

## SANDAG allocates additional funds to bike plan - San Diego Uptown News

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### SANDAG allocates additional funds to bike plan

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By Kathy Hughart | SDUN Reporter

At the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) Board of Directors meeting on Jan. 24, six community leaders from City Heights, North Park, and Mid-City advocated the approval of SANDAG's proposed budget amendments for bicycle infrastructure plans in their communities. The board approved all eight proposed amendments, allocating an additional \$6.9 million to the projects.

Interim Mayor Todd Gloria, chair of SANDAG'S Transportation Committee, called on Active Transportation Manager Chris Kluth to present each of the eight amendments to SANDAG's bike plan. Seven of which were requests for additional funding.

Kluth requested additional funds for preliminary engineering on the Uptown Urban Bikeway (\$3.8 million), and the North Park-Mid City Urban Bikeway (\$2.9 million). Board members approved both amendments.

Five other projects were also approved, including; the State Route 15 Bike Path (\$561,000); the Coastal Rail Trail: Rose Creek (\$362,000); the Coastal Rail Trail Encinitas, Chesterfield to G (\$512,000); the San Diego River Trail: Qualcomm Stadium project (\$98,000) and the San Diego River Trail: Carlton Oaks (\$138,000).



(l – r) Representatives from the City Heights Built Environment Team, City Heights Community Development Corporation, Environmental Health Coalition and Asociacion De Liderazgo Comunitario who successfully advocated for bicycle infrastructure spending at the recent SANDAG board of directors meeting (Courtesy Randy Van Vleck)

A new regional bike plan project, the Bayshore Bikeway: Barrio Logan (\$889,000) was also approved.

The budget increases will go toward preliminary engineering and environmental clearance research on all eight projects. Portions of all projects are scheduled to begin in 2015.

The Uptown Urban Bikeway plan will provide ten miles of cycle track (an exclusive bike path physically separated from motor traffic and distinct from the sidewalk); and bicycle boulevard, (a street where bicycle traffic is given priority). While the exact path is still being determined, the bikeway will extend north from downtown via Third and Fourth avenues, past Balboa Park to Washington St., and on into Mission Valley, north of University Ave.

In the North Park and Mid-City neighborhoods, twelve miles of bicycle boulevard will run east/west near El Cajon Blvd., past Garfield Elementary School, John Adams Elementary School and Ward Canyon Neighborhood Park.

Several of the community leaders present commented on the additional approval of funds.

"It's clear to see that San Diego is moving toward bicycle mobility," City Heights Outreach Manager Sidney Michael said. "We appreciate the foresight of city and county governments working together to bring about healthier, more economical options for the community."

Elyse Lowe, director of Move San Diego, was present to advocate what she described as a "a safe route to transit." Her organization supports SANDAG'S regional bike plan/early action program.

"Let's get people out of their cars and onto bikeways and walkways," Lowe said.

Move San Diego, a sustainable transportation advocacy group, came together in 2004 to serve a broad coalition of people who wanted convenient sustainable transportation.

Now, ten years later, Move San Diego and Walk San Diego have merged, bringing new energy to connecting people and places within urban environments.

A recent change in the SANDAG plan for allocation of funds for bikeways and pedestrian walkways ties in with Move San Diego and Walk San Diego goals.

"We are excited about the Safe Routes to Transit program being developed now," Walk San Diego's Kathleen Ferrier said. "It will be the first time projects and

funding dedicated to improve walking conditions are included in a Regional Transportation Plan. This new SRTTtransit program will mean a significant increase of money for walking.”



Nicole Burgess's bike train (Courtesy Nicole Burgess)

While the move shows continued county-wide support for bicycle infrastructure, many San Diego residents continue to promote active transportation in their own ways. Biker Nicole Burgess likes the idea of safe bike paths and walking trails to neighborhood schools, libraries and parks. An Ocean Beach mom, she formed a “bike train” of her daughters’ local middle school friends, and enlisted a few parents to ride along with her and the kids to school. Some of the street crossings are dangerous, and riding in a

larger pack ensures the safety of the kids as they pedal their way to school.

At the conclusion of the second mayoral debate on Jan. 17 between Councilmembers David Alvarez and Kevin Faulconer, each candidate responded to questions about road construction, and what needs to be done to improve biker and pedestrian safety on San Diego’s streets and sidewalks.

Faulconer said his top priority for safety is “paving the streets in all neighborhoods,” and cited the need for public education on rules and regulations for bikers as well as pedestrians. Potholes and lumpy asphalt in densely populated areas

“Force bikers to ride on city sidewalks, creating an additional safety hazard,” he said.

Alvarez pointed out how “The infrastructure for bikes is in need of repair throughout San Diego’s densely populated neighborhoods.”

Then, emphasizing collaboration between groups, Mr. Alvarez said, “There is no conflict” between bikers and pedestrians.

“Little by little, one neighborhood at a time, in response to San Diego citizens, city government must provide separate bikeways and walkways, each designated by

appropriate striping and signage to direct bike and foot traffic," Alvarez said.

In his State of the City speech on Jan. 15, Gloria described roadwork that has helped make streets safer and more bike-friendly.

"Fifty miles of roadway were restriped last year to accommodate wider bike lanes," Gloria said. "Green bike lanes have been installed at numerous intersections and hundreds of shared lane markers have been placed around the city."

Looking to the future, city and county engineers are designing streets, sidewalks and transit corridors for functional mobility, a key requirement in a city of nearly one and a half million people.