

Santa Maria River Levee Trail Study

Board of Supervisors

May 17, 2022

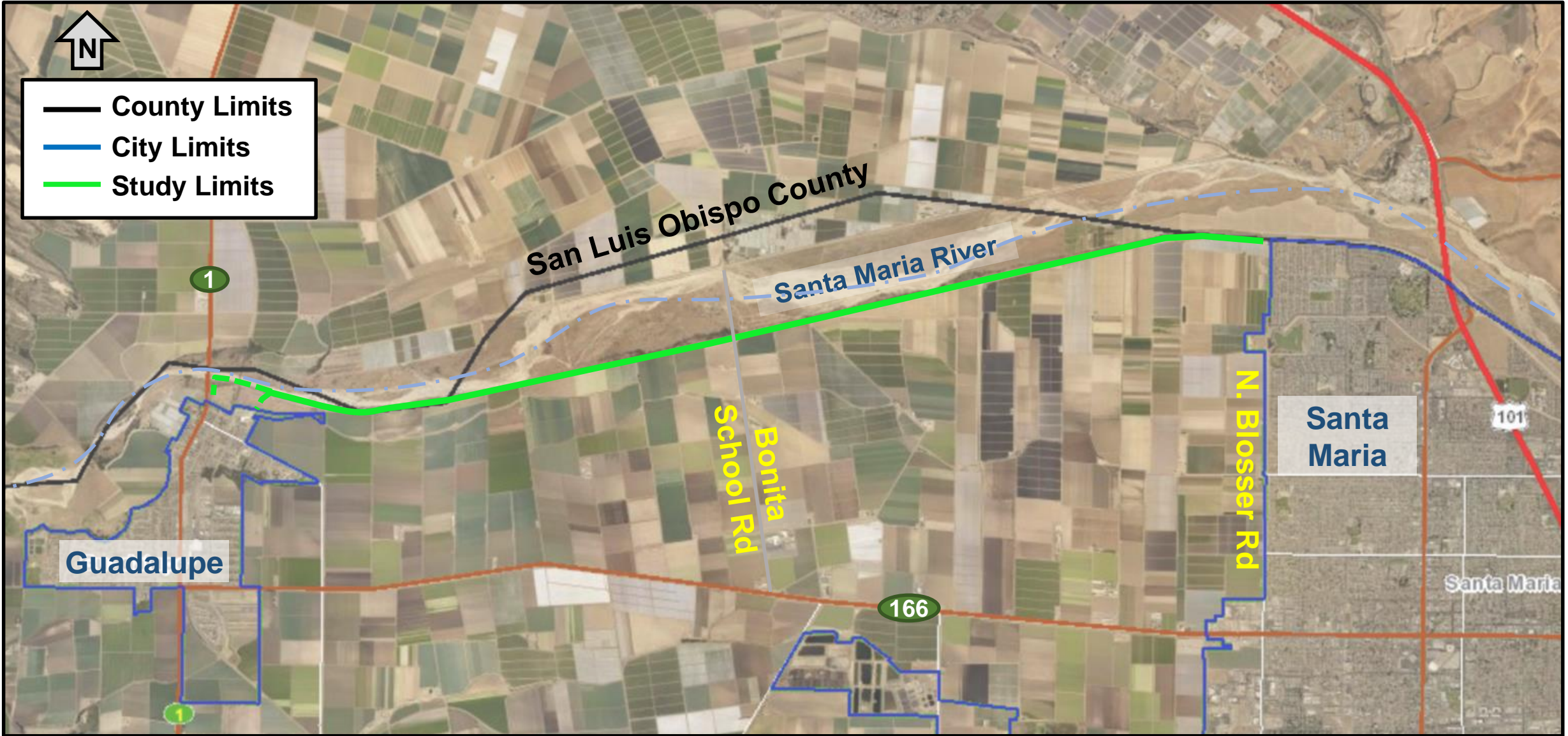


Santa Maria River

LEVEE TRAIL STUDY

REVISED DRAFT - SPRING 2022







What is the SMRLT Study?

Purpose: Gather *community and stakeholder input* and *identify constraints* and *potential design* elements to help determine the feasibility of the SMRLT

IS

- Community interest/informational tool
- Identifies constraints/opportunities
- Conceptual trail design options
- Highlight areas for further study

ISN'T

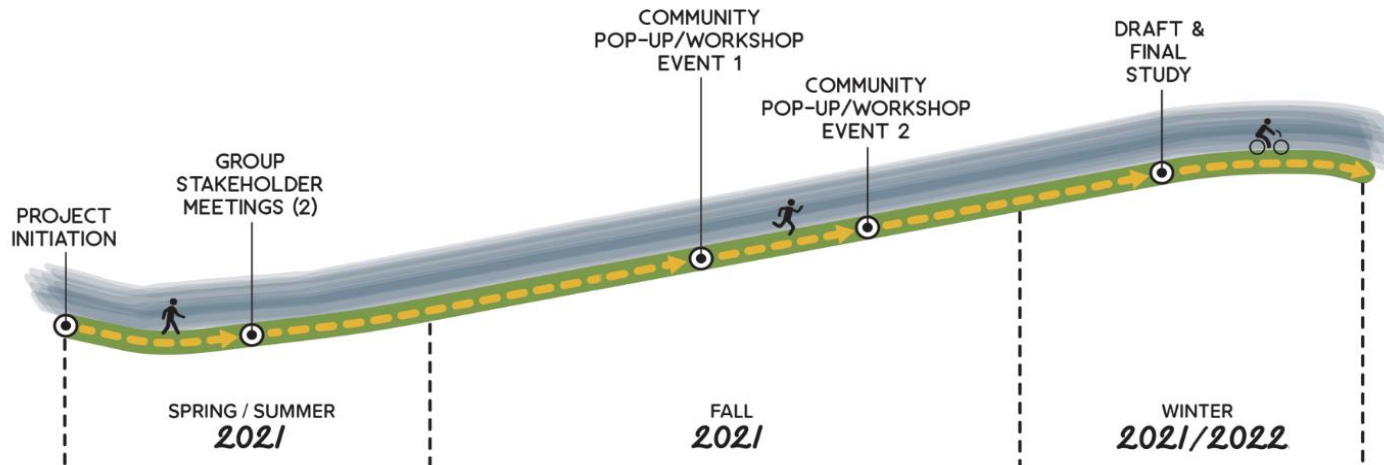
- Prescriptive set of standards
- Fully developed plan
- Long-term maintenance plan
- Permitting and environmental document

Background

- Levee owned and maintained by Flood Control District
- United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) jurisdiction
- Existing legal farm access across the levee
- Trail extension previously identified in adopted plans:
 - *San Luis Obispo County Bikeways Plan (2010)*
 - *Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) Regional Active Transportation Plan (2015)*
 - *City of Santa Maria Active Transportation Plan (2020)*
 - *Guadalupe Mobility and Revitalization Plan (2020)*
 - *Guadalupe General Plan (2021)*
 - *SBCAG Connected 2050 RTP/SCS (2021)*

Outreach Approach

- Met with Ag Commissioner and Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) Chairs
- Held two stakeholder meetings:
 - Landowners & growers (6/10/21)
 - Agency staff & advocacy groups (6/29/21)
- In-person pop-ups & surveys (500+ responses)
- Agency discussions (Flood, Sheriff, Fire etc.)



Agriculture Stakeholder Meeting

What we learned

- Existing Issues along the levee
- Concern that trail could make issues worse:
 - Crime
 - Encampments
 - Trespassing and food safety - pets, trash, etc.
- Concern trail may impact existing ag operations:
 - Pesticide use/Buffer areas
 - Access
 - Liability
- Support active transportation/recreation but not at this location



Agriculture Stakeholder Meeting and Surveys

What we heard

Theft of crops
and
equipment

More
encampments
and illegal
activity

Public exposure or
“perceived
exposure” to
pesticide application
and overspray

Food safety
concerns due to
public access

Enforce
trespassing
rules

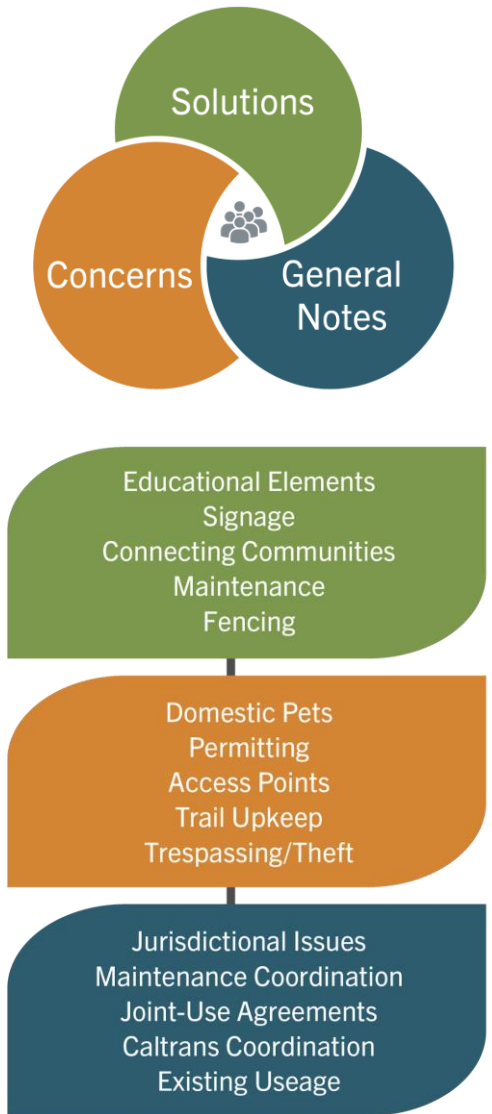
Indemnify
farmers from
public use

Add fencing
and signage

Agency Stakeholder Meeting

What we learned

- Opportunity to tie two communities together and spur economic development
- Educational opportunities along the trail
- Jurisdictional concerns
- Suggest collaborative maintenance approach
- Flood Control operations take precedence
- Environmental review and permitting may take time



Agency Stakeholder Meeting and Surveys

What we heard

Who will maintain trail?

Volunteer/Adopt-A-Highway model for trail maintenance

Fencing would help trespassing on farm lands. Cameras.

USACE approval and 408 permit process lengthy

Public safety concerns

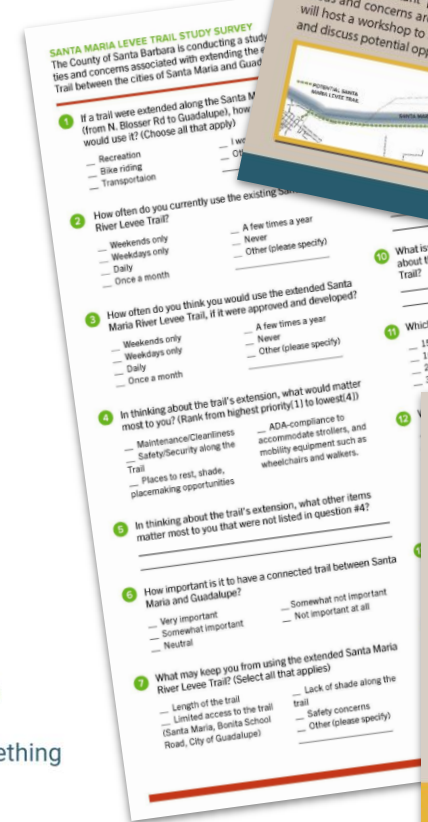
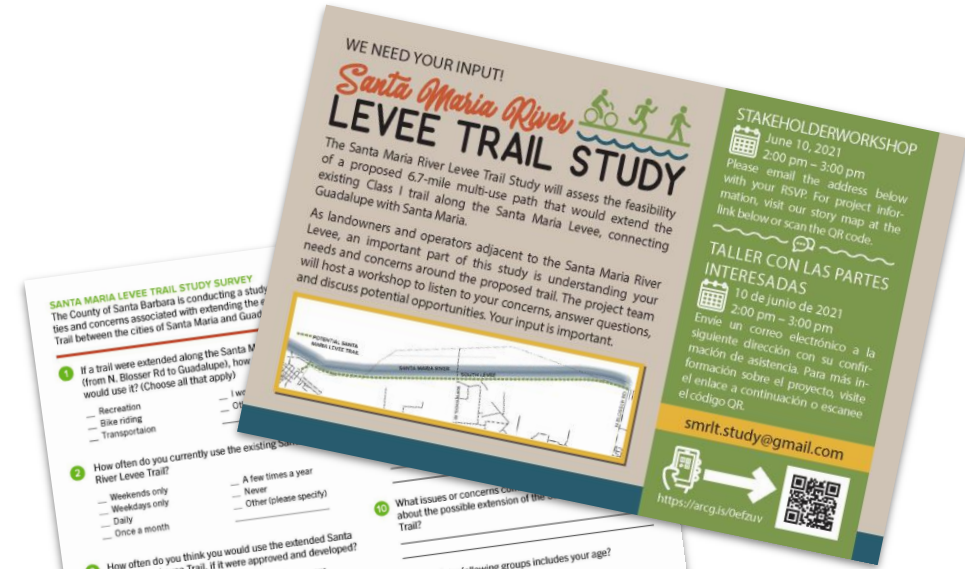
Educational opportunity especially towards river

Consider different trail materials for multimodal access

Community Survey Distribution

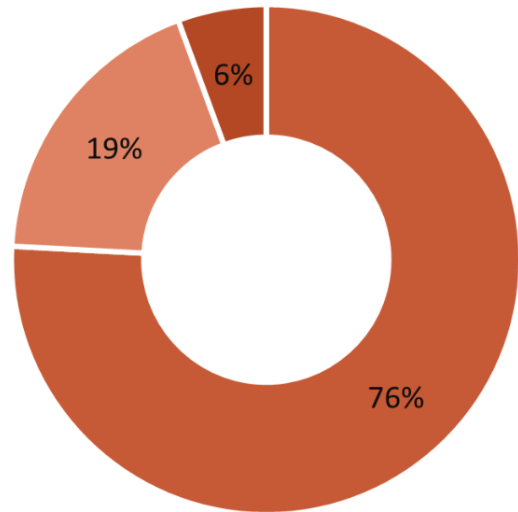
Online/In-Person:

- Santa Maria Farmers Market (8/25/21)
- Guadalupe Food Distribution (8/26/21)
- Santa Maria Downtown Fridays (8/27/21)
- SB Promotoras
- CAUSE



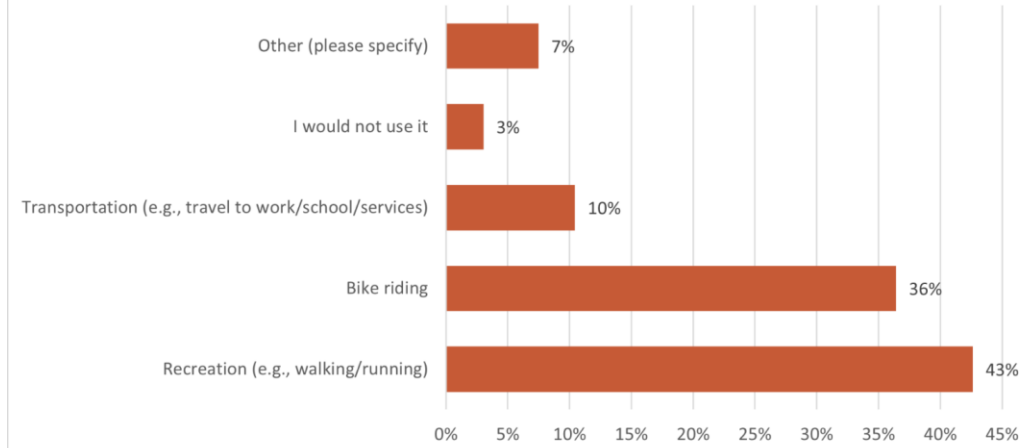
Community Surveys results

How important is it to have a connected trail between Santa Maria and Guadalupe?

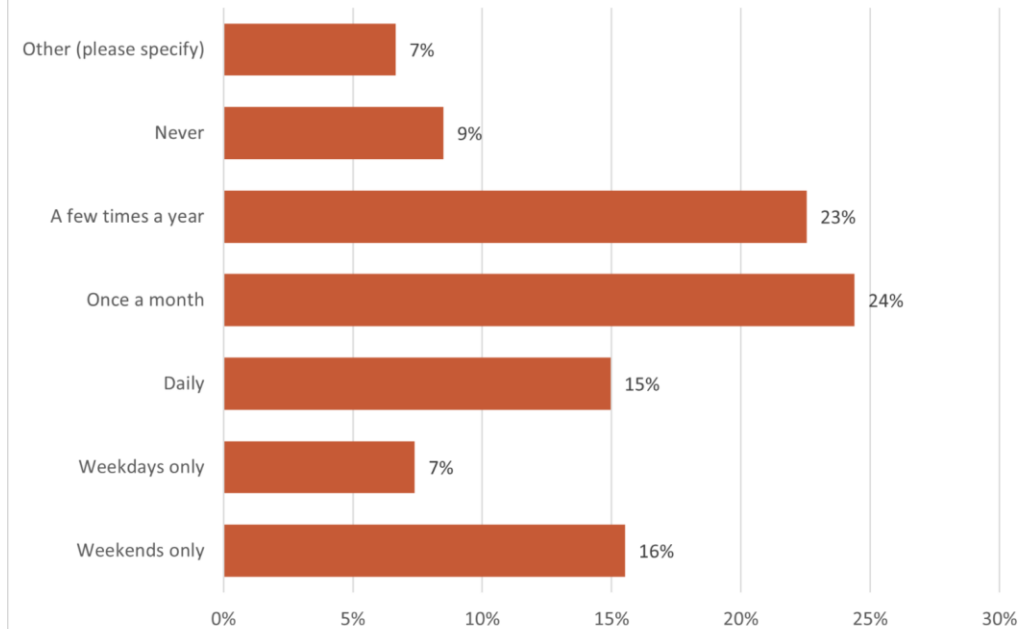


■ Important ■ Neutral ■ Not so important

If a trail were extended along the Santa Maria River Levee (from N. Blosser Rd to Guadalupe), how do you think you would use it?
(Choose all that apply)



How often do you think you would use the extended Santa Maria River Levee Trail, if it were approved and developed?



Community-Informed Design



Toolkit of amenity options

Case Studies

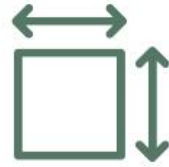
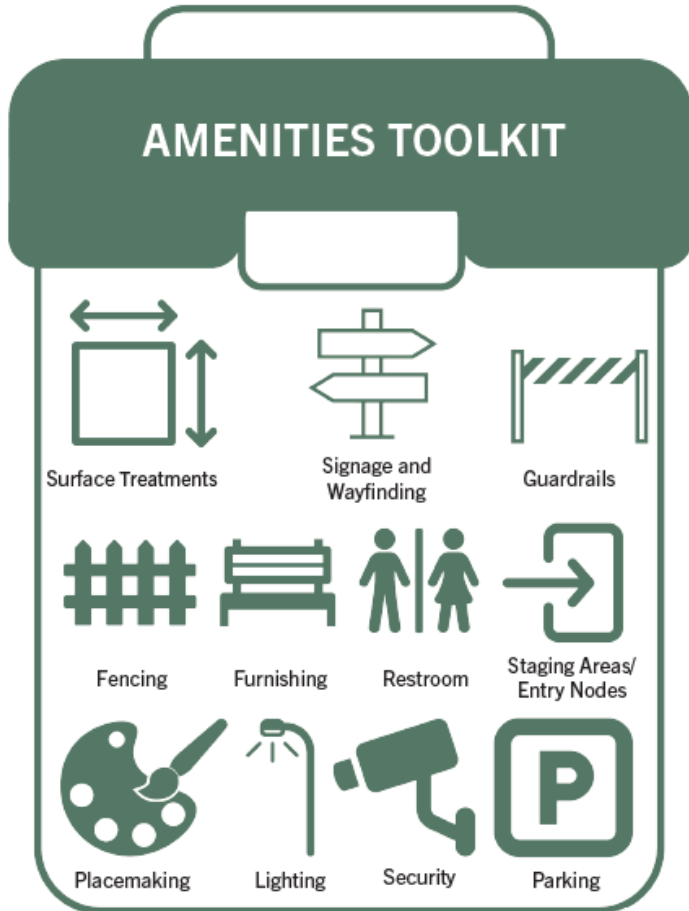
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Discuss and determine design

Develop proposed design graphics (2 options, low and high cost)

Provide recommendations for the Board to consider

Amenities Toolkit



SURFACE TREATMENTS

Surface treatments are the materials that make up the path for the trail system. The materials presented range in their accessibility for bicyclists and other wheeled devices. Materials such as decomposed granite (DG), make a great walking/running path but aren't always the best for cyclists and need frequent maintenance. Materials like asphalt, concrete, and permeable concrete have a longer life span with not as much maintenance and make a great surface for bikes. The levee is currently composed of unreinforced aggregate base.

Location: The location of the surface treatments are along the top of the levee embankment where bicyclists and pedestrians would travel. Surface treatments may also occur at access and staging areas, or other areas where amenities, furnishings, and signage are placed.

Suggested Improvements:

Option 1: Washed class 2 surface or DG surface for a more natural/rural aesthetic.

Option 2: Asphalt to allow for a wider range of bicycle, scooter, and other wheeled pedestrian transportation devices to be utilized.

AMENITY OPTIONS



Decomposed Granite (DG)

- Longevity: ✓
- Ease of Maintenance: ✓
- Aesthetics: ✓✓
- Low-Cost



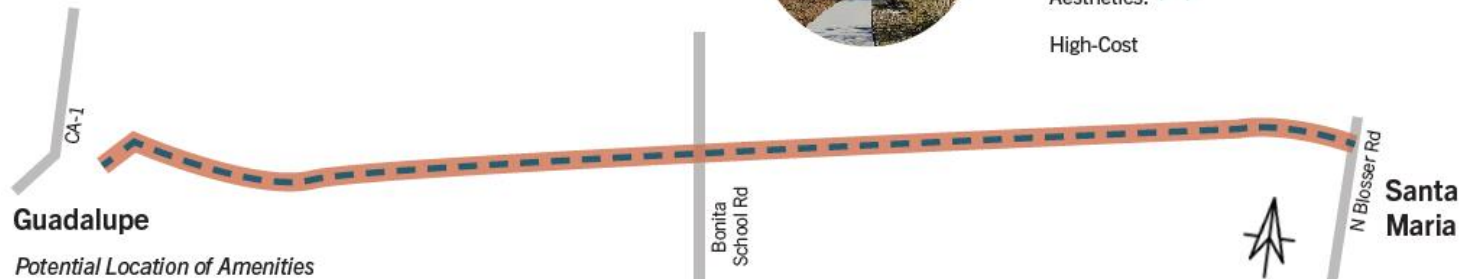
Asphalt

- Longevity: ✓✓
- Ease of Maintenance: ✓✓
- Aesthetics: ✓
- Mid-Cost



Concrete

- Longevity: ✓✓✓
- Ease of Maintenance: ✓✓✓
- Aesthetics: ✓✓
- High-Cost



Trail Options



\$4.1 - \$4.5M



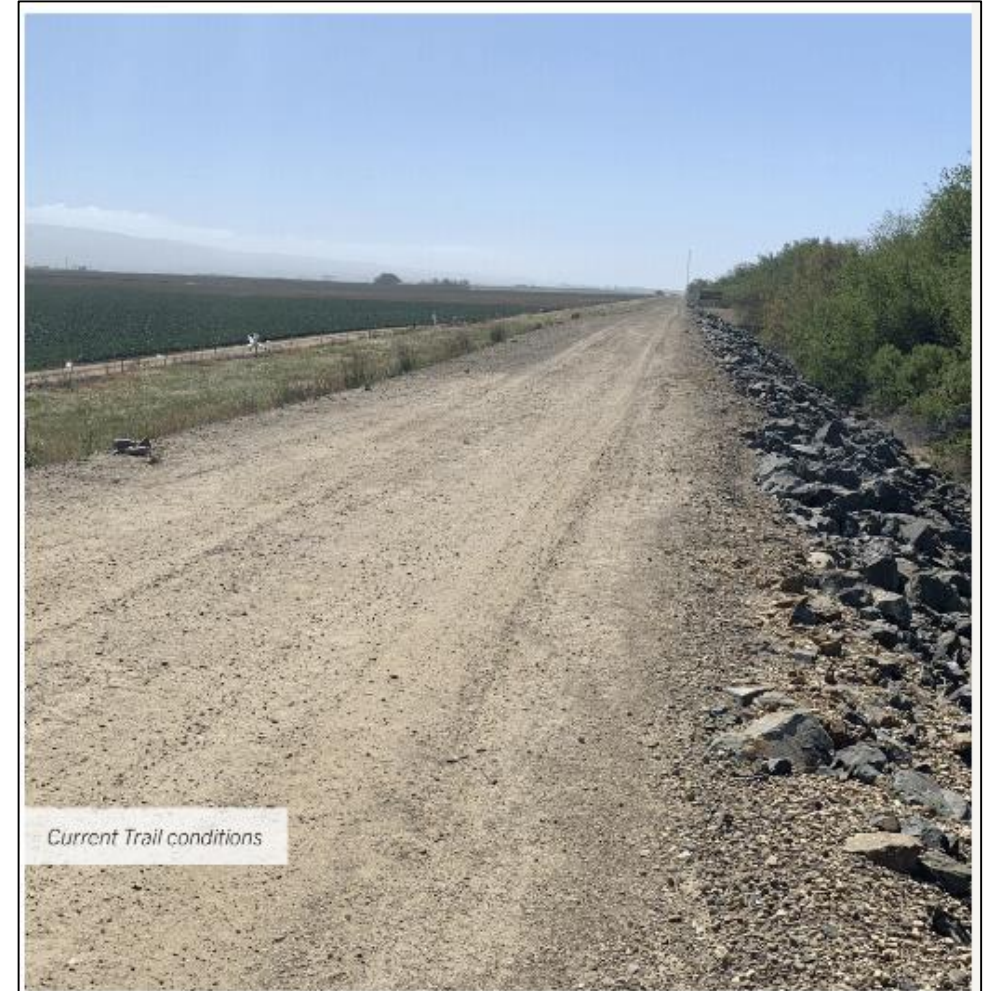
\$7.3 - \$8M

Board Direction

Proceed with next steps?

Considerations:

- Funding
- Priorities
- Long-term maintenance



Next Steps



- Continued coordination
- Project Cost Estimates (depends on options and amenities)
 - Design and Project Management: \$800k
 - Environmental and Permitting: \$550k
 - Right-of-Way: TBD
 - Construction Engineering and Contract Administration: \$700k
- Maintenance agreement(s)

Recommendations

- a) Receive and File the Santa Maria River Levee Trail Study;
- b) Provide direction to staff on next steps related to the trail; and
- c) Find that this action is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under State CEQA Guidelines Section 15262 because it consists of a feasibility study for a future trail that the Board has not approved, adopted, or funded and that will not result in any direct or indirect physical changes in environment



Questions?