitat (California Native Grasslands). It is part of the largest intact habitat patch (>50 square miles) in the County of San Mateo, and includes Pescadero Creek, one of two streams in the County that supports endangered coho salmon. Preservation of this area would support a variety of Special Status Species, provide needed habitat connectivity, and protect important watershed land. Approximately one-third of this PCA remains unprotected.</p> <p><u>Regional Recreation:</u> Premier hiking destinations that are currently closed to the public reside in this PCA. Devil Canyon Falls, one of the peninsula’s most precious waterfalls, and the Eagle Rock formation are top priorities for Midpen to open to the public.</p>

Supporting Narrative – PCAs in County Santa Clara

#	Proposed PCA Name	Supporting Narrative
SC1	Palo Alto Open Space	<p><u>Natural Landscapes:</u> This PCA includes abundant native grasslands, valley oaks, and California buck-eyes, all designated as biologically highly significant by Department of Fish and Wildlife. Numerous springs and ponds that support California red-legged frog, and San Francisco garter snake, and western pond turtle exist in this area. There is a great need to develop and implement pond management and enhancement projects to benefit these rare aquatic species.</p> <p><u>Regional Recreation:</u> Black Mountain backpacking camp resides in this PCA. Currently, this is the only campground on Midpen preserves. From Black Mountain, visitors have an incredible view of Santa Clara Valley and the Mt. Hamilton Range. It is a Midpen priority to develop small amphitheater here, and pilot an evening educational program focusing on environmental stewardship.</p>
SC2	Hidden Villa / Rancho San Antonio	<p><u>Natural Landscapes:</u> This area contains expansive California native grasslands interspersed with stands of <i>Dirca occidentalis</i> a shrub that is a rare California endemic, and California Buckeye. This area is within Permanente Creek’s watershed which currently supports rainbow trout and has historically supported steelhead trout. Natural areas within the Permanente Creek watershed are vital to Permanente’s creek health due to the sediment discharges of the Lehigh Quarry. Unlike most watersheds in the Santa Clara Basin, the headwaters of the Permanente Creek are not protected as open space, but are developed for light industry and mining. Only the headwaters of the West Branch Permanente Creek are protected and reside in this PCA making it a priority for stream restoration.</p> <p><u>Regional Recreation:</u> This PCA contains the Midpen’s most popular open space preserve, Rancho San Antonio. Receiving an estimated 1,500 visitors daily, the current visitation has outgrown the parking accommodations. It’s a priority for Midpen to explore innovative parking solutions. Within this PCA there is an opportunity to partner with Hidden Villa and create a new public staging area at the Black Mountain Trailhead, establishing another access point to Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve.</p> <p><u>Agricultural Lands:</u> This PCA contains Silicon Valley’s treasured Deer Hollow Farm, a working farm with cow, pigs, goats, sheep, chickens, and an organic garden as well as numerous turn-of-the-century ranch buildings. Open to the public, this nonprofit teaching farm welcomes 100,000+ visitors and thousands of students annually. Many of the buildings are in need of refurbishing and maintenance to ensure its continued environmental education programming.</p> <p>In addition to Deer Hollow farm, Hidden Villa resides in this PCA. Hidden Villa is a nonprofit educational organization that uses its organic farm, wilderness, and community to teach and provide opportunities to learn about the environment and social justice. Every year 30,000 people participate in the formal programs they provide. An additional 20,000 visitors come to our</p>



		<p>preserve annually to explore the farm and gardens or to hike. There are many opportunities to partner with Hidden Villa to preserve the agricultural fields and provide improved family-friendly public access to Hidden Villa's agricultural and environmental education programs.</p>
SC3	<p>Southeast Rancho San Antonio</p>	<p><u>Natural Landscapes:</u> This natural area creates the boundary to the highly disturbed area of Kaiser Permanente quarry (now Lehigh Quarry). This area contains California native grasslands interspersed with stands of <i>Dirca occidentalis</i>, a shrub that is a rare California endemic. Natural areas with the Permanente Creek watershed are vital to Permanente's creek health due to the sediment discharges of the Lehigh Quarry.</p> <p><u>Regional Recreation:</u> The popular PG&E trail runs through this PCA and serves as an important regional trail connection. This east-west trail route runs from the valley population centers up to an integrated trail system that includes Bay Area Ridge Trail. Coupled with the equestrian lots at Rancho San Antonio, the PG&E trail is an important equestrian access point to the Black Mountain Summit area.</p>
SC4	<p>Cupertino Open Space</p>	<p><u>Natural Landscapes:</u> This PCA is within Stevens Creek watershed, one of the last few viable steelhead trout runs in the southern San Francisco Bay. The majority of this small PCA is comprised of California native grasslands.</p> <p><u>Regional Recreation:</u> This PCA contains Midpen's most popular open space preserve, Rancho San Antonio. Receiving an estimated 1,500 daily visitors, the current visitation has outgrown the parking accommodations. It's a priority for Midpen to explore transit options, for example extending regional bike trails, installing a bikeshare station, exploring shuttle services from transit nodes with public or private transportation agencies, or other innovative parking solutions. Because of this preserves heavy use, it is an ideal place to develop a small welcome center that educates visitors on the importance of open space and informs them on other hiking options in the area to potentially disperse Rancho San Antonio's visitors to other neighboring preserves.</p>
SC5	<p>Stevens Creek</p>	<p><u>Natural Landscapes:</u> This PCA includes abundant native grasslands, valley oaks, and California buck-eyes, all designated as biologically highly significant by Department of Fish and Wildlife. Numerous springs and ponds that support California red-legged frog, and San Francisco garter snake, and western pond turtle exist in this area. There is a great need to develop and implement pond management and enhancement projects to benefit these rare aquatic species.</p> <p>Upper Stevens Creek drains directly into Stevens Creek Reservoir, operated by Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD) for water supply. Stevens Creek is one of the last few viable steelhead trout runs in the southern San Francisco Bay. Restoration activities in upper Stevens Creek watershed will complement efforts by SCVWD and Stevens & Permanente Creeks Watershed Council downstream of Stevens Creek Reservoir to remove migration barriers, rescue stranded fish, and improve spawning grounds for threatened steelhead trout.</p> <p><u>Regional Recreation:</u> Within this PCA, a rare opportunity exists to connect the Bay Trail to the Bay</p>



		<p>Area Ridge Trail via the popular Stevens Creek trail. Midpen has made it priority to work with the County of Santa Clara and other jurisdictions to complete regional trail gaps along the Stevens Creek Trail above the Steven Creek Reservoir dam, to make the connection between the Bay Trail and the Bay Area Ridge Trail. Completion of the Stevens Creek trail and its connection to the other regional trails (Bay Trail, Bay Area Ridge Trail) are also identified priorities in the <i>Santa Clara County Countywide Trails Master Plan Update</i> (1995), which was adopted as part of the County of Santa Clara, General Plan.</p>
SC6	Saratoga-to-the-Sea	<p><u>Regional Recreation:</u> For the past ten years, Midpen, City of Saratoga and Santa Clara County Parks have been collaborating on a regional trail partnership effort to complete the Saratoga-to-the-Sea trail. It is envisioned that this trail corridor will ultimately connect to the Skyline-to-the-Sea trail, one of the most popular backpacking routes in the Bay Area. Saratoga-to-the-sea trail would allow hikers to hike from Saratoga Village all the way to the ocean. This PCA covers an important component of this trail corridor.</p> <p><u>Natural Landscapes:</u> This entire PCA resides within the choke-point of the Santa Cruz Mountains-Diablo Range Linkage. This linkage is one of 14 Bay Area critical linkages identified by the Bay Area Critical Linkages Project in 2010. These linkages have crucial biological value by allowing an exchange of individuals between populations, genetic diversity is maintained. Isolated species populations can often result in reduced genetic diversity, which negatively impacts species viability.</p>
SC7	El Sereno / Sierra Azul	<p><u>Recreation:</u> El Sereno Open Space Preserve resides within this PCA and has the ability to serve as a key location for regional trail connections. Here there are opportunities to provide regional trail connections to Skyline-Sanborn County Park and Lexington Reservoir County Park; creating an integrated trail system between the Los Gatos Creek Trail, Bay Area Ridge Trail and east-west connections over Highway 17. The Town's Novitiate Park provides a portal and entry point for access to nearby regional facilities such as St. Joseph's Hill and Sierra Azul Open Space Preserves and Lexington Reservoir County Park.</p> <p>Within Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve Midpen has made it a priority to open Rancho de Guadalupe (RDG) to the public, construct new trail system, develop new parking and staging area, provide family recreation services, and establish interpretive/education facilities. This location is within minutes of the City of San Jose and would open up a premier family recreation destination in the South Bay.</p> <p><u>Natural Landscapes:</u> The Serpentine soils that dominate St. Joseph's Hill Open Space Preserve, located within this PCA, are home to a high diversity of native plants. Additionally, serpentine soils are also present in the Sierra Azul portion of this PCA. Cherry Springs Pond is located in this PCA and it is a priority for Midpen to investigate the feasibility of reintroduction of California red-legged frogs. In addition, it is Midpen's priority to enhance habitat and remove barriers to Steelhead trout migration in Pheasant creek.</p>
SC8	Critical Wildlife Linkage	<p><u>Natural Landscapes:</u> Approximately 90% of this ~ 17,000 acre PCA resides within the choke-point of the Santa Cruz Mountains-Diablo Range Linkage. This linkage is one of 14</p>



		<p>Bay Area critical linkages identified by the Bay Area Critical Linkages Project in 2010. Without the conservation of this critical linkage, the peninsula portion of the Santa Cruz mountains could become an isolated habitat island, which can often result in reduced genetic diversity, negatively impacting species viability.</p> <p>Bear Creek Redwoods and Sierra Azul Open Space Preserves reside within this PCA. Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve receives enough precipitation and summer coastal fog to support dense forest vegetation, hosting one of Santa Clara County's best preserved, second growth redwood forests.</p> <p>While Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve is almost entirely within the rain shadow. It is characterized by dense chaparral and dry, deciduous forests of oak, madrone, and bay, as well as serpentine grasslands and lush riparian corridors. The many areas of serpentine soil support a high diversity of native plants, including a unique chaparral/shrubland series and a number of rare and endangered plant species. This Preserve provides habitat for several species of concern, including those listed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and/or the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFG) as threatened or endangered, such as Bay checkerspot butterfly, California Red-legged frog, and steelhead trout.</p> <p><u>Regional Recreation:</u> Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve, currently closed to the general public, will provide outstanding outdoor recreation opportunities in close proximity to major South Bay population centers. There is potential for nearly twenty miles of trails and other visitor facilities, an equestrian stables and trail riding opportunities. The preserve is located only five miles from Los Gatos and will provide incredible recreation opportunities for the South Bay.</p> <p>Mount Umunhum, a local landmark and one of the highest peaks in Santa Cruz mountains, resides in this PCA. Santa Clara Valley residents know Mount Umunhum as the intriguing location of the huge, cement radar tower visible for miles. Mount Umunhum offers a unique 360 degree view, with views as far as Monterey Bay and the Sierra Nevadas. This area has been closed to the public for the last 50 years and it is a priority for Midpen to open the summit and make these world class views available for all to enjoy.</p>
SC9	Eastern Sierra Azul	<p><u>Regional Recreation:</u> Only a section of this Eastern Sierra Azul area is open to the public. It is a Midpen priority to develop multiple-use trail connections to Mt. El Sombroso/Woods Trail and Almaden Quicksilver County Park.</p> <p><u>Natural Landscapes:</u> This area of Sierra Azul has a high concentration of serpentine soils that support a high diversity of native plants, including a unique chaparral/shrubland series and a number of rare and endangered plant species. In addition, there have been several known occurrences of bay checkerspot butterfly and California red-legged frog.</p>



Data Sources

1. Conservation Lands Network, 2012
 2. Bay Area Critical Linkages Project, 2013
 3. *Midpen's Open Space Vision Plan 2014*
 4. California Natural Diversity Database, 2013
 5. California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Game) (CDFW) (GIS Data). 2008. Marbled murrelet detections.
 6. Database of Herbarium Specimens in California Herbaria (GIS data), 2013
 7. Geographic range of Coho Salmon and Winter Run Steelhead (GIS data), 2012
 8. CalFire's Fire and Resource Assessment Program, 2012
 9. *A Conservation Blueprint: An Assessment and Recommendations from the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County*, 2011
 10. National Marine Fisheries Service Draft Recovery Plan for Central California Coast coho salmon (GIS data), 2010
 11. California wetlands (GIS data), 2011
 12. USGS National Hydrography Database for streams, water bodies, and seeps and springs (GIS data), 2012
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