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## COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

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### PRESS RELEASE

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## LANDMARK AGREEMENT REACHED FOR MODOC MULTI-USE PATH:

### CONTINUOUS PROTECTED BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN PATH FROM UC SANTA BARBARA TO CITY OF SANTA BARBARA, PLUS PROTECTIONS FOR MORE MESA

**(SANTA BARBARA, Calif)** - A landmark agreement was reached in principle to complete a long-desired 'missing gap' in the California Coastal Route, and create one of the most highly utilized and contiguous ADA compliant bike and pedestrian paths in the region. For decades, the public has advocated for a safer and more accessible way to walk, bike, stroll, and roll between Goleta and Santa Barbara. After years of extensive public input and careful negotiations, an agreement has been forged between the County of Santa Barbara, the La Cumbre Mutual Water Company, and The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County. This 1-mile stretch of new path will start where the City of Santa Barbara's path ends near Calle De Los Amigos and connect to the Obern Trail Bike Path across from Encore Drive. Construction for this segment of the path is expected to begin in late spring 2025.

"I am thrilled to announce that this crucial segment of this path will enhance connectivity across our region, linking UC Santa Barbara, the City of Goleta, and the City of Santa Barbara to schools, beaches, and neighborhoods along the coast. This project is of tremendous community interest, extensive community involvement, and an incredible and far reaching community benefit" stated Second District Supervisor Laura Capps. "While the agreement still needs to be signed off by the Board of Supervisors tomorrow, with \$5.4 million secured from the State Active Transportation Program and strong community support, we're poised to deliver a safe, ADA-compliant path that supports active transportation and addresses climate priorities. This project exemplifies our commitment to keeping our community moving forward safely and sustainably."

In addition to the path itself which will transform connectivity and recreation in our region, this agreement includes **working with the Land Trust to place permanent protections on County-owned land at More Mesa – over 35 acres – that would preserve this area and restrict its future use as open space for the benefit of the public.** More Mesa is essentially a de facto nature preserve offering a network of walking-hiking trails and access to the South Coast's most isolated beach. This deal will conserve this area in perpetuity.

"The Land Trust works to expand conservation for the benefit of current and future generations. With the Modoc Multi-Use Path, it was essential to us that we go beyond environmentally sensitive design and create a deal that is additive for open space in our community" said

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Meredith Hendricks, Executive Director of the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County. “Placing permanent protections between the two preserves while also allowing us to approve a path design that conforms to the existing conservation easement at the Modoc Preserve. We thank our partners for their hard work over several years to reach this agreement.

“I would like to thank the County for their hard work and addressing our concerns,” said Alex Rodriguez, board president of the La Cumbre Mutual Water Company. “We appreciate the County’s commitment to ensuring minimal impacts to the Preserve. Our stockholders are the owners of the Water Company and the land, which is not a park but a preserve, and it is their interests that we sought to protect.”

The Board of Supervisors will formally vote to solidify the agreement during their November 5, 2024 hearing.

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