

City of Oceanside Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee
BikeWalk Oceanside

Phone: 619-200-6133 • E-Mail: tlichterman@cox.net

July 12, 2021

SANDAG
401 B Street
Suite 800
San Diego, CA 92101

SUBJECT: 2021 Regional Plan Comments (sent via email and U.S. Postal Service)

Dear SANDAG Regional Plan Staff,

The Oceanside Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee is a citizen’s advisory committee whose role is to advise the City on programs and projects which improve bicycling and walking in the community. The Committee’s membership includes over 75 Oceanside residents who are concerned about bicycling and walking infrastructure and opportunities. Our goals are 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.

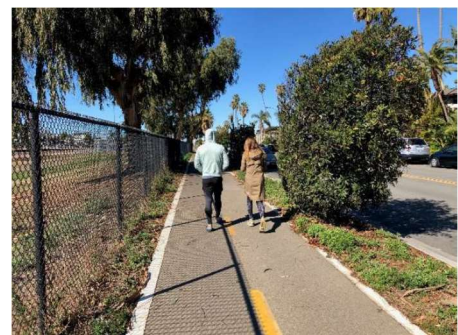
Our Committee has reviewed the draft 2021 Regional Plan and wishes to submit several comments for SANDAG consideration. First, as a general statement, the Committee appreciates the Plan’s significant shift in how people move about in the region, as proposed through the “Five Big Moves” and interrelated projects and programs. We concur with SANDAG’s conclusion that the imperative of responding to the climate crisis requires such a significant shift from previous Regional Transportation Plans. We also strongly agree with the statement on page 1 of *Appendix L: Active Transportation*, that:

Active Transportation is a key element interwoven through the 5 Big Moves; it connects people to all kinds of destinations and defines the infrastructure needs to make the system work for everyone.

With this statement in mind, we have specific input regarding several of the key Active Transportation projects which affect Oceanside, as listed in *Appendix A*, Page A-35, as follows:

AT031 – Coastal Rail Trail Oceanside – Broadway to Eaton

– This project appears to be off-street from Vista Way/Broadway to Broadway/Eaton (using the railroad right-of-way), then on-street on Eaton to Hwy 101. The existing portions of the Coastal Rail Trail north and south of Cassidy Street in this area are sub-standard (see photo) – the usable width of the trail in this section is only about 7 feet wide and does not provide sufficient space for



City of Oceanside Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee

BikeWalk Oceanside

Phone: 619-200-6133 • E-Mail: tlichterman@cox.net

cyclists to pass walkers safely without nearly coming to a stop. In addition, in preliminary City discussions with the Buena Vista Audubon Society, the possibility exists that the Society might allow development of the trail through their property south of the end of Broadway Street, connecting to the improved trail on Coast Highway. This would provide a safer and traffic-free connection rather than putting trail users directly on Eaton and Coast Highway. For these reasons, the City of Oceanside, with Committee support, submitted a Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant request in February 2021, seeking funding for a “Coastal Rail Trail Morse-Vista Way Improvement Study”. Please see our attached January 27, 2021 letter on same. We await word on the outcome of this grant request. Accordingly, we recommend that SANDAG include the potential for widening the trail in this area and connecting it through the Audubon Society property as part of Project AT031 and revise the budget accordingly.

AT049 – Inland Rail Trail Oceanside – This project is intended to cover the entire Inland Rail Trail segment within Oceanside, from Melrose to west of I-5. The Committee strongly supports this project – completion of the Inland Rail Trail and the Coastal Rail Trail within Oceanside are the two top-priority projects in Oceanside’s adopted Bicycle Master Plan.

The Committee’s concern about this project is SANDAG’s listed “Year Built” of 2035. Completion of the Inland Rail Trail has been an adopted goal of the north county communities it travels through since 1995, 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.

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 if not outright dangerous for cyclists given its narrow bike lane widths, complete disappearance of the bike lane at major intersections, high traffic speeds, and heavy truck volume.

Simply put, the citizens of Oceanside should not have to **wait 40 years** for their portion of the IRT to be completed, when the communities across North County made it clear in 1995 that completion of this trail was a priority. This delay is not fair to Oceanside on a general basis and is further exacerbated by equity considerations – Oceanside is home to a significant minority population (52% composition) whereas other North County coastal cities have majority white populations ranging from 74% to 90%¹.

¹ Per City of Oceanside’s FY2020-21 Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant for an Inland Rail Trail – Oceanside Alignment Analysis and Conceptual Design Study

City of Oceanside Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee

BikeWalk Oceanside

Phone: 619-200-6133 • E-Mail: tlichterman@cox.net

The proposed SANDAG Regional Plan includes a significant “Focus on Equity”, including the statement,

In developing and implementing the 2021 Regional Plan, SANDAG has a responsibility to listen to the communities we serve, prioritize equitable solutions in the transportation system, and analyze the burdens and benefits of this system for historically underserved communities².

While Escondido and San Marcos had all or portions of their IRT constructed by 2008, and Vista’s segments are completed, in design, or under construction now, the Oceanside segment is not even in preliminary planning at this time. Given the frequent mention throughout the Regional Plan of the importance of bike trail improvements to the overall success of the Plan, and the Focus on Equity, we implore SANDAG to move up the completion of this segment of the IRT commensurate with its importance to the Adopted Regional Bike Network. We believe that this project could be completed in roughly five years if it was prioritized, as follows:

- 18 months for alignment definition and design
- 18 months for any necessary permitting, approvals, and right-of-way acquisition
- 24 months for construction

AT074 – Coastal Rail Trail Oceanside Segment 1 ALT – According to the materials provided by SANDAG staff, this segment of the Coastal Rail Trail at the northern connection with the San Luis Rey River Trail would become just an on-street bike lane on Pacific Street, from just west of the railroad tracks underpass to west of the Oceanside Transit Center. This alternative does not appear to take advantage of the currently-built off-street segment adjacent to the tracks from under I-5 to Neptune Way (see photo). Why not incorporate that portion as part of this segment before returning to on-street status?



Existing Trail from Neptune Way looking north.

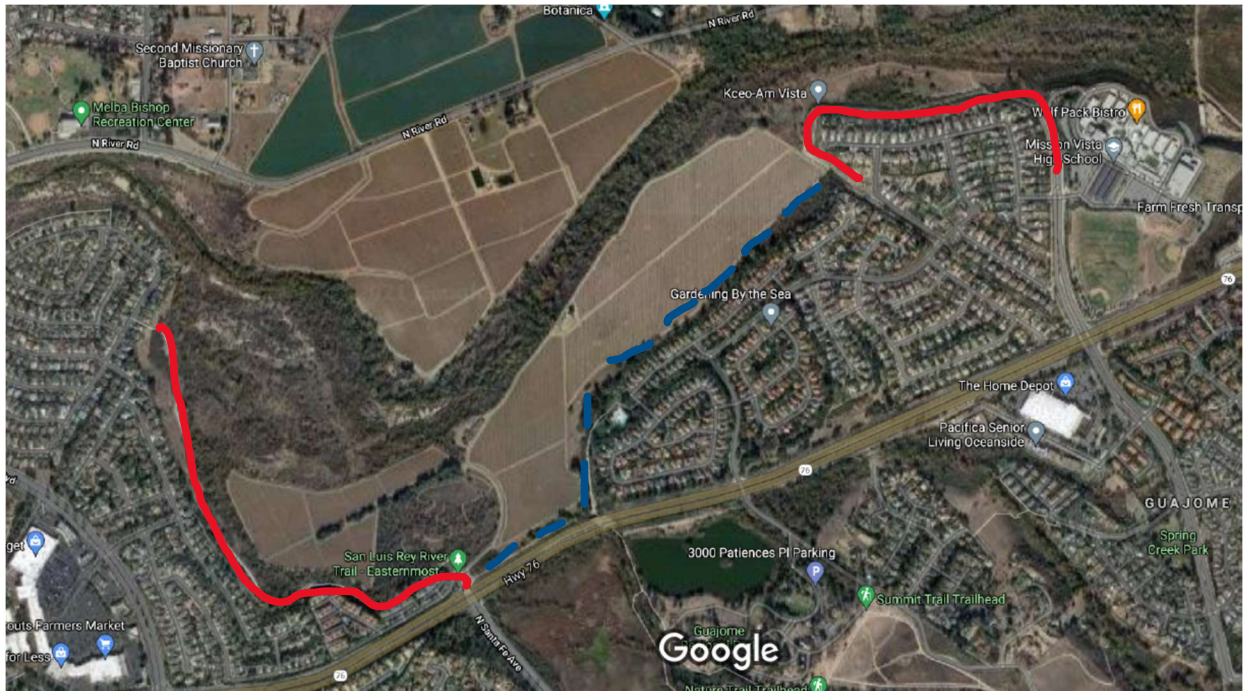
AT113 – San Luis Rey River Trail Extension – This project proposes to extend the east end of the San Luis Rey River Trail from where it returns to surface streets at Andrew Jackson Street near Polk Street, all the way out to Old Hwy 395, mostly adjacent to the river. It should be noted that the proposed alignment does not make use of the already-constructed segment from Tyler Street to Via Manos at Hwy 76. In addition, there may also be City easements along the farmland adjacent to Highway 76, leading from Via Manos to the next neighborhood to the

² Draft 2021 Regional Plan, Page 11.

City of Oceanside Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee BikeWalk Oceanside

Phone: 619-200-6133 • E-Mail: tlichterman@cox.net

east. There, another already-constructed trail segment circumnavigates the residential neighborhood, coming out right across the street from Mission Vista High School on Melrose. All of these segments, if linked together, offer the opportunity to create a significant trail extension in the near future at very little cost. We urge SANDAG to consult with long-term Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee members who have extensive historical background on trails in this area.



Existing trail segments and opportunities to extend the San Luis Rey River Trail:

Red – Existing constructed trails

Blue – Potential City Easements

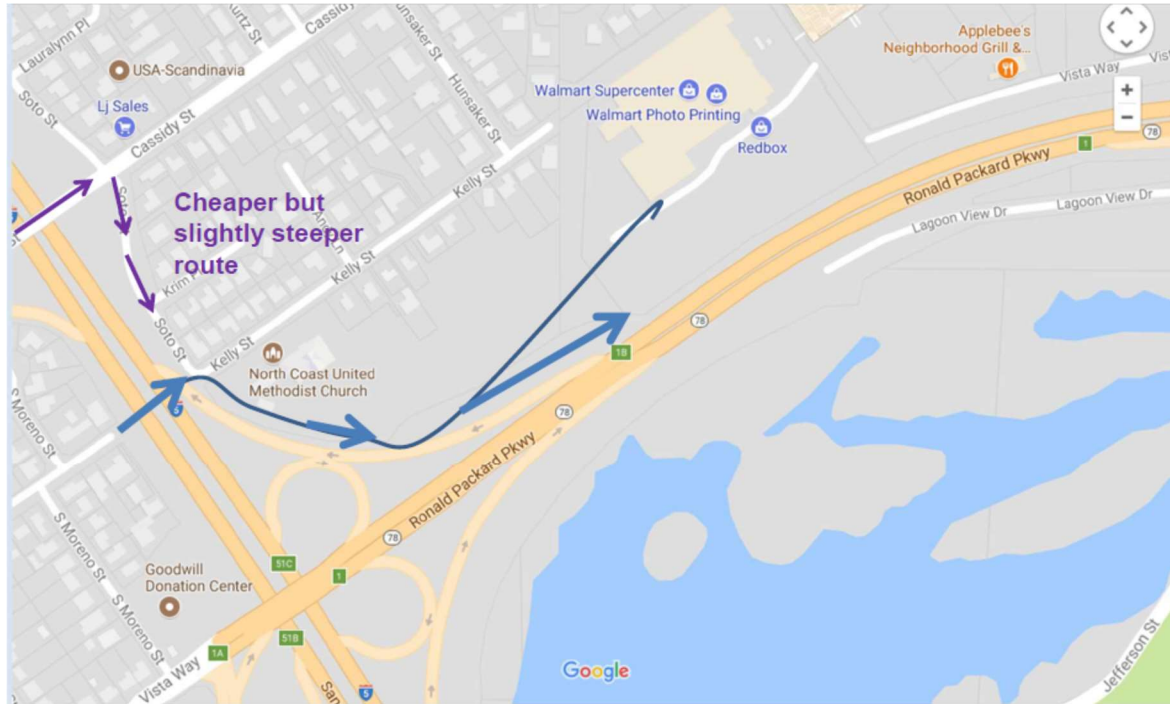
Additional Proposed Project #1 - SANDAG should consider an improved connection between the Vista Way shopping area east of I-5 and the Oceanside communities west of I-5. Currently, due to the topography of the alternative East/West routes, the freeway is a significant barrier to this community having access to the large shopping area on Vista Way east of I-5. Riding from the shopping center, west to the coast, requires riding up a very steep hill at the back of the shopping center and another one on Cassidy Street. They are both difficult climbs, especially with groceries. Such a project would likely entail a bridge overpass of I-5, in the vicinity of Kelly Street. Travelling East, once the Active Transportation user is past I-5, the optimum route would probably follow the least-elevation-change path, which would entail a

City of Oceanside Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee

BikeWalk Oceanside

Phone: 619-200-6133 • E-Mail: tlichterman@cox.net

turn to the south. We found that there is a similar bridge in Cupertino, over I-280, on Mary Avenue, that cost only \$8 million, approximately 13 years ago.



Oceanside neighborhoods near the I-5 and Hwy 78 interchange. Kelly Street routing, highlighted in blue, is a conceptual routing. Major shopping center is near the east end of Kelly, though no physical connection exists.

Additional Proposed Project #2 - SANDAG should consider the Oceanside Coast Highway Corridor Study Road Diet and Incentive Zone, as approved by Oceanside in August 2019 between Harbor Drive and Morse, to be an Active Transportation Project. The project would convert this portion of the road, which is now mostly avoided by the Active Transportation Community, to be one that is safe and desirable.

This “complete street” transformation would provide more room on the road for all roadway users, fewer signalized intersections, and reduced speeds. It would maintain good traffic flow, by having roundabouts at most arterials and a turning lane for streets and driveways between arterials. It would have a desirable mixed-use, smart-growth ambiance, with designated bike lanes, wider sidewalks, community-oriented commercial developments, upscale housing, and shade trees. This project is on the historical Route 101. The street is two blocks East of the Oceanside Transit Center, where new developments are planned. The City Library, a Community Center, and City Hall are on this street, just blocks from the Transit Center. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee has been urging Oceanside to expand its Climate Action

City of Oceanside Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee
BikeWalk Oceanside

Phone: 619-200-6133 • E-Mail: tlichterman@cox.net

Plan (CAP) by giving its City employees a car-parking system that encourages use of alternative modes to driving alone. This complete street project would help City employees get to work without driving.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2021 Regional Plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Lichterman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tom Lichterman
Chairman, Oceanside Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee

cc: Oceanside Mayor, City Council and City Manager
Howard LaGrange, Active Transportation and Micro-mobility Coordinator
Oceanside Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee Members

ATTACHMENTS (2)