



NORTH PARK – MID-CITY REGIONAL BIKE CORRIDOR PROJECT
SAN DIEGO ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP MEETING 1

January 30, 2013 ♦ 6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
City Heights Wellness Center
4440 Wightman Street, Suite 200, San Diego, CA 92105

MEETING SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) has formed a community advisory group to assist with the planning and design of the North Park – Mid-City Regional Bike Corridors Project. The role of the North Park – Mid-City Regional Bike Corridors Community Advisory Group (Advisory Group) is to provide in-depth input on community issues, opportunities, and proposed facility designs and to facilitate broad community involvement from kick-off to completion of the planning and design phase of the project. The Advisory Group is meeting four times at key project milestones.

The first Advisory Group meeting was held on January 30, 2013 at the City Heights Wellness Center, located at 4440 Wightman Street, San Diego, 92105. The purpose of the first Advisory Group meeting was to:

- Introduce the project team and Advisory Group members;
- Provide an overview of the project, background, and relationship to other regional and local plans;
- Discuss the vision and goals for the project; and to
- Discuss issues and opportunities within the project area.

Approximately 44 community members attended the first Advisory Group meeting. Of those who attended, 22 were Advisory Group members. All community members are welcome and encouraged to attend the Advisory Group meetings.

The materials presented and input obtained at the Advisory Group meetings will also be posted to www.keepsandiegomoving.com/NorthParkMidCityBike for community members to review and comment on after each meeting.

The following sections summarize community members' discussions during the first Advisory Group meeting, organized by meeting topic. Each section briefly describes the agenda item (shown in italics) and then lists community members' comments and questions. Where applicable, the project team's responses are listed below the respective question (shown in italics).



SUMMARY OF TOPICS AND DISCUSSIONS

I. Welcome and Introductions

City of San Diego Councilmember Marti Emerald provided welcoming remarks, stressed the need for bicycle-friendly communities, and encouraged Advisory Group members to bring innovative ideas to the project.

Coleen Clementson, SANDAG Principal Planner, introduced the project team and then asked Advisory Group members to introduce themselves. Ms. Clementson also provided an overview of the meeting purpose and agenda.

II. Project Overview

Ms. Clementson described the regional planning context and background of the project.

Bridget Enderle, SANDAG Associate Planner and North Park – Mid-City Regional Bike Corridors Project Manager, reviewed the project area, planning process, schedule and role of the Advisory Group.

Comments and Questions

- Will the PowerPoint presentation and other project information be posted online?
 - *Yes, a project webpage is in development. All meeting materials will be posted online within the next couple of weeks.*
- Will we be widening streets so that we can have parking and bike lanes or will be squeezing bike lanes into existing right-of-way? How much construction money is really available? Is there enough money to build something that will be worth all of these peoples' time?
 - *This process will determine what the best project is, along with the exact cost of construction.*
- If we have a budget that we're striving to, it may help inform the process so we know what ideas are worth putting out there and if we can think outside of the box. For example, can we consider bridges, viaducts, etc.?
 - *At this point in the process it's important to hear all of your ideas and visions for this project regardless of cost.*
- I think it's fantastic that the whole community is getting involved. Will we be looking at resources and examples from other communities?
 - *Yes, we will draw upon best practices from communities throughout the U.S. and abroad.*
- Will we be able to draw the lines on the map differently, suggesting different



routing options?

- *Yes, the lines currently on the map can change. These lines are just our starting point for community input and technical analysis.*

III. Bicycling in North Park and Mid-City: Vision and Goals

Ms. Enderle described the general approach to planning the regional bicycle corridors. She emphasized the desire to create vibrant streets where all types of people feel safe riding a bike for everyday trips, and by taking a place-making approach, also benefit community members who may choose to never ride a bike.

Ms. Enderle noted that it's important for the community to define the vision and goals specific to the North Park – Mid-City Regional Bike Corridors Project and presented preliminary draft goals compiled by the project team based on meetings held with community leaders and groups over the last several months.

Ms. Clementson facilitated a discussion with community members to share their visions for the project and reactions to the draft goals.

Comments and Questions

- There is a lack of institutional memory about planning projects. For example, the I-15 bike path project. We need to try to find ways to use this project to implement other projects that have been envisioned in the past, but never implemented.
- Adding more bicycle corrals in the area is an important part of this project.
- How much leeway is there to design outside of the standards? We should consider moving bike lanes to the right of parked cars like European cycle tracks.
 - *Yes, we can consider innovative design solutions.*
- I like the idea of these project goals but also think we need to talk about sustainability and the triple bottom line: economic, equity, environment. We can aspire to different nationally-recognized rating systems (LEED, Envision, Greenroads, etc.) to ensure sustainability.
- Use this project to help overcome the park space deficit. We need to make these corridors feel like parks. Line the streets with trees. Make these streets more park-like.
- Not just focusing on bikes is important. Widening sidewalks especially around schools. They need to be wide enough for several schoolchildren to walk abreast and for wheelchair users to pass without having to use the street.
- For the University Avenue corridor, we are envisioning something similar to what was done in that photo simulation of Palm Avenue. Tie this to redevelopment efforts to help the business community, pedestrians and bicyclists at the same time.



- We need to ensure that projects that have already been planned are implemented.
- Following up on the bike corrals, some of the bike corral spaces are not practical. We need more practical bike parking areas. We also need more education about the projects, like what are sharrows?
- We need to include considerations for people of all ages.
- Promote the use of canyons for recreation. Maybe we can combine goals of the San Diego Canyonlands with those of this project.
- I live in North Park. Along the lines of place-making, I think the routes should be along main corridors, where people actually have to go, like Adams, University, El Cajon, etc.
- A bike share program could be a potential component of this project. Consider bike-friendly business districts. Be sure to service the areas with commercial destinations.
- We have a pedestrian master plan and bike master plan. Will what we do here take into account the previous plans or contradict them?
 - *This project will take into account previous plans*
- We need to discuss where the routes should be – on boulevards versus smaller streets.
- One of the concerns our community always has is that conflicting plans can sometimes plug things up and make thoroughfares elsewhere. Aren't people afraid for their lives on The Avenue and The Boulevard? Let's bring the old plans to the next meeting so we don't remake old mistakes.
- We need to build a constituency to take lanes on El Cajon and put cycle tracks behind the parking.
- If you put bikeways on El Cajon it will slow traffic and maybe cause traffic to divert through neighborhoods.
- We should think about synergy between transit and biking.
- Bird Rock in La Jolla has been very successful. Let's replicate that.
- For safety, improvement should also include good lighting, traffic calming, roundabouts, speed humps, bumps. Fairmount is also very important to economic development in City Heights.
- Cyclists should not be treated as second class citizens. Not given facilities where it's easy and convenient, but at the best location. There should be the same level of consideration and respect as is provided to other modes.



IV. Project Corridors: Issues and Opportunities

Ms. Enderle highlighted some of the common issues and opportunities she has heard from Advisory Group and other community members through initial outreach efforts.

Chris Kluth, SANDAG Senior Planner and Active Transportation Program Manager, provided an overview of best practices and innovation in bicycle facility designs.

Ms. Enderle facilitated a discussion among Advisory Group and other meeting participants about the issues, opportunities and potential alternate routes to Meade Avenue within the project study area.

Comments on the Meade Avenue Corridor Study Area

- The issue with Meade Avenue is that it doesn't take you to places, especially SDSU. Taking El Cajon Boulevard and then turning left on College is a route that can be made.
- Meade feels safer than Wightman, but it's not that convenient. Traffic goes faster than it should and there are too many stop signs.
- Meade Avenue is a wonderful way to get east and west but please don't add more stop signs on Meade.
- Meade is a great opportunity. It's wide enough. It used to be a four-lane street. I'd like to see less stop signs and traffic calming. I'd like to see it extended further east, along Monroe all the way into Talmadge.
- The south side of Meade is commercial. Those can be destinations as well.
- Meade is nice for a leisurely ride, but it isn't direct like El Cajon, Adams Avenue, and University are. Bikes benefit local businesses. We shouldn't be scared to take away parking. All three of them are important. It's important to put bike facilities on main corridors.
- The YMCA will be built at Meade and Fairmount. There will be a membership of 19,000. There is a lot of concern about increased traffic in an already high-traffic area. Aldine Drive, Montezuma and Fairmount have all received "F ratings." There are so many people living in City Heights and they only have Fairmount to get in and out of the neighborhood.
- Meade dead-ends. The corridor should be shifted to Monroe.
- Monroe works in some places but stops at the I-805.
- Improvements to Aldine and Monroe can resolve traffic problems and make it more bicycle-friendly.
- Meade is not a convenient route. Meade is a nice, scenic alternative route, but not



efficient.

- No freeway on- and off-ramps make for a nicer ride than arterials. As it currently is, Meade could attract non-cyclists, families, because it is calmer.
- Meade is okay as it is, but it could definitely benefit from traffic circles.
- Just to clarify, I fully support the bike boulevards, but the main corridors have to be improved too.
- I would never bike on El Cajon.
- I will ride down El Cajon; I will ride down University, but some people are less confident. What are the maintenance costs going to be for these highly landscaped Bike Boulevards? I don't think we are going to get the numbers up by doing projects on the main corridors; the majority of people will still be scared to ride on them.

Comments on the Orange Avenue Corridor Study Area

- Orange Avenue is where most of the cyclists are riding. It connects six schools and the two largest parks in City Heights. And it doesn't have too many stop signs.
- In all of this discussion we have to keep in mind that there are steep upward hills. Is there a way to have paired, parallel east/west routes you can take in each direction that minimize the topography?
 - Yes, we can look at couplets to reduce the amount hill-climbing needed to travel east to west.
- I want to talk more about the maintenance of landscapes and lighting for these projects. Improvements along Texas Street were installed using a creative maintenance mechanism. We should do something similar here.
- To get all of the way to La Mesa, on the eastern end, there are all these zig-zags. These streets are also way too steep. Malcolm, for example, is steep and dangerous. There are many better routes available. This plan should connect to the University Avenue routes planned in the University Avenue Mobility Study. On the east end at 70th Street, the route should use Tower Street, it's a narrow street, but it's a comfortable street, flat and straight. Take Tower to Solita to Seminole south to Acorn Street, then link up with Adelaide Avenue.
- These are good points. Unfortunately, University is nothing but a canyon where it crosses Adelaide. University should become like it is in Hillcrest. You should have a dual facility. I guarantee if you talk about taking lanes from El Cajon and University we will have instant controversy.
- In terms of prioritization, I think Orange Avenue is the most important of the three. Orange Avenue connects the most destinations. Maintenance really is an issue,



however. I'd encourage that whatever we design – something beautiful and livable – that the maintenance of it be funded too.

- I want to emphasize that we need a balance between comfortable side streets and main streets.
- It would be good to overlay the City's Bicycle Master Plan facilities with these corridors so that we can see how they can work together.
- How can this project be combined with the upcoming Mid-City BRT [bus rapid transit] project? We need to be coordinating with that project.
- Orange Avenue, from the pedestrian perspective and thinking about Safe Routes to Schools, requires lighting and wider sidewalks.
- El Cajon Boulevard does have lots of destinations, but it also has lots of cars and stop lights. Minimizing stops is important to bicyclists. Orange seems close enough to businesses.
- On Euclid Avenue and Wightman Street there are signs that say "bikeway" but there are no dedicated bike facilities there.
- In the east, somewhere near Euclid Avenue, the current route gets too steep. This is where it should connect to University and El Cajon.

Comments on the Landis Street/Wightman Street Corridor Study Area

- I would love to be able to ride through from North Park directly to Hillcrest on Robinson without having to ride on University or Park Boulevard.
- Making streets one way is a good idea. Pairing routes, where you have one road being the east path and the other being the west to avoid steep terrain is ideal
- I'm afraid we are not going to make a big enough impact on these side streets. People are not going to want to ride a mile south to access an official bike facility. We need to create a network rather limit ourselves to specific streets.
- The advantage of non-arterials is the potential to keep moving. You don't have to start and stop at traffic lights.
- There is no north/south connection available. Fairmount is a nightmare. Also, the canyons break things up. This plan won't address getting to Mission Valley. In general, we need more north/south connections. Fern Street/30th Street, for example, is a good north/south connection.
- I think these alignments should be more targeted towards the goals we discussed at the beginning of the meeting.
- Could you explain why Fairmount has become a priority?



- *The Regional Bicycle Plan identified Fairmount as high priority based on an analysis that considered demand, needs, and public input. The project team can follow-up with you if you are interested in learning more about the details of the analysis.*
- We should consider having the option of express routes. Why not have some routes designed as the quickest route and others the more pleasant places to ride?
- If we want to think big, we should be talking about building bridges over canyons and freeways. That would have an impact.

V. Summary of Meeting Findings

Ms. Enderle noted some of the common themes identified during the discussion portions of the meeting.

VI. Next Steps and Closing Remarks

Ms. Enderle described the next steps to the planning process, noting that the next Advisory Group meeting will be held in early March. She closed the meeting and thanked Advisory Group and all community members for attending.