

# FootNotes

*A Regional Coalition Promoting Walkable Communities*

## Fundraiser rings in holidays

Ring in the holidays at WalkSanDiego's Holiday Fundraiser, Wednesday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, 6-8pm at North Park Art Produce: *A Gallery for Pedestrians*. We'll honor San Diego Councilmember Toni Atkins as the first recipient of the "Golden Footprints" Award, hear about WalkSanDiego's most recent triumphs, and experience a "pedestrian-oriented gallery." Enjoy scrumptious Italian fare and live music. Proceeds benefit our "Next Steps" Campaign to hire an executive director in 2003 AND "Making Strides" effort in North Park.

Ticket orders received before December 2<sup>nd</sup> are \$15 for members, \$20 for non-members. The price goes up \$5 thereafter. But space is limited so don't delay.



## City of Villages retains walking, dumps density

The San Diego City Council voted 6-3 to take a new direction in the city's urban form by adopting a new Strategic Framework Element and 5-Year Action Plan on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. The element, dubbed "City of Villages," calls for walkable, mixed-use core areas to reduce reliance on automobiles and increase the effectiveness of transit.

The Council rejected a proposal to increase density above allowed levels in some neighborhoods, citing a new San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) population forecast that anticipates slower growth than previously expected.

WalkSanDiego testified in support of the City of Villages policies (see our testimony at [www.walksandiego.org](http://www.walksandiego.org)) emphasizing that a scheduled "Pilot Village" program will be the key to showing how neighborhoods can benefit from more intensive development at pedestrian-oriented nodes connected by frequent transit services.

Despite rosy SANDAG projections to the contrary, we frankly doubt traffic congestion will decrease by 2030. In our opinion, the City of Villages strategy, coupled with far better transit service, is the only way residents will have an alternative to nightmarish future traffic.



*New policies are designed to will encourage mixed-use, walkable developments such as this recent Kensington project.*

walk to park  
go to store

# Mobility 2030 falls short

SANDAG's newest long-range transportation plan for the San Diego region, called Mobility 2030, covers everything from pedestrians to bikes, vehicles, and airplanes, and a funding plan for each.



The plan follows a new format. Instead of treating highways, transit, and other modes separately, it attempts to integrate the many systems into a seamless document. It's a nice philosophy, but the result is unconvincing.

Mobility 2030 includes welcome improvements. It allocates \$25 million over five years to reward "Smart Growth" developments, proposes \$230 million for bicycle routes and pedestrian improvements (doubling previous allocations), and promises an annual "State of the Commute" report. This report will include "changes in bicycling and walking," which implies SANDAG will finally begin counting pedestrians, as we've been urging for years.

But Mobility 2030 falls far short of what we were hoping. First, the various transportation modes are not well integrated. Too much of the planning is left to future documents such as the promising but so far undefined Comprehensive Regional Plan.

Second, previous versions of the Regional Transportation Plan laid out specific policies for each jurisdiction to follow for each mode, including separate discussion of pedestrian facilities. Most jurisdictions ignored the policies, but SANDAG at least had a rational policy basis for judging roadway projects it funds.

Third, implementation of SANDAG's recently adopted pedestrian guidelines is not addressed.

WalkSanDiego will be submitting comments urging Mobility 2030 lay out more specific commitments regarding the pedestrian environment. The document - and all previous plans - fail to recognize that pedestrian accommodations are the glue that knits the transportation network together. We'd like to see the policy basis for judging arterial projects,

freeway interchanges, transit improvements, and even Smart Growth projects. This will help ensure pedestrian access is a high priority, rather than an afterthought as the region grows.

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**To receive a copy,  
visit [www.sandag.org](http://www.sandag.org)  
or call 619-595-5300**

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An example of how this would be helpful is in planning transit projects that rely on roads.

No agency knows exactly how transit customers reach stops or stations, and what it might take to get them to walk, or walk farther. And why is it that pedestrian fatalities cluster along busy transit routes? Would safer conditions attract more riders, relieving congestion?



What are the walking and biking conditions around stations and stops? No one knows the answers, and it concerns us that Mobility 2030 doesn't even raise the questions.

# North Park rebuilds historic pedestrian character

In light of the location of our Holiday Fundraiser, this issue focuses on the San Diego neighborhood of North Park, one of the region's more walkable areas. Once the principle shopping area outside of downtown, North Park's commercial core was devastated by 1960's and 70's mall development in

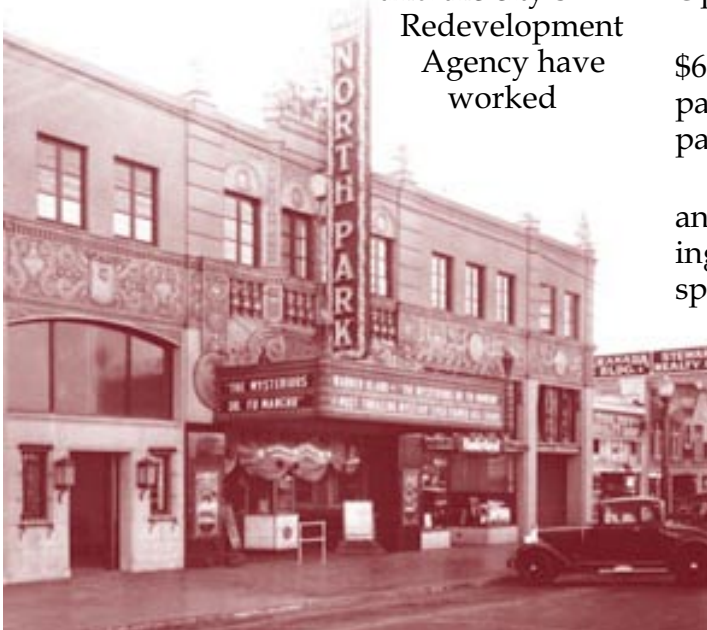


Mission Valley. However, since the mid-1990's, local civic groups have presided over a steady resurgence, by rebuilding the historic pedestrian character. This insert describes neighborhood planning and redevelopment projects now underway, all of them predicated on greater "walkability."

## North Park Theatre Redevelopment

Readapted vintage theatres can lead the revitalize traditional Main Streets. The old North Park Theatre represents such an opportunity. It was once a key venue for vaudeville and silent films, but seismic issues and lack of tenants have idled it the last 12 years. North Park Main Street

(NPMS), the local redevelopment board, and the city's Redevelopment Agency have worked



*Reviving the North Park Theatre has been a 20 year dream.*

hard to return the stucco and relief building to use as a live theatre. After many false starts, NPMS and the Redevelopment Agency have secured a developer and a potential operator, San Diego Lyric Opera (formerly San Diego Comic Opera). At least 16 theatre and musical groups want to use the space, in addition to the Lyric Opera.

The theatre, seating 800, will require a \$6 million retrofit and construction of 400 parking spaces nearby. A \$7 million parking garage is currently out for bid.

Although the theatre is expected to annually bring \$7.2 million in direct spending and several times that in economic spin-offs, some local opposition has surfaced because the plan includes re-installing parking meters (removed in the 1960's) to secure bond financing.

North Park Main Street and most other local groups strongly support the plan, meters and all, and hope to make the design compatible with an active, pedestrian-oriented street. City Council consideration is scheduled for January 2003.

# University Avenue Traffic Calming Project

With WalkSanDiego's help, the local business association, North Park Main Street (NPMS), secured a \$56,000 SANDAG grant to apply traffic calming principles to a 1.4 mile segment of University Avenue, the main commercial corridor.

This street serves around 20,000 vehicles per day – including the region's highest transit volumes – with dangerously narrow lanes and confusing intersections. Traffic crashes are well above the regional average for such roads, with pedestrians, bikes, and parked cars as frequent victims.

A consultant team, led by the design firm KTU+A, was assisted by a local steering committee, the Metropolitan Transit Development Board, city engineers, and three public workshops, in completing a redesign plan in October.

The most radical feature of the proposed design is a dedicated lane for busses, bikes, and right-turning vehicles. Left turning vehicles will use left-turn pockets. Medians will block some left turns from side streets, and provide safe refuge for crossing pedestrians. Some parking will be removed to side streets. These changes will stabilize

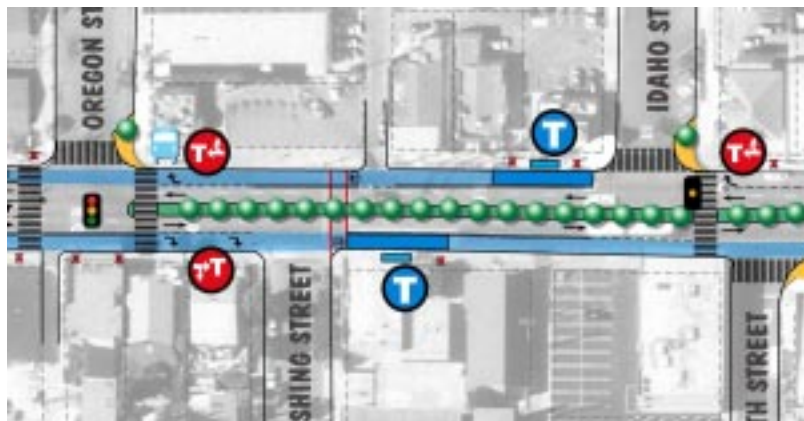


*WalkSanDiego held a press conference in North Park to release a statewide report on pedestrian fatalities.*

flow and reduce unsafe weaving, speeding and parking maneuvers. Numerous pedestrian crossings, bulb-outs, and the medians will enhance pedestrian and driver safety.

The design increases parking by 52 spaces by placing diagonal spaces on wide side streets. This will have the added benefit of calming the side streets and, in combination with corner bulb-outs, discouraging neighborhood cut-through traffic.

Estimated implementation costs are \$6.5 million, requiring a long-term phasing plan. However, NPMS has already secured a \$300,000 Caltrans grant for engineering work, and \$450,000 for construction of the first phase. If North Park is selected as one of the city's three "pilot villages," University Avenue could receive targeted city funds as well, including a slice of the proposed \$230 million pedestrian/bike funding pie from SANDAG.



*The proposed redesign of University Avenue includes an exclusive transit lane and safety benefits for pedestrians and bicyclists.*

# North Park Main Street

North Park's Association of Business has been active for decades, but found real success in 1996 with certification as a "Main Street" organization.

The Main Street model, developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, builds on the appeal of historic commercial buildings as a way to invigorate older commercial districts, preserving historic architecture.

North Park Main Street (NPMS), which opened almost literally in the shadow of the North Park Theatre, quickly established University Avenue as an "Arts, Culture, and Entertainment District."

Sidewalks, splashed with eye-catching colors and artwork, have been expanded on several blocks. Artistic bus shelters and art-adorned utility boxes greet pedestrians. Historic facades have been restored. An annual street fair and weekly Farmer's Market have been very successful.

High-end restaurants, galleries, and boutique shops have joined vendors of hardware, furniture and basic services, local diners, and discount marts. This

eclectic mix echoes the diversity of the local population.

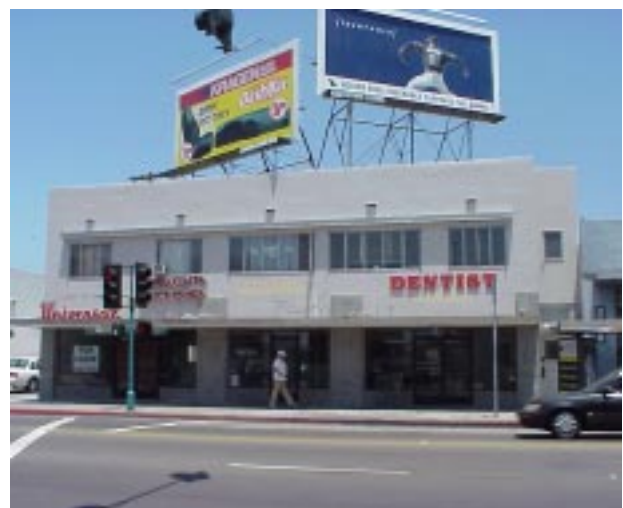
In ways too numerous to mention, NPMS has aggressively focused on the quality of the pedestrian experience.

In 1997, a "big-box" discount grocer unsuccessfully proposed to wall off part of the street frontage and close an alley and side street. The project roused local residents to the defense of the area's historic pedestrian character.

The result was the adoption of pedestrian-oriented Development Criteria that have won several local and national awards, and Design Guidelines for new development. Having clear development rules has spurred developer interest and revealed a new obstacle: extremely low density zoning.

NPMS is currently working to allow moderately higher densities to make more projects "pencil out" and encourage mixed-use projects. Accordingly, it also plans to apply for the city's Pilot Village Demonstration Project (see page 1) in hopes of winning infrastructure funding to support future development.

## Universal Building: Before & After



*The building housing North Park Main Street benefited from the organizations's Storefront Improvement Program.*

Which is before?

# Medians – Do they help or hurt business?

Many pedestrian-friendly street improvements include raised medians. Medians and accompanying improvements typically reduce crashes by 25-50% or more while decreasing congestion.

However, where left turns are blocked, merchants fear losing customers. What do the data show?

A 1999 Kansas Department of Transportation (DOT) study of 15 businesses that had filed lawsuits over reduced left-turn access found that only two actually suffered. These were gas stations where motorists were required to go an extra two miles out of their way. The others were unaffected, and several upgraded their businesses following the changes, presumably due to higher sales.

A similar study in Texas during the mid-1990's found most business types reported increases in numbers of customers per day and gross sales, except for gasoline stations and automotive repair shops, which reported decreases.

Employment within the improved corridors went up overall, with some exceptions during construction. Similar results were found in Iowa and Florida.

Will customers make U-turns to access businesses?



*Medians generally have no affect on local businesses or actually increase sales, while improving safety and traffic flow.*

A Florida DOT publication, "Access Management: Answers to Your Questions" ([www.fladot.com](http://www.fladot.com)) states, "The answer to this question is an overwhelming yes. Surveys of motorists have shown that a vast majority of them have no problem making U-turns to access businesses."

The publication further states, "In fact, most felt... the improvements make roads safer and approve of the changes, despite minor inconveniences associated with U-turns."

The report also notes that access by large delivery trucks can usually be accomplished via an alternate route, rather than by changing the road design.

So what's the bottom line?

Data suggest that while merchants are usually pessimistic, improving a road by adding medians and related upgrades signals to drivers that the area is on the upswing. Generally, the safety and traffic flow benefits outweigh minor inconvenience to motorists and delivery drivers, such that sales are unaffected or show an increase.

(For more information, see "Economic Impacts of Access Management" at [www.cutr.eng.usf.edu](http://www.cutr.eng.usf.edu)).

# Fall walking tours focus on history, health & holidays

Come explore local features in some of San Diego's most walkable neighborhoods on our Fall 2002 Walking Tours. Bring comfortable shoes, sun protection, and your curiosity.

**Balboa Park History & Landscapes** (with Uptown Partnership)  
 10 a.m. to 12 noon Saturday, November 16  
 Meet at the corner of 6th & Laurel  
 Free admission

Join landscape architect Laura Burnett, historian Vonn-Marie May, and WalkSanDiego for an informative walk through Balboa Park. Learn about its history and landscape, focusing on the Central Prado and Palisades areas with an optional trek to Morley Field.

RSVP to (619) 298-2541 by November 13

## Ocean Beach

10 a.m. to 12 noon Sunday, November 17  
 Meet at the foot of Ocean Beach Pier  
 Members: free

Non-members: \$5 donation

Explore one of San Diego's most eclectic and historic neighborhoods. Park in the Newport Avenue public lot (by the beach).

For more information:

Dave Schumacher 619-557-4565 or Katie Cooper 619-232-7555

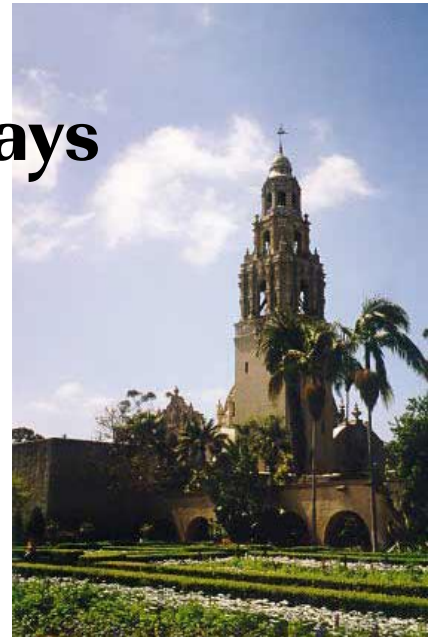
## Turkey Walk

(with Uptown Partnership)  
 4 to 6 p.m. Friday, November 22  
 Meet at University Avenue & Vermont Street  
 Free admission

Join us for a brisk 3-mile walk through Hillcrest and Balboa Park with health and fitness professionals who will provide helpful exercise and nutrition tips for the holidays.

RSVP to (619) 298-2541 by November 20

For more information, visit our website: [www.walksandiego.org](http://www.walksandiego.org).



Fall features a walk in the park.

## WSD to add 'Inc.' to name

Two and a half years after our official unveiling, WalkSanDiego should soon become a California corporation. With pro-bono assistance from Morrison & Foerster, the state's largest law firm, WalkSanDiego recently filed for incorporation and non-profit status.

In the very near future, we expect to be notified that our non-profit status is granted. Once that happens, all donations to WalkSanDiego will be tax deductible, retroactive to approximately September 2001. (Contact us if you need to know the exact date.)

We gratefully acknowledge Morrison & Foerster for their generous help, and the San Diego Coalition for Transportation Choices for serving as our fiscal agent the last three years.

### WalkSanDiego's 2002 Fundraiser

6 p.m. Wednesday, December 11, 2002

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Please return this form with payment to:**

WalkSanDiego  
 P. O. Box 122491  
 San Diego, CA 92112-2491

#### Tickets

\$20 (\$15 member) before Dec. 2;

Add \$5 after Dec. 2 (space is limited)

# Tickets \_\_\_\_\_

Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### Donations

I wish to donate \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(Make checks payable to WalkSanDiego)

# Become a Member

Membership in *WalkSanDiego*:

- Entitles you to free membership in the San Diego Coalition for Transportation Choices, our partner organization.
- Allows you free admission to walks, talks, and training events.
- Strengthens the pedestrian voice of the region.
- Gives you a "seat at the table" of agencies allocating the region's transportation funds.
- Provides you the know-how to make changes in your community.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Walking interests \_\_\_\_\_

- Individual - \$25     Family - \$40
- Benefactor - \$50+
- Student, senior or treading lightly - \$10
- Groups 25+ employees or members of a business or organization - \$250
- Corporate member - \$500

Send to:



P.O. Box 122491  
San Diego, CA 92112-2491

Phone: (619) 557-4565

Fax: (619) 744-5965

mail@walksandiego.org

[www.walksandiego.org](http://www.walksandiego.org)



# WSD assembles Advisory Board

*WalkSanDiego* is proud to announce the formation of an Advisory Board.

Ten distinguished leaders in government, academia, design, and transportation have agreed to meet with us once a year to let us know how we're doing. Soon they'll be featured on the Advisory Board page at [www.walksandiego.org](http://www.walksandiego.org).

The ten are:

- ★ Bill Lieberman, transit planner (formerly Metropolitan Transit Development Board)
- ★ Dr. James Sallis, San Diego State University and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- ★ Linda Sloan, President, American Public Works Association, San Diego Chapter
- ★ Mark Rohrlick, Vice-President, Lennar Communities
- ★ Mary Sessom, Mayor, Lemon Grove
- ★ Michael Stepner, San Diego Economic Development Corporation
- ★ Monica Zech, Pedestrian Safety Specialist, City of El Cajon
- ★ Dr. Nico Calavita, Department of Urban Studies, San Diego State University
- ★ Dr. Sheila Sarkar, Traffic Safety Center, SDSU
- ★ Kathy Garcia, Vice-President, Wallace Roberts and Todd

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