

SAN CLEMENTE

SUN POST NEWS



FRED SWEGLES, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Last spring, San Clemente installed a traffic signal at Avenida Estacion and El Camino Real, in part to increase safety for bicyclists. It used to be a place of many random, angled crossings of the highway by cyclists. Now there's a crosswalk.

'COMPLETE STREETS'

SAN CLEMENTE'S NEW GENERAL PLAN AIMS TO PUT TRANSIT OPTIONS FOR BICYCLISTS, PEDESTRIANS AND CARS ON EQUAL FOOTING. PAGE 6

NEWS DIGEST: TEEN'S SHOE DRIVE RUNS INTO OBSTACLE. PAGE 3

CITY AWAITS RESPONSE ON I-5 SOUND-WALL REVIEW. PAGE 4

TRITONS SAVE BEST FOR LAST, DEFEAT CAPO VALLEY. SPORTS 13



San Clemente strives to be friendlier to bicyclists, walkers

By **FRED SWEGLES**
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Visitors and locals may see San Clemente become dramatically more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly after the City Council adopts a new General Plan for the city this year.

So suggests Pete van Nuys, executive director of the Orange County Bicycle Coalition and a resident of San Clemente.

He also is a member of San Clemente's General Plan Advisory Committee, which is helping to craft the new General Plan.

Since Jan. 1, 2011, a state law known as AB1358, or the Complete Streets Act, has required California cities to plan for "complete streets" when updating their General Plan, as San Clemente is doing now.

A "complete street" provides for all forms of transportation. "Car transportation doesn't trump the other forms of transportation," said Jeff Hook, San Clemente's principal planner.

Bicyclists and pedestrians can expect the city to adopt policies to make it safer and easier for them to get around town.



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Yes, it is legal for bicyclists to transition into a left-turn lane in order to turn left, as this cyclist is doing near San Clemente's North Beach.

A consultant hired by the city is drafting a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

to go with the new General Plan, and the City Council voted 5-0 on Jan. 17 to "fully integrate" the bike/pedestrian plan into the General Plan. That could come as early as August.

"North Beach could be made more bicycle-friendly and pedestrian-friendly, as could the 'T Zone' (downtown), as could South El Camino Real," van Nuys said. "The California Complete Streets Act and this particular master plan have the potential to be truly life-changing for a lot of people, terrifically enhancing our quality of life ... reinforcing the village character. It will be palpable. You will be able to touch it, to walk it. The streets will be quieter. The neighborhoods will be more accessible, and I believe we can prove that people in general will be healthier."

The General Plan process has raised the idea of upgrading a concrete flood-control channel to become a bicycle and pedestrian route between San Clemente High School and North Beach. That's one example. At the south end of town, the city is looking at reducing the four-lane South El Camino Real to two traffic lanes. There would be a turn lane in the middle, diagonal parking on the inland side and a bike lane on the side facing I-5.

Recently, when the California Department of Transportation asked the city to select one of two designs for a proposed upgrade of the Avenida Pico/I-5 interchange, the City Council rejected a cloverleaf element that would have been a little faster for cars and trucks. Instead, the council picked a design that could be safer for bicyclists on Pico.

Hook said the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan is part of the city's Complete Streets initiative and that the city hopes to introduce innovative, creative ideas. "This is a huge step forward," he said.

Brenda Miller, a local advocate of non-motorized transportation, said Long Beach can serve as a case study. That city has seamlessly introduced bicycle and pedestrian features in its street system, she said. Her group PEDal (pedestrians and people who pedal) has invited San Clemente officials to take a bicycle tour of Long Beach on March 10 to see for themselves.

Richard Boyer, a bicyclist and member of the General Plan Advisory Committee, noted that a telephone survey the city took before undertaking the new General Plan showed 90 percent support for bicycle and pedestrian enhancements.

"When do 90 percent of people agree on anything?" Boyer said.

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