

FootNotes

A Regional Coalition Promoting Walkable Communities

Traffic Calming Manual

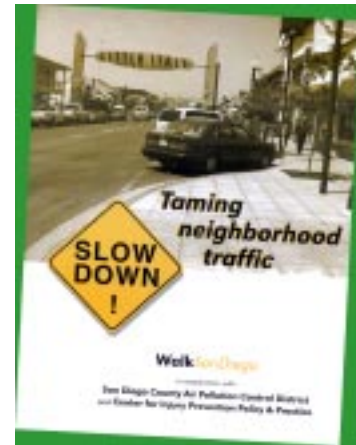
Slow Down! now available

WalkSanDiego receives so many calls for help dealing with speeding neighborhood traffic that we sat down and wrote a book on it. Our new manual, *Slow Down! Taming Neighborhood Traffic*, is now available for \$15.

Inspired by the printed and hand-lettered signs found in neighborhoods all over the region, the 32-page manual was created in partnership with the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District and San Diego State University's Center for Injury Prevention Policy and Practice. The manual illustrates 26 different strategies for

slowing cars and the process for deciding which strategies apply to a given neighborhood.

Contact Andy Hamilton at andy.hamilton@sdcountry.ca.gov or 858-650-4671 to order your copy.



Fall Events

● **Otay Ranch Walk** – 9:30 a.m., Saturday, October 25. So how did walkable Otay Ranch turn out? You be the judge. Meet at Sharp Hospital parking lot at East Palomar Street and Santa Andrea Road, Chula Vista. \$5 (members free).

● **Downtown Dazzle** – 10 a.m., Saturday, November 22. Is downtown San Diego's booming residential development making the area more walkable? Meet at the Downtown Information Center, ground floor, 225 Broadway (next to MacDonald's). \$5 (members free).

● **Mission Hills History** – 9 a.m. Saturday, November 15. Meeting on forming the proposed Mission Hills Historic District followed by walking tour of historic structures. Meet at Mission Hills Methodist Church, 4044 Lark Street (at Fort Stockton). Co-sponsored by Uptown Partnership. Free.

● **Member Night** – December (date to be determined). Introduce a friend to WalkSanDiego, greet your fellow members, and munch hors d'ouvres as we bestow our annual "Golden Footprints Award" and recount this year's accomplishments. Downtown Visitor Center, 225 Broadway. \$10 (members free). Watch for details.

Thanks

Thanks to pro-bono assistance from the law firm of Morrison and Forrester,

MoFo

WalkSanDiego is now recognized by the Internal

Revenue Service and the State of California as a tax-exempt non-profit.

All contributions to WalkSanDiego are now tax deductible. Our sincere thanks go to attorney Clint Davis and the entire firm.



Song rail bridges two communities

In July, the 25th Street bridge over SR-94 in Golden Hill and Sherman Heights received a badly needed railing to protect children using the bridge to walk to school. But there's something different about this railing – it was designed in part by a composer, Joseph Waters, and a public artist, Roman DeSalvo.

The two artists collaborated on metal chimes welded to the vertical elements of the railing. Children walking along the bridge can hear an original song by striking the chimes with a stick. The melody takes the form of a palindrome – it sounds the same played in either direction. There are also palindromes within the palindrome. At the festive unveiling, Mr. Waters assured the gathered crowd it could take local residents several years to discover all the patterns.

According to the project manager Brian Schoenfisch, a City of San Diego planner, the creation of the song rail was itself a



City Councilmember Ralph Inzunza walks across the song bridge he helped make possible.

bridge between the two communities as each had to compromise on the intent and design of the project. Twice, unanticipated costs were covered by timely allocations from Ralph Inzunza, the local councilmember. The railing was funded primarily by SANDAG's Walkable Communities Demonstration Grant, awarded in 2000.

WalkSanDiego was the first to suggest the project include a public art element. The Golden Hill Community Development Corporation and the two communities did the rest.

Become a Member

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Walking interests _____

- Individual - \$25 Family - \$40
- Benefactor - \$50+ Sponsor - \$100
- Student, senior or treading lightly - \$10
- Groups 25+ employees or members of a business or organization - \$250
- Corporate member - \$500

Send to: WalkSanDiego
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Walk to School Day



October 8 was International Walk to School Day. WalkSanDiego participated with these enthusiastic students from Valley Vista Elementary in Bonita.

Need to include walking and biking

TransNet negotiations get underway

The San Diego region's half-cent sales tax for transportation, known as TransNet, is due to expire in 2008. To authorize the sales tax for another 30 years, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) is expected to put a measure on the ballot in 2004.

The 1988 measure helped build scores of highway lanes, transit projects, and some biking and pedestrian facilities. SANDAG will craft a new ballot measure by December 5, 2003, so the wheeling and dealing with various interests is heating up to ensure the two-thirds approval threshold is within reach.

So where does walking fit into TransNet? So far, it doesn't.

For years, SANDAG has given great lip service but little funding to better walking conditions. Although we have arguably the best climate for walking in North America, we have among the most dangerous conditions (see the Spring 2003 FootNotes newsletter).

This time around Walk SanDiego is teaming with other interests to insist severely underfunded non-motorized transportation be addressed in TransNet.

Specifically, we're asking that 10% of the \$9 billion to be raised by TransNet over the next 30 years be dedicated to pedestrian and biking facilities. That works out to \$31 million a year for new sidewalks, repairs, bike lanes, paths, and traffic calming in neighborhoods plagued by speeding traffic.

This also includes \$7.5 million per year for a Smart Growth Incentive – rewarding high-density housing around transit centers/stops. We're also asking SANDAG to require all roadway projects it funds to follow SANDAG's own Pedestrian Design Guidelines.

If TransNet's proposed transit and Smart Growth projects are going to make a dent in the region's worsening traffic congestion, SANDAG must take walking and biking seriously.



Pedestrians frequently cross 6th Avenue to reach Balboa Park. Can the street be safer?

Uptown strives to calm traffic

As part of Uptown Partnership's effort to create a Traffic Calming Plan for 4th, 5th, and 6th Avenues, WalkSanDiego completed a Pedestrian Mobility Element earlier this year that included recommendations for traffic calming different areas of Hillcrest, Mission Hills, Bankers Hill, Park West, and University Heights.

Turning its attention to 4th, 5th, and 6th Avenues, Uptown Partnership is finding these streets serve unusually high volumes of regional traffic going to and from downtown San Diego. Once the Padres' Petco Park begins operating, far more traffic is expected on game days.

The Partnership has conducted two large community workshops and is considering reducing the number of lanes in some segments, installing diagonal parking, pedestrian refuge medians, and corner "bulb-outs." A final plan is scheduled to be forwarded to the city by the end of the year.

Neighborhood Notes

Some of our latest projects to make neighborhoods more walkable

Palm Avenue Puzzle

For years, South Bay's Palm Avenue has been a congested thoroughfare crisscrossed by students and families on foot, and serving as a major bike route. This eclectic roadway, which is on the state highway system, is the target of a new effort by SANDAG and Caltrans to address its severe congestion and safety problems.

As a side project, WalkSanDiego is working with the City of Imperial Beach on a pedestrian safety education campaign. This city has one of the most transit-dependent populations in the region and among the lowest car ownership rates. That means lots of pedestrians.

Unfortunately, too many residents don't hesitate to dart into high-speed traffic. Palm Avenue has become notorious for pedestrian collisions with tragic results. We hope to help change the road itself, and the habits of local residents who use it.

Torrey Hills Terror

The five-year old community of Torrey Hills was designed and built before the City of San Diego revised its Street Design Manual to be more pedestrian and bike-friendly. This community of cul de sacs joined by a ring road should be an ideal place for children to walk to school and residents to walk to the centrally-located park and shopping areas.

The reality is the streets are far wider than necessary and drivers behave accordingly, routinely traveling 50 mph around blind curves. Only the bravest residents walk anywhere that would involve crossing a street. Parents are reluctant to let their children walk to school, and therefore, school drop-off and pick-up is a familiar scene of car-chaos so well-known to San Diego parents.

At the request of a desperate group of residents, WalkSanDiego recently

toured the area and presented possible traffic calming approaches. The residents eagerly bought up several copies of *Slow Down!*, our new traffic calming manual.

The next step is to determine where speed interventions would be safest and most effective, and how to pay for them. The city has little extra money (but plenty of road paint). However, there are other potential funding sources, and if necessary, WalkSanDiego will be there to advocate for the community's interests.

Normal Heights Partners

with Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

A study by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and WalkSanDiego in 2000 found the mid-city San Diego community of Normal Heights to not only be quite walkable but to have residents who weighed less on average because they walked more. But this highly diverse neighborhood has visions of even better walking conditions.

During the last year, WalkSanDiego has assisted the Normal Heights Planning Group and the city to apply for a \$200,000 RWJF "Active Living by Design" grant to plan pedestrian and traffic improvements and promote physical activity. WalkSanDiego authored the initial grant application and

helped design the project strategies. While the application made the top 31 out of 900 submissions, we missed the cut to 25, only because our project was similar to others funded. However, RWJF's Dr. Rich Killingsworth felt so strongly about the proposal he agreed to advocate for it with local foundations, corporations, and SANDAG.



Adams Avenue in San Diego's Normal Heights features pedestrian-oriented storefronts such as this small grocery.



San Diego in the dark on street lights

David Hopkins is a partially-sighted senior who gets around on public transit and his own two feet. Ask him what his greatest travel challenge is and he doesn't hesitate to tell you — dark streets.

Dave recently joined the board of WalkSanDiego but has long agitated for more street lighting in the City of San Diego. Among major metro areas, San Diego is possibly the most poorly lit. Residential streets are typically extremely dark except at some intersections. Mid-block light fixtures are rare.

Residents of some low-density suburbs prefer dark streets, but more urban neighborhoods well-served by transit and with superior walking conditions cry out for more lighting.

Dave has made better lighting his life's passion with some noteworthy success. Since the mid-1990's, he has almost single-handedly convinced the San Diego City Council to upgrade its lighting policies, if not the lights themselves.

This includes leading the fight for mid-block lighting every 150 feet within one-

quarter mile of transit stops and in high crime areas.

Last year, Dave helped convince the Council to adopt a standard favoring bright white lights (with anti-light-pollution designs) over the city's dull yellow lights that obscure colors at night. (Councilmember Toni Atkins championed this effort — part of the reason she received WalkSanDiego's 2002 Golden Footprints Award.)

The next milestone will be finding a way to fund more street lights so these policies yield more actual light. The city has never determined how many or where new lights are needed. Nonetheless, approved requests from residents have generated a backlog of \$13 million, well above the city's meager budget for new lights.

To provide more funding, neighborhoods may assess themselves by creating a Lighting and Landscape Maintenance District (LLMD). Unfortunately, this mechanism has proved largely unworkable.

Dave and WalkSanDiego will be approaching the City Council soon with a proposal to quantify the lighting deficit and suggest ways to improve the LLMD concept so more neighborhoods can use it. In the meantime, if you see an energetic guy with a white cane bending someone's ear about street lighting, stop and thank Dave for brightening our dark city.

San Diego gives pedestrians a 'head start' at signals

Beginning in May 2003, the City of San Diego Traffic Engineering Division began changing the signal timing at some busy intersections to give pedestrians a 3-second "head start". That is, the walk signal flashes on prior to the green light.

This gives pedestrians a chance to get well into the crosswalk before traffic moves. As a result, pedestrians are right in front of right-turning drivers rather than in the periphery of their visual field, creating a far safer condition.

Let's face it: the city is broke. So kudos to Traffic Engineering for continuing to

look for creative ways to improve pedestrian safety anyway.



As this pedestrian could no doubt testify, head start pedestrian signals reduce the hazard posed by right turning vehicles.

In-pavement flashers light up crosswalk

Flashing lights embedded in the pavement alert motorists to watch for pedestrians at a San Marcos intersection. Funded by a San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) Walkable Communities Grant, the \$14,000 flashing lights were installed in a crosswalk near Knob Hill Elementary School. The lights flash when the crosswalk light is activated.

Traffic Analyst Kathlyne Barnum reports that, as with many new technologies, there were problems at first, but city staff, the school, parents, and the surrounding neighborhood are very happy with the resulting safety improvement.

The city is embarking on a formal evaluation, which other cities will undoubtedly want to obtain.



Flashing lights outline this crosswalk in San Marcos to alert drivers when pedestrians are crossing the street.

When we asked whether the city would install more in-pavement lights, the response was “absolutely – if we can find the money.” Hence the reason we feel it’s critical to dedicate renewed TransNet funds for more pedestrian facilities!



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