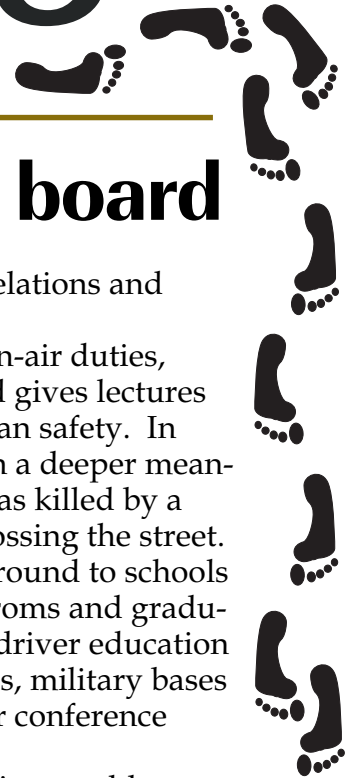




SanDiego

A Regional Coalition Promoting Walkable Communities



Monica Zech

Traffic reporter joins board

The familiar contralto of TV and radio traffic reporter Monica Zech can now be heard each month at WalkSanDiego Board meetings. She serves as

our expert on media relations and pedestrian crash data.

In addition to her on-air duties, Monica researches and gives lectures on traffic and pedestrian safety. In 1992, her work took on a deeper meaning when her father was killed by a drunk driver while crossing the street. Now she speaks year-round to schools – especially prior to proms and graduations – at health and driver education courses, to civic groups, military bases and company safety or conference meetings.

To arrange for Monica to address your group, call (858) 650-7059 or e-mail mzech@earthlink.net. Check out her website, www.moniczzech.com.

Fed-up residents turn to traffic calming

Among WalkSan Diego's more satisfying activities is helping residents combat speeding. During the past two years, we've met or corresponded with numerous neighborhoods. Residents often feel their only options are stop signs or speed bumps, but both have major drawbacks.

Stop signs encourage speeding between signs, and are frequently run by motorists once they sense there is little reason to stop. Speed bumps are unsightly, painful to some, and hinder or damage large vehicles.

To help field requests for better traffic calming solutions, WalkSanDiego is developing a citizen's guide. Call us for more information or log onto www.walksandiego.org and click on "Traffic Calming Basics."

Calming circles



Neighborhood traffic circles cost-effectively eliminate speeding and most crashes while accommodating emergency vehicles.

Welcome

A big welcome to WalkSanDiego's newest board member, Theresa Quiroz, a neighborhood activist from San Diego's City Heights neighborhood.

Theresa doesn't own a car so she walks a lot, a habit she picked up in her native England. She's spearheading our advocacy for a more pedestrian-friendly Street Design Manual in San Diego.

Growth plans hinge on walkability

The San Diego region expects another million inhabitants by 2020. Three agencies are creating plans to handle the onslaught. All

three depend heavily on improved walkability.

First the San Diego Association of Government's (SANDAG) REGION2020

process relies on increasing planned housing densities and mixing homes with other uses to relieve the potential crush of more vehicle trips. Transit stations would be targeted for compact development, with retail, housing, and offices intertwined in a comfortable walking environment. SANDAG envisions dramatically increasing transit use.

The City of San Diego's "City of Villages" concept envisions each neighborhood as self-sufficient, reducing the need for travel between far-flung neighborhoods and shopping/work destinations. Again, ease of walking between uses is key to making this idea work.

Finally, the Metropolitan Transit Development Board (MTDB) adopted a 20-year vision it calls "Transit First". The goal is to substantially increase the reach and convenience of transit, with new, more cost-effective technologies, such that transit becomes many people's first choice. Of course, riders must be able to walk comfortably and safely at either end of the transit trip.

WalkSanDiego is heavily involved in all of these efforts. Our goals in each case are to ensure the pedestrian environment and connections are properly considered, including mechanisms to fund better walking conditions in existing neighborhoods.



Bressi Ranch latest walkable development

Several new developments in the San Diego region seek to make walking a more pleasant, practical alternative to driving a car.

Among these are Otay Ranch (Chula Vista), 4S Ranch (inland north county unincorporated area), and Black Mountain Ranch (City of San Diego). They seek to achieve walkability through easy pedestrian connections, narrower streets to reduce speeding, and placing homes near shops, schools, and parks.

The latest example is Bressi Ranch, planned for a hilly section of southern Carlsbad. Although the steep terrain is a challenge, the developer, Lennar Communities, clearly understands the needs of pedestrians.

The Bressi Ranch plan features corner sidewalk "bulb-outs", four roundabouts, a modified grid street pattern, small parks dispersed throughout, a retail center, and connections to an adjacent employment area.

Reflecting principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), the orientation and design of homes allows "eyes on the street" which gives pedestrians both the sense and the reality of greater safety.

Even with excellent planning, experience warns that pedestrian-friendly features can be whittled away by car-oriented city standards. WalkSanDiego has vowed to actively support the current plan as it proceeds through municipal review.

Main Street make-overs lure back pedestrians

Most of the region's older commercial centers were built for horse-drawn wagons, streetcars, and pedestrians. Decades later, street widenings, parking removal, and other insults whisked potential customers to suburban malls and strip centers. Today the tide is reversing. A shining example is San Diego's Little Italy district.

After eight years of planning, ever-popular India Street has been rebuilt as a pedestrian-friendly destination. A gateway arch, widened sidewalks, corner bulb-outs, outdoor dining areas, period lighting, and landscaping have transformed two key blocks. This was made possible by "taking" a traffic lane. Further along the road, diagonal parking was installed.



The project was designed by the Centre City Development Corporation in partnership with the neighborhood and funded by "tax increment financing," a widely-used redevelopment tool. Coinciding with the project's completion, surrounding businesses and the real estate market have soared.

From San Ysidro to Oceanside, dozens of traditional "Main Streets" are using similar strategies. These include three neighborhoods along San Diego's Adams Avenue as well as University Heights, Golden Hill, North Park, Ocean Beach, Bird Rock, and

town centers in Cardiff, Encinitas, Escondido, Chula Vista, El Cajon, and Oceanside.

These transformations are in part due to a better understanding among small business owners that high-speed/high-volume roads often hurt, rather than help, small businesses. What draws customers is creating a memorable pedestrian experience.

As Little Italy has discovered, you know you've found success when the parking gets tight, thanks to all the new customers.



Little Italy beckons pedestrians with its period lightening, widened sidewalks and old world charm.

Member Focus:

Passionate pedestrian Gary Piro engineers 'livable street' standards

San Diego County's back country roads have been sleepy, narrow lanes for decades. In the early 1990's, the County Fire Department bought big new firetrucks, then pressed its fellow agencies to require 40-foot roads to accommodate them.

Gary Piro, chair of the Planning Commission at that time, sprang into action, forming a committee with firefighters, traffic engineers, environmental groups, and

residents to create new road standards for both public and private roads. The result was a standard of 24 feet for private roads, with possible variances down to 20 feet, retaining the traditional rural character. The committee made similar recommendations for public roads although these were never acted on.

In 1999, Gary learned residents of the narrow, tree-canopied streets of Olde Carlsbad were required to

pay \$20,000 to widen the street in front of their homes as a condition of any building permit. Soon, Citizens for Preservation of Olde Carlsbad (CPOC) was born.

With 850 painstaking signatures and an overflow City Council hearing, CPOC achieved the region's only alternative standard preserving older, narrow streets.

The streets have no sidewalks - pedestrians safely and comfortably share the street with slow-moving cars.

Crashes are rare, and full tree canopies eliminate the "heat island" effect so ubiquitous to San Diego. Emboldened, the city is now pursuing "Livable Streets" standards for new neighborhoods. Gary is leading the charge.

As owner of Piro Engineering: Livable Community Design, Gary is no planning novice but an avid student of "conservation planning." He writes a monthly newspaper column called "Livable Communities." About his business, which primarily designs rural subdivisions, Gary says, "I don't believe in the cookie cutter approach. I design each project to conform to the topography, keep as much open space as possible, and look for every loophole to minimize road widths."

Not all of our members can boast Gary's knowledge or achievements. But we're working on it.

San Diego, Carlsbad to revise street standards

Traffic engineers report their most frequent complaint isn't congestion but speeding in neighborhoods. This results directly from street standards borrowed from freeways - no kidding.

Cities all over the United States are rethinking their street standards, including Carlsbad and the City of San Diego. *WalkSanDiego* is in the trenches in both cities, arguing for adoption of narrower standards, tighter corners, and mandatory traffic calming in new developments.

Carlsbad plans to reduce its standard street from 40 feet to 34 feet, a definite improvement, but still not enough to deter speeding. To keep speeds low while still meeting its fire code standard for streets, the city will also

mandate traffic calming. *WalkSanDiego* is pushing to ensure the traffic calming requirements are explicit, and that the engineering staff receives training in traffic calming design.

In San Diego, the city has been trying for several years to revise its Street Design Manual. Some improvements have already been adopted, but we hear horror stories from developers such as requirements to widen streets when incorporating traffic calming devices - a flagrant misapplication of the concept. Another is requiring a street be designed for the highest speed possible. We will be working doggedly to assure the Street Design Manual incorporates more sensible standards and practices.

WalkSanDiego unveils website

Thanks to member David Boyne, WalkSanDiego launched its website in May at www.walksandiego.org.

The website highlights WalkSanDiego activities, suggests ways to improve the walking environment, and lists related links.

Visit it soon and let us know what you think!



- ✓ A U.S. pedestrian is killed every 99 minutes.
- ✓ 600 pedestrian deaths and 13,000 injuries occur annually in California.
- ✓ Pedestrians comprise 12% of traffic deaths in the U.S. and 28% in San Diego County.
- ✓ Percentage of pedestrians surviving a collision: 95% at 20 mph, 50% at 30 mph, and 15% at 40 mph.
- ✓ 85% of speeding motorists live in the neighborhood where cited.
- ✓ Collisions (all kinds) were reduced 90-93% in Seattle neighborhoods where stop signs were replaced with landscaped mini-circles.
- ✓ Cost of four stop signs is \$4000.
- ✓ Cost of a neighborhood mini-circle is \$8,000-\$15,000.

"Terrible Ten" attracts attention



At a press conference last fall, WalkSanDiego unveiled its *"Terrible Ten"* dangerous intersections, attracting wide media coverage and leading to an appearance on KPBS-Radio's "These Days" call-in program.

The passion and outrage of callers reflected the routine lack of adequate pedestrian facilities in this region.

The hand-picked *"Terrible Ten"* were:

- 1) Waring Road at Greenbrier Avenue (Paradise Hills)** – School route, wide road and narrow median too dangerous for kids. A child was killed here in 1998.
- 2) Friars Road and Frazee Road (Mission Valley)** – Frightening intersection, with the most direct crossing leg to a trolley station blocked off to pedestrians.
- 3) Mira Mesa Boulevard and Black Mountain Road (Mira Mesa)** – Wide intersection, poor pedestrian crosswalk.
- 4) 3rd Avenue and B Street (downtown San Diego)** – Double right-turn lanes block drivers' view of the crossing area when turning from the middle lane.
- 5) San Ysidro Boulevard (border area)** – Filled with pedestrians, built for speeding cars.
- 6) Broadway and H Street (Chula Vista)** – Right-turn pocket sends cars into the crosswalk even when pedestrians have the walk signal.
- 7) 2nd and Cedar Street (downtown San Diego)** – I-5 ramp pours cars into the path of crossing pedestrians.
- 8) Mission Gorge Road and Father Junipero Serra Trail (Santee)** – Housing on one side, the only sidewalk on the other, and a prohibition against crossing. Walkers bushwack through weeds.
- 9) Camino de la Reina (Mission Valley Center east entrance)** – High crossing area between busy shopping areas and a bus stop, with no signals or crosswalks.
- 10) I-5 at Clairemont Drive** – Blind freeway exit sends high speed vehicles into a crosswalk.

Become a Member

Membership in *WalkSanDiego*:

- Entitles you to free membership in the San Diego Coalition for Transportation Choices, our partner organization,
- Strengthens the pedestrian voice of the region,
- Connects you with other “walktivists” throughout the region and nation,
- Gives you a “seat at the table” of agencies allocating the region’s transportation funds, and
- Provides you the know-how to make changes in your community.

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SANDAG awards 'walkable' grants

At the urging of *WalkSanDiego*, SANDAG last year set aside \$1 million in regional transportation funds for Walkable Communities Demonstration Grants. A total of 45 applications were received totaling \$7.2 million. In January, the grants were awarded to seven recipients:

- ✓ Encinitas – \$340,000, Coast Highway 101 pedestrian-orientation project
- ✓ Golden Hill (San Diego) – \$200,000, 25th Street pedestrian improvements
- ✓ San Marcos – \$14,000, In-Pavement Flashing Light Crosswalk System
- ✓ El Cajon – Colored asphalt stamping to highlight pedestrian areas and signage \$320,000
- ✓ Clairemont (San Diego) – \$40,000, Balboa Avenue Vision Plan
- ✓ North Park (San Diego) – \$56,000, University Avenue Traffic Calming Plan
- ✓ Oceanside – \$29,000, Downtown Pedestrian Plan

Approximately half of the applications were truly innovative, as required. *WalkSanDiego* boardmembers Dave Schumacher and Andy Hamilton assisted preparers of two of the winning proposals, and member Tina Zinzola served on the application evaluation committee. Our congratulations go to the winning cities and neighborhoods.

WalkSanDiego will be urging SANDAG to repeat the program in future years.

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