



The community's voice for the protection, restoration, responsible development, and celebration of the Napa River and its watershed through education and advocacy.

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*A "living" Napa River  
conveys equilibrium  
and harmony with all  
that it touches and  
resonates through  
the human and  
natural environment*

August 29, 2023

Board of Directors  
Napa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District  
804 1st St.  
Napa, CA 94559

Friends of the Napa River has been, "the community's voice for the protection, restoration, responsible development, and celebration of the Napa River and its watershed through education and advocacy" since 1994.

In keeping with this role, the Board of the Friends of the Napa River requests that the entire multi-use trail paralleling the proposed flood wall project on the western side of the Napa River be located on the river side of the flood walls to maintain maximum public access to the river.

#### Background

Four Friends of the Napa River Board members, who are also former Flood Control District Technical Advisory Panel members, reviewed the 15% and the 35% engineering plans for the "Flood Walls North of the Bypass" project. Appropriately, both plan versions retain and enhance the existing multi-use trail on the river side of the proposed flood wall from Lincoln Avenue to the end of the project at the Elks Club property.

But both plan versions show a long section of the river walkway paralleling the flood wall on the land side of the flood wall, both physically and visually cut off from the river. FONR submitted comments on both versions of the plans that called this out and requested that the entire trail, or at least as much as is feasible, be located on the river side of the flood wall.

Two representatives from FONR subsequently met with FCD engineering staff to discuss the feasibility of relocating the trail to the eastern/river side of the flood wall between its southern end at the River Terrace Inn northward to the Ace & Vine property on the south side of Lincoln Avenue.

#### Feasibility Considerations

During the meeting with FCD, FCD engineering staff agreed that there is plenty of room between the flood wall and the river bank to fit a multi-use trail on the "water side" or "river side" of the flood wall from the north end of the River Terrace Inn (at the south boundary of the Ag Commissioner office parcel) to the intersection of Wall Street and North Bay Drive (near the southern boundary of the Ace & Vine property). This area has a trail length of approximately 1,400 feet.

There appears to be sufficient area available at the south end of the wall where it ties in to the existing fill at the River Terrace Inn for both the required flood wall maintenance road on the "land side" of the flood wall and for a multi-use recreational trail on the "river side" of the wall. Both the maintenance road and the trail would slope down from the elevation of the hotel fill pad to the existing land elevations immediately to the north of the hotel fill.

Just south of North Bay Drive, the top of the proposed flood wall is only about 5 feet higher than the existing land elevation and a ramped "stile" trail crossing over the flood wall could easily be constructed that would transition the trail from the river side to the land side of the flood wall at the Ace & Vine property.

In contrast, there does not appear to be any currently feasible option for the recreational trail to be on the river side of the proposed flood wall at the Ace & Vine property south of Lincoln Avenue, so the approximately 500 linear feet of trail skirting that property would still have to be located on the flood wall's "land side."

### **Justification**

At the 35% FONR meeting with FCD, FCD staff pointed out that the recreational trail function may not be directly part of the flood control function, and therefore not be included in the project, but also considered that even if there was a recreational trail located on the "land side" of the flood wall, there is still a need for vehicle maintenance access to the "river side" of the flood wall and to the adjacent river bank. The "river side" recreational trail would provide this needed access and could therefore be included in the flood wall project as required maintenance access to the riverbank.

The potential added cost for the flood wall project to include the "river side" trail might be minimal because the Corps already requires a 15-foot wide "vegetation free" maintenance zone on the "river side" of the flood wall and the FCD will require vehicle access to that same side for river bank maintenance.

The 1997 "General Design Memorandum" standards that have guided the entire past flood control project include robust requirements that public access to the river be provided as part of all development adjacent to the river, including for this project. Following the GDM guidelines, the existing trail at the River Terrace Inn has visual access to the river. The existing trail north of Lincoln Avenue, which is to be retained and renovated in the flood wall plans, has both visual and physical access to the river. If this 1,400-foot length of trail is placed on the land side of the flood wall, it will deprive the public of river access for this distance.

As a federally funded project, the flood wall project should include appropriate diversity, equity, and inclusion components. The "river side" multi-use trail will provide quality river front access to all economic and social segments of the population, which would be denied by walling the trail off from the river.

### **Summary**

In sum, the Board of the Friends of the Napa River requests that the Napa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District Board support moving the described 1,400-foot long segment of the multi-use trail to the "river side" of the proposed flood wall.

Sincerely,

 BOARD SEC. For  
Francie Winnen, Board President