

the Los Gatos Creek Trail -- a brief history ...

Larry Ames

Larry@L-Ames.com

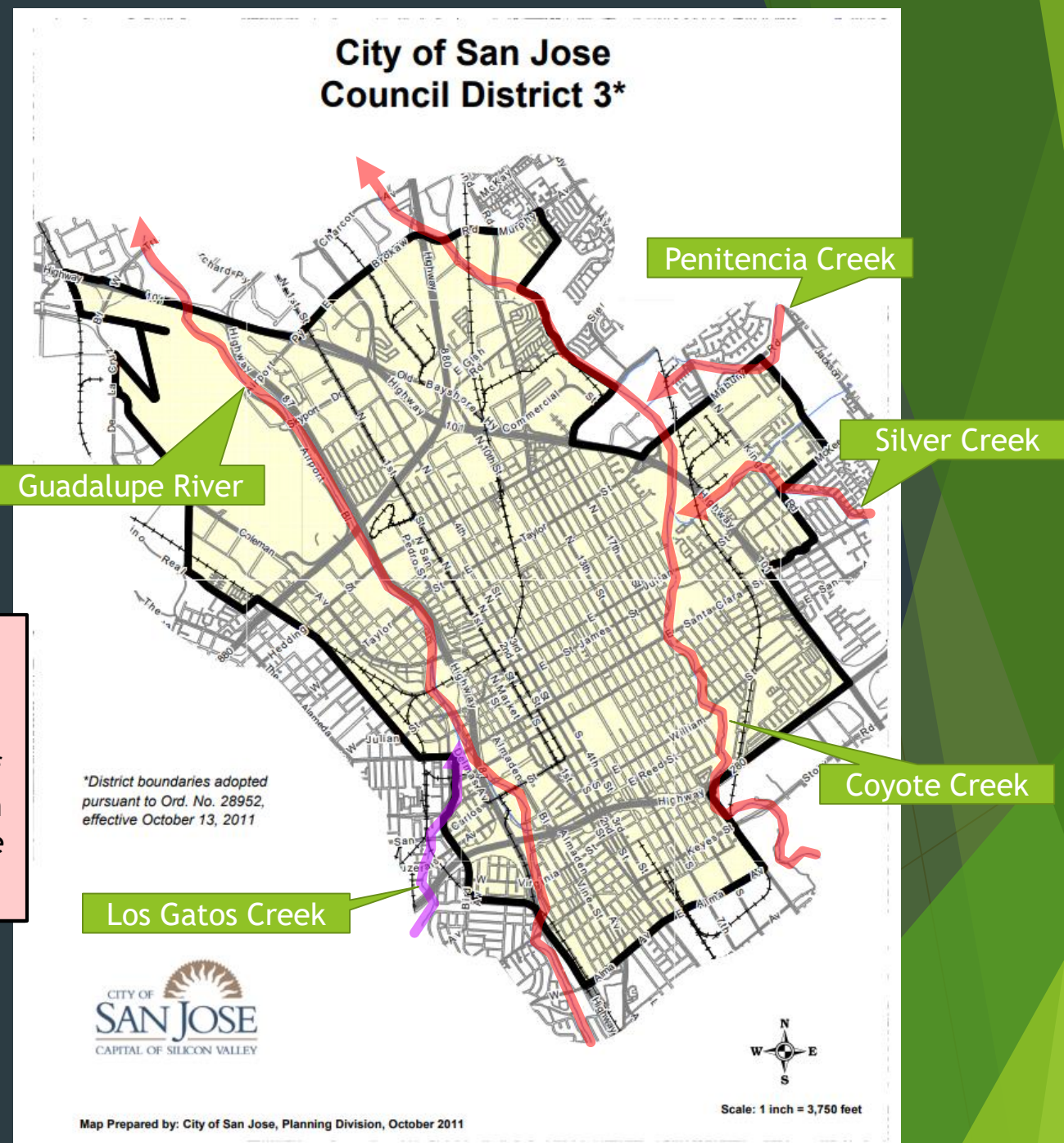
May 10, 2018

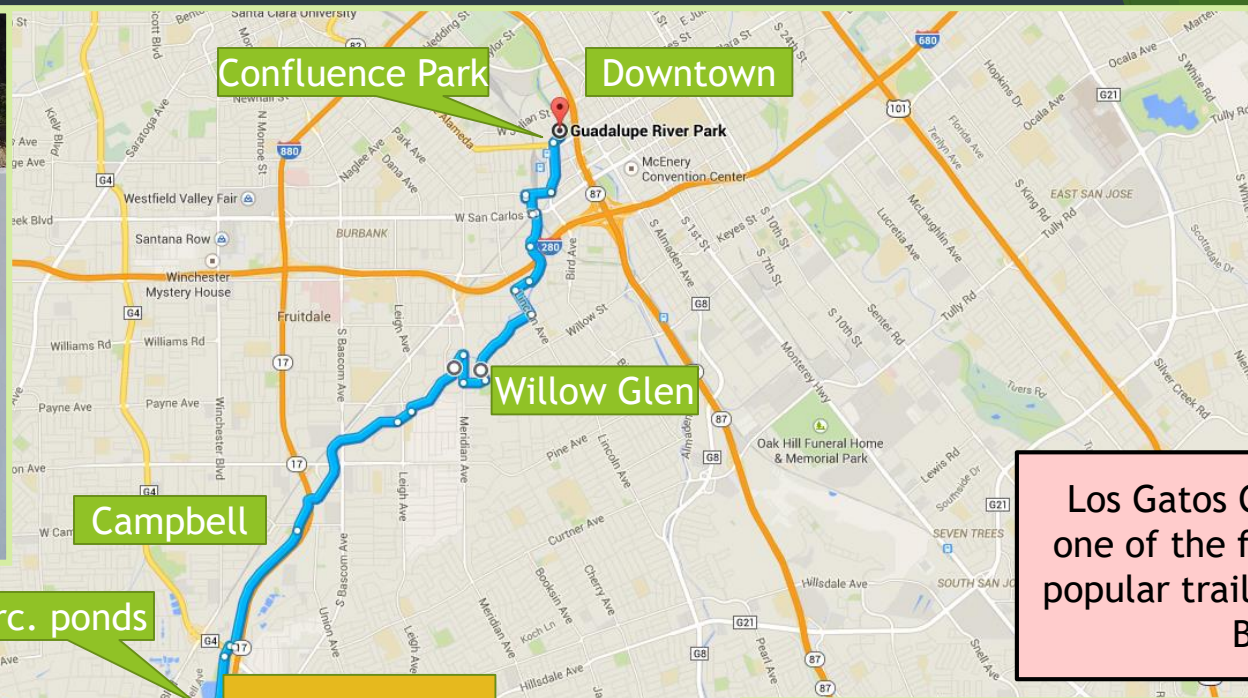
with accompanying
explanations

The Creeks of District 3

Several creeks in District 3, including Guadalupe and Coyote.

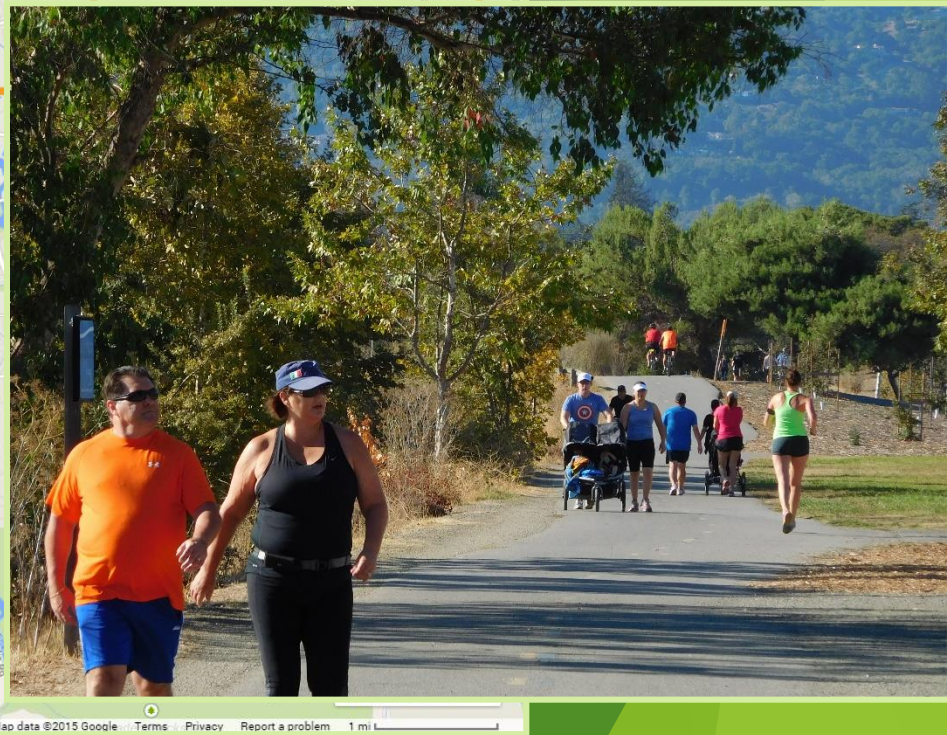
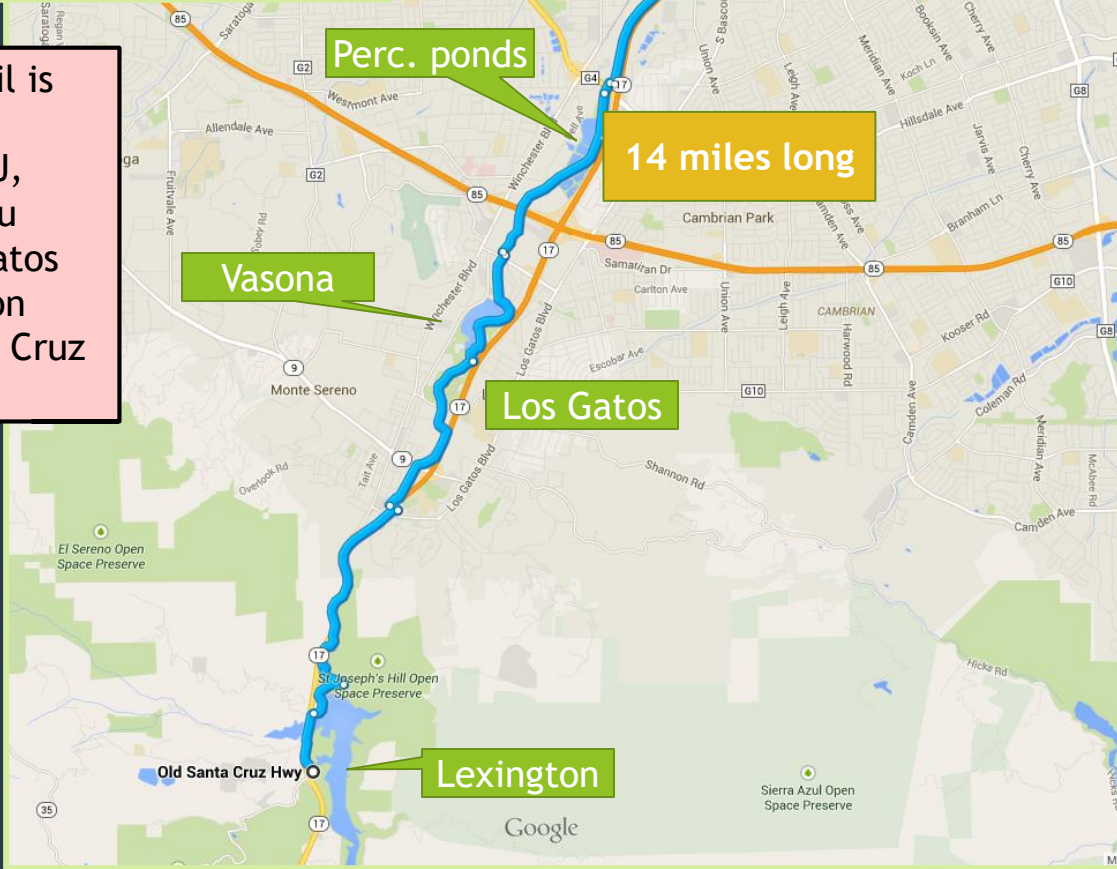
There's only a small part of the Los Gatos Creek Trail in D3 - hopefully you'll still be interested...





Los Gatos Creek Trail is one of the first and most popular trails in the South Bay

Los Gatos Creek Trail is 14 miles long. From downtown SJ, it heads south thru Campbell and Los Gatos and up to Lexington Reservoir in the Santa Cruz Mountains.



Guadalupe and Coyote each also have their own trails, and their own stories ...

open: 14 miles

open: 5 miles

Guadalupe is continuous from Virginia Ave (just south of I-280) to the Bay (north of Alviso). Somewhat tricky to follow: just follow the (faded) dashed yellow lines...

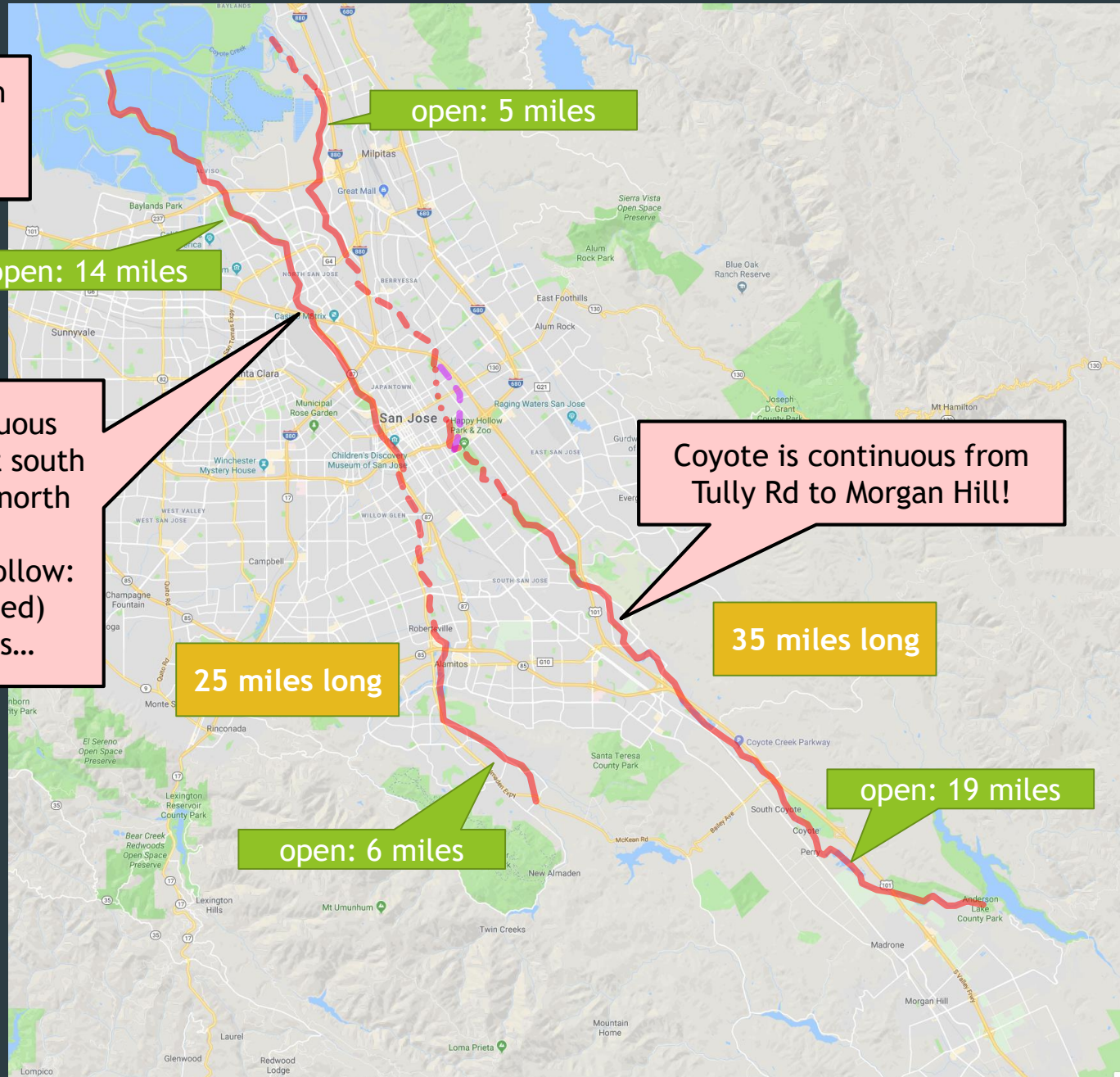
Coyote is continuous from Tully Rd to Morgan Hill!

25 miles long

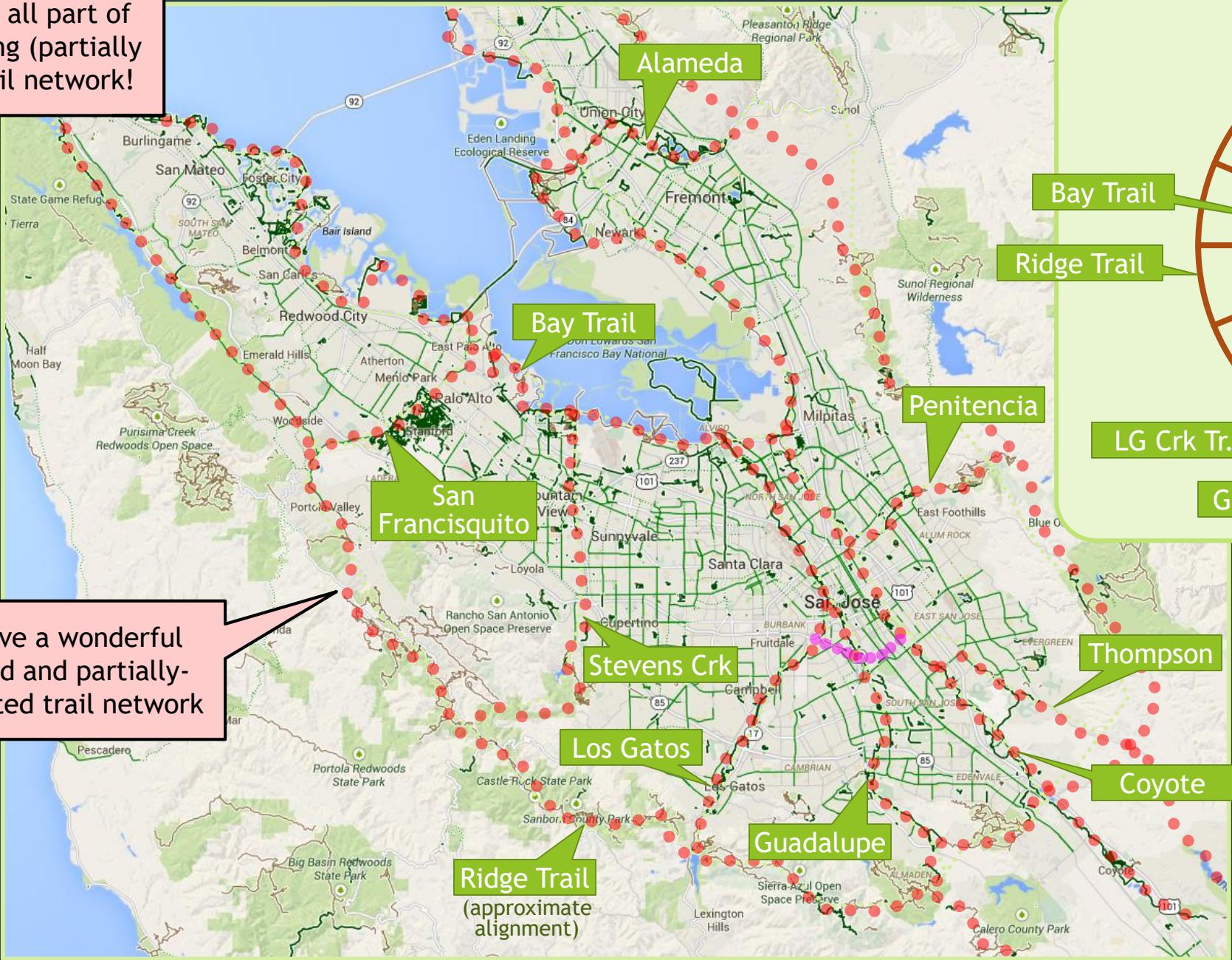
35 miles long

open: 6 miles

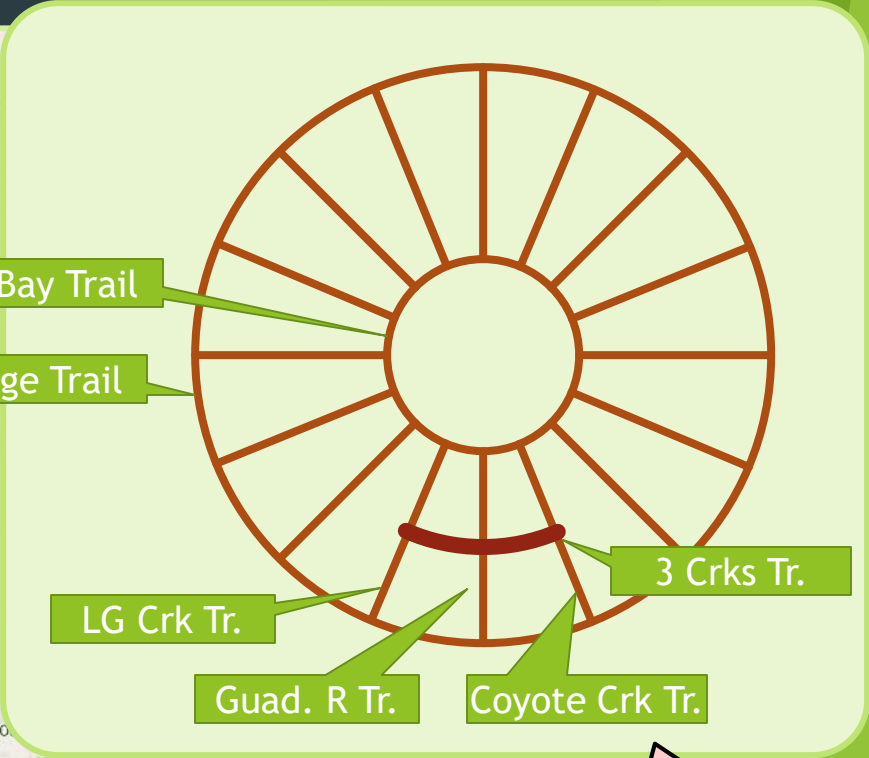
open: 19 miles



They are all part of an amazing (partially built) trail network!



We have a wonderful planned and partially-completed trail network

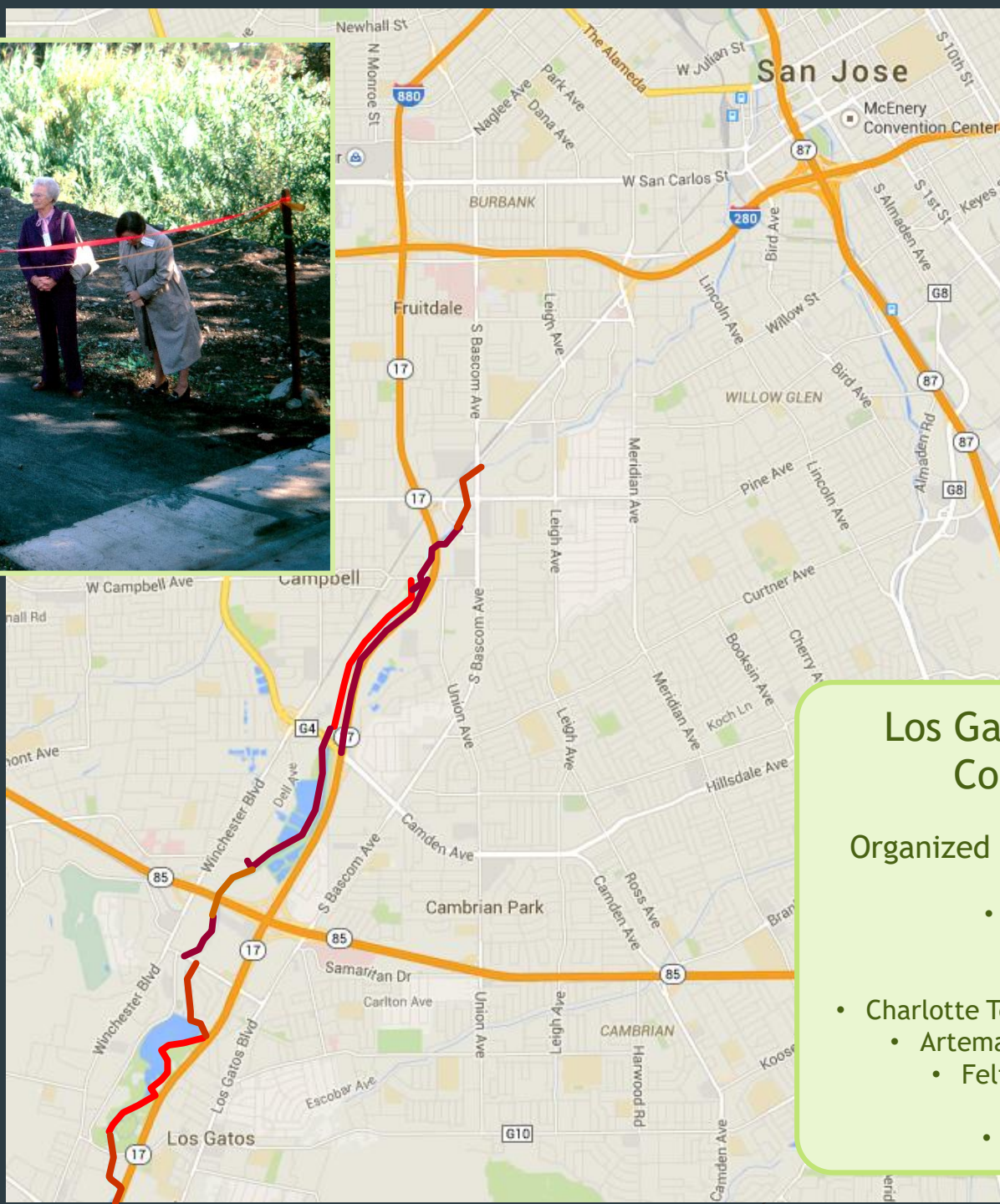


It's like a wagon-wheel, with the Bay Trail as the hub, the Ridge trail as the rim, and the various creek trails as spokes. (The Three Creeks Trail is like a reflector on bike spokes.)



The trail was built piece-by-piece.

Be sure to celebrate each segment's opening - it's great for raising public (and elected official) awareness!



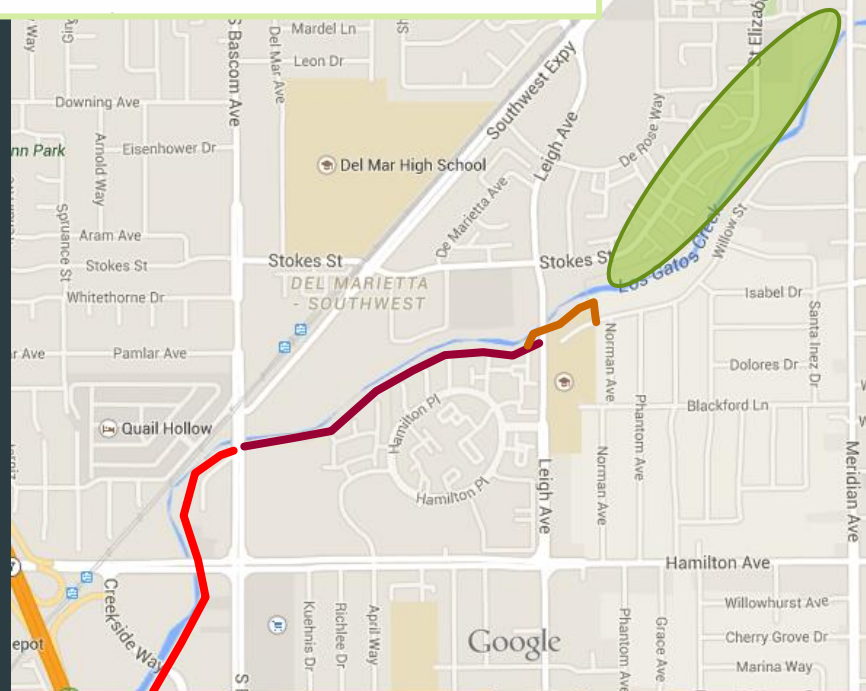
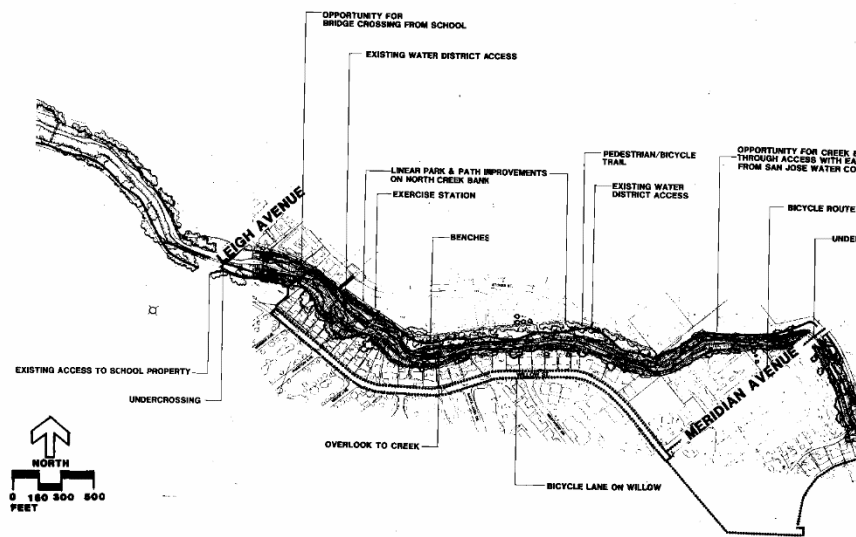
The LGCSPC helped advocate for the trail and coordinate between different agencies.

Los Gatos Creek Streamside Park Committee (1974 - 2000)

Organized by County Supervisor Rod Diridon Sr.

- Don Hebard, Campbell - Chair
 - Jim Sugai, Los Gatos
 - Bill Hoeft, SCVWD
- Charlotte Teichner → Chris Svensson → Larry Ames, SJ
 - Artemas Ginzton, IGC Trails & Pathways Cmte
 - Felix Errico → Debbie Turpen, S.C. Co.
 - Libby Lucas, riparian
 - Margaret Shafer, walkers' club

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Community volunteers (Willow Glen N'hood Assoc) took pages from the plan and applied for a state grant to implement the next section themselves.

Reach 2 extends from Leigh Avenue to Meridian Avenue both on-street and along the creek bank. A 4 acre parcel on the north bank, owned by the Santa Clara Valley Water District allows for development of a neighborhood linear park with a bridge crossing to Blackford Elementary School. Acquiring selected easements would provide the opportunity to create a continuous trail with connections to adjacent neighborhoods, high density apartment buildings and nearby professional offices.

Development of a neighborhood linear park in Reach 2 creates the most exciting and active segment of the trail system with two existing gated entries at either end. An easement from San Jose Water Works would provide the opportunity to continue access on the north bank to Meridian Avenue. Within the park, the trail divides into a bike path and a meandering pedestrian path along the creek bank. Santa Clara Valley Water District service and maintenance vehicles will continue to have access to the creek for maintenance and erosion repair. A proposed SCVWD bank stabilization project will restore the physical top of bank access near the upstream end of the proposed linear park. Other sites along the creek are proposed for repair. Water District and park plans in this area should be coordinated to assure compatibility. Park improvements include benches and overlooks to the creek,

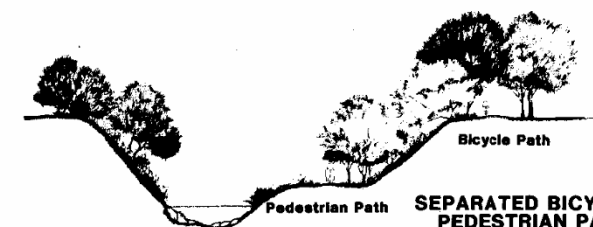
and an exercise course, especially attractive to nearby businesses and neighborhood residents. Mounded grass areas provide additional space for relaxation and play. Landscaping includes alders and cottonwoods to enhance the existing riparian environment, along with erosion control planting for slope stabilization. Grading and other improvements will be required to repair eroded banks in some stretches.

An easement from Campbell School District allows for a trail along the north side of Blackford Elementary School with a bridge crossing the creek to the linear park. As property improvements near Meridian might occur, it is encouraged that a bridge crossing be pursued from the eastern portion of the neighborhood linear park to Willow Street.

The undercrossing below Leigh Avenue slopes up the southern bank to meet the on-grade

connection from Leigh Avenue at Blackford Elementary School. One segment of the trail continues along the school property to Willow Street and becomes a bike lane on both sides of Willow Street to Meridian Avenue. A bike route extends up Meridian Avenue and connects to an on-grade access on the northern bank of the creek. Narrowness of this busy thoroughfare and existing on-street parking restricts Meridian Avenue to designation as a bike route. In the future, possible road changes or restriping may improve the situation.

The other trail segment along the creek bank of the school property crosses the creek with a bridge, connects to the linear park and separates out two pathways for pedestrians and bikes. The trail continues along this northern bank, connects to Stokes Street at two different points and forks into a path which continues on-grade to Meridian to connect to the bike route and a path which descends the bank to an undercrossing below Meridian Avenue to the east side.



Los Gatos Creek Urban Stream Restoration Project:

Dept. of Water Resources:

- Earle Cummings
- Sara Denzler

Santa Clara Valley Water District:

- Kay Whitlock
- Sue Tippets
- Larry Wilson

Willow Glen Neighborhood Assoc.:

- Tiralisa Kaplow
- Madeleine Randal

Santa Clara County:

- Lisa Killough

check out this paper!

(see www.WGBackfence.net/arcata.htm)

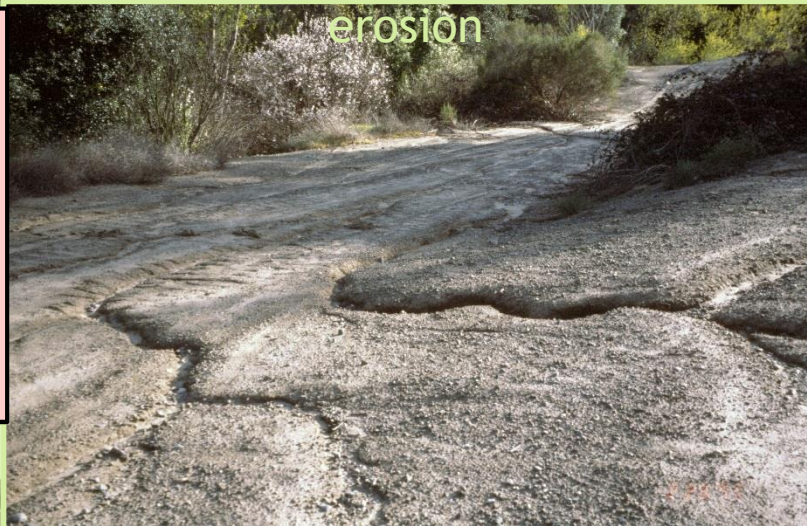


WILLOW GLEN NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION ♦ P. O. Box 7706, San Jose CA 95150 / (408) 294-WGNA



barren landscape 12/30/92

The SCVWD land was barren: they were >required< to plow & poison it annually to assure that nothing grew there...

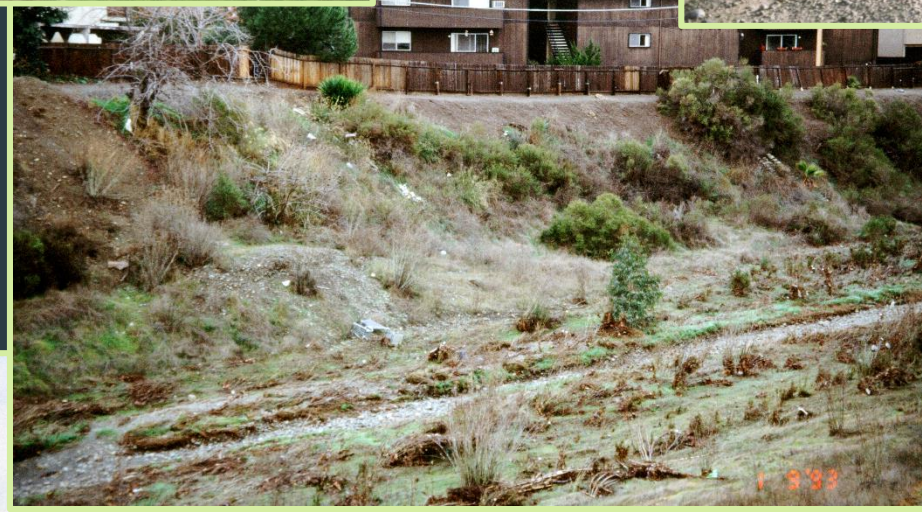


erosion



emptiness

“Before”



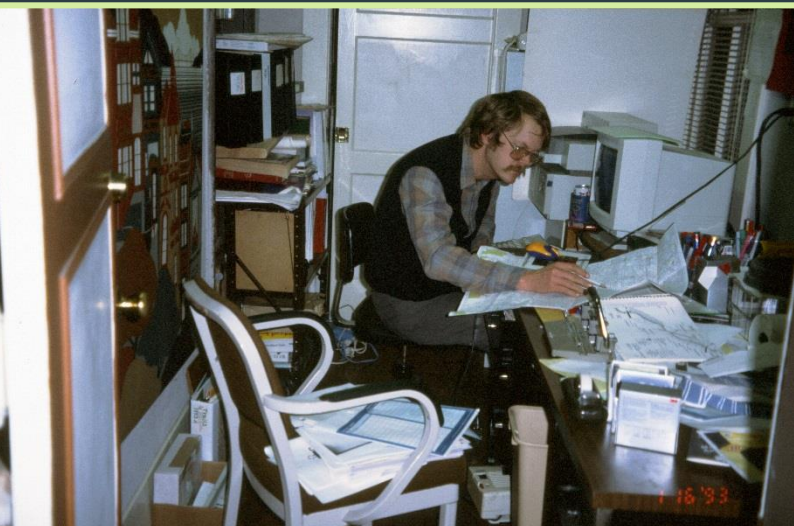
piles of gravel

... they >had< to keep it barren in case they might need to mitigate some future project...

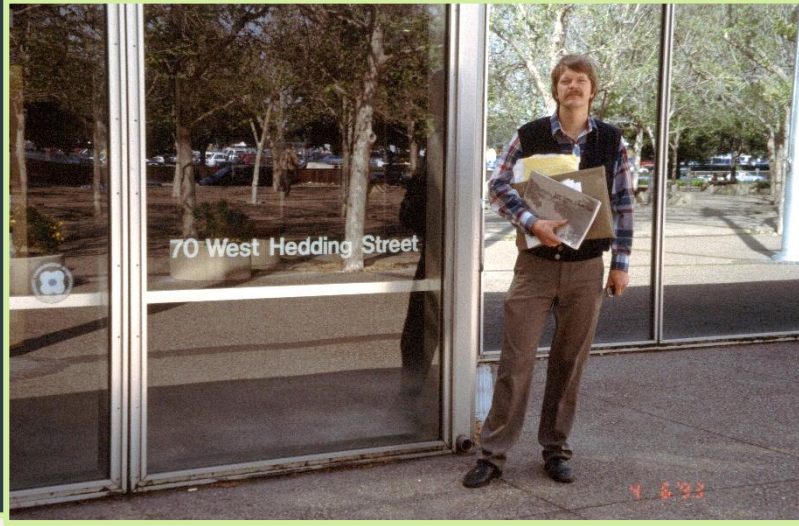


trash





making plans



at the County Board of Supervisors



Here we are,
making
plans...

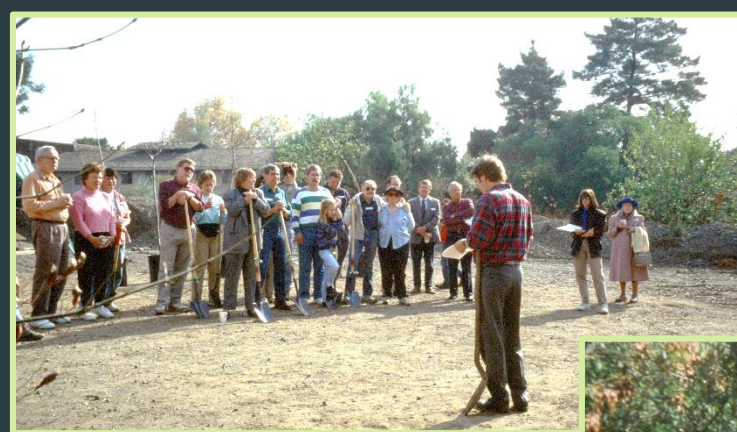


at the LG Creek Streamside Park Cmte.

“Planning”



“Groundbreaking”



Rod Diridon & Zoe Lofgren

It took us 2-1/2 years to get the needed permits from SCVWD: all we had to do was change state law first! (We established a first-in-the-state precedence for “advanced mitigation” - see www.WGBackfence.net/arcata.htm for details.)





irrigation pipe



the "Muddy Hands" Club

"Planting"

A total of 200 volunteers!
1,000 native trees & shrubs planted!
A half-mile of drip-irrigation, with a solar-power control system!
Resulting in a 10 acre park, all for \$60,000!

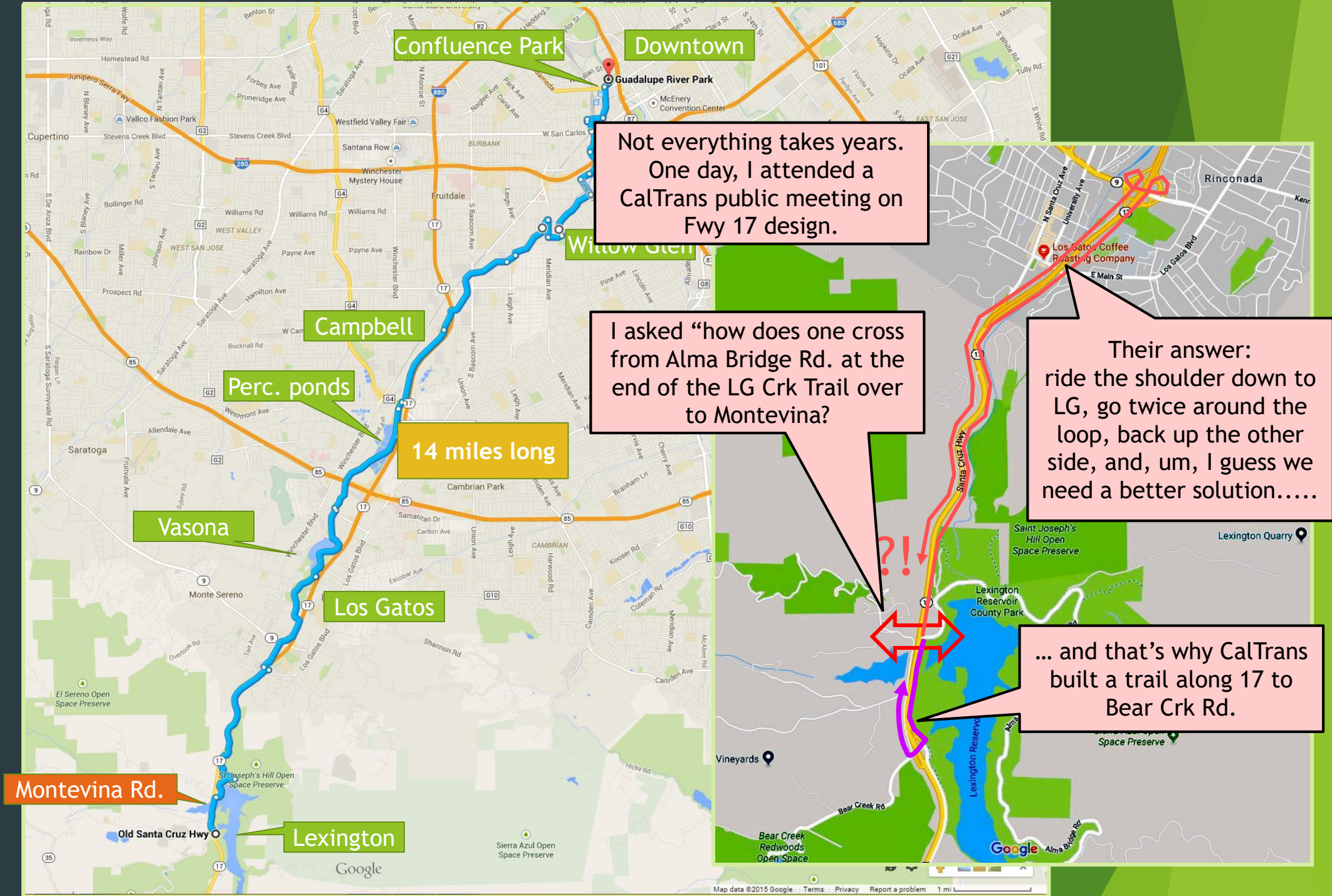


Jim Sugai



“After”







10/20/07

It took over 20 years to open this segment of trail...

There are a number of ways of “filling the gap” between Meridian and Lincoln: just need to work w/ the community to select the best alternative!



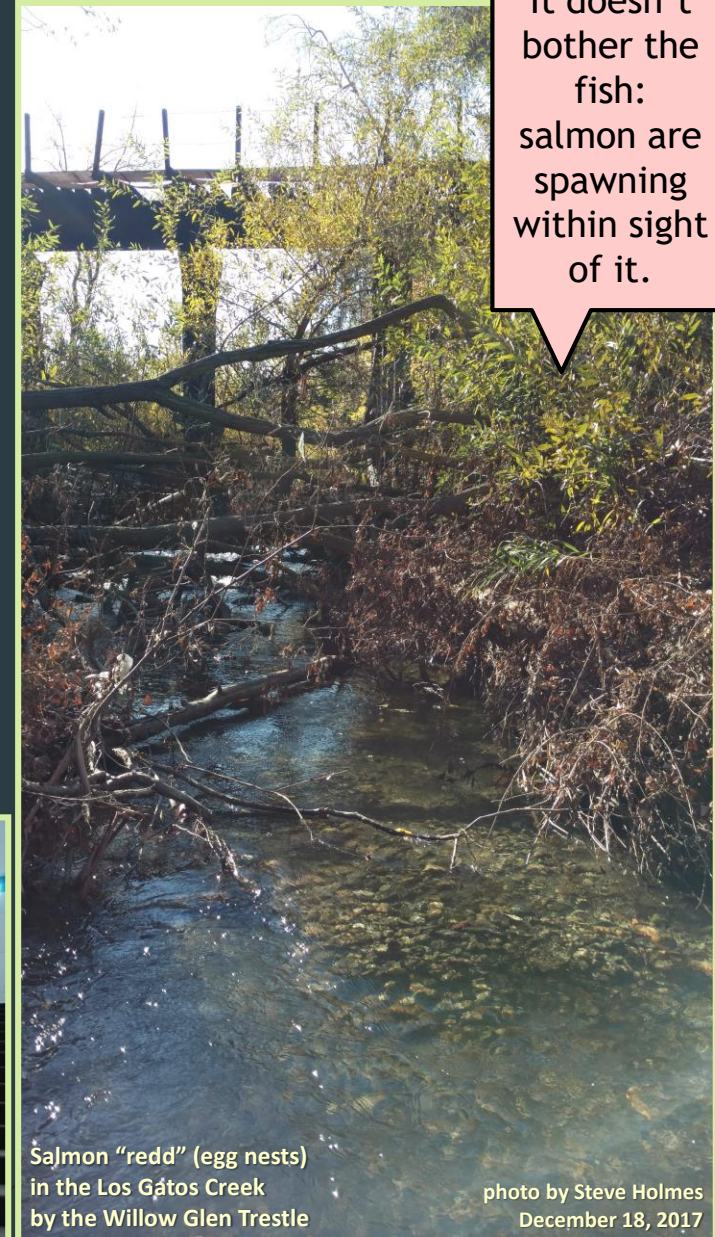
Oh how do we connect the Three Creeks Trail to the Los Gatos? Restore a historic railroad trestle, or replace it with a generic prefab steel truss?



According to the City's own study, it's faster and cheaper to restore the trestle than to replace it.

Recent floods show that it doesn't impede water flow

	Trestle "Retrofit"	Prefab Steel Bridge "Project"
Construction cost	\$959,000	\$1,637,000
Est. Maintenance	\$4,000 / year	not budgeted
Est. Inspection	\$2,000 / year	\$500 / year
Construction time	5 months	7 months
Estimated Life	30 - 50 years (more if well-maintained?)	75 years (w/o maintenance?)
Flooding	not a problem	not a problem
Creosote	not a problem if left alone	a concern if disturbed
Fire	not a problem: fire-retardant coating; sprinklers, alarms and maintenance	no precautions are provided, and steel loses strength at brushfire temperatures
History	<i>(To be determined by the State Historical Resources Commission, May 10, 2017)</i>	"While this does not salvage the trestle, aesthetics could be made pleasing. Staining the concrete deck to resemble the old track could be done. Also, railroad themed signs could be incorporated at the approaches."



Salmon "redd" (egg nests)
in the Los Gatos Creek
by the Willow Glen Trestle

photo by Steve Holmes
December 18, 2017

It doesn't bother the fish: salmon are spawning within sight of it.

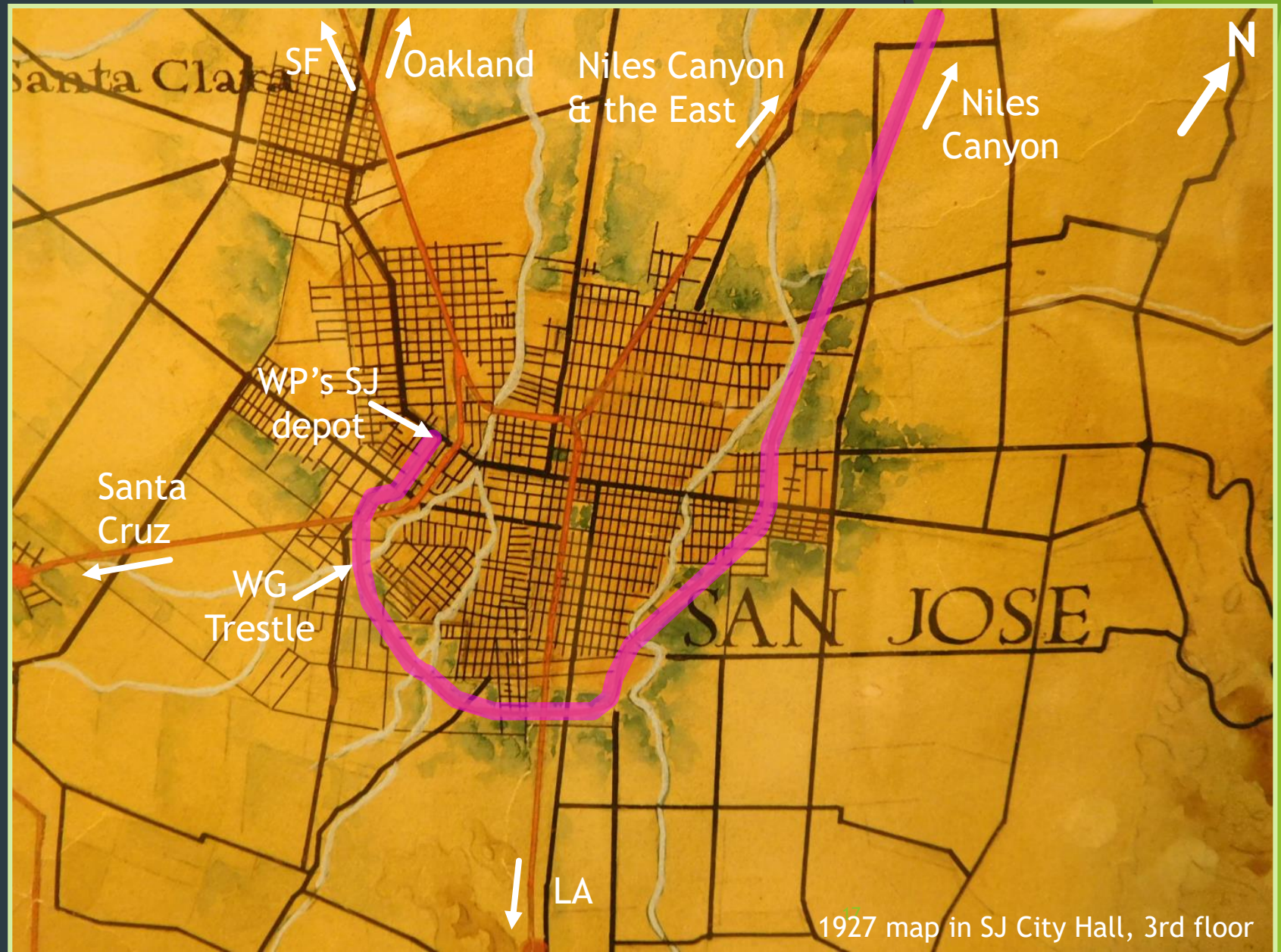
www.WGTrestle.org

Check out our website!

The public wants it.

History of Trains in SJ

- ▶ 1864: First train, SJ - SF
- ▶ Early 1900's: well-connected with Southern Pacific tracks
- ▶ SP has a Monopoly
- ▶ Agricultural interests urge T.S.Montgomery to bring Western Pacific to SJ
- ▶ 1922: WP's WG Trestle connects world to SJ, breaks SP's monopoly.



Status:

► State Historical Resources Commission (SHRC) evaluated the Willow Glen Trestle at three hearings:

- Apr. 2016: approved for National Register
 - City complained; Feds returned the application
- May 2017: approved for State Register
 - City formally requested a “do-over”
- Oct. 2017: Cmsn reaffirmed historic status
- Jan. 2018: City sues to have the State force SHRC to remove trestle from Register
 - Moot point? In 2017, Court ruled City could proceed with 2014 plans for demolition, as that preceded the SHRC’s historic findings
 - Historic status may dissuade Cal. Dept. Fish & Wildlife from granting the required demolition permit...



Hopefully... Seems that the city is rushing ahead w/ demolition plans!

Meanwhile, ...

“The San José trail network has over 50 pedestrian bridges. They range from stone bridges in Alum Rock Park constructed in the 19th century to newly installed steel truss bridges.

The City of San José strongly supports iconic or placemaking bridges at high-traffic and highly-visible locations, as they can encourage greater usage, and support tourism and community identity.”

... and ...

City invited the visionary behind NYC's High Line to come talk.

They also sued the city to save a ~100-year-old railroad structure. They succeeded, and now it's NYC's top tourist attraction!



CalTrain replaced their bridge over the LG.
After years of discussion, they agreed to build it high enough to allow the trail to extend beneath it.

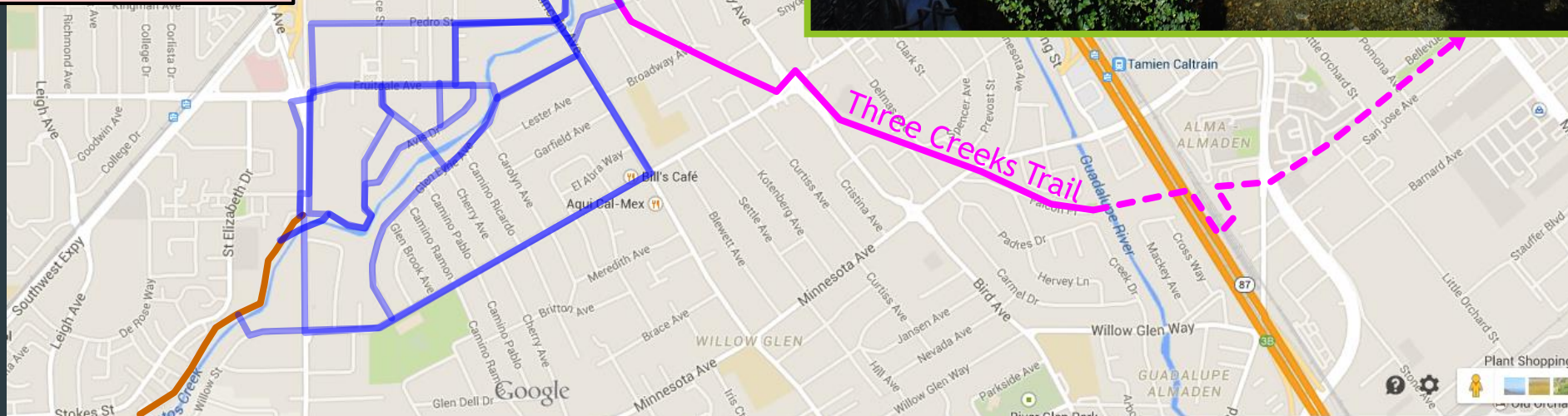


Diridon Station:
CalTrain,
ACE, Cap.Cor.
BART
VTA Light Rail
High Speed Rail
Bus

The LG vanishes into a
culvert beneath Park &
Montgomery - buried 50
years ago so that cars to
make a faster right-on-red.

We are working w/ Google to
Free the Los Gatos Creek!
and to “Day-light” it

**Google
Village**



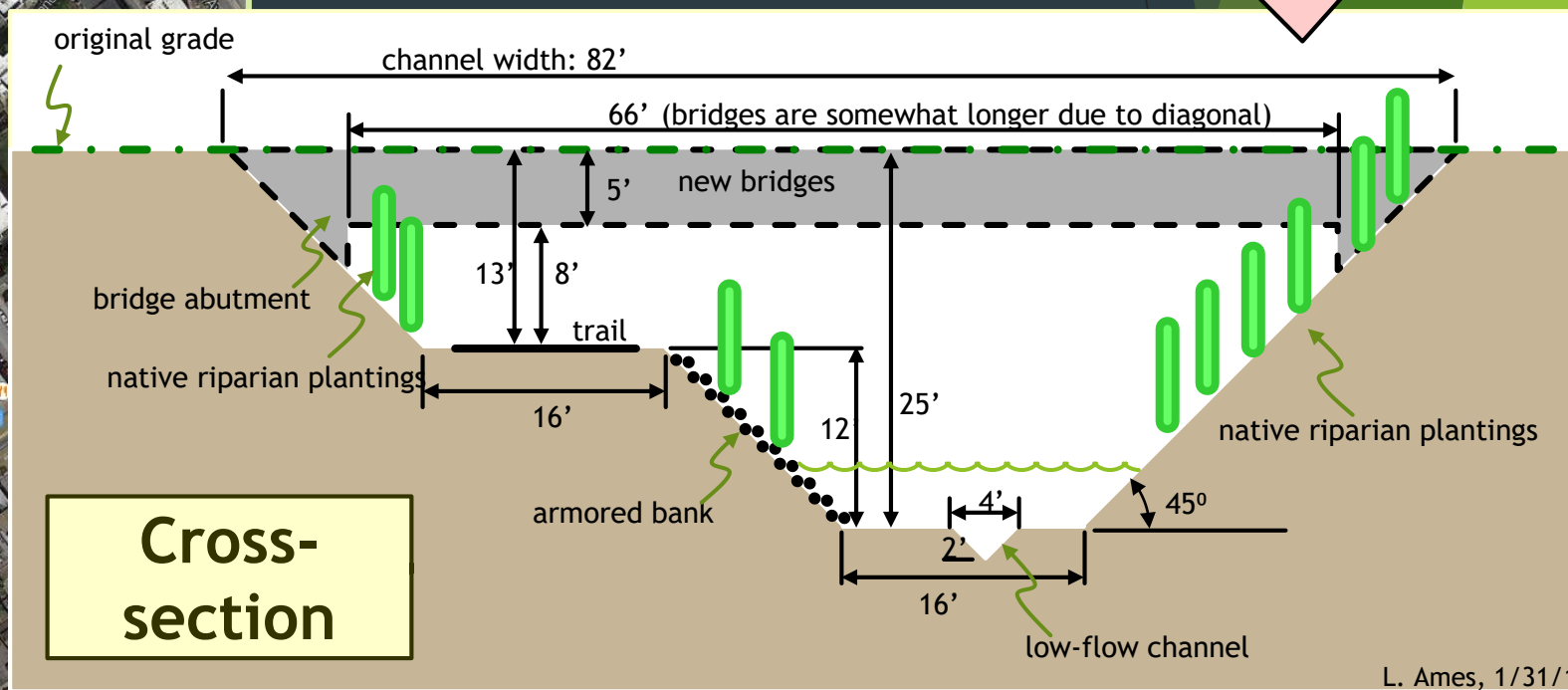
**Conceptual
Diagram
to Free the
Los Gatos Creek**



“Free the Los Gatos Creek!”

We have recently gone on a couple on-site tours with Google and the Diridon Station Area Advisory Group (SAAG)

Conceptual diagrams: of course, more engineering detail is required!



Cross- section

Diridon Station:
CalTrain,
ACE, Cap.Cor.
BART
VTA Light Rail
High Speed Rail
Bus

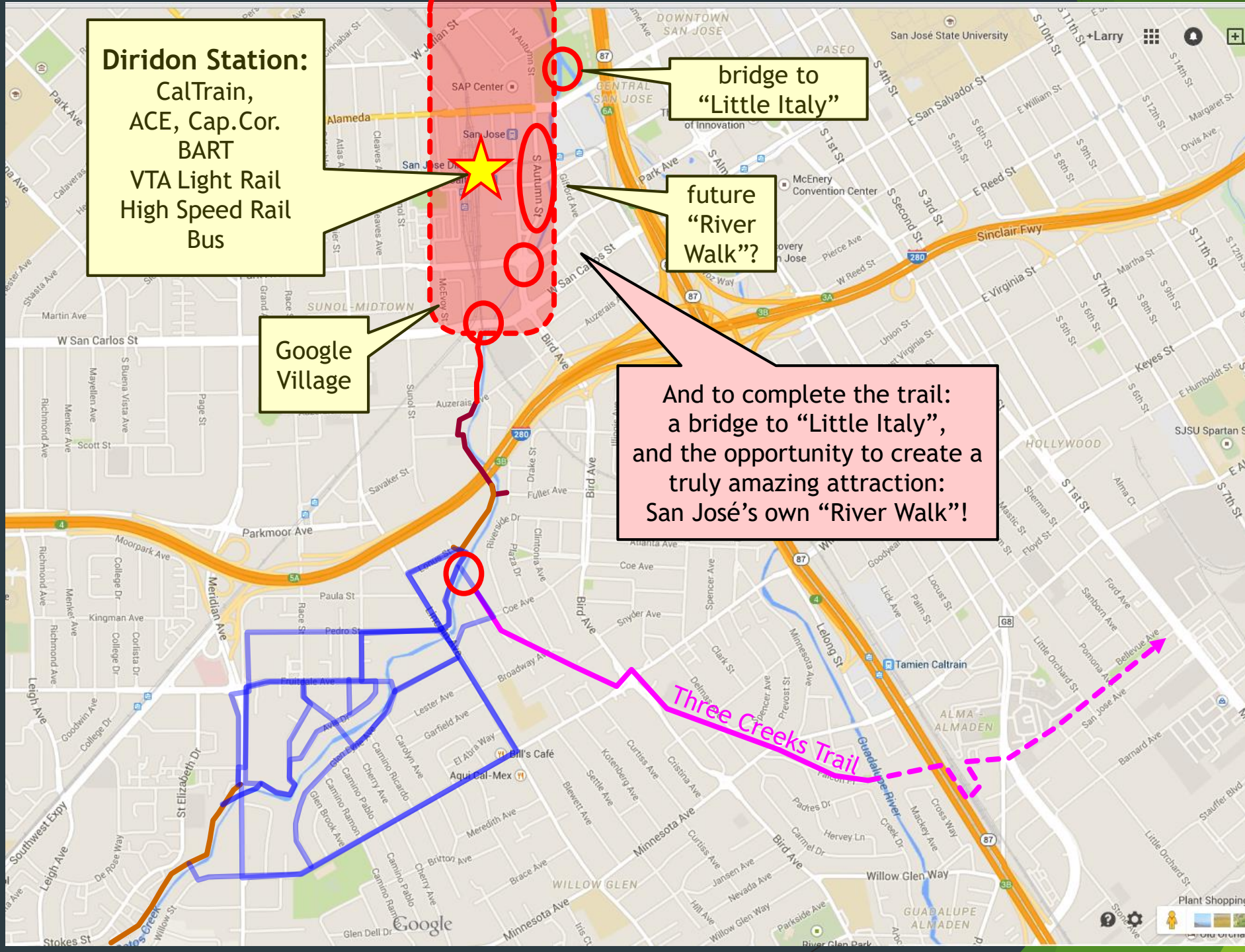
bridge to
“Little Italy”

future
“River
Walk”?

Google
Village

And to complete the trail:
a bridge to “Little Italy”,
and the opportunity to create a
truly amazing attraction:
San José’s own “River Walk”!

Three Creeks Trail



We can “Dream big”



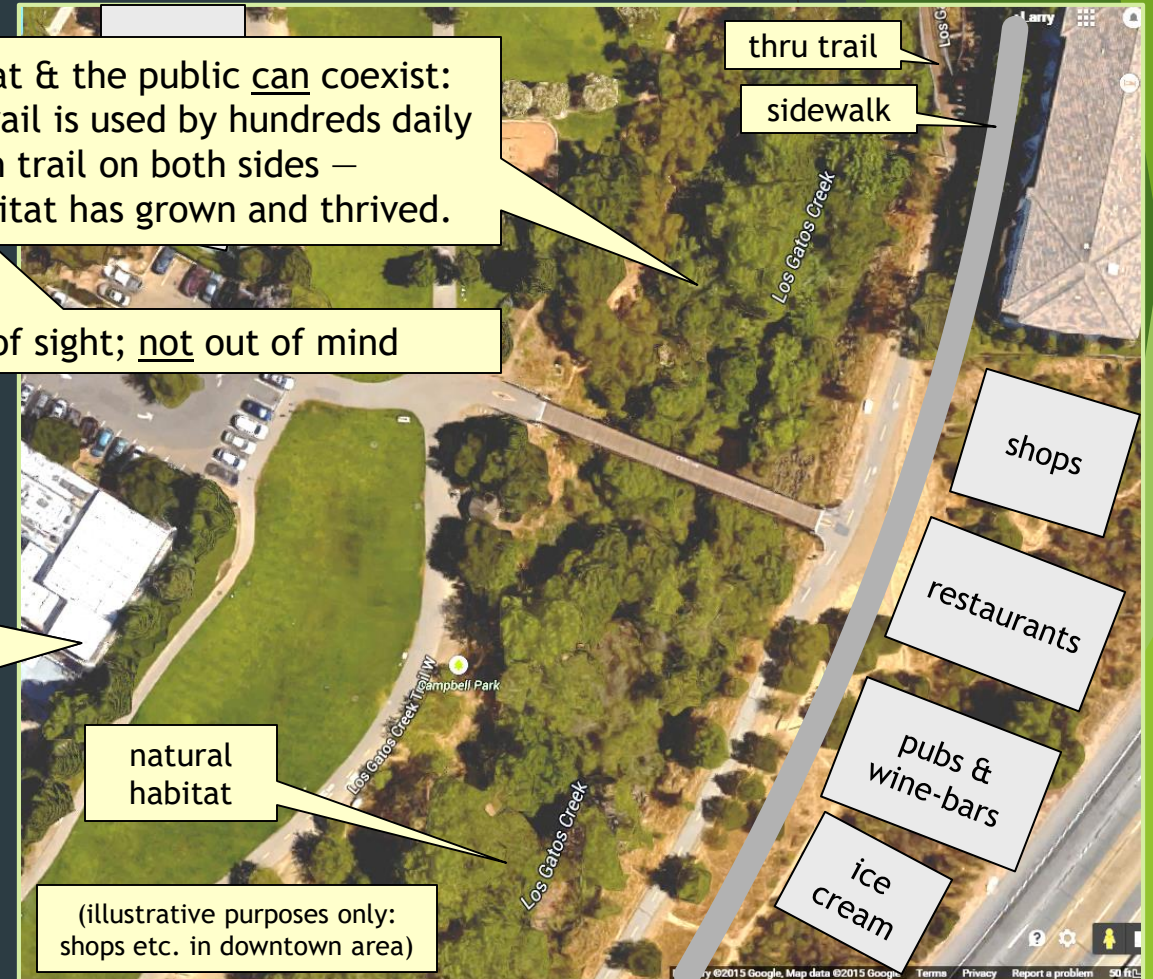
San Antonio Texas is famous for its “River Walk”:
2.5 mile long, lined with shops & restaurants;
almost like a Disneyland ride.

Note: habitat & the public can coexist:
the LG Crk Trail is used by hundreds daily
— with trail on both sides —
and the habitat has grown and thrived.

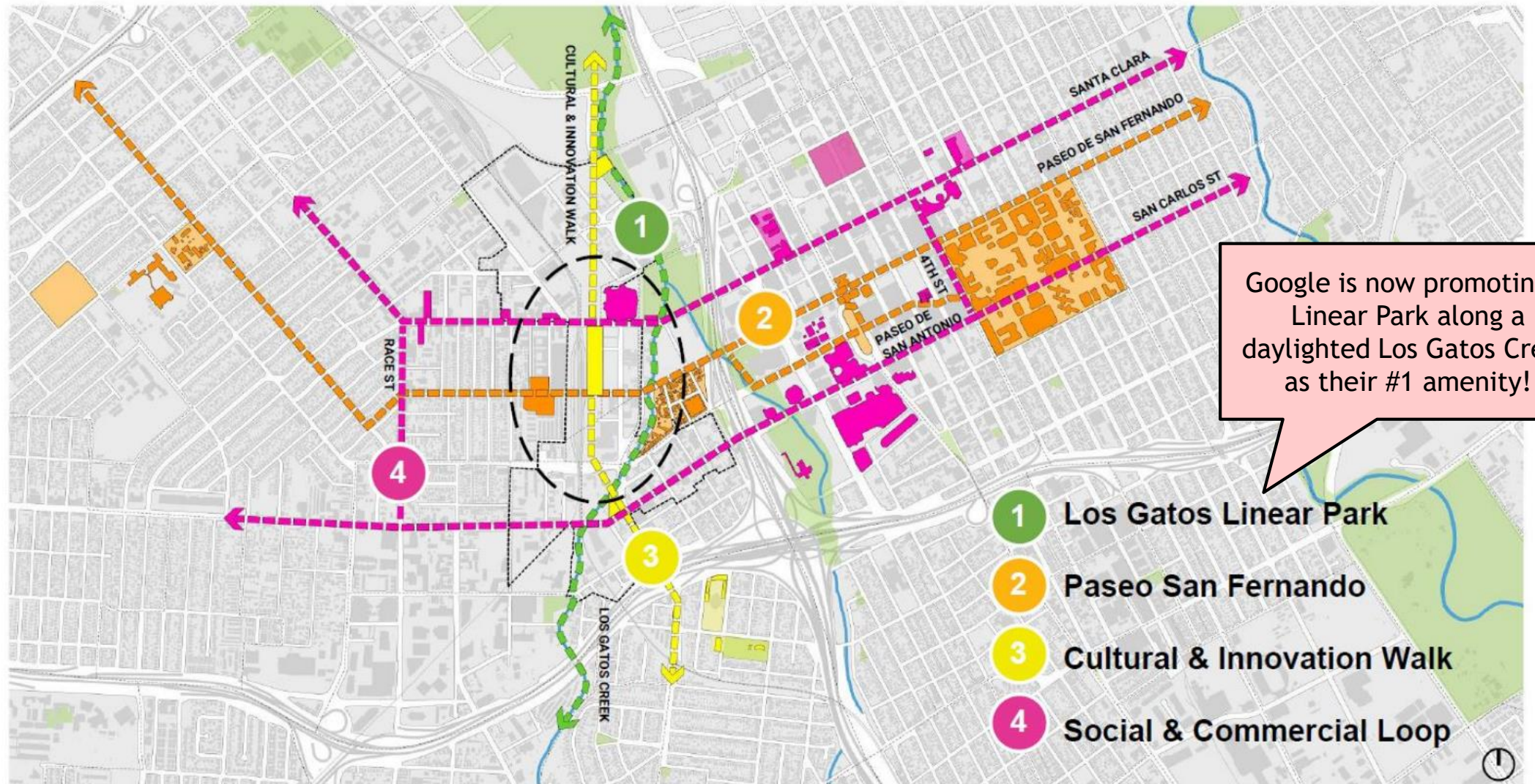
Not out of sight; not out of mind

San José has the potential,
but we should do it “San José style”
— trails and attractions
along the sides,
but natural and wild at heart!

San José may have less water in the river,
but we have many more miles of trail
and many opportunities



Google's Concept



Connected Experiential Framework: Connecting Places to Support a Broad Range of Experiences

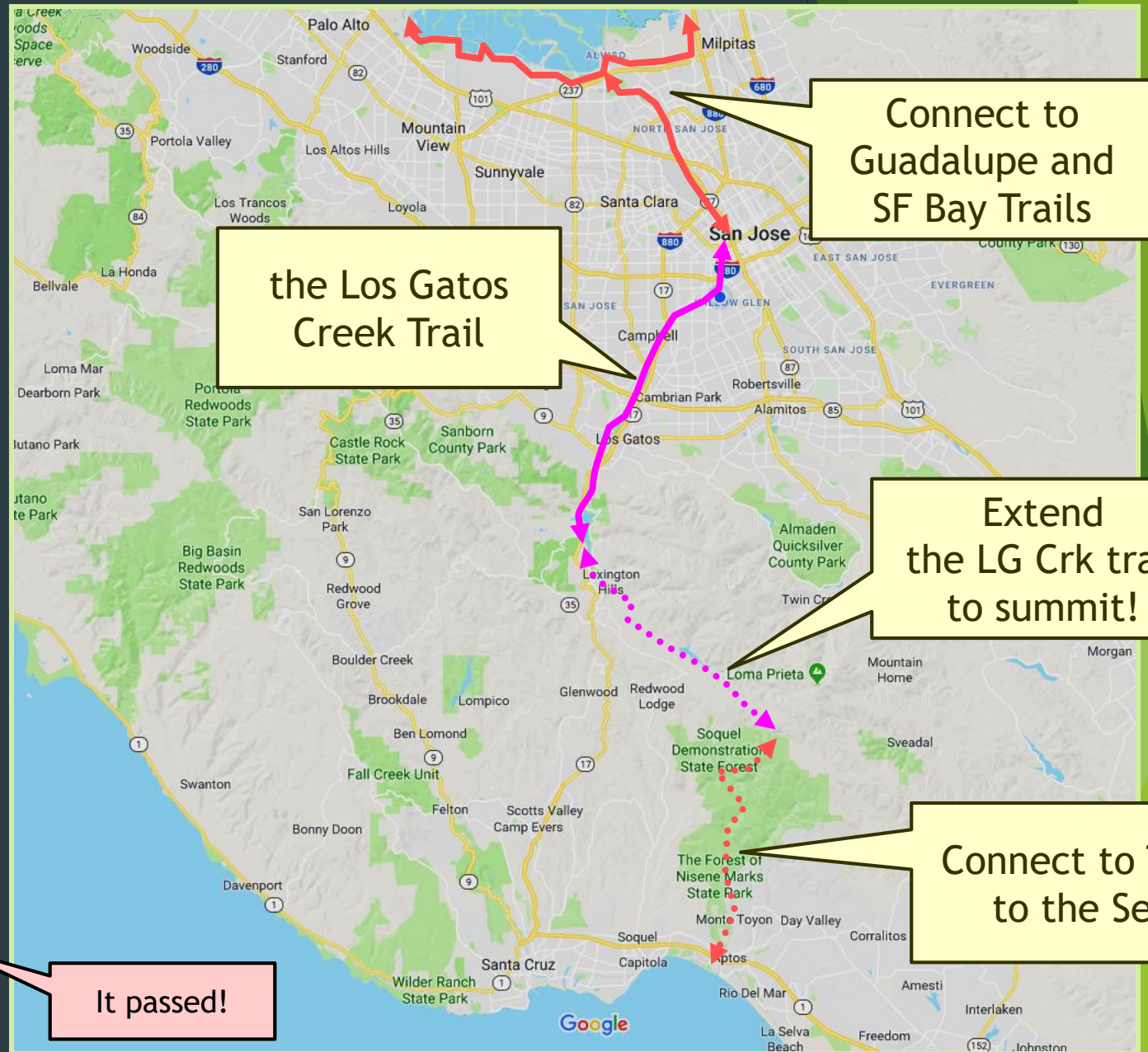
Dream very big!

“Bay to the Sea!”

Long a dream of State Senator Jim Beall, now a possibility with the passage this year of SB 492!

Prop. 68 on the June ballot provides funding for this!

It passed!



to Learn More...

info on the
SJ Neighborhoods Commission
(and a link to these charts):
www.WGBackfence.net/NC

info on trestle: www.WGTrestle.org

to contact the speaker:
Larry@L-Ames.com



an archive of
SJ's Riparian Corridor information
(both the Policy and the unreleased
draft Restoration Action Plan),
plus citizen commentary

a local trails-advocacy committee:
www.saveourtrails-scc.org/



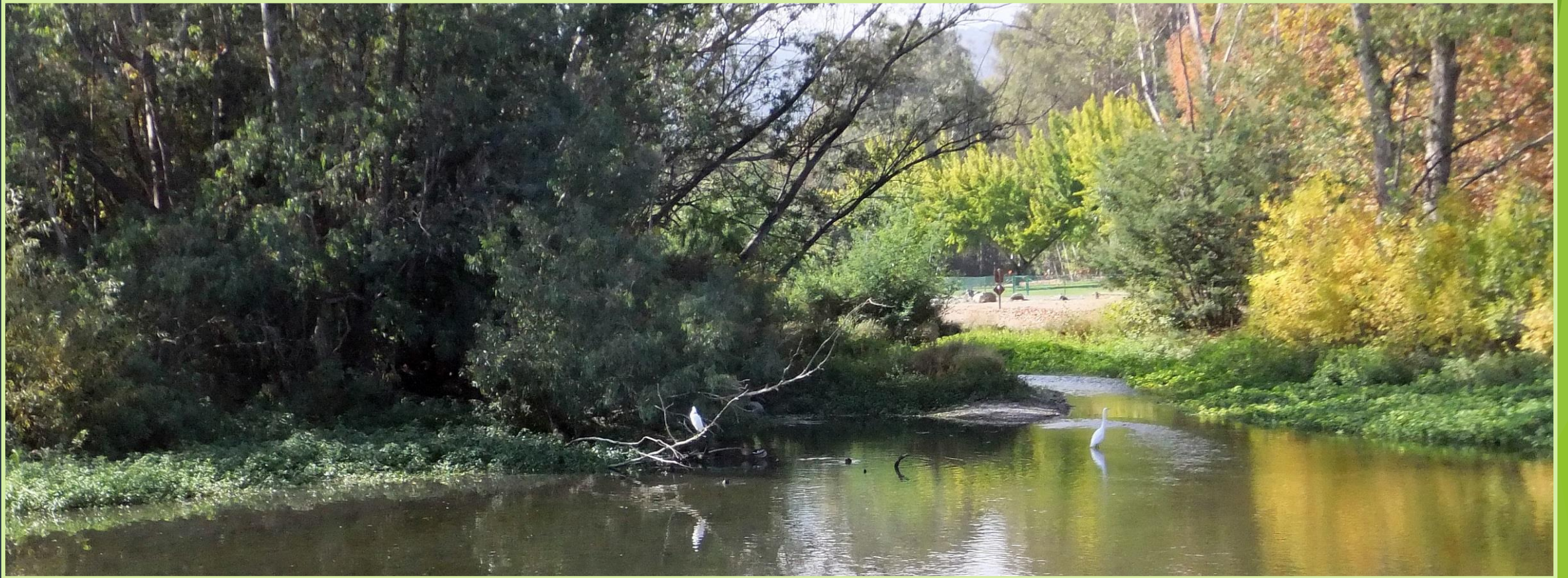
San Jose's trail coordinator:
Yves.Zsutty@SanJoseCA.gov

San Jose's bike coordinator:
John.Brazil@SanJoseCA.gov

to keep informed on issues
affecting D6 in SJ, join at
www.groups.yahoo.com;
search on "D6NL"



Thank you.



Larry Ames -- Larry@L-Ames.com
www.L-Ames.com/LGCT_2018.pdf



backup charts



1955

A Western Pacific train crossing the Willow Glen Trestle.

“[The Willow Glen Trestle] has a visual quality. It is not something that would be built today, ... technology has evolved and it would be entirely different. However, it has an aesthetical uniqueness to the area, ...[and] having trails going thru is actually quite appealing: instead of going thru concrete or steel that has very little thing to do with the touch of the human person, this is something that represents something of the time when it was done - it represents that particular period, [that particular area] there.”

-- Commissioner Alberto Bertoli, State Hist. Resources Cmsn



RunKeeper and Mapbox collaborated to visualize 1.5 million of their users' public runs, walks, and bike rides.

A “heat map”, showing the popularity of the LG Crk Trail

the Los Gato Creek Trail
is one of the most-used trails
in the region!

