



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 09/15/2026

ITEM NO: 1

DESK ITEM

DATE: September 15, 2026
TO: Mayor and Town Council
FROM: Chris Constantin, Town Manager
SUBJECT: **Study Session Regarding State Route 17 Corridor Congestion Relief Project**

REMARKS:

Attachment 2 contains revised VTA presentation materials and Attachment 3 contains public comments received before 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, September 15, 2026.

Attachment Received with Staff Report:

1. VTA Presentation Materials

Attachment Received with this Desk Item:

2. Revised VTA Presentation Materials
3. Public Comment Received Before 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, September 15, 2026.

SR 17 Corridor Congestion Relief Project

Town of Los Gatos
Town Council Special Session

September 15th, 2026



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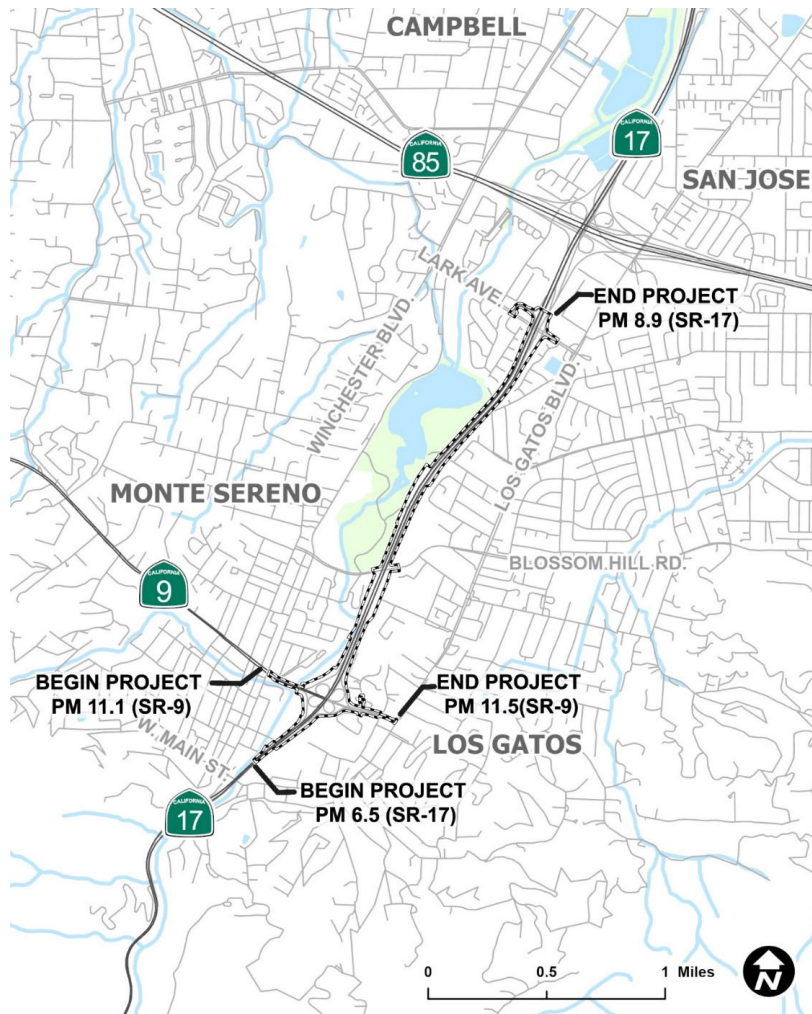
Project Overview



Existing Conditions

- Current freeway consists of four-lanes, two in each direction
- High peak-hour congestion, anticipated to increase with future growth
 - freeway congestion encourages traffic to cut-through the Town of Los Gatos
 - cut-through traffic degrades operations on local streets
- Beach traffic on weekends and high temperature days contribute to local road backups and congestion
- Cloverleaf interchange creates bottleneck effect due to short weaving distances between successive loop on- and off-ramps
- Insufficient facilities for bicycles and pedestrians





Project Purpose

- Reduce congestion and improve mainline traffic operations on SR 17
- Reduce cut-through traffic in the Town of Los Gatos
- Improve SR 17 / SR 9 interchange operations
- Improve bicycle and pedestrian mobility and connectivity in the Town of Los Gatos across SR 17

Project Status:

- PA/ED
- All environmental technical studies completed
- Draft Environmental Document nearing completion

Cost:

- \$178M (escalated)

Schedule:

- Current – 2031 (excluding PEP)

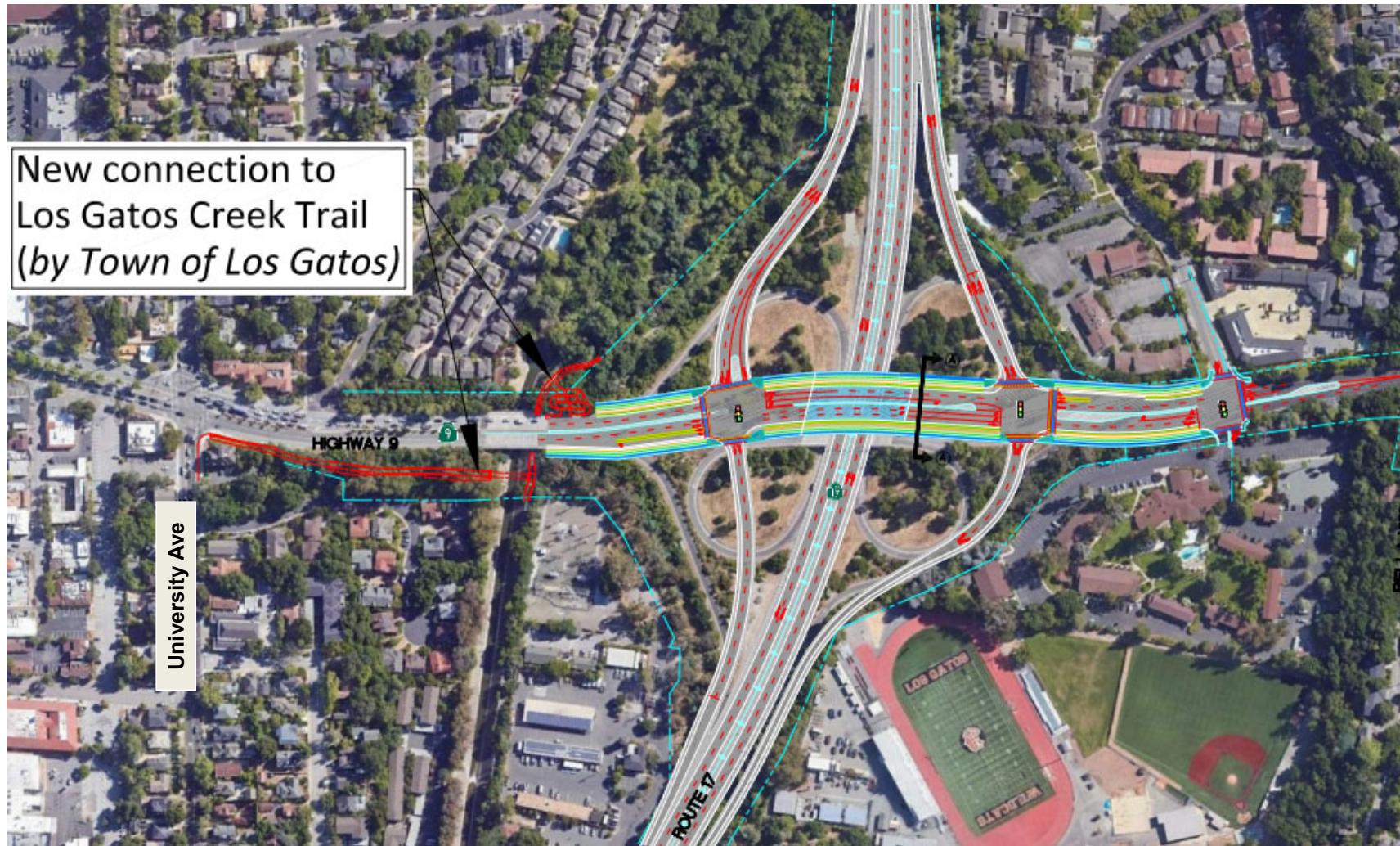
Stakeholders:



Project Features

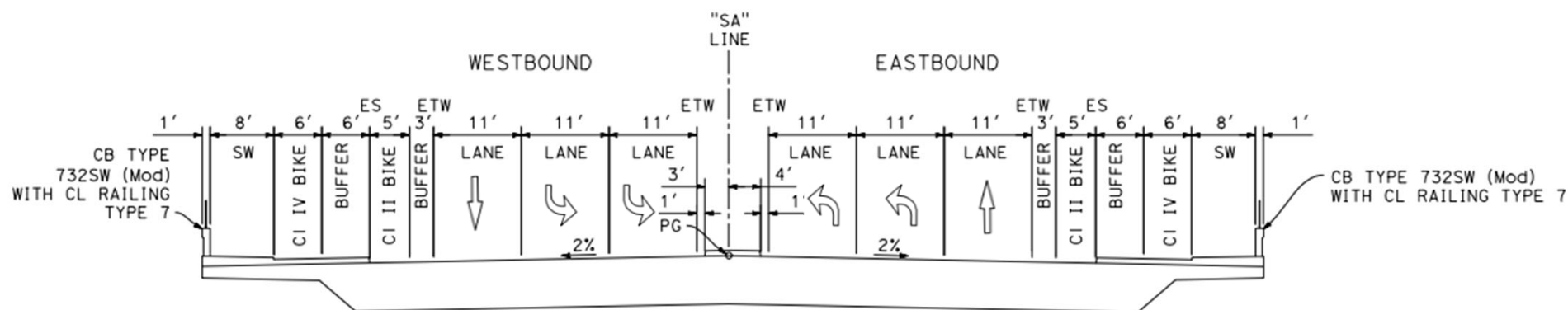


Spread Diamond Interchange



Proposed Features

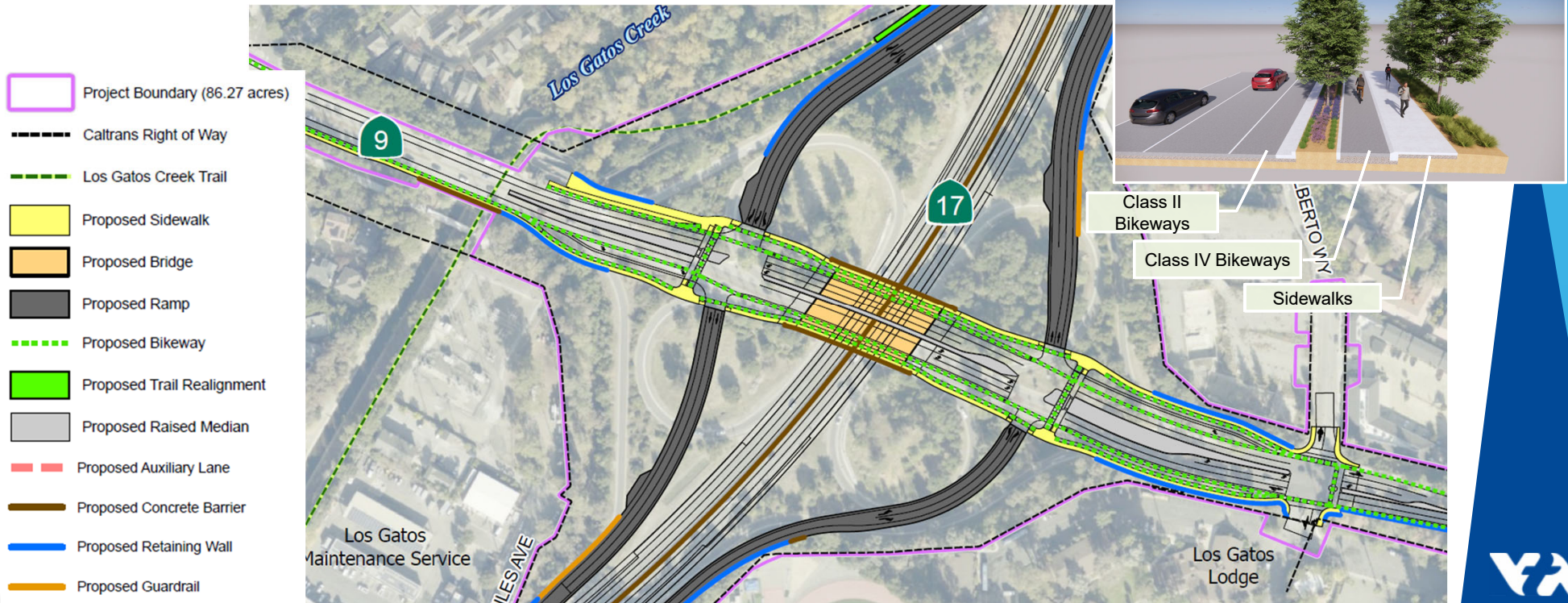
- Addition of third lane in both NB and SB directions on SR 17
- High-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane added to the NB diagonal on-ramp
- Construction of retaining walls along SR 17 to minimize right-of-way impacts, slope grading, and reduce tree removal
- Signalized SR 9 and ramp intersections, ramp metering to both on-ramps
- Existing SR 9 separation structure would be replaced with new, realigned six lane structure



SR 9 Overcrossing Typical Section

Active Transportation Features

- Strengthened connectivity to the Los Gatos Creek Trail
- Class I, Class II, and Class IV bicycle facilities
- Sidewalks on both EB and WB sides of SR 9
- Landscaped buffers and raised/curbed medians



Next Steps



Circulation of Draft Environmental Document

- Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment nearing completion
- Filing Notice of Availability (NOA) with state
- Opportunity for public comment and to obtain responses from the Project team

Feedback & Questions

**Thank you
for your time
& attention**



ITEM 1 — STUDY SESSION — SEPTEMBER 15, 2026

Questions for VTA Staff

SR 17 Corridor Congestion Relief Project

VTA is in the room tonight and will not be again before the comment period opens.
These are the questions only VTA can answer.

Submitted to the Mayor and Town Council by Phil Koen

Disclosure: I serve as a member of the Town of Los Gatos Finance Commission and submit this solely in my individual capacity as a resident. The Finance Commission has not reviewed, discussed, or taken any position on this material.

ASK THESE FIRST

Five questions, while VTA staff is at the podium

1

Which metric determines whether “reduce cut-through traffic” has been met — VMT, local level of service and delay, or absolute non-local trip counts?

2

Which local streets are inside the traffic study area — are Los Gatos Blvd, Main St, Winchester Blvd and N. Santa Cruz Ave analyzed, or only labels on a map?

3

How much reduction is forecast — vehicles per hour and percent of baseline, by street, by scenario, opening year and design year?

4

VTA has publicly cited 2022 data showing ~24% of weekend Highway 17 traffic cuts through Town. What study is that, and is it the baseline?

5

Will VTA commit to measuring the result after opening — same streets, same method, at one and three years, published?

WHY THOSE FIVE

The benefit that justifies a Town contribution falls between two frameworks

CEQA measures VMT

Guidelines § 15064.3(b)(2): congestion and level of service are not significant impacts. VMT is regional and per-capita — and for a capacity-increasing project the finding is ordinarily adverse.

Engineering measures LOS

Delay, queue and level of service live in the Traffic Operations Analysis Report — not the CEQA document, not circulated for comment, no mitigation obligation attached.

Neither counts whether fewer non-local vehicles turn onto N. Santa Cruz Avenue on a Saturday in July. Only a deliberate local-street analysis would — and the four streets that carry the traffic are named nowhere in the project description.

Because cut-through traffic is not a CEQA impact, no mitigation monitoring program will require anyone to measure it after the project opens. That is why V5 matters: without a commitment tonight, no one is obligated to find out whether it worked.

THE SCOPE CHANGE

The overcrossing grew by half — and nobody told the public

1 + 1

existing: one through lane plus one merge lane, each direction

4

2022 NOP: four through lanes, two-span structure

6

2026 deck: realigned six-lane structure, three 11-ft lanes each way

6

Did the completed technical studies analyze the four-lane project, or the six-lane one?

7

When did it change, at whose direction, and was any public notice given — a revised NOP, supplemental scoping, anything?

8

Six through lanes is roughly triple existing capacity across SR 17. What does the model forecast for SR 9 volumes — and how is delivering more vehicles into downtown consistent with reducing cut-through traffic?

9

VTA's own May 2022 fact sheet put this project at \$102–111M. It is \$178M tonight. How much of that is the bigger bridge and revised interchange, as distinct from escalation?

10 — If the studies analyzed four lanes: revision, supplement, or recirculation under CEQA Guidelines § 15088.5? The Funding Agreement requires Council approval of a scope revision — was it ever asked?

Status, access, and alternatives

11 • Has the Draft EIR/EA been circulated — yes or no?

Slide 6 says it has. Slide 12 and the agenda report say it has not. State Clearinghouse SCH 2022050127 shows only the May 2022 NOP — no Notice of Completion, no NOA. These cannot all be correct.

12

When will the NOA be filed, how long is the review period, and will there be an in-person hearing in Los Gatos?

13

Will the Traffic Forecast Report, the TOAR and the VMT and induced-travel analysis be released in full, concurrently with the draft — not summarized in it? Posted where?

14

Was an alternative without mainline widening analyzed — interchange, metering and ITS only? How does it compare on cut-through traffic?

The numbers behind \$178 million

15

Break the \$178M down by component — third lane, overcrossing, ramps and earthwork, retaining walls, signals and ITS, active transportation, right of way, support costs. Base year and escalation?

16

How much is committed, programmed, and unfunded — by source? What is the gap, and what gets dropped if it stays open?

17 • What Town contribution does VTA's funding plan assume for PS&E, right of way and construction?

**Agreed to date: \$600,000 — the minimum 10% non-Measure B contribution to the \$6M environmental and engineering phases.
Construction share: unset.**

The executed Funding Agreement leaves it “subject to future negotiation and mutually agreed upon written amendment.” Percentage or dollar amount — and when does VTA intend to bring the amendment forward?

18

Does the traffic work show a net VMT increase, and has a Caltrans Transportation Analysis Framework induced-travel analysis been prepared?

WHAT COUNCIL SHOULD DO TONIGHT

Do not let the answers leave the room

- 1 Put questions 1 through 5 to VTA staff directly, and get a yes or no on question 11 before the item closes.
- 2 Direct staff to log every question VTA cannot answer tonight and transmit it in writing to VTA and Caltrans District 4, with a requested response date before the comment period closes.
- 3 Direct that the amendment setting the Town's construction-phase contribution be referred to the Finance Commission and heard as a noticed Council action before it is concluded.
- 4 Authorize a written comment letter to Caltrans District 4 during the formal comment period, agendized early enough to meet the deadline.
- 5 Decline to record the Town as endorsing the cut-through traffic claim until the analysis behind it has been produced and reviewed.

VTA will not be back before the comment period opens.

Sources: Council Agenda Report and Attachment 1 (VTA slides), Item 1, 09/15/2026 · Caltrans NOP, SR 17 Corridor Congestion Relief, May 2022 · State Clearinghouse SCH No. 2022050127 · Funding Agreement between the Town and VTA for this project, and its Attachment B (2016 Measure B Highway Interchanges Program Guidelines) · VTA project fact sheet, May 2022 · CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3. The 20% Town share and the 24% weekend cut-through figure appear in no project document identified to date.