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February 11, 2022

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

By email to sbcob@co.santa-barbara.ca.us

RE: Countywide Recreation Master Plan Update

Dear Chair Hartmann and Supervisors,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide brief input prior to your meeting on February 15th regarding the Santa Barbara County Recreation Master Plan.

We note that projects have been identified for the Gaviota Coast within the Recreation Master Plan presentation for February 15, 2022 including possible campgrounds and trails. GCC is very supportive of trails generally. We strongly suggest that the draft plan include the California Coastal Trail as a priority item for the Gaviota Coast. Specifically, we see a need for interagency cooperation in establishing this trail, and for easements to be obtained.

Our comments originate from discussion from the Gaviota Coast Plan and I add these references below.

The "provision of new parks, open space, trails and recreational opportunities is a key element of the Gaviota Coast Plan and [recognizes] that the level of such improvements should reflect this Plan Area's National, State and County significance as a recreational resource" and as "a high priority, these types of improvements and must be actively pursued." Gaviota Coast Plan (GCP) p. 4-5. A key component of the state and local vision for enhancing coastal recreation is establishment of a continuous California Coastal Trail (CCT) within the sight, sound, and scent of the sea.¹ "The CCT has been a part of the County's Comprehensive Plan and Local Coastal Plan since their respective legislative adoptions in 1980 and 1982" but *only one segment of the CCT has been completed to date within the Gaviota Coast Plan Area* (a 4.5-mile segment between the east side of El Capitan Ranch and Refugio State Beach that has been partially closed due damage from coastal bluff erosion.) GCP p. 4-4. The GCP includes policies, actions, and development standards to effectuate the CCT along this incredibly significant stretch of coastline (listed below) and states a preference for pursuing trails first on public lands (see GCP Policy REC-3). In addition, the Gaviota Coast Plan includes a robust set of policies intended to help assure that the County and Caltrans

¹ Completing the California Coastal Trail <https://www.coastal.ca.gov/access/coastal-trail-report.pdf>

(and other key agencies) work together to ensure that an effective trail network is actually established.

GCP Policy REC-12: Interagency Coordination. The County shall work cooperatively with organizations including but not limited to the California Coastal Conservancy, California Department of Parks and Recreation, Caltrans, Union Pacific Railroad or its successor, non-profits, and the US Forest Service to establish an effective network of inland and coastal trails where jurisdictions overlap.

GCP Action REC-3: Coastal Trail Planning Coordination. The County shall actively:

- 1. Seek funding for coastal trail development, planning, and construction and identify related issues and constraints.*
- 2. Promote and achieve inter-jurisdictional coordination, planning, and implementation.*
- 3. Work with private non-profit trail organizations to acquire funding.*

GCP Action REC-5: Memorandum of Understanding. The County should establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the California Department of Parks and Recreation, Caltrans, and the US Forest Service to coordinate planning and funding of future trail implementation, managed access, environmental review, construction, and long-term maintenance.

GCP Action REC-7: Trail and Access Completion. The County shall work with the County Riding and Hiking Trails Advisory Committee to strive to complete public access improvements including, but not limited to, the following:... 4. *Work with California State Parks to develop and open a three-mile-long bluff top segment of the California Coastal Trail, south of U. S. Highway 101, from Gaviota State Park east to the Gaviota Marine Terminal.*

GCP Action TEI-2: Comprehensive Corridor Plan. The County, in cooperation with Caltrans, SBCAG, California Department of Parks, and Union Pacific Railroad, shall seek funding for preparation of a Comprehensive Corridor Plan for the Highway 101 corridor between Gaviota Tunnel and Farren Road. The Plan shall address:

- Operational and safety improvements to Highway 101, the Union Pacific Railroad, and County roads along the Gaviota Coast;*
 - New Union Pacific Railroad crossing points (e.g., at grade crossings, bike lanes, bridges and tunnels);*
 - Adaptation planning to address Sea Level Rise impacts (including possible long-term realignment of Highway 101 and the Union Pacific Railroad) to address bluff retreat, and to avoid the need for new coastal protections structures;*
 - Implementation of the California Coastal Trail and Pacific Coast Bike Route;*
- and,*

- *Retention and enhancement of public coastal access.*

Thank you for considering this early comment. We look forward to sharing additional comments with you as the process progresses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Doug Kern".

Doug Kern
Executive Director