

**SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY  
GRANT APPLICATION**

**Project Name:** Liberty Canyon Wildlife Crossing  
– Engineering and Design Project

**Amount of Request:** \$ 3,000,000

**Applicant Name:**  
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

**Total Project Cost:** \$ 8,000,000

**Matching Funds:** \$ 5,000,000

**Lat/Long:** 34°08'17" N  
118°43'44" W

**Applicant Address:**  
570 West Avenue 26, Suite 100  
Los Angeles, CA 90065

**Project Address:** U.S. 101 and Agoura Road  
approx. 0.2 miles west of  
Liberty Canyon Road

**County**

**Senate  
District**

**Assembly  
District**

Los Angeles

27

50

**Phone:** 310-589-3230 ext. 121

**Email:** chad.christensen@mrca.ca.gov

**Tax ID:** 77-0112367

**Grantee's Authorized Representative:**

Cara Meyer, Deputy Executive Officer  
*Name and Title*

323-221-9944 ext. 117  
*Phone*

**Overhead Allocation Notice:**

- ✓ Any overhead costs will be identified as a separate line item in the budget and invoices.
- ✓ The Conservancy encourages grantees to reduce overhead costs including vehicle and phone expenses.
- ✓ The overhead allocation policy has been submitted prior to or with the grant application.

*All check boxes must be checked*

**Project Description:**

This proposed Proposition 68 project will support Caltrans' Plans, Specifications, and Engineering (PS & E) design phase for the Liberty Canyon Wildlife Corridor Crossing over U.S. 101 and Agoura Road near Liberty Canyon Road in the City of Agoura Hills.

The Crossing is a critical linkage between the coastal Santa Monica Mountains, the Simi Hills, and the inland Sierra Madre Mountains and represents one of the few coastal-to-inland habitat connections remaining in Southern California. The South Coast Missing Linkages Project, California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project, and Santa Monica-Sierra Madre Linkage CAPP identify the need to preserve and enhance this critical linkage.

Upon completion, the Crossing would be the largest wildlife crossing in the world—approximately 165-foot wide by 200-foot long and spanning over 10 lanes of freeway and a frontage road.

**Tasks / Milestones:**

PS & E design phase (MRCA contribution)

**Budget:**

\$ 3,000,000

**Completion Date**

January 2020

PS & E design phase (multi-agency contribution)

\$ 5,000,000

January 2020

**For Acquisition Projects:** **APN(s):**  
**Acreage:**

I certify that the information contained in this Grant Application form, including required attachments, is accurate.

*Cara Meyer*

*Signature of Authorized Representative*

*10/16/2018*  
*Date*

SMMC Proposition 68 Competitive Grant Application  
Liberty Canyon Wildlife Corridor Crossing – Engineering and Design Project

**NARRATIVE**

The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) requests grant funding from the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68) through the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's (Conservancy) Proposition 68 Grant Program to facilitate the proposed Liberty Canyon Wildlife Corridor Crossing – Engineering and Design Project (Project). With matching funds provided by the National Wildlife Foundation and California's Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), this Project will fund the California Department of Transportation's (Caltrans') initial Plans, Specifications, and Engineering (PS&E) design phase of the long anticipated Liberty Canyon Wildlife Corridor Crossing (Crossing) over U.S. 101 and Agoura Road<sup>1</sup> near Liberty Canyon Road in the City of Agoura Hills.

The Crossing is a critical inter-mountain range linkage between the coastal Santa Monica Mountains and inland Sierra Madre Mountains and represents one of the few coastal-to-inland habitat connections remaining in Southern California. Both the South Coast Missing Linkages Project and the California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project identified the need to preserve and enhance this critical linkage in order to sustain ecological and evolutionary processes in California's South Coast Ecoregion. The Crossing is also within the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) approved Santa Monica-Sierra Madre Linkage Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP).

The need for the Crossing is supported by many years genetic and tracking data that show U.S. 101 to be a major barrier for wildlife that have historically occupied, and traveled between, the Santa Monica Mountains and the Simi Hills that ultimately connect to the Sierra Madre Mountains. In particular, large mammals such as mountain lions and bobcats need large connected habitats in order to hunt, breed, and thrive. U.S. 101 divides this previously contiguous range into isolated habitat fragments. For the Santa Monica Mountains mountain lion population, habitat fragmentation has resulted in increased inbreeding, territorial fighting, and a decrease in genetic diversity.

The Crossing has broad support from a variety of conservation agencies, environmental activists, and other stakeholders. Upon completion, the Crossing would be the largest wildlife crossing in the world—approximately 165-foot wide by 200-foot long and spanning over 10 lanes of freeway and a frontage road.

Description of Property

The subject property is located between MRCA-owned properties—namely Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNs) 2052-009-900 to the north and 2062-008-907 and 2064-006-

---

<sup>1</sup> The Liberty Canyon Wildlife Corridor Crossing is proposed to cross U.S. 101 by vegetated bridge and for Agoura Road to pass under the southern reach via tunnel. For narrative simplicity, reference to the Agoura Road tunnel may be omitted but should be interpreted as a proposed, and integral, element of the Crossing.

SMMC Proposition 68 Competitive Grant Application  
Liberty Canyon Wildlife Corridor Crossing – Engineering and Design Project

900 to the south—in the City of Agoura Hills. An additional 0.27-acre property, APN 2064-006-001, abuts the project site to the south. The MRCA is currently in negotiation with the willing seller of APN 2064-006-001 to acquire the last remaining privately held parcel within the project area.

The subject property is located in the Liberty Canyon watershed which drains into the Malibu Creek watershed and eventually into Santa Monica Bay. Adjacent sections of Liberty Canyon Creek on the south side of U.S. 101 support mostly valley oak riparian woodland with blackberry and poison oak understory. A heritage-sized valley oak tree on APN 2064-006-001 will be retained as a project component on the south side of the Crossing. This section of Liberty Canyon Creek is important to provide high quality habitat and water in close proximity to the proposed freeway Crossing. Any wildlife species present in the Santa Monica Mountains could potentially occur on adjacent MRCA-owned lands and benefit from the proposed Crossing.

The Crossing will be a vegetated bridge across Agoura Road and U.S. 101 approximately 0.2 miles west of Liberty Canyon Road at Post Mile 33. The anticipated footprint of the entire Crossing will comprise approximately 3.5 acres with bridge columns spread on footings in the freeway median, tunnel over Agoura Road, and retaining walls on both the north and south ends. Soundwalls along the outer edge of the bridge will mitigate traffic noise and block light in order to make night crossing more conducive to wildlife. The bridge will be planted with native vegetation and an irrigation and drainage system will be installed to maintain natural habitat.

The subject property is entirely within the County-designated Santa Monica Mountains Significant Ecological Area (SEA).

### **BUDGET**

This Project grant request to the Conservancy's Proposition 68 Grant Program is for a total of \$3,000,000 which includes contributions for the initial 50-percent costs for Caltrans' PS&E design phase.

Matching funds from the National Wildlife Foundation and WCB will comprise the remaining \$5,000,000 support costs for Caltrans' PS&E design phase.

### **TIMELINE**

The proposed grant expenditures for this Project will begin in January 2019 with an anticipated delivery date for Caltrans' PS&E design plans of January 2020.

SMMC Proposition 68 Competitive Grant Application  
Liberty Canyon Wildlife Corridor Crossing – Engineering and Design Project

**RESPONSE TO EVALUATION CRITERIA**

**The Project achieves multiple purposes of Proposition 68 per Public Resource Code Section 80001(b) and several Strategic Goals and Common Ground principles of the Conservancy.**

*Prioritization Value*

Project achieves 80001(b)(4) by providing urban recreation and protecting or restoring natural resources.

The proposed Project is a required element of Caltrans' pre-construction planning to support the Liberty Canyon Wildlife Corridor Crossing. Upon completion, the Crossing will connect core habitats of the Santa Monica Mountains that have been virtually isolated from the Simi Hills and Sierra Madre Mountains since the construction of U.S. 101 from Calabasas to the Ventura County line.

Project achieves 80001(b)(6) by having already obtained all required permits and entitlements.

No regulatory agency permits are required to fund the engineering and design phase represented by this proposed Project. Caltrans, as the lead agency for construction of the Crossing, is responsible for all permitting and entitlements. A Mitigated Negative Declaration was certified by Caltrans in early 2018. MRCA and Caltrans have a previously executed Cooperative Agreement related to a Project Study Report that included Caltrans' preliminary regulatory agency coordination for the proposed construction of the Crossing. Caltrans has identified permits from the following agencies will be required for construction:

- Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Army Corps of Engineers
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- City of Agoura Hills

Project achieves three or more actions listed in 80001(b)(8)(A through G).

Public relations are an integral part of any public park, recreation, and/or open space preservation agency. As part of regular employee duties, the MRCA has dedicated staff to promoting awareness of open spaces, parks, trail locations, and restoration activities including the use of social media and multilingual material. Additionally, the Conservancy, Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains (RCDSMM), Caltrans, National Wildlife Federation, WCB, National Park Service (NPS), City of Agoura Hills, and other local stakeholders have committed their support for the Crossing.

SMMC Proposition 68 Competitive Grant Application  
Liberty Canyon Wildlife Corridor Crossing – Engineering and Design Project

Project achieves more than one of the Conservancy's Strategic Objectives.

The proposed Project furthers the Conservancy's efforts to implement the Santa Monica Mountains Comprehensive Plan by cooperating with NPS to create a Crossing that links the coastal Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area with the inland Sierra Madre Mountains to interlink open space for wildlife and wildlife habitat in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties.

Project achieves more than one of the Conservancy's Common Ground guiding principles.

Among other objectives, the proposed Project seeks improve habitat quality, quantity and connectivity by directly bridging the wildlife barrier (U.S. 101) separating the coastal Santa Monica Mountains and the inland Sierra Madre Mountains.

*Category Value*

The project will provide benefits to multiple values including water, recreation, habitat, and interpretation of natural resources.

The proposed Project will fund the engineering and design phase of the Crossing's construction. This Project is a required step towards completion of the Crossing that will result in significant benefits to wildlife habitat by safely interlinking the Santa Monica Mountains and the Sierra Madre Mountains across the main wildlife barrier in the area, U.S. 101.

The site lies wholly within a large block of undisturbed core habitat.

The proposed Project site lies predominantly between two MRCA-owned properties comprised of undisturbed core habitat within the County-designated Santa Monica Mountains SEA. The Crossing will provide critical core habitat linkage across U.S. 101.

At least one-fourth of the site is located within a designated ecologically sensitive watershed or significant ecological area.

The entire subject property is located within the County-designated Santa Monica Mountains SEA. The entire subject property also drains to Malibu Creek which National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) considers a sensitive watershed for southern steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and part of the Southern California Evolutionary Significant Unit.

The site contains largely undisturbed communities with species diversity.

The northerly adjacent MRCA property contains predominantly easterly-sloped hillsides above a section of Liberty Canyon Creek that supports a moderately-developed riparian community with valley oak (*Quercus lobata*), coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), and mulefat (*Baccharis salicifolia*) accompanied by mixed grasslands and sage scrub. This section of Liberty Canyon Creek is important to provide high-quality habitat in close proximity to the wildlife Crossing.

SMMC Proposition 68 Competitive Grant Application  
Liberty Canyon Wildlife Corridor Crossing – Engineering and Design Project

The southerly adjacent MRCA property contains valley oak woodland, mixed grasslands, and sage scrub with emergent valley oak (*Quercus lobata*), coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), California black walnut (*Juglans californica*), western sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), and other native herbaceous species following a multi-year restoration effort implemented by MRCA staff.

Project will benefit specially protected species pursuant to the California Wildlife Act of 1990.

Mountain lion (*Puma concolor*) mortality, inbreeding, and declining health are all well documented effects of being isolated on either side of U.S. 101. The need for a Crossing is supported by many years genetic and tracking data that shows U.S. 101 is a major barrier to wildlife that have historically occupied, and traveled between, the Santa Monica Mountains and the Simi Hills that ultimately connect to the Sierra Madre Mountains.

The site has documented use by State or Federally-listed animal species.

The Crossing is a multi-agency effort to safeguard wildlife (including mountain lion) passage across U.S. 101. Several individuals of the Santa Monica Mountains population of mountain lions have been documented crossing U.S. 101 despite the inherent danger posed by traffic collisions. Construction of the Crossing is imperative to reduce local mountain lion inbreeding, territorial fighting, and increase genetic diversity.

The site has documented use by an animal species that is a candidate for State or Federal listing.

The Crossing is a multi-agency effort to safeguard wildlife (including mountain lion) passage across U.S. 101. Several individuals of the Santa Monica Mountains population of mountain lions have been documented crossing U.S. 101 despite the inherent danger posed by traffic collisions. Construction of the Crossing is imperative to reduce local mountain lion inbreeding, territorial fighting, and increase genetic diversity.

The site contains 10% or greater cover of full canopy forest and/or oak woodland.

The Crossing will be planted with native vegetation that will include native canopy trees at each end and, where appropriate, on each transitional upslope. Upon construction completion, monitoring and maintenance will ensure successful establishment or replacement of all installed plantings. MRCA will be the agency responsible for the establishment and long-term maintenance of the new vegetation.

The site contains 10% or greater cover of riparian habitat.

The Crossing will be planted with native vegetation, and an irrigation and drainage system will be installed to maintain the natural habitat. The southern end of the Crossing will tie in with existing MRCA restoration plantings that include riparian species. Combined with the proposed irrigation and drainage system, riparian species

SMMC Proposition 68 Competitive Grant Application  
Liberty Canyon Wildlife Corridor Crossing – Engineering and Design Project

will comprise 10% or greater cover for the Crossing. Upon construction completion, monitoring and maintenance will ensure successful establishment or replacement of all installed plantings.

The site contains an area of riparian or wetland habitat that integrates with upland habitat.

The southern end of the Crossing will integrate with existing MRCA restoration plantings that include emergent valley oak (*Quercus lobata*), coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), California black walnut (*Juglans californica*), western sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), and other native herbaceous species following a multi-year restoration effort implemented by MRCA staff. This southern area integrates with valley oak (*Quercus lobata*) woodland habitat and coastal sage scrub habitat dominated by purple sage.

The northern end of the Crossing will integrate with MRCA property that contains predominantly easterly-sloped hillsides above a section of Liberty Canyon Creek that supports a moderately-developed riparian community with valley oak (*Quercus lobata*), coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), and mulefat (*Baccharis salicifolia*) accompanied by mixed grasslands.

The site supports substantial upland vegetative cover in a predominantly natural watershed.

The Crossing will be planted with a majority of upland vegetation cover, and an irrigation and drainage system will be installed to maintain the natural habitat. The Liberty Canyon watershed has some residential and minimal commercial development on the south side of U.S. 101; however, the majority of the watershed remains in a predominantly natural condition as described above.

The project alleviates stress on other overburdened recreational resources within a 0.5-mile radius.

While the proposed Project does not itself provide additional recreational resources, the Crossing will provide opportunities for local wildlife to cross U.S. 101 and thereby alleviate stress on local wildlife populations that inhabit the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and adjacent MRCA-owned public open spaces.

The project is designed to accommodate the needs of users from a variety of cultural and economic backgrounds.

This Project will support Caltrans' engineering and design of the Crossing that will span U.S. 101 approximately 0.2 miles west of Liberty Canyon Road. Thousands of people from a variety of cultural and economic backgrounds travel this section of U.S. 101 every day. With strategic signage and aesthetic design elements, the Crossing will be an important structure for wildlife movement and an important visual reminder of the commitment of public funds to support natural resources. Upon completion, the

SMMC Proposition 68 Competitive Grant Application  
Liberty Canyon Wildlife Corridor Crossing – Engineering and Design Project

Crossing would be the largest wildlife crossing in the world—approximately 165-foot wide by 200-foot long and spanning over 10 lanes of freeway and a frontage road.

The site contains unique scenic elements: e.g. waterfalls; spectacular wildflower displays; geologic formations; vistas of scenic grandeur.

This Project will support Caltrans' engineering and design of the Crossing that will span U.S. 101 approximately 0.2 miles west of Liberty Canyon Road. Thousands of people from a variety of cultural and economic backgrounds travel this section of U.S. 101 every day. With strategic signage and aesthetic design elements, the Crossing will be an important structure for wildlife movement and an important visual reminder of the commitment of public funds to support natural resources. Upon completion, the Crossing would be the largest wildlife crossing in the world—approximately 165-foot wide by 200-foot long and spanning over 10 lanes of freeway and a frontage road.

The project provides a new vista point or overlook for a significant scenic viewshed.

Upon completion, the Crossing would be the largest wildlife crossing in the world—approximately 165-foot wide by 200-foot long and spanning over 10 lanes of freeway. Thus, not only will the Crossing be an important structure for wildlife movement, it will also be an important visual reminder of the commitment of public funds to support natural resources. The Crossing will be featured in advertisements for local, regional and international tourism and feature as a model for urban-wildland interface design.

The site provides a significant contribution to an existing or proposed corridor or greenway.

The site is a critical linkage between the coastal Santa Monica Mountains and the inland Sierra Madre Mountains and represents one of the few coastal-to-inland habitat connections remaining in Southern California. Both the South Coast Missing Linkages Project and the California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project identified the need to preserve and enhance this critical linkage in order to sustain ecological and evolutionary processes in California's South Coast Ecoregion.

The site contains substantial-sized or representative sample of a native plant community surrounded by dense urban development.

The site is currently occupied by U.S. 101 and Agoura Road which represent an urban density that most wildlife cannot successfully cross. However, the Crossing will be covered with native vegetation to link the core habitat areas on each side of the Crossing with established, and emergent, valley oak (*Quercus lobata*), coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), California black walnut (*Juglans californica*), western sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), and other native herbaceous species and sage scrub species.

The majority of the site is part of a watershed draining directly into an ecologically sensitive protected area.



SMMC Proposition 68 Competitive Grant Application  
Liberty Canyon Wildlife Corridor Crossing – Engineering and Design Project

The entire Project site is within the County-designated Santa Monica Mountains SEA and the Malibu Creek watershed. NMFS considers Malibu Creek a sensitive watershed for southern steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and part of the Southern California Evolutionary Significant Unit.

The site directly abuts and increases the ecosystem function of a protected habitat area.  
The Crossing directly abuts two MRCA-owned properties, each several hundred acres of open space natural lands. The construction of U.S. 101 divided this previously continuous habitat range into isolated fragments and resulted in severely restricted movement between the Santa Monica Mountains and the Simi Hills which lead to the Sierra Madre Mountains. The crossing will provide safe access across U.S. 101 for a variety of wildlife species including mountain lions (*Puma concolor*), bobcats (*Lynx rufus*), gray foxes (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*), coyotes (*Canis latrans*), American badger (*Taxidea taxus*), and mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) that inhabit and travel between these two mountain ranges.

The site directly contributes to the connection of two core habitat areas by serving as a habitat linkage or movement corridor for wildlife.

The Crossing will complete the linkage between the coastal Santa Monica Mountains, the Simi Hills, and the inland Sierra Madre Mountains identified in the South Coast Missing Linkages Project, the California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project, and the Santa Monica-Sierra Madre Linkage CAPP. The crossing will provide safe access across U.S. 101 for a variety of wildlife species including mountain lions (*Puma concolor*), bobcats (*Lynx rufus*), gray foxes (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*), coyotes (*Canis latrans*), American badger (*Taxidea taxus*), and mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) that inhabit and travel between, and within, these two mountain ranges.

The site contains substantial potential for restoration of natural vegetation.

The anticipated footprint of the entire Crossing will comprise approximately 3.5 acres with bridge columns spread on footings in the freeway median, a tunnel for Agoura Road, and retaining walls on both the north and south ends. Soundwalls along the outer edge of the bridge will mitigate traffic noise and block light in order to make night crossing more conducive to wildlife. As it exists today, the site is paved roadway (U.S. 101 and Agoura Road) with disturbed roadside embankments dominated by low habitat value, non-native vegetation.

Thus, construction of the Crossing will result in a substantial increase in habitat value for the 3.5-acre site as the Crossing will be covered in soil and converted into permanent habitat with native vegetation and an irrigation and drainage system installed to maintain natural habitat.

The habitat is partially degraded but conditions are suitable for natural regeneration or restoration.

SMMC Proposition 68 Competitive Grant Application  
Liberty Canyon Wildlife Corridor Crossing – Engineering and Design Project

The site is currently occupied by U.S. 101, Agoura Road, and disturbed roadside embankments. Completion of the Crossing will result in a substantial increase in habitat value for the 3.5-acre site as the Crossing will be covered in soil and converted into permanent habitat with native vegetation and an irrigation and drainage system installed to maintain natural habitat.

In addition, localized species with low motility or dispersion rates that occupy adjacent hillsides will benefit from the increased opportunities for genetic diversity that result from re-connecting these core habitat areas.

*Implementation Value*

Applicant has proven that implementation of the project is feasible.

The MRCA previously commissioned a Project Study Report (PSR) by Caltrans which evaluation two feasible alternatives: Alternative 1: “No Build” and Alternative 2: “Build”. The PSR recommended Alternative 2: “Build” and that the project proceed to Project Approval/Environmental Document (PA/ED) phase. Thus, the MRCA now seeks funding to support Caltrans’ engineering and design plans that will inform the PA/ED phase.

Applicant has financial and technical capacity to perform project.

MRCA staff has many years of experience coordinating improvement projects that require regulatory agency approval. Likewise, Caltrans has vast experience and resources dedicated to roadway construction projects including over- and under-crossings of existing roadways. The funding sought for this Project will be limited to supporting Caltrans’ engineering and design plans for the Crossing.

Applicant, or active project partner, has successfully completed multiple projects of similar size and scope.

While the Crossing would be the largest wildlife crossing in the world—approximately 165-foot wide by 200-foot long and spanning over 10 lanes of freeway and a frontage road—the scale of the Crossing is dwarfed by other Caltrans’ roadway improvement projects including the ongoing Lost Hills Road – U.S. 101 interchange improvement project approximately one mile east of the proposed Crossing site.

In addition, the MRCA manages over 75,000 acres of parkland and has vast experience implementing habitat restoration and improvement projects.

The project is a partnership between two or more organizations and each organization has committed to contributing toward project implementation.

In 2012, MRCA and Caltrans’ signed a Cooperation Agreement to pursue the Project Study Report which recommended building the Crossing. This Project will fund Caltrans’ staff time and resources to develop the engineering and design plans for the Crossing.

SMMC Proposition 68 Competitive Grant Application  
Liberty Canyon Wildlife Corridor Crossing – Engineering and Design Project

In addition to the MRCA and Caltrans' collaborative efforts towards the Crossing's construction, the Conservancy, RCDSMM, National Wildlife Federation, WCB, NPS, City of Agoura Hills, State Coastal Conservancy and other local stakeholders have committed to supporting the Crossing.

Applicant has conducted outreach to the affected communities.

Caltrans has conducted multiple, widely-advertised public meetings regarding the Crossing. The most recent public hearing was on October 12, 2017, at MRCA's King Gillette Ranch that was well-attended with representatives from several Cities announcing positive positions.

Support for the Crossing has also been provided by State Senator Fran Pavley, Assemblymember Richard Bloom, LA County Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, and Congressman Ted Lieu.

Applicant, or project partner, has 1+ years of experience operating projects of similar size and scope.

The MRCA, founded in 1985, is a local public agency exercising joint powers of the Conservancy, the Conejo Recreation and Park District, and the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. The agency's mission is to complement the work of these and other agencies in protecting land and public access in Los Angeles County and Ventura County mountains.

Caltrans, formed in 1972 from the reorganization of other State agencies, manages California's highway system with the mission to "Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and livability."

Applicant has identified maintenance funding for at least 2 years after completion.

The scope of this Project is limited to providing funding to Caltrans' for the engineering and design plans of the Crossing. Capital fundraising campaigns for the construction and maintenance of the Crossing are ongoing. MRCA has a \$9 million operations budget, and some of that discretionary budget will be used for the overpass vegetation and soil maintenance. Caltrans will maintain the overpass structure and tunnel.

Project has approval from all landowners to complete the project, or Applicant is the landowner.

MRCA currently owns the adjacent properties to the north (APN 2052-009-900) and south (APNs 2062-008-907 and 2064-006-900). An additional 0.27-acre property, APN 2064-006-001, abuts the project site to the south. The MRCA is currently in negotiation with the willing seller of APN 2064-006-001 to acquire the last remaining privately held parcel within the project area.

SMMC Proposition 68 Competitive Grant Application  
Liberty Canyon Wildlife Corridor Crossing – Engineering and Design Project

Caltrans, which has jurisdiction over the right-of-way for U.S. 101, is an active project partner and their Project Study Report recommended building the proposed Crossing.

The City of Agoura Hills, which has jurisdiction over the right-of-way for Agoura Road, supports the Project and construction of the Crossing.

*Climate Change Value*

The project acquires, preserves, or restores natural areas at risk of development and quantifiably avoids emissions associated with development.

The South Coast Missing Linkages Project and the California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project identified the need to preserve and enhance this critical linkage in order to sustain ecological and evolutionary processes in California's South Coast Ecoregion. The Crossing is also within the CDFW approved Santa Monica-Sierra Madre Linkage CAPP.

Because the Crossing will provide linkage between the coastal Santa Monica Mountains and the inland Sierra Madre Mountains, California's South Coast Ecoregion will support additional regional wildlife and promote additional wildlife crossings (e.g. the proposed I-15 crossing in northern San Diego County). Increased wildlife and wildlife crossings will, in turn, increase the capacity of local wildlands to support additional species of concern and present additional opportunities to limit urban/suburban expansion into open space and natural lands.

The project contributes to tree canopy cover and/or greenways in urban areas to mitigate heat island effects and promote public health and recreation.

The site is currently occupied by U.S. 101 and Agoura Road. Completion of the Crossing will result in a vegetated bridge spanning U.S. 101 and a tunnel for Agoura Road. The approximate 3.5 acre site will be planted with native vegetation and help reduce the heat island effects for this portion of U.S. 101 and Agoura Road.

Because the Crossing will provide linkage between the coastal Santa Monica Mountains and the inland Sierra Madre Mountains, California's South Coast Ecoregion will support additional regional wildlife and promote additional wildlife crossings (e.g. the proposed I-15 crossing in northern San Diego County). Increased wildlife and wildlife crossings will, in turn, increase the capacity of local wildlands to support additional public recreation.

The project acquires and/or maintains wildlife corridors and linkages to provide connections between areas of undeveloped lands, particularly significant public lands and key habitat ecosystems.

SMMC Proposition 68 Competitive Grant Application  
Liberty Canyon Wildlife Corridor Crossing – Engineering and Design Project

The Crossing will complete the linkage between the coastal Santa Monica Mountains and the inland Sierra Madre Mountains identified in the South Coast Missing Linkages Project, the California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project, and the Santa Monica-Sierra Madre Linkage CAPP. The crossing will provide safe access across U.S. 101 for a variety of wildlife species including mountain lions (*Puma concolor*), bobcats (*Lynx rufus*), gray foxes (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*), coyotes (*Canis latrans*), American badger (*Taxidea taxus*), and mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) that inhabit and travel between these two mountain ranges.

The project engages local communities through outreach, education, and interpretation regarding long-term stewardship and climate change awareness.

Along with MRCA and Caltrans, the Conservancy, RCDSMM, National Wildlife Federation, NPS, City of Agoura Hills, and other local stakeholders committed their support for the Crossing.

Human-induced climate change is the direct result of urban growth patterns and fossil fuel-based economies. One of the largest contributors to greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change is carbon emissions related to transportation. Because the Crossing will span U.S. 101, it will provide awareness to thousands of people per day that cooperative steps to mitigate for climate change impacts can be implemented. In addition to the passive daily reminder, public relations are an integral part of any public park, recreation, and/or open space preservation agency. As part of regular employee duties, the MRCA has dedicated staff to promoting awareness of open spaces, parks, trails and restoration activities including the use of social media and multilingual material.

The project implements water saving technologies and techniques to yield quantifiable water and energy savings. Such techniques may include the use of drought-efficient landscaping, stormwater filtration, impervious surfaces, green roofs and other forms of water capture and storage.

In practice, the Crossing will be an approximate 3.5-acre green roof over U.S. 101 and Agoura Road. The Crossing will be planted with native vegetation, and an irrigation and drainage system will be installed to maintain natural habitat. The irrigation system will take advantage of existing MRCA water meters on both sides of the freeway that deliver reclaimed water. The resultant vegetated structure will promote stormwater infiltration by capturing what would have fallen on the site's area of U.S. 101 and Agoura Road. Using reclaimed water for irrigation will prevent additional demands on local municipal potable water supply.

#### *Additional Consideration*

The site is subject to an imminent threat that would preclude future implementation value.

SMMC Proposition 68 Competitive Grant Application  
Liberty Canyon Wildlife Corridor Crossing – Engineering and Design Project

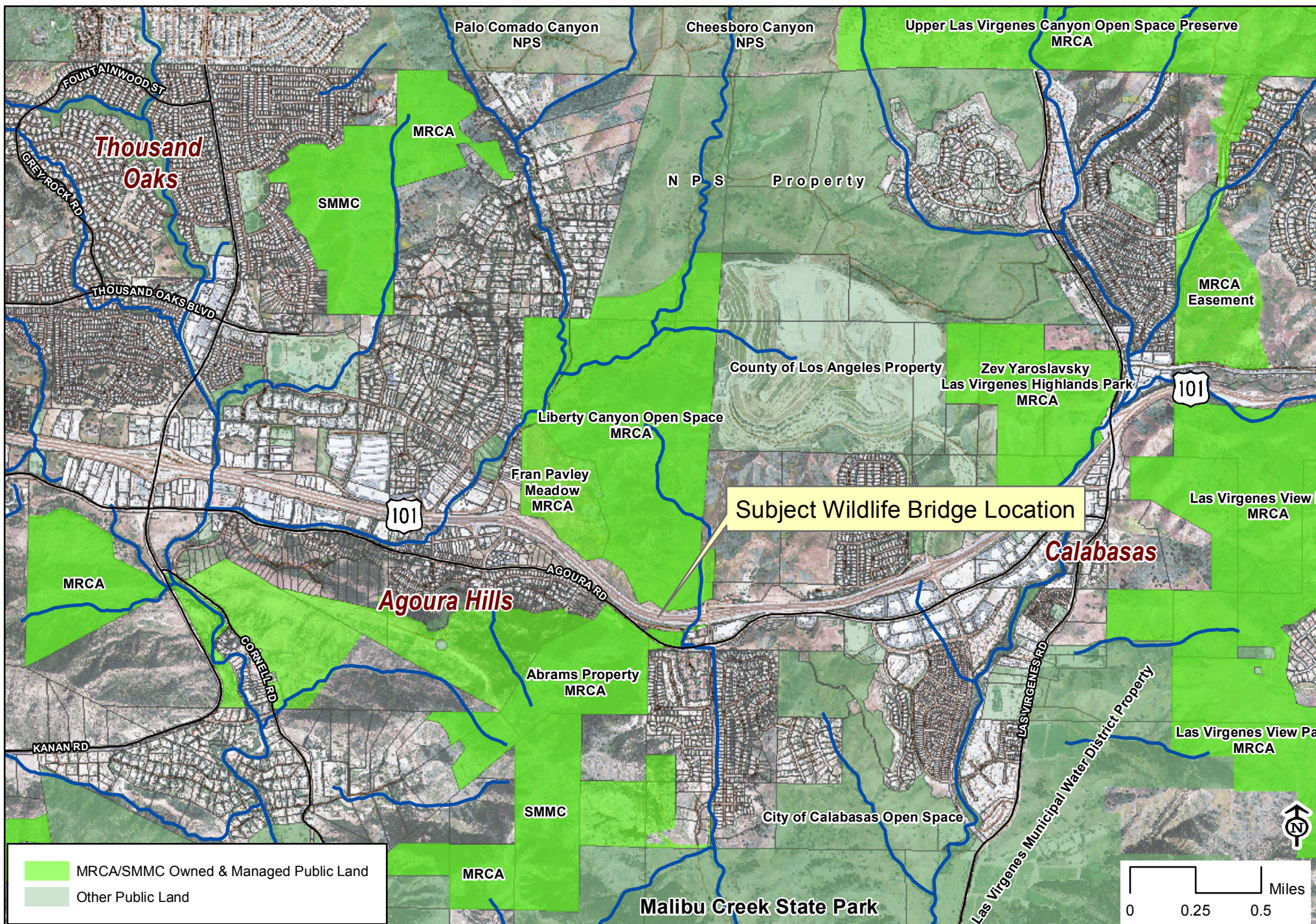
The South Coast Missing Linkages Project and the California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project identified the need to preserve and enhance this critical linkage in order to sustain ecological and evolutionary processes in California's South Coast Ecoregion. The Crossing is also within the CDFW approved Santa Monica-Sierra Madre Linkage CAPP.

Based on the studies cited above that analyzed the habitat fragmentation caused by urban development in the region, the Liberty Canyon Wildlife Corridor Crossing is the most viable linkage between the coastal Santa Monica Mountains and the Simi Hills that lead to the Sierra Madre Mountains.

Project is within 0.25 miles of public transportation.

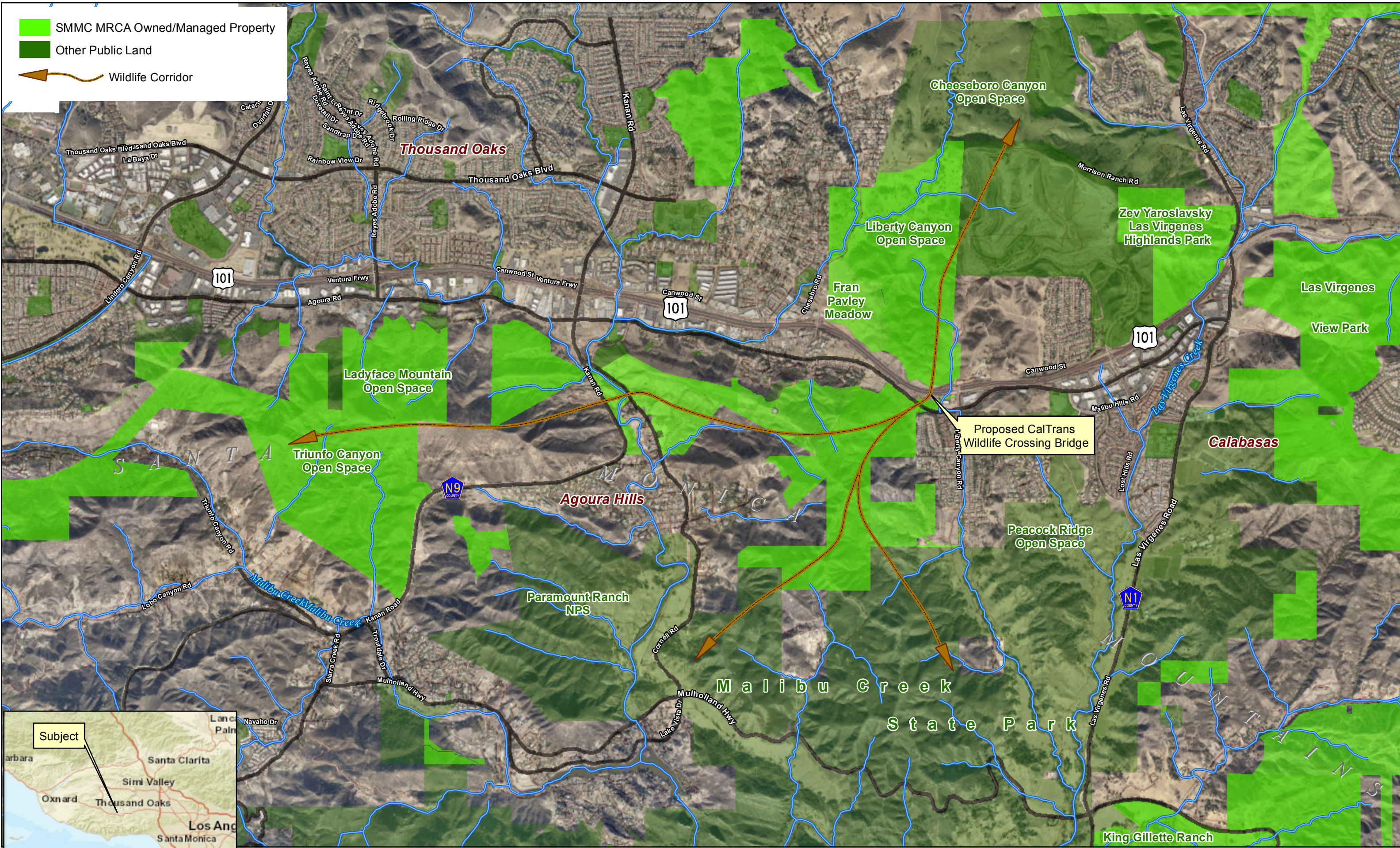
The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) Line 161 has two bus stops (Stop ID Numbers 20090 and 20243) near the intersection of Agoura Road and Liberty Canyon Road that are 0.25 miles from the Project site.



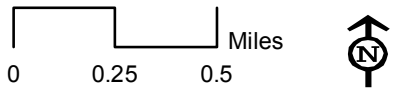


Liberty Canyon Wildlife Corridor - Vicinity Map





Liberty Canyon Wildlife Corridor – Connectivity Map







SIMI HILLS

101 FREEWAY

LIBERTY CANYON ROAD

AGOURA ROAD

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS



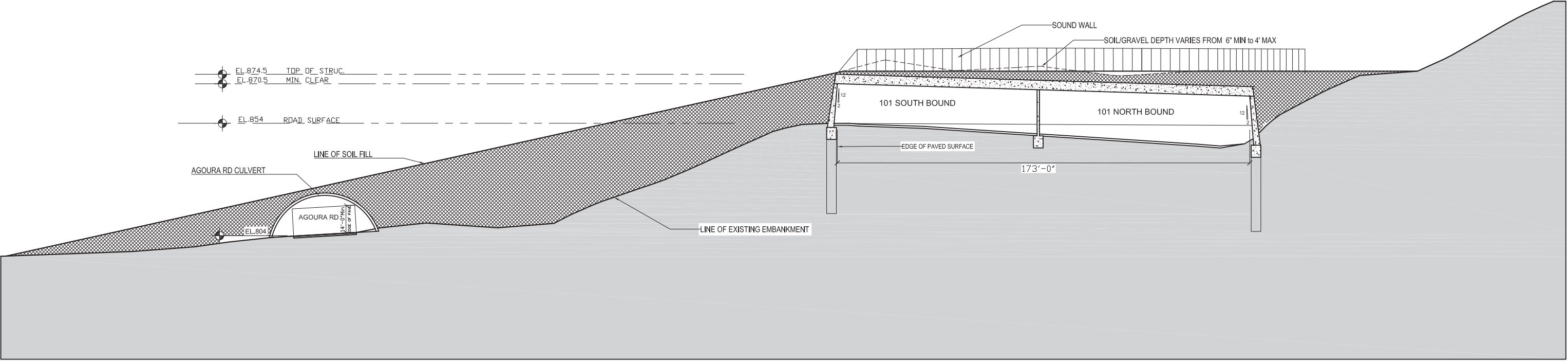
**RESOURCE**  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
OF THE  
SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS

[www.rcdsmm.org](http://www.rcdsmm.org)

**WILDLIFE HABITAT OVERPASS AT LIBERTY CANYON**

Ultimate design and environmental impacts  
for proposed crossing over Agoura Road  
will be subject to public hearing process  
and community forums





# WILDLIFE CROSSING CENTER PROFILE



