City of Oceanside Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee
BikeWalk Oceanside

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October 6, 2021

Howard LaGrange
Active Transportation and Micromobility Coordinator
City of Oceanside
300 North Coast Hwy
Oceanside, CA 92054

Dear Mr. LaGrange:

The Oceanside Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee's purpose is to promote bicycling and walking in the community for health, recreation, and transportation, to promote bicycle and pedestrian safety, and to improve bicycling and pedestrian facilities.

The Committee is pleased to provide a letter of support for the City of Oceanside's application for funding in response to the Senate Bill 1 Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant program. With this requested funding, Oceanside will prepare a Project Study Report to evaluate extending the Inland Rail Trail along the NCTD Sprinter right-of-way. The Inland Rail Trail is a planned continuous Class 1 route that, once complete, will provide a dedicated bike facility from the City of Escondido through San Marcos, County Unincorporated area, Vista and the City of Oceanside to the Coastal Rail Trail. The portion from Escondido to the city limits of Oceanside has been completed or is currently in development. Funding from this grant will allow the City of Oceanside to conduct a study to complete the "missing link" in this trail from Melrose Blvd. to Coast Highway.

Completion of the Inland Rail Trail has been an adopted goal of the north county communities it travels through since the mid-1990's, through a Memorandum of Understanding (copy attached). In that MOU, the corridor agencies adopted the following vision 25 years ago:

> *NCTD and the sponsor agencies desire to create a multi-modal transportation facility which will help these communities achieve a higher quality of life by promoting alternative transportation opportunities, reducing automobile trips, improving air quality, reducing congestion, providing recreational opportunities, and increasing access to desired North County destinations.*
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> *The planned bikeway will provide a continuous Class I Bicycle facility between the Oceanside Transit Center and the Escondido Transit Center, and will span the Cities of Oceanside, Vista, San Marcos, and Escondido, including a portion of unincorporated San Diego County. (Escondido to Oceanside Rail/Trail Bikeway Project MOU, February, 1995)*

This trail has also been identified as a priority project in the SANDAG Ride to 2050 Plan and is key in promoting bike commuting in the region. The only nearby alternative to completing this trail in Oceanside is to ride on Oceanside Blvd., which is very challenging for cyclists given its

narrow bike lane widths, complete disappearance of the bike lane at major intersections, and high traffic speeds.

This study is urgently needed due to regional plans to eventually double-track more of the Sprinter line. SANDAG and NCTD are considering options for improved Sprinter service, and the double-track segments those options would require. Identifying the needed right-of-way for the completion of the Inland Rail Trail now will enable those needs to be considered during future Sprinter line planning and expansion and avoid foreclosing options that we have today.

A successful Inland Rail Trail Project Study Report will:
- Evaluate right-of-way widths on the NCTD Sprinter line that would accommodate a recreational and commuter trail
- Determine the additional right-of-way that would be required
- Determine if any environmental issues exist
- Provide additional route alternatives where NCTD right-of-way is not available
- Provide an estimated cost of the project

The Oceanside Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee urges Caltrans to approve this important grant application request so that a long-sought-after goal of a continuous bicycle trail from Escondido to Oceanside can move closer to reality.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tom Lichterman
Chairman, City of Oceanside Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee

cc: City of Oceanside Council Members and City Manager

ATTACHMENT