

#7

Ramirez, Angelica

Public Comment

From: Barry Remis <bremis@snet.net>
Sent: Monday, May 16, 2022 2:16 PM
To: Lavagnino, Steve; Hartmann, Joan; Supervisor Das Williams; Hart, Gregg; Nelson, Bob
Cc: 'Heather Deutsch'; 'Melissa Cunningham'
Subject: SBBIKE+COAST Public Comment for May 17th Board Of Supervisors Meeting, Departmental Agenda Item #7: Santa Maria River Levee Trail Study & Direction
Attachments: SBBIKE+COAST Santa Maria River Levee Extension Board of Supervisors Public Comment Letter.pdf



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Good afternoon!

For tomorrow's May 17th Board of Supervisors Meeting, attached please find SBBIKE+COAST's (the Santa Barbara Bicycle Coalition & the Coalition for Sustainable Transportation's) public comment letter **in support** of the Santa Maria River Levee Trail Study and proposed Trail extension project to connect Santa Maria and Guadalupe. We strongly urge your unanimous vote of approval for this Trail expansion that will bring much-needed recreational opportunities and safer inter-city active transportation access for the community.

Thank you!

Barry P. Remis
 Programs Administrator





May 15, 2022

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Dear Board of Supervisors,

With over 17,000 supporters of our mission to promote walking, bicycling and public transit county-wide to create healthy, sustainable and equitable communities, SBBIKE+COAST strongly urges your unanimous vote at the May 17th, 2022 Board meeting, for Departmental Agenda Item #7, in support of the proposed extension of the Santa Maria River Levee Trail, connecting the cities of Santa Maria and Guadalupe for local residents, families and agricultural workers. Through this valuable project we have the opportunity to expand the River Levee Trail by 6.7 miles, creating more healthy recreational open space and safer inter-city access where the community can walk, run, bike and roll with family and friends.

The River Levee Trail extension will provide a much safer alternative route for pedestrians, bicyclists and working commuters without automobiles to travel between Santa Maria and Guadalupe. As referenced in the [draft Santa Maria River Levee Trail Study](#), the only current roadway for such inter-city travel is the traffic-congested State Route 166...unsafe and prone to collisions. The main streets of Santa Maria are increasingly dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists, especially children. In October, 2021, there were two instances of students injured in an auto collision while riding their bikes to school, an example of how unsafe and inaccessible alternatives to driving can be in Santa Maria.

Suffering from a disproportionate investment in open space across our county, Santa Maria needs more of it. Santa Maria residents have access to only eight miles of recreational trails over two options, while Santa Barbara residents can access over 130 miles of trails across 52 options. Per the [Santa Barbara Countywide Recreation Master Plan](#), only 17% of County open space is located in the Santa Maria valley, and 47% of Santa Maria residents live in areas with less than 3 acres of parks or open space per 1,000 residents. The River Levee Trail extension will double the miles of access to trails in Santa Maria, a worthwhile investment in improving the physical and mental health of community members.

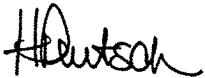
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The entirety of the City of Guadalupe and approximately 42% of Santa Maria are considered disadvantaged communities through the CalEnviroScreen 4.0.¹ As one of the smallest incorporated cities in Santa Barbara County (with 7,719 residents, 86% of whom identify as non-white), Guadalupe has only two parks larger than one acre in size, yet over 30% of its residents are children under 18 who require access to recreational opportunities for healthy development. These young residents deserve more open space for recreation, and the River Levee Trail extension will provide that. Let's not deprive them of this opportunity.

Concern has been expressed by some that recreational use on the proposed River Levee Trail extension would be incompatible with agriculture, causing economic harm to adjacent farming property, but farms and trail use can co-exist without such impacts. A properly designed and maintained Trail extension would cause no more harm than any of the current streets, bike lanes, sidewalks and pathways that are next to existing farms in the community. With your vote of support, the Santa Maria River Levee Trail extension will provide much needed recreation opportunities, away from dangerous motor vehicle traffic. The Trail extension will be a win-win for the community, public health *and* the county budget, as scientists estimate that every dollar spent on creating and maintaining park and open space trails can yield a net savings of almost three dollars in community health care costs alone. Please approve the Trail extension for its health, safety and environmental benefits for so many in the Santa Maria and Guadalupe communities!

Sincerely,



Heather Deutsch
Executive Director

¹ CalEnviroScreen 4.0 is a mapping tool used to help identify communities that are disproportionately burdened by pollution and where people are most vulnerable to its effects using environmental, health, and socioeconomic information.