

# FootNotes

*A Regional Coalition Promoting Walkable Communities*

## WalkSanDiego hires executive director

WalkSanDiego is proud to announce that Tina Zenzola has become WalkSanDiego's first Executive Director, on a part-time basis. Tina has been our Advocacy Chair for three years. Her primary duties will be to implement the Next Steps Project, funded by a \$50,000 grant from Kaiser Permanente, to write additional grants for 2006, and to receive WalkSanDiego calls and correspondence. Tina brings a wealth of experience in public health communication and neighborhood planning. The Kaiser-funded project involves working with South Bay neighborhoods, training residents of

lower income communities to advocate on their own behalf for pedestrian safety improvements. Kaiser had funded a large obesity-prevention project in San Diego, and sought out WalkSanDiego to begin to improve the walking environment – a major component of increasing physical activity.



*Tina Zenzola is WSD's new executive director.*

## TransNet passes – Now what?

Long-time readers know WalkSanDiego promoted walking elements in the November 2004 ballot mea-

sure, Prop A, the TransNet sales tax. The vote could not have been closer. By a .01% margin, 2/3 of participating San Diego County voters extended the half-cent TransNet sales tax for 40 years. The original tax was approved in 1987 and was scheduled to expire in 2008. Due in part to WalkSanDiego's efforts, the tax extension includes 2% (~\$280 million) for walking, biking, and traffic calming projects, and another 2% for smart growth (walkable) projects.

The current TransNet tax doesn't expire for another three years, and most of

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*Members of the Euclid Avenue Revitalization Action Plan Committee accept a Golden Footprints Award. (See page 2.)*



# WalkSanDiego bestows Golden Footprints Awards



On February 24, 2005, WalkSanDiego bestowed its third annual Golden Footprints Awards. The winners were celebrated at a festive gathering of members, city staff, developers, and others working for better walking conditions in the region. The event was held at Exotic Bamboo, a popular tea shop located in San Diego's Hillcrest neighborhood.

Awards were presented in four categories: Public Agency, Non-Profit Organization, Individual, and Project or Program.

In presenting the awards, WalkSanDiego President Jamie Moody stated, "We hear lots of talk about smart growth, obesity prevention, and walkable neighborhoods. The truth is, there are numerous rules, development practices, and funding shortfalls that make creating walkable communities a monumental task. Tonight we recognize people who are walking the talk to make the San Diego region more walkable."

The winners were:

★ **Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC)** - In the Government Agency category, CCDC won for its many pedestrian

friendly street and building projects in Little Italy, the Marina District, Cortez Hill, the Ballpark District, the Core Area, and the Gaslamp Quarter.

Example techniques include corner bulbouts, reduced street widths, wide sidewalks, contrasting materials in crosswalks, active building fronts rather than blank walls, street trees, and traffic signals providing an all-way walking phase, known as a pedestrian scramble, at Fifth and Market Streets.

Project Manager Alexandra Elias accepted the award for CCDC.

★ **Downtown Encinitas Main Street Association (DEMA) and the City of Encinitas** - In the Program/Project category, DEMA and the City of Encinitas were recognized for the rebuilding of a portion of Coast Highway 101, the city's traditional main street. Improvements included corner curb extensions, new sidewalks, imbedded art reflecting local themes, new landscaping, and diagonal parking.

The \$5 million project has led to a revival of the historic and highly walkable downtown area. New businesses and restaurants have located to the street, which on any given day is filled with residents and tourists. Accepting the award were Peder Norby (DEMA), Planner Dave deCordova, and Assistant City Manager Richard Phillips.

★ **Euclid Avenue Revitalization Action Program Committee** - The Euclid RAP Committee was awarded in the category of non-profit organization. The committee was sited for its many efforts to improve walking in the Euclid area of San Diego.

Recently, the group was successful in helping design and install a pedestrian-friendly gateway enhancement at Euclid and University Avenues. The committee also worked with the city to obtain a coveted



CCDC Program Manager Alexandra Elias, left, accepts a Golden Footprints Award from President Jamie Moody.

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# Awards...

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Caltrans "Environmental Justice" grant for creating bike and pedestrian-accessible improvements along a major portion of Euclid Avenue.

The award was accepted by Jim Varnadore and eight other RAP Committee members.

★ **Richard Beas** – Mr. Beas won in the Individual category for his multi-year efforts to convince the City of San Marcos to provide a crosswalk and flashing light system on an industrially-zoned street frequently crossed by employees going to and from a parking lot. So far, the city has refused to provide the crosswalk.

WalkSanDiego has provided comments to the city pointing out its outdated standards for placing crosswalks, so far to no avail.

Despite these setbacks, WalkSanDiego believes the issue has raised the city's aware-

ness that it must reconsider traffic standards affecting pedestrians.

★ **Bureau of Customs and Border Protection** – The Customs Bureau was presented an Honorable Mention for its SENTRI (Secure Electronic Network for Travelers Rapid Inspection) Program. The program provides rapid processing for pedestrians who cross the border frequently and who are pre-screened for a special pass, similar to the vehicle lane version instituted in 1995.

Since its inception in August 2004, the pedestrian SENTRI program has enrolled over 2,500 commuters.

Program Manager Thomas Keen, the brain-child behind the project, accepted the award.

Attendees were also treated to an inspirational presentation by Olympic Race Walker and current 50 km U.S. Champion, Philip Dunn. Philip trains at the ARCO Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista, and lives in North Park with his wife Liz.

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# TransNet...

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these funds have already been spoken for. Still, TransNet will provide future funds for realizing many of the ambitious walkability goals of the Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP), adopted by SANDAG in 2004. In January, SANDAG assembled a "Stakeholders Working Group" to advise it on implementing the RCP and the Regional Transportation Plan, which TransNet funds will help fund. (WalkSanDiego board member Kevin Reese and our frequent partner, the San Diego County Bicycle Coalition, are members.) To-



*New pedestrian facilities such as this raised crosswalk in Solana Beach will be eligible for future TransNet funds.*

gether, these two plans will go a long way to determining whether future San Diego residents remain stuck in

their cars, or have an opportunity to use their feet, bicycles, and an efficient transit system in future years.

## Promote walkability

# WalkSanDiego contracts advance

WalkSanDiego has contracted with three cities and one neighborhood group to advance walkability:

◆ **Uptown, San Diego** – WalkSanDiego helped launch and conduct a Pedestrian Safety Awareness Campaign in Hillcrest.

The effort included distributing literature and reflective zipper pulls, posting signs in store windows, and conducting a press conference featuring Councilmember Toni Atkins. WalkSanDiego also negotiated with the city to install countdown timers and other intersection safety features in Hillcrest. Thanks go to RBF Consulting for donating printing services and materials.

◆ **Imperial Beach** – WalkSanDiego is helping



*Andy Hamilton (2<sup>nd</sup> from right) poses with a safety poster, Uptown Partnership representatives and San Diego Councilmember Toni Atkins (3<sup>rd</sup> from left) at a November press conference.*

conduct a Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety Campaign that includes bike/walking rodeos, school assemblies, presentations to seniors, outreach to transit

riders, and targeted law enforcement. Last September, WalkSanDiego helped write the grant application to the California Office of Traffic Safety which funded the campaign.

◆ **La Mesa Walkability Plan** –

WalkSanDiego subcontracted with a local firm and the Local Government Commission to provide outreach to La Mesa seniors, businesses, and schools to generate input and awareness to inform the city's forthcoming Walkability Plan.

◆ **City of San Diego Pedestrian Master Plan** – WalkSanDiego will conduct community outreach, policy analysis, and contribute writing and editing for the city's landmark plan (see related story, pg. 5).



*San Diego County Deputy Sheriff Franco Del Rosario conducts bike safety training at an I.B. Bike and Walking Rodeo.*

# City initiates pedestrian master plan and traffic calming program

It's financial troubles notwithstanding, the City of San Diego marched forward on two major programs affecting pedestrians. The city recently selected separate consultant teams to create a Pedestrian Master Plan and a Traffic Calming Program.

Adding to our consulting role, WalkSanDiego was on the winning Pedestrian Master Plan team.

The Pedestrian Master Plan will gather relevant city policies, examine the current state of the pedestrian environment, develop a methodology for fixing the broken parts, and then apply this method to two neighborhoods.

WalkSanDiego's main focus will be conducting the public outreach portions of the project, taking advantage of our five years of experience conducting neighborhood workshops around this issue. The master plan will help forge a comprehensive strategy for dealing with the city's crumbling sidewalks, fast, dark streets, and chronic lack of safe places to cross.

The Traffic Calming project entails preparing a manual showing possible traffic calming treatments and laying out a process for selecting and prioritizing projects.

As discussed in WalkSanDiego's own manual, *Slow Down! Taming Neighborhood Traffic*, typical programs require a neighborhood requesting a traffic calming project to submit a petition signed by a set percentage of residents on an affected street.



Traffic calming treatments can be expensive. Fortunately, TransNet's Neighborhood Safety fund, which WalkSanDiego successfully fought for, will help pay for approved traffic calming plans.

WalkSanDiego congratulates the City for moving ahead on these keystone programs.

## Become a Member of WalkSanDiego

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

- Individual - \$25
- Family - \$40
- Benefactor - \$50+
- Sponsor - \$100
- Student, senior or treading lightly - \$10
- Small business member - \$100
- Corporate member - \$500-\$2,000

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

# Streets perilous for walkers

A report by the nationally-based Surface Transportation Policy Project, released in December 2004, shows that walking is 15 times more dangerous than riding in a car or airplane, and 27 times more dangerous than riding public transit.

The report reveals that, in the last 10 years, pedestrian injuries and fatalities in the San Diego region have increased 9.2% relative to the number of walkers. At the same time, the San Diego region spends just 33 cents per capita per year on pedestrian and bicycle safety, less than half the national average of 82 cents.

The report was released locally by WalkSanDiego during a press conference at Ninth and Island Streets, one block from Petco Park in Downtown San Diego. Redevelopment areas of downtown were cited as one of the few bright spots in a continuing decline in walking conditions region-wide.

At the press conference, President Jamie Moody remarked, "As this report shows, the San Diego region remains among the most dangerous places to take a walk. Not only has walking become more hazardous here, but 22.5% of our traffic deaths in 2003 were pedestrians, which places us third in



*WalkSanDiego President Jamie Moody describes the Mean Streets 2004 at a December 2, 2004, press conference.*

the nation behind New York City and Miami." The national average is 11.4%.

Nationally, the danger to pedestrians increased 5% in the last ten years. Over that period, deaths declined 12.8%, but walking to work – the most reliable indicator of walking activity – decreased far more – 24.9%.

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## Mean Streets report shows pedestrians more endangered; safety spending lags

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Walking is the most popular form of exercise. However, the decrease in walking and other physical activity contributed to a staggering 73% increase in the incidence of obesity over the same 10-year period.

Cities in the western U.S. are generally more dangerous for pedestrians due to their sprawling designs and wide, high speed arterial streets. But the STPP report shows that metropolitan regions that have committed themselves to improving pedestrian safety have reduced deaths and injuries by large margins. Salt Lake City, for example, decreased pedestrian crashes 44.2% relative to walking activity during the 10 year period. Mayor Rocky Anderson has championed pedestrian safety since the city's poor showing in the 2000 Mean Streets report.

The Mean Streets 2004 report received wide media coverage in the San Diego region, and throughout the nation. The report and state-by-state data reports are available on the STPP website, [www.transact.org](http://www.transact.org).

## Observations on San Diego's walkability

# View from the United Kingdom



by Stefan Kruczkowski  
WalkSanDiego member

I discovered WalkSanDiego by chance and, as a regular visitor to San Diego, I became interested in the work of the organization. My first walking experience in San Diego was in 1993 – a short roundtrip from my aunt's home to the local Vons in Rancho Penasquitos. My aunt seemed concerned. "Why walk?" she asked. I soon discovered I was the only (isolated) pedestrian – and I am sure some passing motorists thought I was some sort of eccentric! I was keen to discover why walking was not more popular in such a pleasant climate!

The reasons soon became obvious. Although the sidewalk was generally clean and tidy, I was sandwiched between the backs of people's overgrown back yards and the crash barriers alongside the road. There was no natural surveillance nor active uses alongside the sidewalk.



*Britain's plazas welcome pedestrians and invite human interaction.*

At crossings, vehicles had clear priority with often long waits to cross. Some places where I wanted to cross had "no crossing" signs, thus blocking the most direct and convenient routings. I also noted that crossings were located only at intersections, which can be intimidating and confusing to cross.

So how can we encourage more people to walk in San Diego?

Part of the answer is to create rewarding and stimulating environments which people in cars cannot experience. Successful side-walks and plazas combine two distinct elements: the physical and the 'socio-cultural.' First, the physical qualities of a sidewalk must be right – providing a wide, clear, and accessible route for all, while addressing the visual and actual dominance of traffic. The socio-cultural dimension is more complicated, and involves addressing people's anxieties. Factors such as age and gender can influence how safe or comfortable a person feels.

Creating an inviting public realm involves addressing complementary public functions. For example, high quality public transport is essential to drawing people with a choice of driving out of their cars, rather than providing the minimum service for those with no choice.

There is a growing trend in the U.K. (following a shift in government policies) towards not only encouraging more sustainable methods of movement (in particular promoting 'multi-modal' journeys) but also reducing the need to travel. This aim should be at the forefront of any plans for new neighbourhoods or urban villages.

The popular 'Park and Ride' services where people either drive, walk or catch the bus prove it is possible to entice people out of their cars where there is a pleasant, efficient, and affordable alternative.

Walking really can offer us benefits that cars simply cannot.

# Walking sharpens the mind

A study of more than 18,000 women ages 70 to 81 by the Harvard School of Public Health concluded that the more active we are, the better our cognition.

HealthDayNews reports that among the women who

put in the highest of five levels of activity, which would be the equivalent of six or more hours of weekly walking at an easy pace, there was a 20 percent lower risk of cognitive impairment, compared with women in the lowest level of activity, which was the equivalent of walking less than two hours a week at an easy pace.

Bottom Line: One and a half hours of weekly walking at a pace of 16-20 minutes per mile will give you the full cognitive benefits.

The study was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association.



*photo courtesy of Dan Burden at [www.pedbikeimages.org](http://www.pedbikeimages.org).*

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