



October 28, 2022

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
 105 E Anapamu Street
 Santa Barbara, CA 93101
 Submitted via email to sbcob@countyofsb.org

RE: November 1, Agenda item #6: Consider recommendations regarding the Modoc Road Multi-Use Trail Phase II - SUPPORT

Dear Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors,

We the undersigned organizations, representing thousands of residents of Santa Barbara County, thank you for working to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety through your Active Transportation planning and for securing grant funding for the Modoc Path connecting the City of Santa Barbara's path near Calle De Los Amigos to the widely used Obern Trail at Encore Drive. We urge you to approve the revised MND and complete this project to close the gap in our Coastal Route. The benefits are many:

- **Connectivity:** This new path will provide safe, enjoyable, access for all. It will enable the young and old, residents and visitors, able and less able-bodied to access the beach, the Mesa, schools, shopping, jobs and most importantly, the outdoors. The Modoc Path will create a vital link between two existing multi-use paths, creating a more complete network of safe, off-street facilities spanning from Carpinteria to Goleta. It will connect the Las Positas-Modoc, Obern and Maria Ygnacio multi-use path systems, providing a continuous connection between homes, jobs, schools and open spaces. The Modoc Path gap closure will result in 14.5 miles of linked multi-use paths.
- **Safety:** The Modoc Path will replace unsafe on-road facilities and allow people of all ages and abilities to travel with ease by foot, by bicycle or wheelchair. This section of Modoc Road has discontinuous sidewalks, inadequate crosswalks and the bike lanes are narrow and unprotected next to 45 mph traffic. Bike lanes along roads with vehicle speeds in excess of 35 mph are not recommended for most cyclists, especially children. A crash between a vehicle and bicyclist or

pedestrian at over 40 mph has an 80% chance of being fatal. On Modoc Rd, there have been 9 crashes involving cars and bicyclists in the last 11 years. If we fail to build this path and take advantage of a funding source for signalized crosswalks, our youth and others will continue to be at greater risk on this stretch of road.

- **Climate:** In California, 40% of our emissions come from our transportation system. Automobile dependency is a major factor in our climate goal shortcomings. [Studies](#) find that swapping the car for walking, cycling and e-biking even just one day a week makes a significant impact on personal carbon emissions. Cyclists have 84% lower CO2 emissions from all daily travel than non-cyclists. Other cities that have added safe, separated bike paths have demonstrably reduced car trips. For instance, in the city of Davis, which extended separated bike paths from its UC campus to the rest of the city, fully [20% of commutes](#) are made by bike.
- **Conservation:** Conservation and forestry experts approve of this plan, which provides a funding opportunity to extend native plant restoration and educational signage along the path, and to remove non-native trees, an explicit goal of the Modoc Preserve Conservation Easement. In addition to fire risk, non-native trees like eucalyptus and palms can use so much groundwater that they dry out wetlands, kill and crowd out other trees and plants, and require constant maintenance. Aging trees also pose dangers of falling or dropping limbs. Many of the trees removed would be eucalyptus, a non-native and highly flammable tree, and these would be replaced with oak trees, which are quick-growing, and both native and fire resistant. This is a better long-term choice given climate change and hotter, windier conditions.

We concur with the County that Alignment B is the preferred alternative, as it provides greater separation from the road, reduces the need for retaining walls and tree removals, especially palms, and would not negatively impact existing trails within the Modoc Preserve. We believe it would help meet the goals set when the Conservation Easement was created by providing equitable public access while promoting conservation values, and we hope that the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County and the La Cumbre Mutual Water Company will facilitate Alignment B. However, we think Alignment A is a valid alternative, and either option will provide many of the benefits specified above.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Heather Deutsch
Executive Director
MOVE, Santa Barbara County (formerly SBBIKE+COAST)

Katie Davis
Chair, Sierra Club Santa Barbara-Ventura Chapter

Michael Chiacos
Director of Climate Policy
Community Environmental Council

Mark Wilkerson
Executive Director
Santa Barbara Trails Council

Dustin Hoiseth
Public Policy Manager
SANTA BARBARA SOUTH COAST CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Nancy Black
Board President, Committees for Land, Air, Water and Species (CLAWS)

Maricela Morales
Executive Director
Central Coast Alliance United for A Sustainable Economy (CAUSE)

Dan McCarter
President
Santa Barbara Urban Creeks Council

Irene Cooke
Founding Member
Society of Fearless Grandmothers Santa Barbara

Sharon Broberg
Steering Committee Member
350 Santa Barbara

Daniel Gonzalez
Director of Organizing & Advocacy
Future Leaders of America

Gurleen Pabla
President, UCSB Associated Students

Alyssa Jain
Actions Lead, Sunrise Movement Santa Barbara

Luca D'Agruma
Political Lead, Sunrise Movement Santa Barbara

Vicki Allen
VP Communications
League of Women Voters of Santa Barbara

John Seigel Boettner
Founder
Cycling Without Age Santa Barbara

Sullivan Israel
Strong Towns Santa Barbara
Urban Planning Advocacy

Dillon Osleger
Executive Director
Sage Trail Alliance

Autumn Brook
Modoc Preserve Original Master Plan Designer & Consultant
30 Year Resident on Obern Trail

Brigitta Van Der Raay
Former Wildlife Biologist, US Forest Service