



August 19, 2021

Honorable Clint Lorimore
President, Regional Council
Southern California Association of Governments
900 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1700
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Dear Mr. Lorimore,

I am writing to confirm my positive experience with and practical utility of the Pajaro Compass framework, its resources, and online tools, which are similar to what is being developed for the SoCal Greenprint Project, when planning transportation infrastructure projects.

I oversee the environmental clearance of two major transportation projects in the Pajaro River Watershed, which includes an area of approximately 1,300 square miles in Southern Santa Clara County and San Benito County. These projects are the U.S. 101 Improvement Project (Monterey Road to State Route 129) and State Route 152 Trade Corridor Project. The US 101 Improvement Project consists of widening US 101 from Gilroy to State Route 129, a distance of approximately 7 miles, and reconstructing the U.S. 101/State Route 25 Interchange. The State Route 152 Trade Corridor Project consists of constructing a new 4-lane freeway between U.S. 101 and State Route 156 and providing eastbound truck climbing lanes over Pacheco Pass. Both these projects are located in rural areas with considerable environmental resources including sensitive habitats, special status species, agricultural lands, floodplains, cultural resources, and so on.

When planning such large projects, notable resources such as the Pajaro Compass Network and Pajaro Compass Webmap have proven to be extremely valuable tools. The Network itself provides access to key stakeholders in order to understand public concerns and design constraints during the project planning and engineering phases. I appreciate this engagement as it helps VTA develop the best project possible while considering the concerns of those for whom a project directly or indirectly affects. The Pajaro Compass Webmap includes multiple layers to identify sensitive resources, other environmental concerns, and potential mitigation opportunities. While ground-truthing in formal technical analysis is required during project development, the Webmap provides an excellent overview and starting point to identify these resources at both the local and regional scale.

VTA is an independent special district that provides sustainable, accessible, community-focused transportation options that are innovative, environmentally responsible, and promote the vitality of our region. VTA fully supports the Pajaro Compass Network and use of the Webmap and other resources developed as part of the overall framework. The development and implementation of the SoCal Greenprint Project should provide equivalent benefits to planners, designers, and decision-makers of public and private projects in the region for which the Greenprint serves.

Sincerely,

Ann Calnan (electronically signed)

Ann Calnan
Manager, VTA Environmental Programs
(408) 321-5976