



San Clemente Couple Celebrates 70th Wedding Anniversary
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Pedaling Forward

City's bicycle and pedestrian master plan receives plaudits from professional group

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The city's new Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan has received honors as a "visionary document" from professional planning groups. Citizen activists such as Pete van Nuys (left) and Brenda Miller worked closely with city staff to create the policy. Photo: Jim Shilander

City Council Begins Looking at Marblehead Coastal Financial Plans

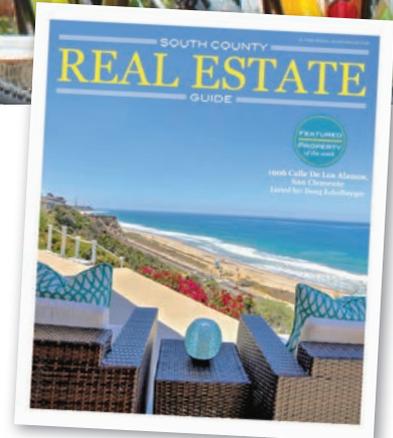
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What's Up With...

Five things San Clemente should know this week

1 City Council Moves Forward With El Camino Gateway Plan

THE LATEST: While it did not decide to go as far as it could have, the San Clemente City Council approved moving forward with designs for improvements for cyclists and pedestrians on North El Camino Real south of Dana Point. The council also seemed to favor going forward with a more ambitious vision of the project.

The council unanimously approved \$40,000 for consultants and city staff to provide designs for landscaping along El Camino Real's southbound lane coming from Dana Point. The plan provides for a median to separate a bicycle and pedestrian path of 14-17 feet between the road.

The council, which approved preliminary designs for the project in March, was debating whether providing greater landscaping on the medians would provide more safety, as well as creating a more attractive gateway.

How much landscaping will likely depend on the cost. Staff estimated landscaping 50 percent of the median would add \$348,000 to the project's costs and \$460,000 to cover 100 percent.

WHAT'S NEXT: The council indicated a willingness to use money from a fund created to provide additional capacity for roads used in projects such as the free-way exchange at Avenida Vista Hermosa.

The council expressed hope that doing more of the project initially would prevent rising costs if it was delayed.

—Jim Shilander

2 Marblehead Updates Hit Council

THE LATEST: The council moved forward Tuesday with a couple of updates to its agreements on the Marblehead Coastal residential development with new information from its owners, Taylor Morrison.

Land at the Jim Johnson Memorial Sports Park that had been reserved for Courtney's SandCastle was formally changed to allow it to be used as open parkland, since the playground had been built at Vista Hermosa Sports Park when the residential development was delayed.

As part of the agreement, Taylor Morrison returns approximately \$500,000 to the city, which will be placed in parks

reserve funds. Beaches, Parks and Recreation Director Sharon Heider said the area would primarily be used for free-play, as well as a warm up area for nearby soccer fields.

WHAT'S NEXT: The city also began a process to change the community facilities district agreement it has with the developer, which will have to go before a public hearing at the council's August 19 meeting.

The revised agreement eliminates the possibility of custom lots at Marblehead and also caps the amount the city can bond for infrastructure related to the project at \$45 million—paid back by residents over a 30-year period. If infrastructure costs went beyond the bonded amount, the developer would be responsible for the costs. —JS

3 Capistrano Unified Bids Farewell to Farley

THE LATEST: The Capistrano Unified School District and trustees gave a warm sendoff to retiring Superintendent Joseph Farley on what was his last board meeting on Wednesday, June 25.

Speakers praised Farley for steering the district through troubling times, including its worst fiscal crisis. They applauded his openness and willingness to speak with teachers, parents and staff during his four years at the helm.

Farley received framed proclamations of thanks from each of the cities in Capistrano Unified, as well as recognition from local elected officials. Trustees also pitched in to buy a new custom watch, inscribed with Farley's name and the Capistrano Unified seal.

"I count you as a friend. You've been a great mentor," said Board President John Alpay.

Farley, who will take on a part-time job with a national consulting firm tasked to find school officials, reciprocated the well-wishes with trustees and district staff.

"Am I completely ready for the watershed moment of retirement from this wonderful work? Probably not," Farley said. "But I'm leaving it with an enormous sense of gratitude and appreciation."

WHAT'S NEXT: The board also unanimously approved the contract with its next superintendent, Kirsten Vital, who currently serves as superintendent of the Alameda Unified School District in the Bay Area.

Her contract runs through 2018 and costs \$305,000 per year with no automatic increases. Vital will receive a one-time allo-



The Capistrano Unified School District Board of Trustees presented retiring Superintendent Joseph Farley with several proclamations of gratitude and mementos, including a custom-made watch inscribed with his name and the district seal. Photo: Brian Park

cation of \$15,000 for relocation expenses.

She is set to begin Aug. 26. Deputy Superintendent Clark Hampton will lead until then. —Brian Park and JS

4 Fireworks, Celebrations Set for July 4

THE LATEST: San Clemente will again celebrate the Fourth of July at the Pier Friday.

To prepare, the end of the Pier will close at noon Thursday and will be closed entirely, other than to Fisherman's patrons, at 8 a.m. Friday until the end of the day. Ocean access under the Pier will be prohibited during the show, and surfers, swimmers and boarders are asked to be at least 1,000 feet from the end of the Pier, where the fireworks are launched from.

A fly-over of vintage World War II planes will be held at 6:25 p.m.

WHAT'S NEXT: Police Services will close vehicular traffic in the lower Pier Bowl from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. Friday. Pedestrians are asked to steer clear of the train tracks.

Police have also established traffic control routes, with three routes out of the Pier Bowl: Avenida Palizada onto Interstate 5 or northbound El Camino Real, Avenida Del Mar onto Avenida Presidio or Avenida Victoria southbound to I-5.

Residents are asked to take trash with them. Personal fireworks are prohibited by law in the city. —JS

5 City to Take Over Chamber Building

THE LATEST: Following a year of nego-

tiations over rent and their subsequent move, the San Clemente Chamber of Commerce has agreed to turn over its former offices at 1100 N. El Camino Real to the city, which will be rehabilitating the building before determining a future course.

City Manager Pall Gudgeirsson confirmed Friday that the transfer of the building from the chamber to the city is underway. Once the city has control, improvements will be made over the next several weeks.

The building had been the source of conflict since the beginning of 2013, when the chamber's lease with the city ran out. The chamber owned the building but rented land on which it sat from the city. The chamber had acted as the city's tourist bureau in return for reduced rent of \$100 per year.

Negotiations to keep the chamber at the site for higher rent proved unsuccessful and earlier this year, the chamber moved to a new site in the Talega Business Park at 1231 Puerta Del Sol, Unit 200.

WHAT'S NEXT: Chamber President Lynn Wood sent out an announcement earlier this week that an open house for the new offices will be held July 24, at which point, the chamber would officially turn the El Camino Real building over to the city.

FIND OUT MORE: For future updates, visit www.sanclementetimes.com —JS

Have a story idea or topic you would like to read about?

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Send your suggestions to editorial@sanclementetimes.com.

Pedaling Toward a New Future

San Clemente blazes a trail for future bicycling improvements

BY JIM SHILANDER, SAN CLEMENTE TIMES

From the outside, San Clemente seems an unlikely candidate to make waves in its planning and zoning plans.

But it has.

San Clemente's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, approved along with the General Plan in February, provides a framework for future transportation plans within the city to include non-motorized traffic. The plan was recently honored by the Orange County American Planning Association and nominated for a statewide honor. Mayor Tim Brown formally accepted the award Tuesday.

It was the culmination of years of work of residents and city staff to set the city on a path they believe is sustainable and embraces forms of transportation beyond cars.

The panel took particular note of the "quantitative model" devised to find the best routes to enhance for bicycles and pedestrians.

"It's sophisticated, it's logical," Randy Nichols, an OCAPA juror who examined the plan and presented the award said. "If you want to defend funding decisions on where you want to spend money, it's easy to do. It's a really useful tool."

He also praised the design standards for new developments and its new ways of measuring street performance, which he called "leading edge stuff."

Resident and bicycle advocate Brenda Miller said the recognition was about giving the city its due for looking forward and getting help from community stakeholders.

"To embrace the future, a community needs people with new ideas and people to listen to those ideas," Miller said. "San Clemente is special because we're lucky enough to have both."

Gridlock Shows Need to Make Changes

Pete Van Nuys, who runs Bicycles San Clemente on North Beach, also leads the Orange County Bicycle Coalition. San Clemente, he said, really jumped ahead of the pack when it adopted the plan in February.

"No one's even close," Van Nuys said. "Other towns have gone after recognition to pick up bicycle-friendly designations, but in terms of visioning and engineering, they're not close."

Van Nuys said the coalition's goal was to introduce the concept of "complete streets" to the city. Complete street engineering and designs, according to CalTrans, "recognizes bicycle, pedestrian and transit modes as integral elements of the transportation system" and encourages those working on new or improved transportation infrastructure to include this in their thinking.

During the initial meeting when he

introduced the concept, Van Nuys got "blank stares" from people on the committee. That isn't completely surprising, Miller said, since the concept of complete streets, despite being official policy of CalTrans, doesn't necessarily mean it's always followed.

"From an engineering and design standpoint, they (CalTrans) often completely ignore it," Miller said of the policy, she said is supposed to maximize the safety of all road users.

In recent years, however, as congestion reached new heights in Southern California, and people began making longer and longer trips between home and work, more local governments began integrating transportation planning in their land use efforts.

"In 1999, I attended a CalTrans symposium at USC," Van Nuys said. "The guys from District 7, Los Angeles CalTrans basically got up and said 'The freeway era is over, from now on its in-fill and optimization of what we have.'"

Closer to the present, Miller said Orange County Transportation Authority officials have also expressed similar long-range concerns. At a long-term transportation meeting earlier this year, Miller reported an OCTA official saying the county could not build their way out of freeway congestion and the present road system would require more efficient use.

"That means you broaden the range of choices available to individual people," Miller said. "That means providing an option for walkable/bikeable distances."

Assistant Planner Cliff Jones, who helped write the plan, said the process of working on the project really was an education on the concepts involved.

"I think we've all become supporters," Jones said of city staff and leaders regarding multi-modal transportation.

Evolution, Not Revolution

Recent debate this spring over a proposal to restripe Avenida Vaquero could be a preview of how the city might manage implementing elements of the plan. The City Council narrowly approved changes to the road's striping to eliminate a center turn lane and increase the size of the bike paths.

Residents along the street opposed the total elimination of the turn lane. They argued the turn lane was necessary for residents to safely get in and out of their homes without impeding the traffic flow.

Those living on the street would have preferred a compromise plan that provided for a smaller increase of the bike lane but kept the center, resident Tom Marier said.

"Our concern is that there's going to be



Mayor Tim Brown, far right, accepts an award from the Orange County American Planning Association for excellence in transportation planning. The plan, juror Randy Nichols (second from right) said, was innovative and a good example of collaboration with the community. Bicycle activist Brenda Miller and assistant city planner Cliff Jones also were on hand for the presentation. Photo: Jim Shilander

Terms to Know

Future bicycle and pedestrian improvements in the city include the additions of Class 1 Bike Paths, Class 2 Bike Lanes and Class 3 Bike Routes. Here's the difference:

CLASS 1: Paved rights-of-way completely separated from streets. Candidate San Clemente projects include: El Camino Real from Camino Capistrano to North Beach, Avenida Pico from Camino Vera Cruz to El Camino Real

CLASS 2: Striped lanes on streets, designated with specific signage and stencils. Candidate San Clemente projects include: Avenida Vaquero from Via Cascadita to Camino Capistrano and Avenida Vista Hermosa within Marblehead Coastal.

CLASS 3: Preferred streets for bicycle travel using lanes shared with motor vehicles. Candidate San Clemente projects include: Avenida Pico from El Camino Real to Calle Del Comercio.

serious injuries," Marier said.

Similar objections were raised in Oceanside on that city's plans to provide new bicycle and pedestrian opportunities came up, Miller said. Restriping, she noted, was the cheapest way for the city to affect changes.

Elsewhere in San Clemente, the changes may be so subtle that residents will not even realize changes they've been made, the pair said.

"If we're smart, we're not going to have a big test. We're going to have small successes," Van Nuys said. "People aren't going to find any smoke, and where there's no smoke there's no fire."

Where it's applicable, city staff have already begun trying to find ways to make life easier for cyclists, he said.

Miller cited the increasing number of

curb extensions, or "bulb outs," that extend curbs into intersections, shortening the distance between pedestrian crossings and forcing motorists to slow down. She noted city traffic engineer Tom Frank was finding ways to make streets safer for pedestrians and bicyclists.

"Every opportunity to make it safer for everyone, he's seizing that opportunity, within the budgetary limits he's been provided," Miller said.

"There's no revolution," Van Nuys said. "If this is rolled out properly, motorists aren't going to feel much."

Frank said such projects largely depend on the particulars of each situation.

"We look at each street improvement project on its own merits and we try to balance the improvements for all users of the roadway," Frank said.

The older portions of San Clemente are more likely to get such improvements in general, he said. More importantly, the public needed to be open to the idea.

"I believe, and I think that most of the leaders in our department believe that any change to the streets need to include a public vetting process, because it's their streets," Frank said.

The city is also starting a program to get public input on the addition of more roundabouts in the city, which will provide education and feedback.

Bicyclists prefer roundabouts to traditional stops because they tend to slow down vehicular traffic, Miller said, while paradoxically making the routes more efficient for drivers, since they have fewer stops. That would be her ideal solution to the Avenida Vaquero issue.

Jones noted that the plan included 66 "candidate projects" for improvements, too many to be tackled quickly.

"It's going to be small, incremental improvements to our roadways to support non-motorized transportation," Jones said. "The city will be seeking grant funding to do more improvements in the future. And the plan makes us a strong candidate to receive those grants." **SC**