



November 29, 2021

Ms. Maiea Sellers  
Acting Regional Director  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
Economic Development Administration (EDA)  
Seattle Regional Office  
Jackson Federal Building  
915 Second Avenue, Room 1890  
Seattle, WA 98174-1012

RE: Letter of Support for the City of Mission Viejo – Oso Creek Trail Improvement Project

Dear Ms. Sellers:

The South Orange County Economic Coalition (SOCEC) is happy to write this letter of support for the City of Mission Viejo's application to the Economic Development Administration (EDA) American Rescue Plan Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Grant Program. The project proposes to expand and make improvements to the Oso Creek Recreational trail located in the heart of Mission Viejo along Oso Creek. We understand that the proposed project is the first phase of the larger Village Town Center Revitalization Project, a 300,000 square foot community shopping center in the core of Mission Viejo.

The SOCEC, based in Mission Viejo, is the premier voice of business in South Orange County. Serving the region since 1969, we work diligently to promote a strong economic climate, providing current updates on issues discussed at the state, county, and local levels. Member businesses include key stakeholder companies, including corporations and sole proprietorships, committed to building a strong local business climate both regionally and within our constituent local communities. Our mission is to be a strong, leading business advocate in South Orange County.

Based on numerous case studies and economic impact statements, we at SOCEC know that trails and the people that utilize them generate considerable economic benefits. Research has indicated that the economic impacts of trail systems bolster the evidence that recreational trails bring new economic life to cities, towns, and communities. Positive economic impacts of trail systems include offsetting individual and family costs that would otherwise go to gasoline purchases and healthcare. One result of this additional financial resource for individuals and families is that more spending can return to the private sector in the form of retail purchases. This is of particular importance for the Village Town Center, which lost two anchor stores and approximately 100 jobs as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Revitalization of this community center is crucial to the economic health of Mission Viejo.



For these reasons, the SOCEC strongly supports the City's proposed project which, if implemented, will further support our vision for a strong economic climate in South Orange County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Hernandez".

Victoria Hernandez  
Executive Director, South Orange County Economic Coalition