

City of Oceanside Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee
BikeWalk Oceanside

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

July 24, 2024

Mr. Russ Cunningham, Principal Planner
City of Oceanside
300 N. Coast Highway
Oceanside, CA 92054
DELIVERED VIA: gpu_2_project@oceansideca.org

RE: Comments on General Plan Update Phase 2 Documents

Dear Oceanside Planning Commissioners, Mr. Cunningham, and City Planning Staff,

The Oceanside Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee is a citizen's advisory committee whose role is to advise the City on programs, projects, and policies which improve bicycling and walking in the community. The Committee's membership includes over 90 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 and increase bicycling and pedestrian facilities. In addition to these goals, the Committee has been active in commenting on and supporting the City's Climate Action Plan, the goals of which are closely aligned with the Committee's goals and initiatives.

With Staff's assistance, the Committee recently conducted an in-depth review of the bicycle and pedestrian-oriented goals, policies, standards, and actions in the General Plan Update, Phase 2 documents. Documents in this process which contain specifically-relevant elements include:

- Efficient and Compatible Land Use Element (ECLU)
- Integrated Mobility Element (IM)
- Remarkable Community Element (RC)
- Healthy and Livable Community Element (HLC)
- Smart and Sustainable Corridors Specific Plan (SSCSP)
- Updated Climate Action Plan (CAP)

The Committee is highly-supportive of the bicycle- and pedestrian-oriented elements in these GPU documents and applauds the City for providing a compelling future vision for the important role active transportation can and will play in the community. We further commend the City for taking a cross-element, holistic approach in fashioning these goals and policies to ensure they support one another towards achieving the overall Community Vision. In the following sections of this comment letter, we have recapped the relevant goals, policies, standards and actions in each of the above document elements (shown in italics) and have then added comments where appropriate to further strengthen these elements.

Efficient and Compatible Land Use Element (ECLU)

The ECLU “promotes synergies between different land uses that encourage walking, biking, and sustainable lifestyles.”

- *Increase residential density allowances and floor area ratios in commercial corridors*
- *Encourage a synergistic mix of residential, commercial, and public uses in these corridors*
- *Decrease reliance on the private automobile through compact development patterns, mixed-use development, and transit-oriented environments*
- *Require surface parking be separated and/or screened from primary street frontages*
- *Require new mixed-use development to provide adequate and secure bike parking facilities*
- *Encourage bicycle and pedestrian links between commercial centers and surrounding residential uses*

Committee Comments: Increased future densities will be key to making our community more bikeable and walkable. Decreased reliance on the private automobile will require a “complete streets” approach to future corridor planning so that biking and walking are safe and viable alternatives to automobile use. On several major corridors, such as Oceanside Blvd., Vista Way, Coast Highway, and College Blvd., this will require remaking the roadways to better accommodate cyclists and pedestrians, as called out in the SSCSP reviewed later.

Decreased reliance on the private automobile will also require the consideration of replacing parking minimums with parking maximums. More importantly, the car parking system should increase economic equity and choice while it reduces the economic incentive to drive. Such a system will provide car-parking earnings to those who are losing money because parking is provided. For example, “employee parking” should provide earnings to employees, based on the time they spend at work, regardless of how they get to work. The employee parking should be available to all drivers, to maximize the earnings for the employees.

Efficient and Compatible Land Use should also mean that the City will avoid sprawl development such as proposed in South Morro Hills, which will require inefficient extension of City services and make active transportation infrastructure investments more costly and difficult. If such development goes forward, the developers should be required to pay ALL of the public costs of such development, not just for road widening but for active transportation improvements and all the on-going City services’ operating costs that will be impacted, such as police, fire, and public transit.

Integrated Mobility Element (IM)

The IM “promotes a citywide mobility network that effectively integrates all modes of travel, including driving, walking, biking, transit use, ride-hailing services, and powered micro-mobility options.”

- *Complete the Inland Rail Trail, Coastal Rail Trail, and San Luis Rey River Trail; enhance access to these facilities*

- *Prioritize funding to [bicycle facilities] based on safety, demand, equity, value, and locational balance*
- *Evaluate short-term and long-term bicycle parking demand*
- *Leverage maintenance activities and capital projects to implement active transportation improvements in a cost-effective manner*
- *Strive to provide bicycle parking that (1) supports a bicycle in at least two places, (2) is U-lock compatible, (3) is securely anchored, and (4) is located in highly visible and well-lit areas*
- *Collaborate with Caltrans, SANDAG, and other agencies to reduce barriers to walking and bicycling created by Interstate 5 and State Routes 76 and 78*
- *Prioritize bicycle connections to transit services, schools, and recreational facilities when seeking grant funding for active transportation projects*
- *Ensure new developments provide pedestrians and bicyclists with seamless connections between private property and the public right-of-way*
- *Integrate bicycle parking and other bicycle amenities into mobility nodes and hubs (e.g., SPRINTER station sites, San Luis Rey Transit Center)*
- *To the extent possible, minimize curb cuts/driveways where sidewalks and/or bicycle facilities are present*
- *Provide buffers between bike lanes and vehicle traffic lanes, and between parked vehicles and bike lanes, where feasible*
- *Improve active transportation safety at intersections, where feasible. Utilize high visibility crosswalks, advance stop bars, green conflict paint for bike lanes, bike boxes, traffic circles/roundabouts, pedestrian countdown signal heads, bicycle signals, lead pedestrian/bicycle intervals, advance bicycle detection, curb extensions, lighting, signage, pedestrian hybrid beacons, rectangular rapid flashing beacons, pedestrian refuges, and other context appropriate enhancements*
- *Continue and expand opportunities to provide education on transportation behaviors, including the Safe Routes to School program and bicycle education courses*
- *To enhance pedestrian comfort on sidewalks and other shared facilities, motorized mobility devices such as electric bicycle and electric scooters, will only be allowed to operate on roadways, parking lots, bicycle lanes, and will be prohibited to operate on sidewalks, promenades, nature trails, parks, plazas, parking garages, and piers*
- *Promote land use patterns and urban design that support active transportation (e.g. mixed-use developments, strong street grids, and short blocks)*

Committee Comments: Completion of the Inland Rail Trail (IRT) and the Coastal Rail Trail have been the Committee’s two highest priority goals for many years, and those goals are properly called out first in this list of bicycle and pedestrian goals. It should be noted that the cities and county in the SPRINTER corridor first passed a resolution supporting completion of the Inland Rail Trail in 1995, nearly 30 years ago. It is critical that the City of Oceanside express support for completion of this major regional bikeway which has been on the Regional Bike Network Plan for many years, by strongly advocating for its completion when funding discussions are held at SANDAG. The Inland Rail Trail is either completed or in process in the

rest of the communities in the corridor, but nothing has started in Oceanside. A Caltrans grant to study the alignment in Oceanside was recently received by the City.

The Committee also wants to emphasize that, while completion of the IRT is a top Committee goal, the City must still work to enhance bicycle access and safety on the parallel Oceanside Blvd. Even IRT users will likely need to use portions of Oceanside Blvd. to begin or complete their trips. Right now, Oceanside Blvd. is very hazardous for cyclists and in many spots the existing striped bike lanes are either undersized or missing altogether. The City is in possession of proposals from a recent study to enhance bike lanes at several major intersections on Oceanside Blvd. (the “Berkeley Study”). The Committee urges the City to prioritize implementation of these low-cost improvements.

It is very important that City development reviews include review for bicycle parking and storage whenever a new or re-use development comes before the City. Including bike parking and facilities during project development is far more cost effective than trying to retrofit it later. One solution that should be considered is to amend Oceanside’s off-street parking ordinance to include numerically and functionally adequate bicycle parking.

It is also critical that, when the City is undertaking road maintenance activities, that the project be reviewed in advance by the Active Transportation and Micromobility Coordinator to ensure that work such as road re-striping accommodates bicycles to the maximum extent possible.

Transportation safety elements for cyclists and pedestrians are crucial if active transportation is to contribute to reduced vehicle miles travelled and associated greenhouse gas emissions. We applaud the list of traffic safety enhancements at intersections listed above and hope these will become the standard for roadway design and upgrades in the City in the future.

Remarkable Community Element (RC)

The RC “seeks to introduce and expand pedestrian and bicycle trails along the east-west riparian corridors and link these trails to key destinations.”

- *Pursue roadway design that balances efficient vehicle through-put with traffic calming that contributes to pedestrian and bicycle safety and reduces noise and air pollution. Potential design elements include minimum-width traffic lanes, roundabout intersections, curb bulb-outs, chicanes and other path deviation devices, and variable paving treatments*
- *Coordinate with Caltrans and SANDAG to improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities on and near the Mission Avenue bridge over Interstate 5*
- *Pursue complete streets improvements on Mission Avenue and major cross streets, including expanded sidewalks and buffered bicycle lanes*
- *Expand and improve pedestrian and bicycle trails throughout the City and create linkages between the SLR River Trail, Coastal Rail Trail, and Inland Rail Trail*
- *Encourage businesses to establish an active presence on alley frontages with building transparency, outdoor merchandizing and dining areas, bicycle parking, etc.*

Committee Comments: Several of these goal and policy statements relate to a “complete streets” approach to roadway design and re-design. The Committee strongly supports this approach and calls upon the City to adopt a standard operating procedure (SOP) that ensures that all development proposals coming before the City, for both new and re-use development, include a requirement for review by the City Active Transportation and Micromobility Coordinator. Too many projects have gotten all the way through the development review process without such review, resulting in a need for retrofit changes later.

The Committee is in total agreement with the goal to expand and improve pedestrian and bike trails throughout the City, as noted earlier. Linkages from these trails to nearby major land uses are very important to maximize the value of these trails to the community. Bike trail and bike lane improvements need to be viewed as part of a network; stand-alone bike improvements that don’t connect to other parts of the network, such as was done to Mission Avenue from Coast Highway to Clementine Street, should be avoided.

Healthy & Livable Community Element (HLC)

The HLC calls upon the City to maintain its status as a designated Bicycle Friendly City.

- *Provide consistent and clear pedestrian/bicycle wayfinding signage throughout Oceanside, including in the public right of way and along off-street trails and shared-use paths*
- *Work to improve pedestrian, bicycle and transit connections to the City’s libraries*

Committee Comments: Consistent wayfinding signage should be provided throughout the City and should include not only pedestrian and bicycle signage but also signage for major destinations such as SPRINTER stations, City government facilities, and the Oceanside Transit Center (OTC.) Regarding the OTC, Michigan Street, from the Coast Highway to the train Platform, should be renamed “Transit Center Way” and the roundabout at Michigan and Coast Highway should contain an oversized art and wayfinding sculpture.

Smart and Sustainable Corridors Specific Plan (SSCSP)

The SSCSP establishes that “bicycle routes along the corridors will be safe, comfortable, and accessible for bicyclists of all ages and abilities.”

- *Extend the Inland Rail Trail (regional Class I bike path) along its prevailing alignment within the Escondido Sub rail right-of-way*
- *Install a path system within the grounds of El Corazon Park, which provides off-street connections to and from Oceanside Boulevard, Mesa Drive, El Camino Real, and Rancho Del Oro Drive*
- *Install Class IV bikeway facilities when feasible*
- *Where feasible along Class IV bikeways at signalized intersections, install “protected intersections,” which apply raised concrete islands or other physical delineators to separate bicyclists approaching an intersection while lowering the speeds of right-*

turning vehicular traffic and positioning them to have a better view of bicyclists at the conflict point

- *Along Class II bikeways and Class IV bikeways where “protected intersections” (M-17) are not feasible at signalized intersections, install treatments at intersections which increase separation between bicyclists and vehicular traffic, and/or which improve the visibility of bicyclists*
- *All traffic-actuated signals (e.g., traffic signals which do not operate on fixed timed phases) should have the loop detectors beneath travel lanes at the signal approach calibrated to detect bicycles where no bicycle facility is present*
- *Install secure bicycle parking for both short-term and long-term trips at major destinations, commercial areas, employment sites, transit stations, and multi-family housing complexes within the SSCSP area*

Committee Comments: The earlier drafts of the SSCSP covered Mission Avenue, Oceanside Blvd., and Vista Way. The Committee recommends the SSCSP also include Coast Highway, based on the Coast Highway Corridor Plan which has been adopted for that corridor.

The Committee previously commented on the original draft Smart and Sustainable Corridors Specific Plan issued by the City in late 2023 and respectfully re-submits comments from our previous letter here along with additional recommendations:

Proposed additional goal: Bicycle lanes and paths need to be viewed and constructed as a NETWORK, with full connectivity throughout the city between bike paths, bike lanes, and intersecting streets. The City should avoid piecemeal projects which do not connect to the larger network. The network approach should also ensure that adequate bicycle parking and storage facilities, and safe pedestrian paths from such storage facilities to final destinations are included.

Proposed additional goal: The Committee has had a long-standing concern about the difficult of cycling and walking access between South Oceanside and the major shopping areas in Pacific Coast Plaza and Vista Way, just to the east, due to the major barrier created by Interstate 5. A proposed goal addressing this issue might read as follows: “The City will work with SANDAG, Caltrans, the businesses in the Pacific Coast Plaza (who may want to provide funding), and responsible agencies to develop a safe, comfortable, and accessible facility connecting South Oceanside communities west of I-5 with the major shopping and commercial areas east of I-5.”

The first SSCSP goal listed above calls for completion of the Inland Rail Trail (IRT) through Oceanside. This has long been a top goal of our Committee and we appreciate the emphasis placed on it. The Policy notes the possibility that the IRT may need to revert to Oceanside Blvd. or other parallel streets in some areas, pending the alignment study which was just funded by Caltrans. If this occurs in some areas, it will be of utmost importance that such parallel street sections that become part of the designated IRT route provide enhanced separation and safety for cyclists, through Class IV bikeways or other similar strategies such as buffered bike lanes. Oceanside Blvd. in its current state is woefully inadequate as a bicycling facility, where narrow bike lanes, non-existent bike lanes at major intersections, high traffic speeds and heavy truck volumes combine to create a high “bicycling level of traffic stress” for users.

The third policy above calls for installing Class IV Separated Bicycle Facilities along SSCSP corridors and connections where feasible. While the Committee supports separated facilities in concept, it is important that each specific location where such facilities are proposed be independently evaluated to ensure unintended safety problems don't materialize as a result. They also must be planned so as to not preclude servicing adjacent sidewalks with bus stops. The document "Designing Cycle Tracks for Success" from the San Diego County Bicycle Coalition, provides an excellent checklist of items to consider in evaluating the use of Class IV Bikeways at a specific location.

The next-to-last policy statement above calls for traffic signal loop detectors to be calibrated so as to detect bicyclists where no bicycle facility is present. The Committee recommends this be required at all signalized intersections, and/or that the City replace the loop technology with the new camera detection system now being tested which has been demonstrated to be extremely effective in detecting pedestrians as well as cyclists. Besides designs based on timing, using the cameras to operate lights using "situational awareness" should be considered. For example, if there is no other traffic and a bicycle rider (or driver) approaches a signal, there is no reason that the light should not turn green for convenience and energy efficiency. Similarly, a slow moving pedestrian should be given extra time to cross.

The last policy statement listed above calls for the installation of secure bicycle parking for both short-term and long-term trips at major intersections, commercial areas, employment sites, transit stations, and multi-family housing complexes in SSCSP areas. The Committee supports this recommendation but believes it would be enhanced by providing some specific bicycle parking quantity standards so that City Planners will have more direct guidance to follow in reviewing project development proposals. For example, please consider our proposal listed in our previous review letter of November 14, 2022, on this topic, which reads in part:

"Provide safe and secure bicycle parking in addition to vehicle parking at all significant commercial and multi-family residential developments in an amount equal to at least 20% of vehicle parking spaces. A higher percentage of bicycle parking shall be considered for destinations on connected corridors. Such bicycle parking shall follow minimum space requirements identified by City standards."

The Committee also recommends addition of the following Policies which are consistent with past input we have provided on the SSCP:

- "Seek the completion of the Coastal Rail Trail and the Inland Rail Trail in Oceanside at the earliest possible dates."
- "Pursue extension of the San Luis Rey River Trail as a Class I Trail out to Interstate 15." (This is proposed as an extension of the Mission Avenue corridor.)
- "For projects on the affected corridors, the City's Development Review process shall always include a review of Active Transportation access and accommodations to ensure all modes of transportation are served by prospective development."
- "New developments in the affected corridors should be required to reduce vehicle miles travelled (VMT) by prioritizing transit, HOV, pedestrian, and bicycle travel, including by

having managed car-parking systems that are shared, value-priced, automated, and that provide earnings to those for whom the parking is built, and by incorporating active transportation and transit infrastructure enhancements.”

Updated Climate Action Plan (CAP)

The updated CAP points to “key levers the City has to reduce transportation related emissions through reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT).” Our review is focused on the Transportation section of the CAP. Active-transportation-related strategies include:

- *Transportation Demand Management (TDM) – Proposes reducing the compliance threshold for the City’s current TDM Ordinance to 40 daily commute trips (from the current 50 daily commute trips)*
- *VMT reduction in new development (15% below baseline)*
- *Bicycle infrastructure (11 miles of Class I bike paths, five miles of Class II bike lanes, and nine miles of Class III bike lanes by 2030)*
- *Continue to implement the existing Bicycle Master Plan and develop a new Active Transportation Plan/Trails Master Plan with Goals to (i) Update the bike trails and hiking trails maps available on the Parks, Trails, Amenities page on the City’s website, (ii) Improve the Inland Rail Trail, (iii) Extend San Luis Rey River Trail.*
- *Implement a docked bikeshare/e-bike program for key destinations in the City*
- *Reduce City employee VMT by providing subsidized transit passes, a carpool connection program, preferential parking for carpools, and setting pricing for employee parking to provide parking cash out opportunities*
- *Requiring that new mixed-use developments promote linkages with adjacent uses and provide adequate and secure bike parking facilities, as well as allowing for mobility and telework amenities as a part of public benefits packages.*
- *Requiring that the design of new development provides pedestrians and bicyclists with safe, conspicuous, and convenient connections between the public right-of-way and private property.*
- *By 2035, complete the Coast Highway Corridor Design Complete Streets Projects to enable safe and efficient bike and pedestrian travel along the Coast Highway Corridor.*
- *Develop and implement a policy consistency checklist for projects in the Smart and Sustainable Corridors Specific Plan (SSCSP) plan area which requires consistency with smart growth policies*

Committee Comments: We start with the following overarching comment. The City’s Climate Action Plan should conform to the CARB Scoping Plan, since that plan is designed to support climate stabilization, a requirement for human survival. This update to the City’s Climate Action Plan includes a number of improved policies and beneficial enhancements, all of which the Committee supports. Key among them are the goals for increases in Class I and Class II bike facilities, implementation of a docked bike-share program, implementation of City Employee VMT reduction measures including priced-parking and subsidized transit passes, development of a new Trails Master Plan to improve the Inland Rail Trail and extend the San

Luis Rey River Trail, and completing the Coast Highway Corridor Complete Streets project by 2035.

The Committee has two principal concerns with the overall Transportation Section of the CAP. The first is that Measure TR-1's overall goal is to reduce per-capita vehicle-miles-traveled (VMT) by just 3% by 2030 and 6% by 2045 from 2016 levels through TDM strategies. This conflicts with the CARB Scoping Plan that asks for a 25% reduction in VMT with respect to 2019 levels, by 2030. We understand that other areas of the CAP Transportation Section specify additional potential GHG reduction, though they don't identify the VMT reduction potential. The CAP should clearly state in the first paragraph of the Transportation section what the overall VMT reduction percentage will need to be to reach climate-stabilization levels by 2030 and 2045, and carry this through each subsection as to each subsection's contribution to this goal. This will enable the reader to better understand the magnitude of the shift that will be needed in the transportation sector to reach climate stabilization.

Second, the CAP needs to include an Implementation Plan that shows specifically how the active transportation infrastructure improvements listed above will be funded and implemented in time to help stabilize the climate. Perhaps Traffic Impact Fees covering roadway improvements should be expanded to cover all modes of transportation, not just road expansion for cars. And all new development needs to be required to prepare and implement a Transportation Demand Management Program to help reduce use of the single occupant auto.

Some of the Transit Facilities Measures listed in the CAP Update's Transportation section also relate to or support increased active transportation use, including:

- *Developing a system for subsidized, shared rides to or from the train and bus stops by 2030. (This could include bike-share programs and other micro-mobility devices.)*
- *Creating a circulator shuttle service that provides bi-directional frequent, free or low-cost connections between the train stations and key city destinations and employment hubs. (Again, this could include Active Transportation).*
- *Collaborating with NCTD to increase shading and heat-mitigating materials at transit stops, sidewalk/crosswalk safety enhancements, bus shelter improvements, improved lighting, and other features.*
- *Conduct an audit of current access to rail stations and bus stops and identify upgrades/modifications needed to support equitable transit access.*

Committee Comments: The Committee sees transit measures as an important supporting area for Active Transportation; indeed, Active Transportation is already used to access many transit trips today and can do more in the future. The above-listed Transit strategies are examples of this multi-modal support for both modal areas.

We would like to call out a specific example where the above goal regarding creating circulator shuttles between train stations and key destinations comes into play. Oceanside will soon witness the opening of the Frontwave Arena, a major sporting venue just 0.6 miles away from the Rancho Del Oro SPRINTER station. When well-attended sporting events occur during the rush hour at this facility, the Committee fears massive traffic jams on Oceanside Blvd., College Blvd.,

and El Camino Real as thousands of attendees attempt to drive to and park at the events. NCTD and/or Frontwave Arena should institute a special-event circulator shuttle connecting to the existing SPRINTER service at Rancho Del Oro Station to provide a viable alternative that will reduce congestion and emissions.

In closing, the Committee appreciates the effort that Staff have put into these updated planning documents and supports these efforts to improve Active Transportation and our climate. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

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 Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee Members
Oceanside Planning Commission Members
Howard LaGrange, Active Transportation and Micromobility Coordinator