

# FootNotes

*Promoting Walkable Communities*



**National conference reveals WSD's leadership role**

## WSD tackles diversity puzzle

WalkSanDiego's Vice President Andy Hamilton shared WSD's successes at the biennial Pro Walk/Pro Bike Conference held September 5-8 in Madison, Wisconsin.

Andy had eagerly sought out conference sessions that highlighted how cities and advocates were working with residents of minority communities - long neglected neighborhoods where walking and traffic dangers are a way of life. But what he mostly heard was a succession of frustrating failures - sparsely attended walks, bike rides, and planning events - residents disaffected by years of broken promises. Andy ended up being the one to share successes with the other attendees.



Three years ago, WalkSanDiego, spurred by our health partners, decided to take a more data-driven approach to responding to our many requests for help. Minority communities quickly emerged as the population most in need of our services. This resulted in our Next Steps Project and collaboration with the Healthy Eating Active Living Coalition (HEAC) in South Bay.

These are some of the lessons we've learned so far:

Hispanic immigrants may view public and private space very differently than long-time residents. For example, in many neighborhoods, front yards are an extension of the house, complete with furniture. A fence, rather than excluding visitors, may be seen as creating an outdoor room and invites exchange. Sidewalks are the primary place for cart vendors (legal or not).

*(continued on page 5)*



WalkSanDiego's popular "walk audit" technique of assessing pedestrian safety works just as well in two languages.

### What's inside...



**WalkSanDiego's new booklet lights the way**  
(See story page 2)

**WSD partners with Chula Vista**  
(See story page 3)

**ALSO...**

- Successful 'brown bag'
- Traffic engineers' webpage
- Pedestrian deaths up

# Way to pay for more street lights

San Diego has some of the darkest streets of any major city. The backlog for street lighting requests at the City of San Diego is in the millions of dollars. Most citizens don't bother requesting streetlights given the city's current fiscal crisis.

Since most pedestrian fatalities occur at night, WalkSanDiego decided to examine the lighting problem in more detail. We determined that, indeed, the city will likely never have enough funds to correct decades of failing to



*In San Diego, most major streets are well-lit, but residential streets remain largely dark, discouraging evening strolls and transit use.*

require developers to install street lighting. Instead, we decided our best approach would be to inform neighborhoods of a self-funding option that has been used success-

fully by a few neighborhoods: the Maintenance Assessment District, or MAD.

Under state law, neighborhoods may adopt a MAD, a property assessment district formed by a majority vote of property owners. Essentially the property owners tax themselves to pay for lighting and other public improvements such as street trees and landscaped medians.

WalkSanDiego has created an 8-page booklet that explains how to form a MAD, the approximate assessment to expect, and what can be funded. The booklet is available on our website at [www.walksandiego.org/pages/projects.html](http://www.walksandiego.org/pages/projects.html).

Although aimed at neighborhoods within the City of San Diego, the booklet details the procedure applicable to any city within the state.

WSD encourages more neighborhoods to take advantage of this mechanism for improving night-time safety for walkers, bicyclists, and motorists.

---

## Report cites increase in pedestrian deaths

A recent report by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reveals that, while injury rates continue to decline in all categories, fatality rates rose.

Analyzing traffic crash data for 2005, the report showed that pedestrian fatalities increased nationally by 4.4% to 4,881. As in previous years, a majority (66%) of pedestrian fatalities occurred at night. Most of the additional pedestrian deaths (76%) also occurred at night.

In addition, bicyclist fatalities increased 8% to 784. Both pedestrian and bicyclist

figures are significant increases for a single year, and reverse a long-term downward trend.

The report also showed that motorcycle crashes had skyrocketed 13%, with the largest absolute increase since 1977.

One bright spot in the report was the finding that alcohol-related fatalities in all categories had continued to decline and are at their lowest level in seven years.

Released in August 2006, the report, entitled *Motor Vehicle Traffic Crash Fatality Counts and Estimates of People Injured for 2005*, is available by calling NHTSA at 800-934-8517.



WalkSanDiego Executive Director Tina Zenzola, left, met with Chula Vista staff and others to help plan a Safe Routes to School grant application as Chula Vista Pedestrian/Bike Coordinator Tom Adler takes notes.

## WSD reaches out to Chula Vista

As WalkSanDiego's grant-funded work with South Bay's Healthy Eating Active Living Coalition (HEAC) advances, we have begun working more closely with City of Chula Vista staff.

In August the city gathered managers and senior staff at a meeting with HEAC members, including WalkSanDiego, to learn about the project and promptly offered to partner on several projects.

WSD is the primary HEAC member working to improve the building environment to foster more physical activity. Working primarily with the Traffic Engineering and Planning

Departments, WSD has begun assisting the city on the following efforts:

- ◆ Providing training to various city departments and citizen commissions on pedestrian design and traffic calming;
- ◆ Revisiting traffic policies to balance the trade-offs between pedestrian, bicycle, and disability access on the one hand, and traffic flow on the other;
- ◆ Defining what the city's forthcoming Pedestrian Master Plan will include;
- ◆ Reviewing specific policies or standards affecting walkability, such as where crosswalks can be provided, and designs for crossing over or under freeways;
- ◆ Establishing how and when major intersections receive safety upgrades;
- ◆ Designing a traffic calming program;
- ◆ Establishing walk and bike-friendly street design (or retrofit) standards for the southwest area, a relatively low-income, primarily Hispanic neighborhood which the city expects to examine through a comprehensive planning process;
- ◆ Setting up School Safety Committees to increase safety for kids walking or biking to school;
- ◆ Crafting grant applications to Caltrans for Safe Routes to School funding; and
- ◆ Reviewing the city's tree policies.

WalkSanDiego is pleased to have this opportunity. Our challenge will be achieving concrete results quickly, given our limited grant funding. But we're working on that too!



Chula Vista's traditional main street is 3rd Avenue, a mecca for walkers, but much of the city is not so pedestrian-friendly.

# WSD launches webpage for traffic engineers

One constituent group that WalkSanDiego has not reached out to enough is arguably the most important to us – traffic engineers.

As we work with these professionals, we frequently find that local government agencies have scant resources for sending their staff to conferences and trainings.

WSD is determined to help fill that void.

WSD recently launched a new webpage that is aimed specifically at San Diego area engineers.

New resources found at [www.walksandiego.org/pages/engineers.html](http://www.walksandiego.org/pages/engineers.html) include annotated research papers regarding the safety of

crosswalks, how street width and lane width affect crash rates, and other important street design issues.

You'll also find the best guidelines on pedestrian design, including *Planning and Designing for Pedestrians: Model Guidelines for the San Diego Region* by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG). Cities in the region are required to comply with this document under certain SANDAG funding programs.

In assembling these resources, we found that some long-standing traffic engineering practices are making our streets far more dangerous or pedestrian-unfriendly than they need to be. These practices are detailed on the web page, and we'll be covering various topics in future issues of Footnotes.

Send your local engineer to our new page, and let us know of any other resources we should include.



WalkSanDiego's new webpage for engineers provides guidance documents and research on pedestrian design and traffic calming for traffic engineers and transportation planners.

## 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

### Words to Remember

*"A well-used street is apt to be a safe street."*

— Jane Jacobs

(May 4, 1916 – April 25, 2006)

An American-born Canadian writer and activist, Jane Jacobs is best known for *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), a powerful critique of the urban renewal policies of the 1950s in the United States.

# WSD tackles diversity puzzle

(continued from page 1)

🧩 Residents tend to view the local elementary school catchment area as the boundaries of their neighborhood. This means creating “safe routes to school” resonates more deeply in these neighborhoods.

🧩 In many one-vehicle households, mothers walk the kids to school and do most of their commuting or shopping within the neighborhood or via public transit. If you want to reach the kids, reach the mothers first. On the other hand, traditional gender roles may mean women are not empowered to attend a public meeting or to participate actively.

🧩 Most residents won't attend meetings they read



*WalkSanDiego's Next Steps Project has brought together residents, school administrators, and city staff to make walking safer in underserved neighborhoods.*

about on a flyer – they rely on word of mouth via trusted neighbors and informal neighborhood leaders. *Promotoras*, recognized women leaders, have been utilized by health providers for years for recruiting residents to health services. WalkSanDiego is testing out using *promotoras* to recruit

residents to walkability planning events.

🧩 Child care and refreshments are a must at a public meeting, although many planning grants won't pay for these.

🧩 Participating in planning workshops may be, literally, a foreign concept. It sometimes takes conducting quick surveys at homes, churches, beauty parlors, and bus stops to get the necessary information from residents.

🧩 Finally, even if you've done everything right to reach residents, they may not participate because it isn't in their experience to have someone in authority solve a safety issue, restore a park, or install new lighting. It may take repeated attempts, building trust, and establishing relationships to get real engagement.

WalkSanDiego considers it part of our mission to share these valuable lessons learned through our national networks and conference appearances.



*“Safe routes to school” resonates more deeply in neighborhoods whose residents tend to view the local elementary school catchment area as the boundaries of their neighborhood.*

WalkSanDiego's

## Bimonthly Brown Bag

A free forum to exchange information and ideas  
on walkability in the San Diego region



**12 noon to 1 p.m.**  
**Wednesday, November 16, 2006**  
**Downtown Information Center**  
**225 Broadway, San Diego**  
Rear of downtown NBC Building  
Parking available at Horton Plaza



Presenting WSD's annual

*Golden  
Footprints  
Awards*

Bring your lunch, a friend, and your ideas  
for future topics and speakers

## Brown bag lunches get off to a great start

WalkSanDiego launched its lunchtime  
Bimonthly Brown Bag in September.

A forum created to exchange information  
and share successes on creating a more  
walkable region, WalkSanDiego's co-founder  
Andy Hamilton was the first speaker.

His presentation - "The State of Walking  
in the San Diego Region: The Good, the Bad,  
and the Truly Dangerous" - was attended by  
about 65 people. Attendees included city  
staff, residents, developers, and urban design  
consultants.

The next Brown Bag lunch is scheduled for  
12 noon November 16 at the Downtown  
Information Center. The annual Golden  
Footprints Awards for outstanding  
contributions in making San Diego County  
more walkable will be presented at the  
meeting.



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

Phone: (858) 586-2641  
mail@walksandiego.org  
www.walksandiego.org

STAMP  
HERE

To:

### Board of Directors

Andy Pendoley, President  
Andy Hamilton, Vice-Pres.  
Amanda Wilson, Treasurer  
Sandy Cordova, Secretary  
David Hopkins  
Jamie Moody  
Danielle Putnam  
Tanya Rovira-Osterwalder