

# Santa Paula Branch Line Trail Master Plan Update and EIR/EIS Request for Proposals

Pre-Proposal Conference

December 14, 2023





# SPBL Trail Acquisition, Master Plan & EIR

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITIES (not to exceed 60 words)

This project is the acquisition of the 32-mile-long Santa Paula Branch railroad right-of-way for use as a multimodal corridor serving five communities within Ventura and Los Angeles Counties. The corridor will be used for a bicycle and hiking trail; for freight port access, recreation, and possibly commuter rail service; for pipelines and utilities; for public parks, greenbelts and gateways to communities; for access to the Coastal Bicycle Trail and the De Anza National Historic Trail; and for access to the State High Speed Rail Corridor. The acquisition includes 388 acres of land, 29 miles of operating track, bridges, buildings and related improvements.

## SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE MASTER PLAN

December, 1996

*Ventura County Transportation Commission*



Santa Paula Branch Line  
Recreational Trail

## Master Plan

Ventura

Saticoy

Santa  
Paula

Fillmore

Firu



Ventura County Transportation Commission

## SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE RECREATIONAL TRAIL MASTER PLAN

## *Final* Environmental Impact Report

State Clearinghouse No. 99031035

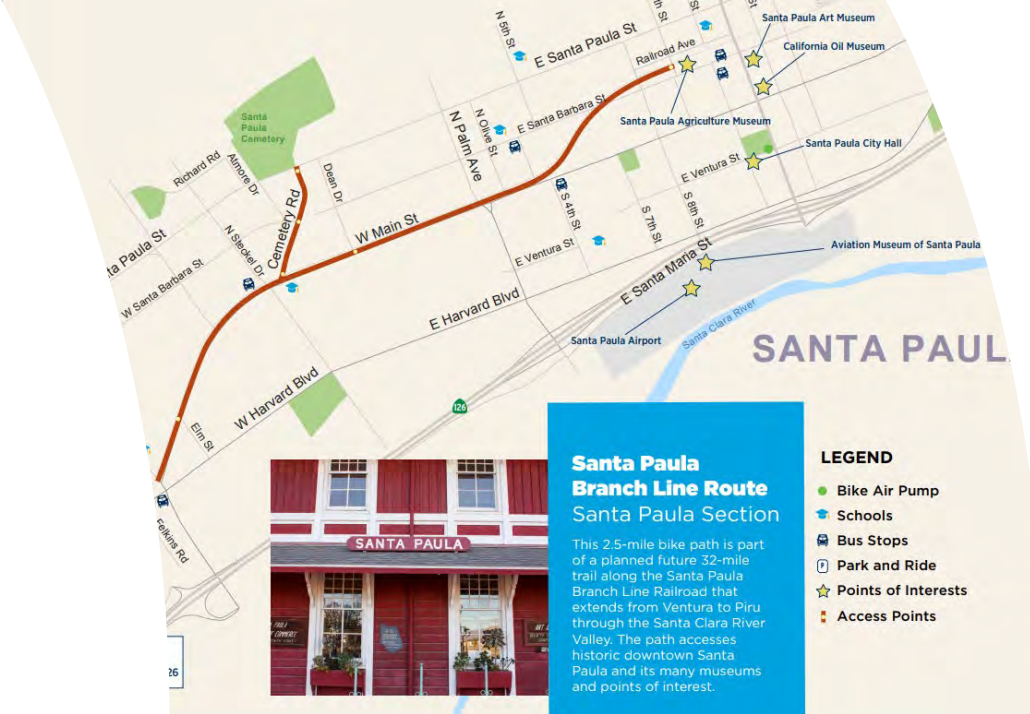
January 2000

VCTC





# Completed Trail Sections







# Commission Goals & Strategies

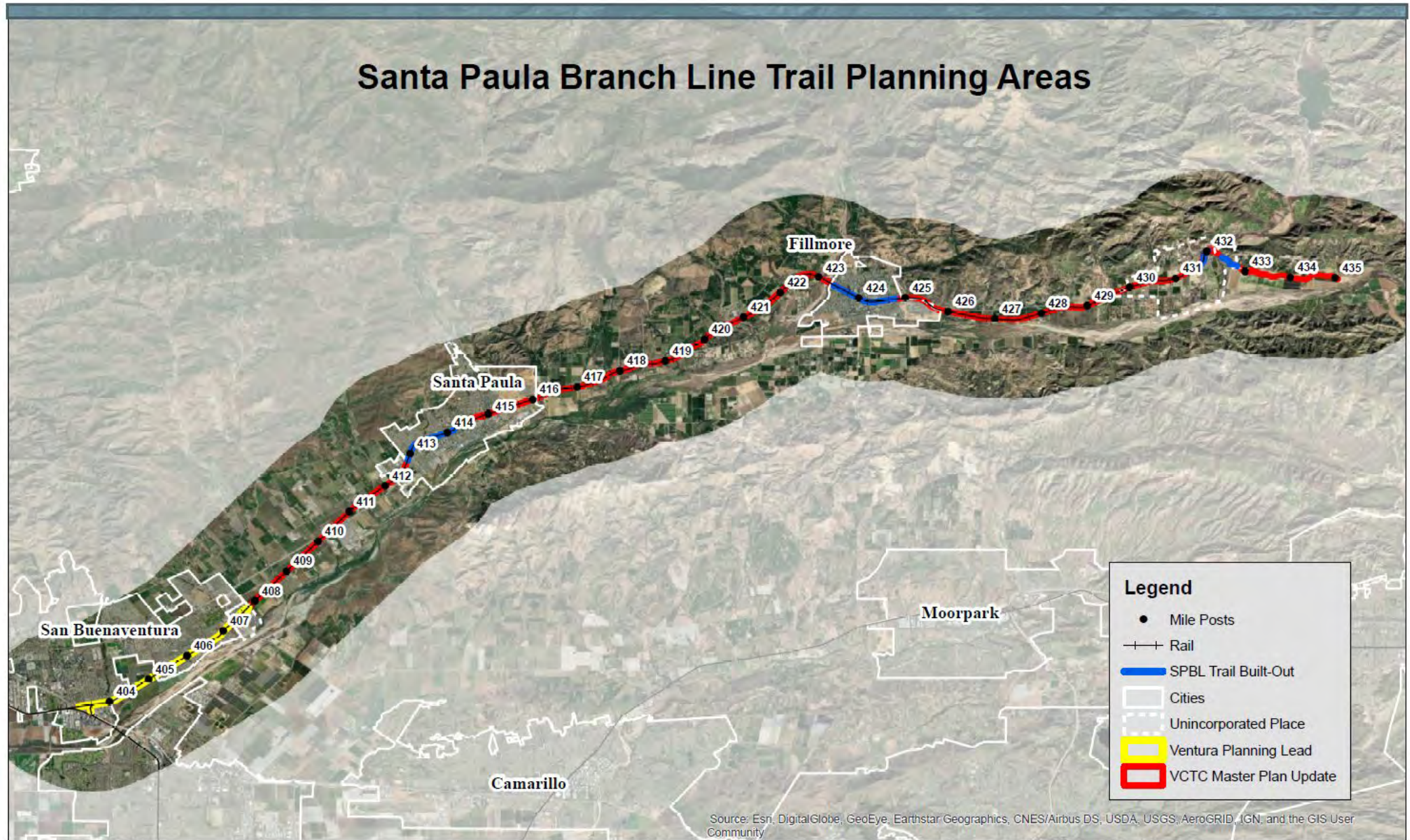
- April 2022 – Commission adopted goal to “Reinvigorate the process to complete the Santa Paula Branch Line bike trail.”
- VCTC Strategic Plan 22/23 – 27/28 Strategy A-8: “Update the Santa Paula Branch Line (SPBL) trail master plan, validate trail alignment, connections, and amenities, and update existing conditions to facilitate trail completion, with stakeholder engagement.”







# Trail Overview Map







# SPBL Trail Planning & Construction Grants

- Ventura Section (Montalvo to Saticoy)
  - Funding for planning and design of the 4-miles Ventura trail segment is included in Regional allocation of ATP Cycle 6, and funding to construct the trail segment is part of the successful Solutions for Congested Corridors grant application submitted by VCTC
- Santa Paula City Section
  - City of Santa Paula received funding to design trail extension through ATP Cycle 6 Regional allocation
- Saticoy to Piru Combined
  - SCAG REAP 2.0 CTC Partnership Program award to update Master Plan & EIR/EIS



**HAVE YOUR INPUT!**

## VIRTUAL COMMUNITY FORUM



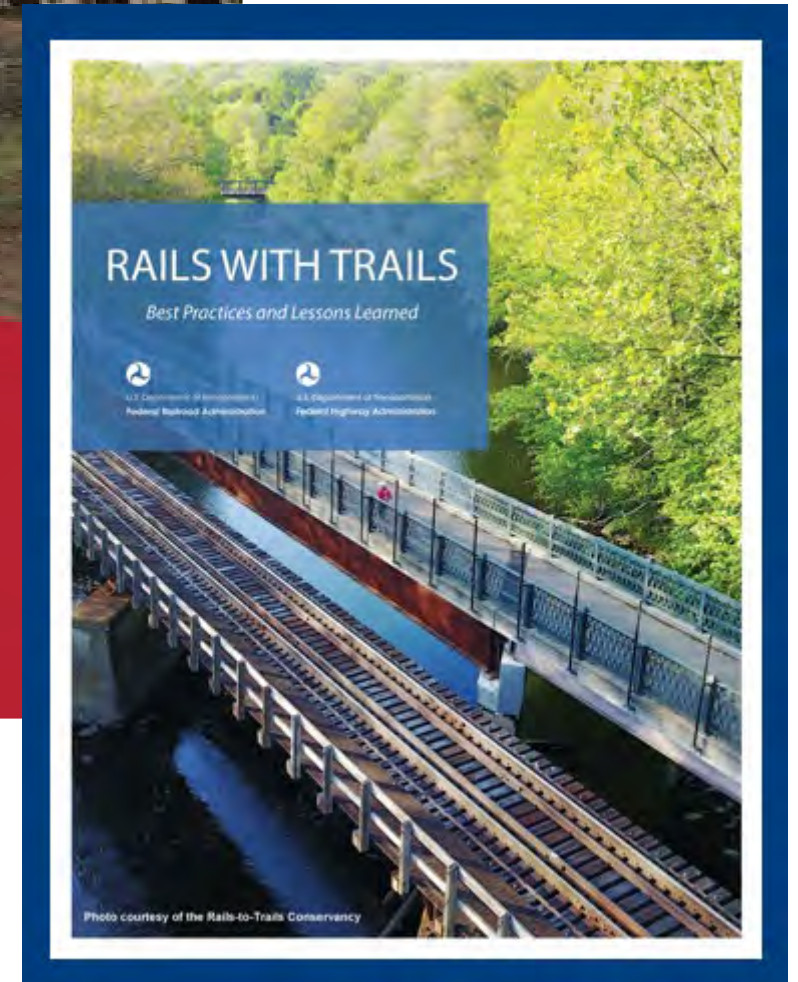
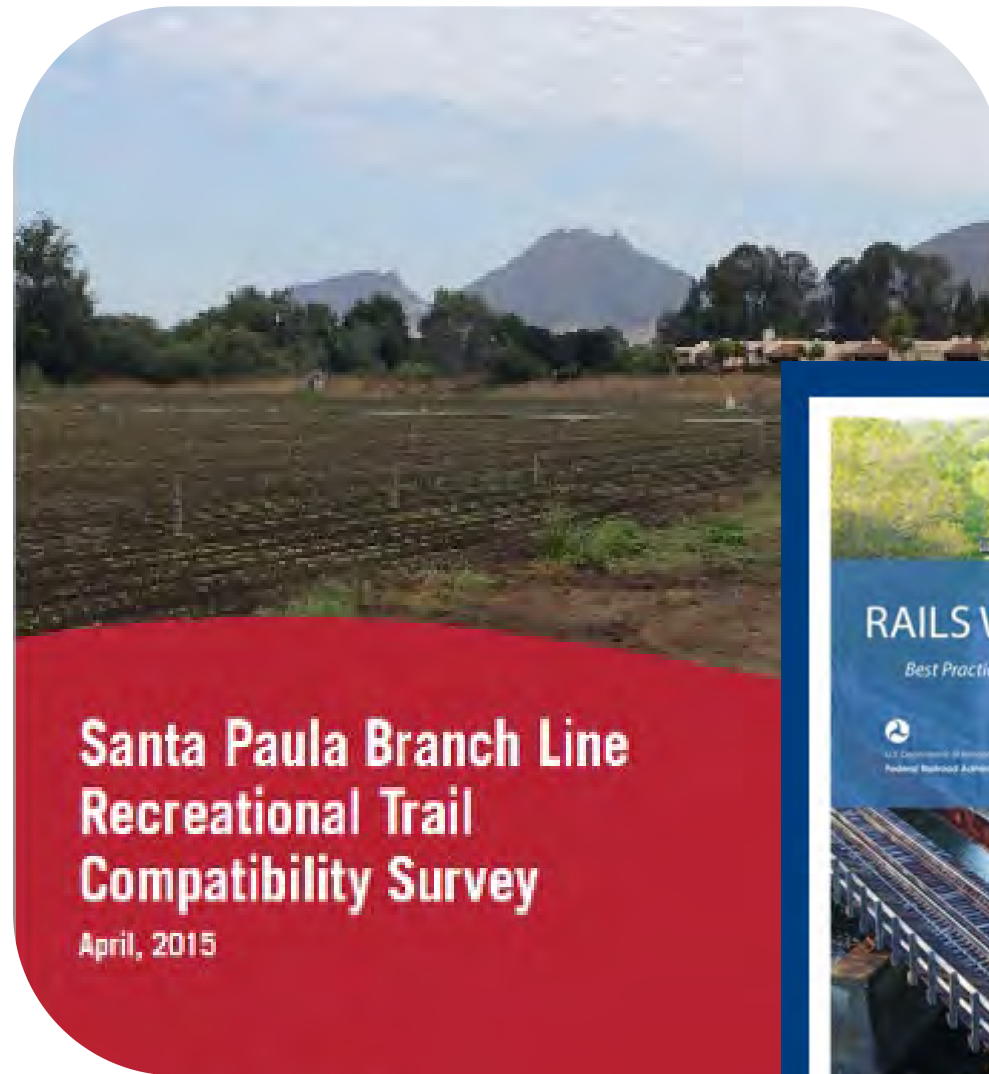
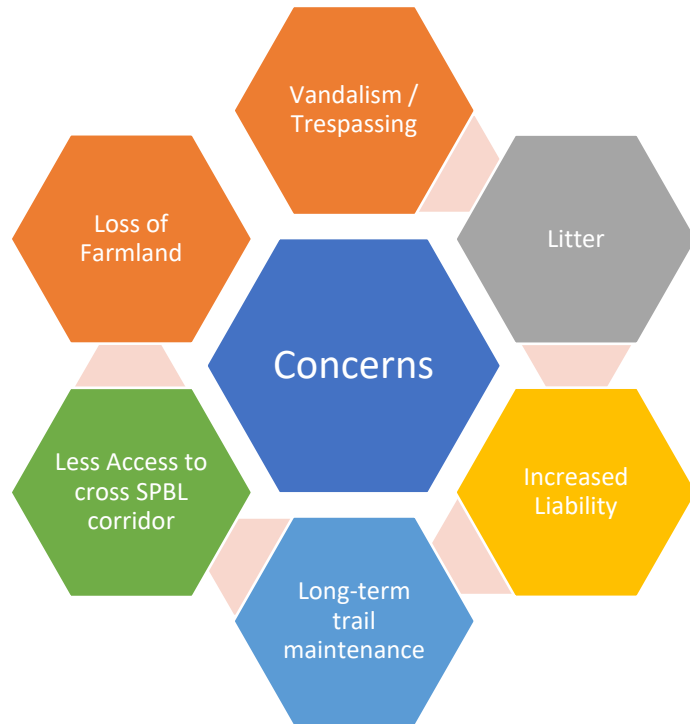
**City of Ventura - Government**

Jun 1 •

**VENTURA RAIL TRAIL  
ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM  
GRANT APPLICATION**



# Trail Compatibility





# Support for SPBL Trail

Broad range of individuals  
and groups have  
expressed support for trail  
completion throughout its  
30-years planning history

Bicycle  
clubs

Environmental  
Organizations

Local  
Residents

State &  
Regional  
Funding  
Partners

Cities of Santa  
Paula and  
Fillmore  
General Plans

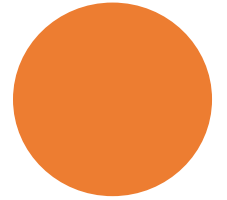
County of  
Ventura  
General Plan



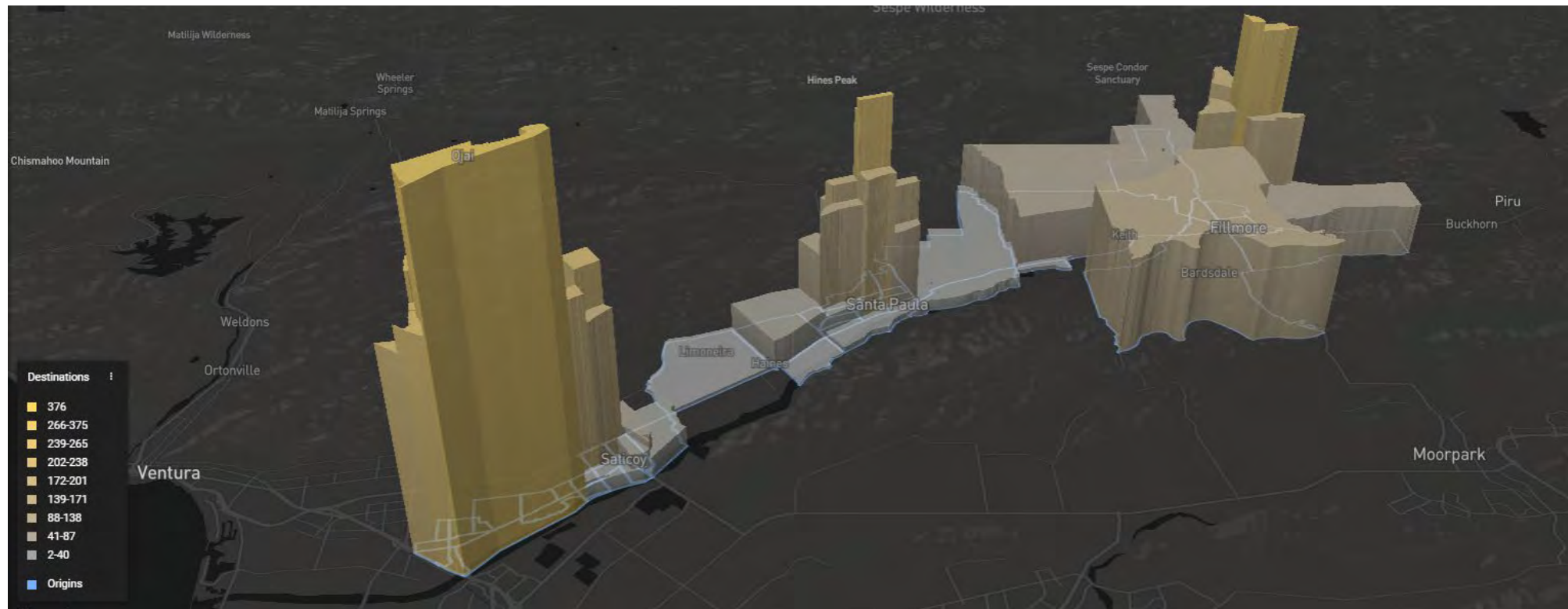


# Benefits of Trails & Active Transportation

- Economic Benefits
  - Increased property values
  - Economic benefits of both commute and recreational trips
- Connectivity with transit fosters transit ridership recovery (first/last mile solutions)
- Provide safe non-motorized transportation routes that improve air quality
- Facilitate use of clean transportation alternatives
- Reduces air pollution from motorized vehicles, which can damage agricultural crops









# Why build out the SPBL Trail?

SPBL trail at buildout will **reduce VMT** by an estimated 23,350 - 46,700 daily

Environmental  
Benefits: GHG  
and VMT  
Reduction

Increase  
Bike/Ped  
Trips

Estimated **300 – 500 bike trips per day** on SPBL Trail

From 2018-2022, 122 bike and pedestrian crashes were recorded within ½ mile of the SPBL ROW. Bike Lanes **reduce crashes** by 17% - 90%.

Improve  
Safety

Economic  
Benefits

Estimated \$20 **economic benefit** per recreational trip and \$40 per commute trip, resulting in an estimated \$6,000 - \$20,000 economic benefit per day, or \$2.2 - \$7.3 million per year

Studies show that neighborhoods supported by active transportation design and infrastructure **increase residential property values** by a range of 1-15%

Increased  
Property  
Values

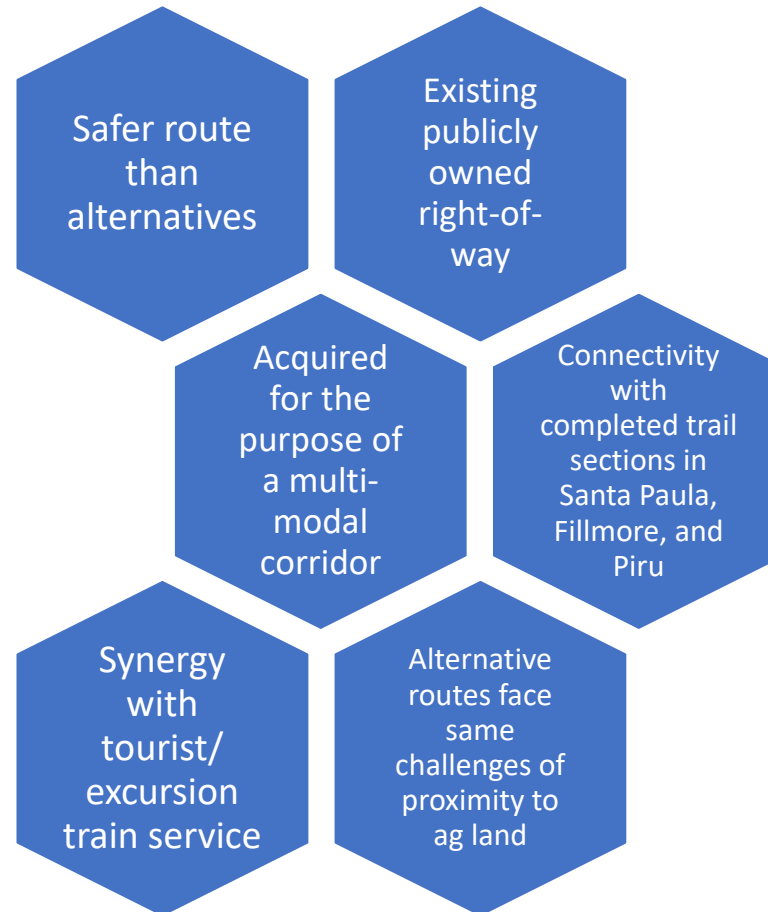
Improve  
Public  
Health

Bike lanes and trails are associated with **improved public health**





# Why build a trail on the SPBL right-of-way?





# SPBL Trail Timeline

1995

VCTC purchased SPBL for use as a Multimodal Corridor to include multiuse path

1996

VCTC adopted SPBL Master Plan

2000

VCTC adopted SPBL Recreational Trail Master Plan and Environmental Impact Report

2001

VCTC, County, and neighboring landowners entered Agreement not to build unincorporated trail section

2016

Sections of trail completed in Cities of Santa Paula, Fillmore, and Piru community

Agreement not to build trail in unincorporated areas expired

2017

VCTC completed SPBL Trail Compatibility Survey

2020

County of Ventura applied for Active Transportation Program grant to construct Saticoy to Santa Paula section

2022

VCTC adopted goal to reinvigorate process to complete SPBL trail

2023

City of Ventura received funding for design and engineering for Montalvo to Saticoy section

April 2023

VCTC adopted Strategic Plan that includes facilitating trail completion

May 2023

VCTC approved submittal of grant application to SCAG REAP CTC Partnership Program to update Master Plan & EIR/EIS

June 2023

VCTC awarded grant funding to construct Montalvo to Saticoy section via Solutions for Congested Corridors

July 2023

SCAG announced grant award to VCTC to update SPBL Trail Master Plan and EIR/EIS

Dec 2023

VCTC Commission consideration of MOU to accept REAP Grant Award and release RFP





# **SPBL Trail Master Plan Update & EIR/EIS REAP CTC PP Grant Application & Award**

- May 12, 2023: Commission approved submittal of grant application to SCAG for Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) County Transportation Commissions Partnership Program
- July 6, 2023: Grant award to VCTC approved by SCAG Regional Council; includes \$1,677,000 for SPBL Trail Master Plan Update & EIR/EIS – no local match required
- December 1, 2023: Commission approved MOU with SCAG to administer grant



# **SPBL Trail Master Plan Update & EIR/EIS Request for Proposals Overview**

- RFP seeks consultant support to update SPBL Trail Master Plan and EIR/EIS for portion of trail from Saticoy to Piru
- Presents background and context for proposal development
- Defines scope of work
- Provides selection criteria
- Scope of work components
  - Project Management
  - Existing Conditions
  - Outreach and Engagement
  - Conceptual Planning
  - Plan Production and Approval
  - Project Definition
  - Technical Studies
  - Draft EIR/EIS
  - Public Participation
  - Final EIR/EIS
  - Regulatory Process





# Deliverables & Timeline of Completion

- Updated SPBL Trail Master Plan
- New combined EIR/EIS
  - Substantial public participation
  - Technical studies
- Conducted in parallel
- All deliverables must be completed by **November 30, 2025**



# Question Submittal

- Any questions concerning this RFP should be submitted via email to: [afagan@goventura.org](mailto:afagan@goventura.org)
- Questions must be received no later than **4:00 PM PST on Friday, December 22, 2023**
- All questions and responses will be posted on VCTC's website as an addendum to the RFP
- <https://www.goventura.org/work-with-vctc/contracts/>





# Proposal Submittal Instructions

**Download RFP and cost proposal template at:**

<https://www.goventura.org/work-with-vctc/contracts/>

**Submit in writing with one signed original and two (2) hard copies, along with one (1) original of the Fee Proposal in a separate sealed envelope to:**

Ventura County Transportation Commission

Attn: Amanda Fagan

751 E. Daily Dr., Suite 420

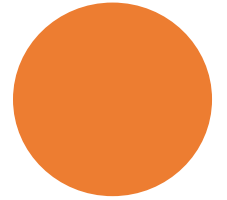
Camarillo, CA 93010

**In addition, submit electronic version by email to:**

[afagan@goventura.org](mailto:afagan@goventura.org)

# Miscellaneous Notes

- **Demonstrate alignment with funding partner goals and objectives**
  - Promoting Infill Development that Facilitates Housing Supply, Choice, and Affordability
  - Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing
  - Reducing Vehicle Miles Traveled
- **Include any requested exceptions to the template agreement**
- **Please use the Cost Proposal template for ease of comparison**







# RFP Timeline & Submittal Summary

Project Name	Santa Paula Branch Line Trail Master Plan Update and Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement
Issuance Date	Friday, December 1, 2023
Project Period	VCTC anticipates plan completion and approval by November 2025
Pre-Proposal Conference (Optional)	Thursday, December 14, 2023 @ 11:00 PM (PST) via Microsoft Teams Meeting
Questions Deadline	Friday, December 22, 2023 @ 4:00 PM (PST)
Responses to Questions	Friday, January 5, 2024
Proposal Submittal Due Date/Time	Friday, February 2, 2024 @ 4:00 PM (PST)
Interviews	February 21, 2024, via Microsoft Teams Meeting (If needed)
Proposal Submittal Location	Via hard copy to: Ventura County Transportation Commission Attn: Amanda Fagan 751 E. Daily Dr., Suite 420 Camarillo, CA 93010 Via email to: <a href="mailto:afagan@goventura.org">afagan@goventura.org</a>
Contract Award*	March 1, 2024
Solicitation Contact	Amanda Fagan   <a href="mailto:afagan@goventura.org">afagan@goventura.org</a>
Contract Type	Firm, fixed fee compensated per task completion as identified in Scope of Work



# Questions?

Contact us:

Website: [goventura.org](http://goventura.org)

Social media: @GoVCTC on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram

Phone: 805-642-1591

Email: [spbl@goventura.org](mailto:spbl@goventura.org)

<https://www.goventura.org/spbl>



# BACKUP SLIDES

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# VCTC Strategic Plan FY 22/23 – 27/28

## SPBL Related Strategies

A-8

A8. Update SPBL trail master plan, validate trail alignment, connections, and amenities, and update existing conditions to facilitate trail completion, with stakeholder engagement.

B-21

B21. Partner with Sierra Northern Railway, corridor cities and the County to operate, maintain, and improve the SPBL railroad and right-of-way corridor as a countywide community asset, ensuring outreach to stakeholders in the process.

B-22

B22. Continue to address encroachment into the SPBL right-of-way through leasing activities to ensure safety of operations and protection of the asset and infrastructure.





# SPBL Trail Compatibility Survey

## 3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Trails and active agriculture areas can and do exist in harmony, as demonstrated by examples from across the United States, including a wide range of use levels, trail surfaces, and management policies. The following strategies have been essential to the success of trails in agricultural areas:

- Indemnification of farmers against liability from trail use (in California there are existing statutes that provide strong protections);
- Fencing to clearly delineate trail and agricultural areas and provide barriers;
- Policies and agreements that give farmers the ability to close portions of the trail when agricultural operations would otherwise be limited by or hazardous to trail users;
- Controlled crossings that allow farm equipment to reach both sides of the trail, where necessary;
- Signage to alert trail users to the presence of active agricultural operations and instructing users to stay on the trail;
- Maintaining and observing the trail at a level to minimize vandalism and encourage a self-policing environment.





# VCTC SPBL Ownership



## 3.1 Design and Management Strategies

The most common thread in successful trail planning and management in agricultural settings has been one-on-one cooperation between trail operators and adjacent farmers and landowners. By developing these individual relationships, trail managers are able to accommodate concerns of farmers that are specific to the land features, crops, operations and machinery required for unimpeded farming. While farm bureaus and other agricultural representative bodies have, as a matter of policy, opposed recreational uses adjacent to farmland, individual farmers adjacent to the trails analyzed in this study have reported very little, if any, conflict with trail operations, trail users, or have had their farming operations hampered by adjacent trails. Illegal dumping, when it has been documented, has been the responsibility of the trail operator to clean up, and the presence of the trail removes the farm operator's responsibility. Concerns of trespassing, theft, and vandalism have not been supported by evidence.

Of all documented management practices, one of the most common is the ability to close the trail, or portions thereof, to allow agricultural operations such as spraying to occur without the danger of affecting trail users. Design measures that have helped minimize conflict include fencing and/or planted buffers between trails and crops, and the design and maintenance of regular trail crossings and gates for farmers.





# VCTC Ownership of the SPBL Corridor

RECORDED AT REQUEST OF  
STEWART TITLE

RECORDING REQUESTED BY  
AND WHEN RECORDED MAIL TO:

Ventura County Transportation Commission  
950 County Square Drive, Suite 207  
Ventura, California 93003

MAIL TAX STATEMENTS TO:

Ventura County Transportation Commission  
950 County Square Drive, Suite 207  
Ventura, California 93003  
Attention: Ginger Gherardi, Executive Director

95-131252

Recorded  
Official Records  
County of  
Ventura  
Richard D. Dean  
Recorder  
8:00am 31-Oct-95

Rec Fee .00  
A.R. .00

SPACE ABOVE THIS LINE FOR RECORDER'S USE

This instrument is exempt from Recording  
(Govt. Code § 27383) and from Document  
Transfer Tax (Rev. & Tax Code § 11922)

**GRANT DEED**  
(Santa Paula Branch Line)  
Ventura County, California

For good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which I hereby acknowledged, Southern Pacific Transportation Company, a Delaware corporation ("Grantor"), sells, transfers, grants and conveys to the Ventura County Transportation Commission, a county transportation commission existing under authority of Public Law 103-155, Code Section 130000 et seq. ("VCTC") ("Grantee"), having its principal office at 950 County Square Drive, Suite 207, Ventura, California 93003 (a) the land located in the County of Ventura, State of California, more particularly described on Exhibit A attached hereto and made a part hereof, commonly known as the Santa Paula Branch Line (the "Land") (b) all of Grantor's interest, if any, in the improvements on the Land ("Improvements") fixtures; if any, that Grantor owns and uses in the operation and maintenance of the Land Improvements; and (d) all appurtenances to the foregoing property (the Land, the Improvements and such appurtenances being referred to herein collectively as the "Property") subject to the Permitted Exceptions (as defined in the Purchase and Sale Agreement dated October 27, 1995 by and between Grantor and Grantee (the "Purchase Agreement"), and to the terms and conditions of the Usage Agreement-Santa Paula Branch and the Assignment and Revenue-Sharing Agreement between the parties dated of even date hereto.

PARCEL 3: (V-48/1, PORTION NO. 2)

THAT CERTAIN LOT, PIECE OR PART OF  
INDENTURE TO THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY, RECORDED ON JANUARY  
1904, IN BOOK 102, PAGE 50 OF DEEDS, IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY RECORDER OF SAID  
COUNTY.

PARCEL 4: (V-48/1, No. 3)

THAT CERTAIN STRIP OR PARCEL OF LAND,  
CERTAIN INDENTURE TO THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY, RECORDED ON JANUARY  
JANUARY 27, 1887, IN BOOK 18, PAGE 173 OF DEEDS, IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY RECORDER OF SAID  
OF SAID COUNTY.

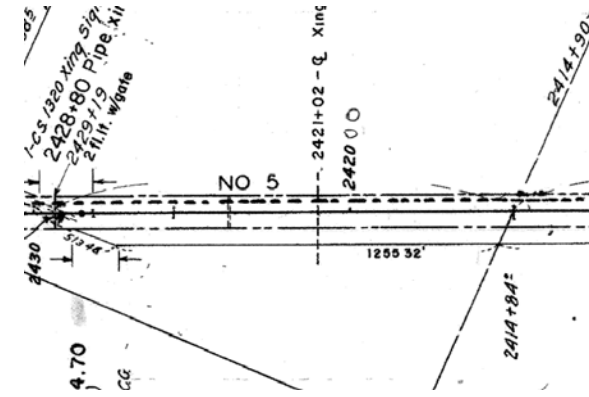
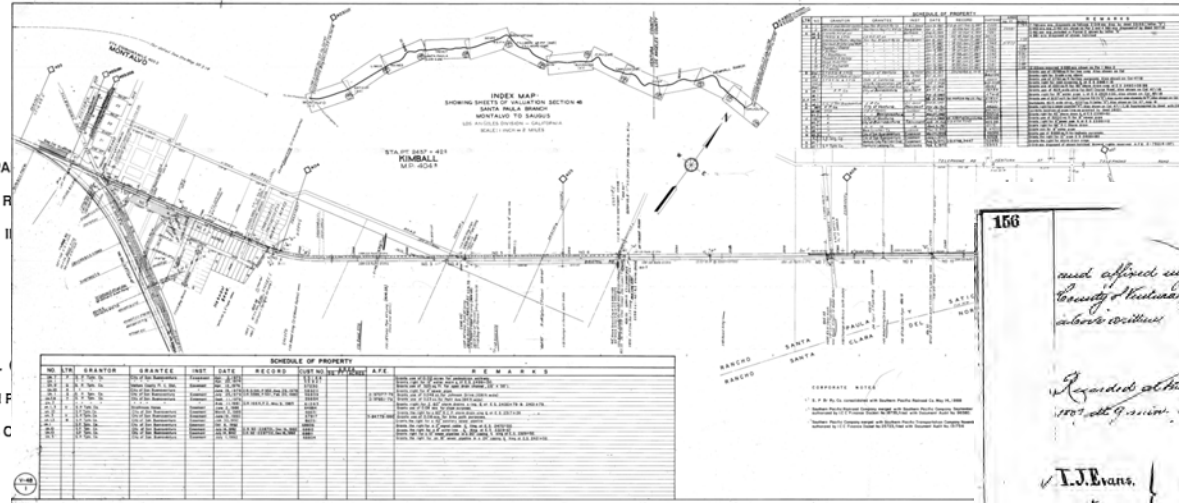
PARCEL 5: (V-48/1, No. 4)

THAT CERTAIN STRIP OR TRACT OF LAND, 100 FEET WIDE, AS DESCRIBED IN THAT CERTAIN  
INDENTURE TO THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY, RECORDED ON JANUARY  
27, 1887, IN BOOK 18, PAGE 150 OF DEEDS, IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY RECORDER OF SAID  
COUNTY.

PARCEL 6: (V-48/1, No. 5)

THAT CERTAIN STRIP OR TRACT OF LAND, 100 FEET WIDE, AS DESCRIBED IN THAT CERTAIN  
INDENTURE TO THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY, RECORDED ON JANUARY  
27, 1887, IN BOOK 18, PAGE 156 OF DEEDS, IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY RECORDER OF SAID  
COUNTY.

LWP/REC: am409  
09/08/95  
RELA 3228



18/156 Deeds  
1-27-1887

and offered my official seal, at my office in the met  
County of Ventura, the day and year in this Certificate first  
subscribed written.

Subscribed at the County of Santa Paula, California, on the 10th day of January, 1887, at 9 o'clock, A.M.

J. J. Evans.

S.P.R. Co. This Indenture, made the 19th day of January  
in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and  
eighty seven between Thomas J. Evans of the County of Santa  
Paula of California, party of the first part, and the Southern  
Pacific Branch Railway Company, a corporation duly incor-  
porated under the laws of the State of California, party of  
the second part; Witnesseth: That the said party of the first  
part for and in consideration of the sum of three hundred  
and twenty eight dollars, to him in hand paid by the said  
party of the second part, at or before the executing and deliv-  
ering of these presents, hereunto set forth in handwriting  
of these presents, have granted, sold, conveyed, and by these presents  
do grant, sell, convey unto the said party of the second  
part, and to its successors and assigns forever, All of that  
certain strip or parcel of land, lying, being and situate  
in the County of Ventura, in the State of California, and  
described as follows to-wit: A strip or tract of land, one  
hundred feet wide, lying equally on each side of the  
center line of the said Santa Paula Branch Railway where the same  
is located through the land of the party of the first part  
being a portion of the Rancho Santa Paula of Santa  
Barbara, particularly described as follows, to-wit: Com-  
mencing for the same at a point on the center line of





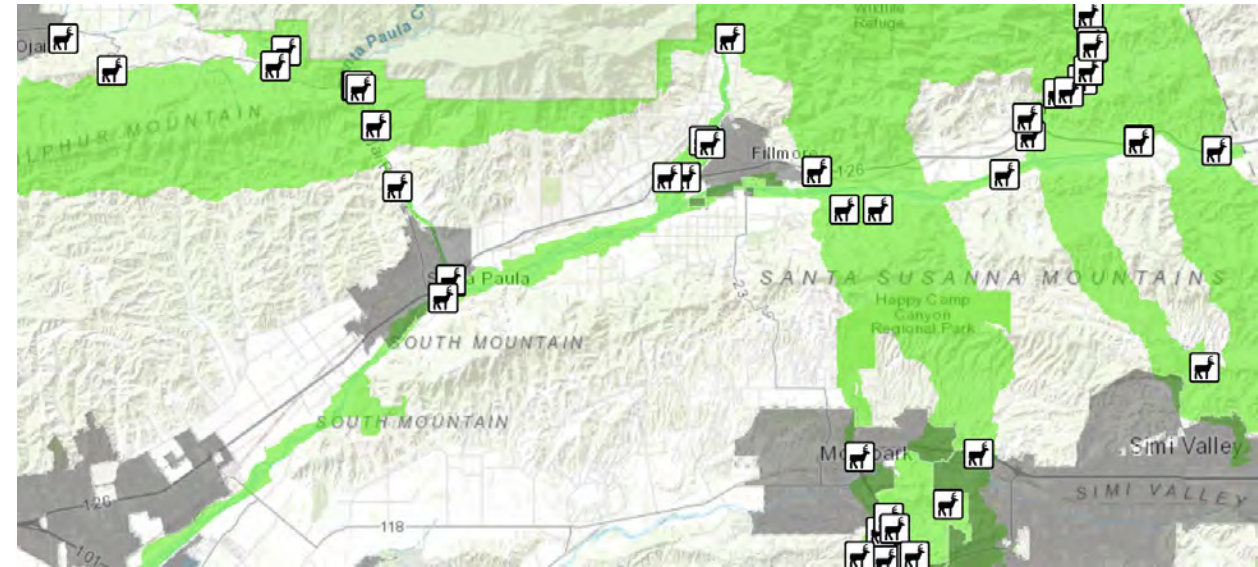
# Wildlife Corridors

On March 19, 2019, the Ventura County BOS approved new regulations related to wildlife movement in addition to a Habitat Connectivity and Wildlife Corridor map identifying those areas that are subject to the new regulations.

The ordinance includes regulations to:

- Minimize impacts of outdoor night lighting by regulating brightness, shielding, light direction, etc.
- Limit disturbance around surface water features and important road crossings, as these areas are especially important for wildlife movement.
- Minimize the amount of impermeable fencing that can be installed without a permit.
- Encourage compact siting of structures in three key “Critical Wildlife Passage Areas” within the Corridor.
- Prohibit intentional planting of invasive plants.

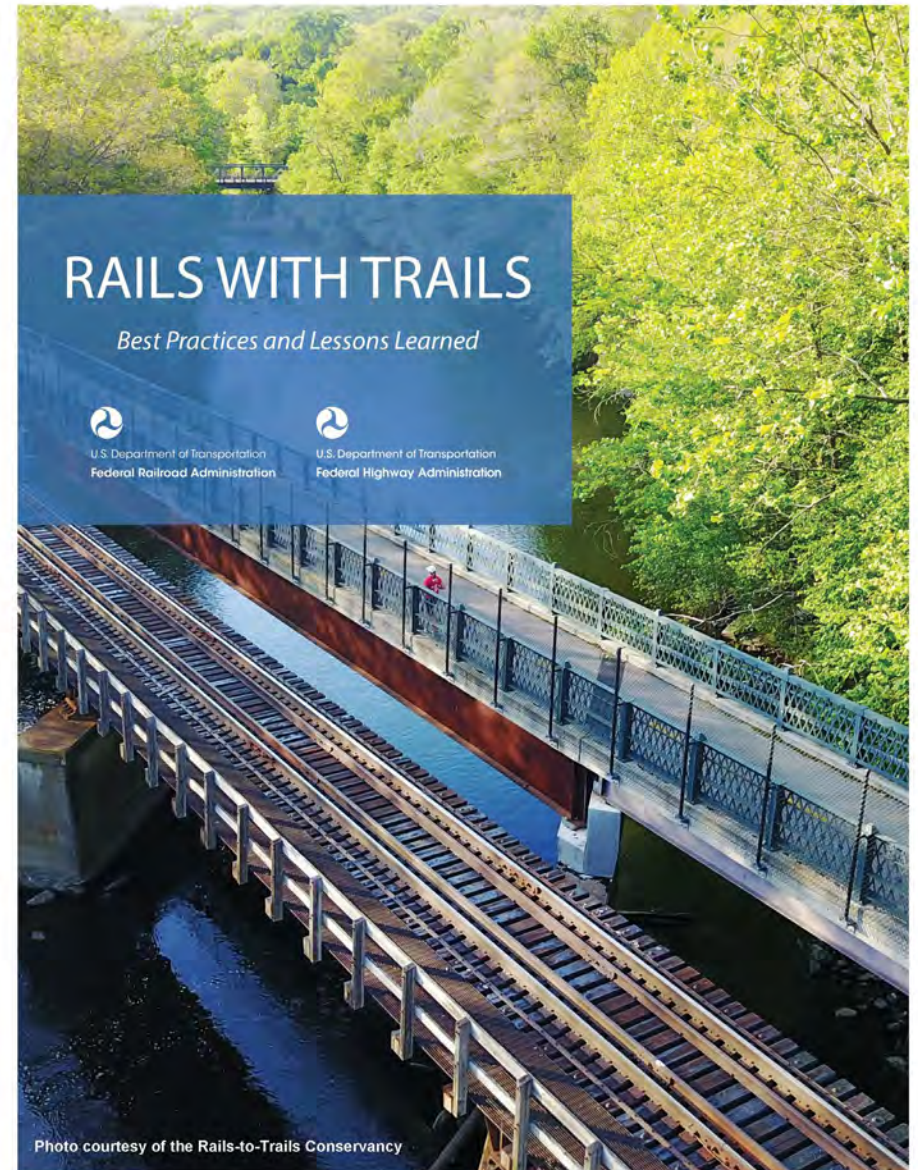
Source - <https://vcrma.org/en/habitat-connectivity-and-wildlife-movement-corridors>



- Areas of SPBL Trail between Fillmore & Piru may be subject to Habitat Connectivity regulations
- Trail Master Plan Update can and will incorporate Consideration of these regulations into Plan

## Rails with Trails: Best Practices and Lessons Learned

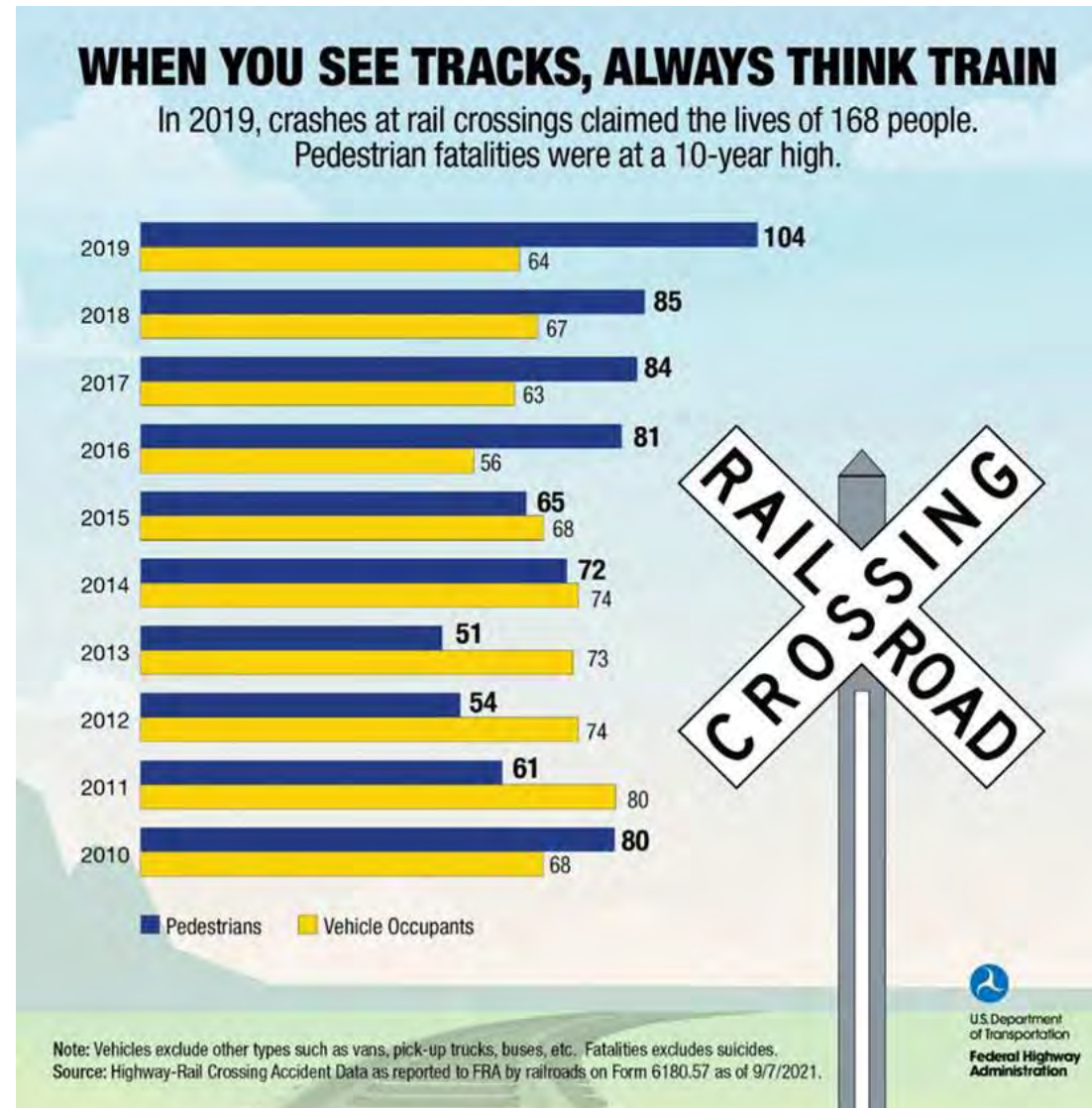
Jared Fijalkowski  
U.S. DOT Volpe Center





# Why are we here? Railroad crossing fatalities...

- No documented cases of RWT adding to railroad trespassing casualties
- Benefits to railroads and the public





# Rails-with-Trails:

A shared-use path or trail open and developed for public use that is located on or directly adjacent to an active railroad or rail transit corridor.



# How many? Where are they?

**343** rails-with-trails in **47** States comprising **917** miles

