

INSIDE: Five bike rides in South County to check out

# THE WAY WE ROLL

Efforts under way to improve local bike infrastructure to boost safety, but advocates decry slow progress.

BY LUKE RAMSETH • ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

“We have a long way to go yet, but I’m not going anywhere. I would like to see our town be as good as the Netherlands.”

BRENDA MILLER  
SAN CLEMENTE

**B**renda Miller is perfectly comfortable navigating her bike on San Clemente’s narrow streets, through its congested intersections and on the shoulder of Pacific Coast Highway. But she’s realized not everyone is so adept.

“A primary concern I’ve heard consistently is the complaint that you can’t expect me or my child to ride on a roadway with cars that are going 50 to 60 mph,” said Miller, an outspoken bicycle advocate and former planning commissioner who is helping to create a cycling master plan in San Clemente.

May is National Bike Month, promoting getting out on the open roads, feeling the breeze and saving on gas. But local bike advocates say it’s also a reminder of the poten-

## Area cycling projects

- **San Clemente:** Officials and advocates are working on the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, which lays out plans for 40 more miles of bikeways around the city.
- **Dana Point:** The city plans to add more expansive bike lanes to several busy thoroughfares downtown, including Del Prado Avenue, and eventually a protected lane along the length of Pacific Coast Highway in the city.
- **Laguna Niguel:** The city is working to secure funding for its section of the Oso Creek Trail in the city’s busy Gateway District, which might eventually include a pedestrian and bike bridge over Crown Valley Parkway.
- **Laguna Beach:** Plans have stalled to add bike lanes to Gleneyre Street, but “sharrows” and other bike-route signage may soon be added to direct cyclists off the busiest sections of Coast Highway.

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PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CHRIS LUSK, THE REGISTER • IMAGE FROM SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



FILE PHOTO: FRED SWEGLES, THE REGISTER

Families swim in San Clemente’s municipal pool at the Ole Hanson Beach Club while, upstairs, visitors dine in 2010.

## Landmark getting a major remodel

BY FRED SWEGLES  
ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Preservationists argue the \$3.1 million rehab will alter the character of Ole Hanson Beach Club.

from San Clemente founder Ole Hanson.

A legal showdown may loom between the San Clemente Historical Society and the city over the council majority’s decision to widen the beach club’s entry doors and doors leading onto the pool deck.

Supporters said Tuesday that the new features have a

compatible design that will improve the visitor experience. Critics said the changes run counter to the city’s policy of preserving historic landmarks and set an example for historic-building owners who want to alter their property.

The city pools at 105 W. Avenida Pico closed in early 2012 so the city could study

the aging facility’s structural needs and develop a rehabilitation plan. A legal challenge – hinted at in a Historical Society letter to the council Tuesday – could delay the reopening, said to be about 18 months away.

Sharon Heider, city director of beaches, parks and recreation, said she thinks changes can be made within the U.S. Department of the Interior’s guidelines for historic preservation.

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Triton boys volleyball powers through first round with win



MIGUEL VASCONCELLOS, FOR THE REGISTER

San Clemente’s AJ Hammer, right, goes for the kill past Granada Hills’ Andrew Simkins during Tuesday’s CIF-SS Division 1 first-round match at Granada Hills. San Clemente won, 3-0, and faces top-seeded Huntington Beach in the next round.

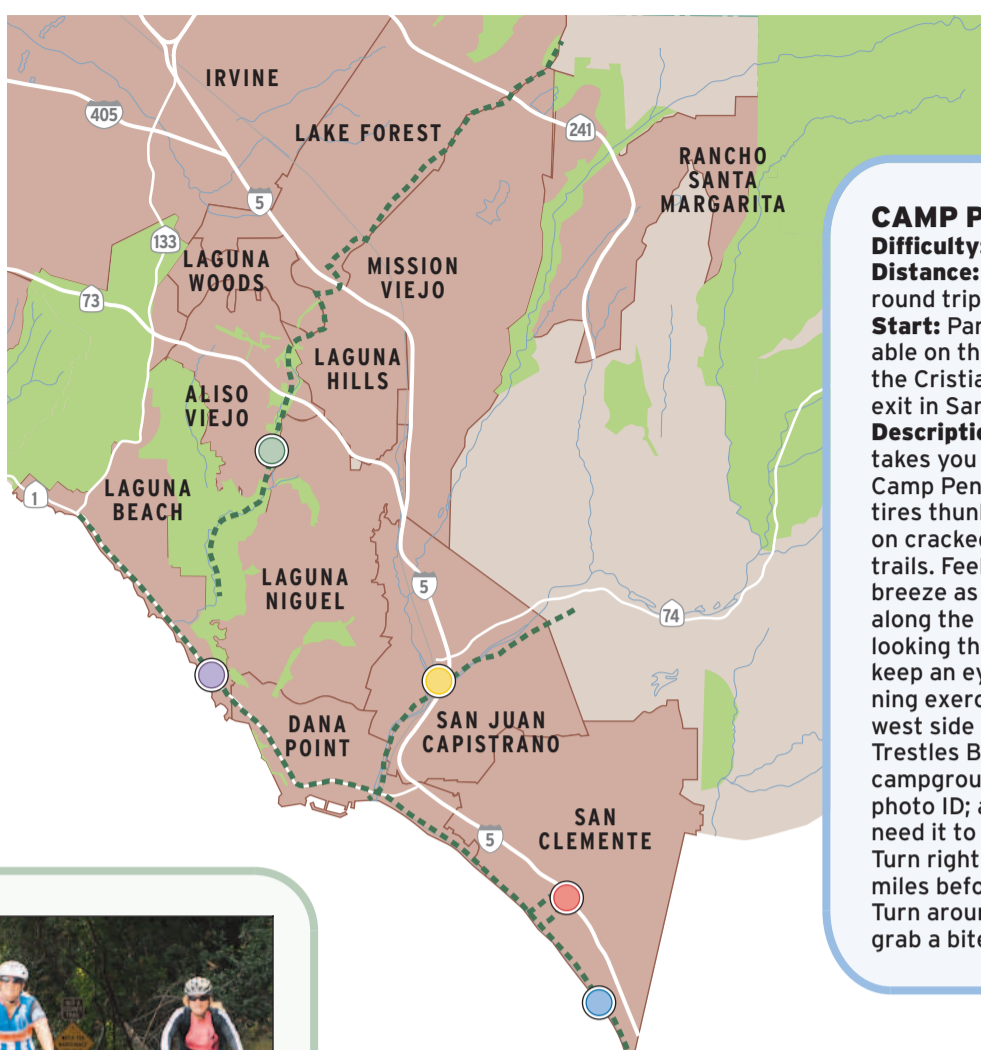
SEE MORE GAME COVERAGE ON PAGE 15

# CYCLING: O.C. cities prioritizing bike safety

FROM PAGE 1

## South County bike rides

Here are five trails in south Orange County for riders of various levels:



### CAMP PENDLETON RIDE

**Difficulty:** Advanced  
**Distance:** 40 miles round trip  
**Start:** Parking is available on the east side of the Cristianitos Road exit in San Clemente  
**Description:** This ride takes you through Camp Pendleton, your tires thunk-thunking on cracked concrete trails. Feel the salty breeze as you cruise along the bluffs overlooking the ocean, and keep an eye out for Marine helicopters and tanks running exercises. Start by jumping on the trail on the west side of I-5 at Cristianitos Road. After passing Trestles Beach, head south through the San Onofre campground and into the military base. Bring your photo ID; after crossing to the east side of I-5, you'll need it to get through Pendleton's Las Pulgas Gate. Turn right on Stuart Mesa and continue for several miles before turning right on Vandergrift Boulevard. Turn around here, or continue into Oceanside and grab a bite to eat before the return trip.



FILE PHOTO: THE REGISTER

### The Camp Pendleton ride heads past the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station.

### COASTAL CITIES TOUR

**Difficulty:** Moderate to advanced  
**Distance:** 26 miles round trip  
**Start:** Anywhere in San Clemente or Laguna Beach  
**Description:** From San Clemente, find your way to Pacific Coast Highway. Head north before hopping on the protected bike and pedestrian trail next to the railroad tracks. Continuing on Park Lantern, follow bike-route signs back to the bike lane on Pacific Coast Highway that runs through downtown Dana Point. Continue north for several miles over the rolling terrain. As Laguna Beach nears, be especially wary of traffic and parked cars on the shoulder. Turn around in Laguna or climb the steep Park Avenue or Temple Hills Drive to Top of the World Park for expansive views.

### SAN CLEMENTE TOUR

**Difficulty:** Casual  
**Distance:** About 6 miles  
**Start:** San Clemente Pier (or anywhere along the route)  
**Description:** Take a tour of San Clemente's beachfront and neighborhoods on this short, scenic route. Start at the pier and head north on the San Clemente Coastal Trail. At the far end, swing a right at Calle Deschecha. From there, follow the green bike-route signs through San Clemente's neighborhoods and past downtown. When you reach the southern end of the city, at Avenida Calafia, take a right down the hill and find your way back to the beach trail. Head north again toward the pier.

### SAN JUAN CREEK TRAIL

**Difficulty:** Moderate  
**Distance:** 10 miles round trip  
**Start:** Paid parking at Doheny State Beach, or elsewhere near Dana Point Harbor for free  
**Description:** Starting at Doheny State Beach on the west side of San Juan Creek, this paved trail runs inland under Pacific Coast Highway. About 2 1/2 miles in, take a right at the wooden bridge. Continue under I-5, eventually reaching the end at Ortega Highway. Head back to the beach, or explore historic San Juan Capistrano.

**"If you make the streets look safer ... (riders) may be tempted to come out and use their bike as transportation."**

PETE VAN NUYS  
 O.C. BICYCLE COALITION



FILE PHOTO: THE REGISTER

### Cyclists make their way on the Aliso Creek Regional Trail.

### ALISO CREEK TRAIL

**Difficulty:** Moderate  
**Distance:** 30 miles round trip  
**Start:** Trailhead is near the corner of Alicia Parkway and Awma Road, Aliso Viejo  
**Description:** A popular route for recreational cyclists and commuters, this paved trail runs gradually uphill along its namesake, Aliso Creek. Keep a keen eye for directional signs. In several places you'll have to ride on the sidewalk or along a road. Stop to refill water at Sheep Hills Park, or much farther along at El Toro Park or Heroes Park in Lake Forest. The trail runs along El Toro Road for a spell, eventually ending near Cook's Corner. For more adventure, continue into the hills via Santiago Canyon Road or Live Oak Canyon Road.

### DANGER ZONES

Pacific Coast Highway infrastructure creates trouble for cyclists up and down the coast, and the stretch running through Laguna Beach is especially dangerous, van Nuys said.

"The infrastructure is completely automobile-dominated," he said.

If you're an experienced road cyclist, "you take a lane and you ride through there ... (though) the general traffic flow through downtown Laguna is slow."

A savvy cyclist can stay close to traffic and maneuver around parked cars. Novice riders tend to "hug the gutter," van Nuys said, giving motorists coming from behind the idea that they can squeeze by. That's when trouble can occur.

There have been several stalled attempts to create a safer thoroughfare for cyclists. One circuitous bike route runs a few blocks inland through less-congested streets. But that route can be hard to find and get to.

A petition at [Change.org](http://Change.org) called "Create Safe Bike Lanes in Laguna Beach" has garnered 427 signatures. From May 2012 to May 2013, there were 11 reported car/bike collisions in the city, the Laguna Beach Police Department said.

Chris Prelitz, who serves on the city's Complete Streets Task Force, said "sharrows" or painted bike arrows, and signs will soon be added on Pacific Coast Highway to direct riders onto Cliff Drive and Glenneyre Street.

But a plan to put green-painted bike lanes on a six-block stretch of Glenneyre - which would result in two traffic lanes being eliminated - was rejected by the City Council in February. A main concern was the possibility of adding to Laguna

Beach's car congestion.

### SUCCESSES AND PLANS

In cities farther south on Pacific Coast Highway, efforts to improve bike lanes and other infrastructure are moving ahead.

The stretch of the highway between Dana Point and San Clemente gives experienced cyclists space to stay on the road, while pedestrians, children and slower cyclists can opt for a barrier-protected path.

Dana Point has long-term plans to create a protected bike and pedestrian path running the length of Pacific Coast Highway through town, said Brad Fowler, the city's public works director. For now, he said, the city tries to divert bike traffic through the most congested area with signs to Del Prado Avenue - which soon could have bike lanes added - Golden Lantern and Dana Point Harbor Drive.

Fowler knows the challenges of creating new bike lanes. If Pacific Coast Highway is widened for bikes, there still must be ade-

quate room for vehicle traffic, without encroaching on businesses and homes, he said.

"You don't have the ability to design it from scratch," said Fowler, a recreational cyclist. "You have to fit in what you can from a variety of other constraints."

Fowler and van Nuys agree that protected bikeways are ideal for safety but shouldn't come at the expense of regular painted ones.

A major focus of the San Clemente plan that Miller is spearheading is to have more protected bikeways leading to area schools. That could cut congestion tremendously if it encourages a few more kids and adults to bike rather than drive, Miller said.

In some cases, she said, a "buffer" bicycle lane - a wide, painted patch between traffic lanes but with no concrete barrier - could encourage more commuting, too.

Miller realizes the changes won't come overnight. The process of writing the San

Clemente plan has already taken several years and is not over, she said.

This summer, the Orange County Transportation Authority plans to get involved with a South County "bikeways collaborative" that would bring together city leaders and bike advocates to prioritize upcoming projects, said Joel Zlotnik, an OCTA spokesman.

For now, Miller said, she'll keep riding the busy route from her home to Trader Joe's.

In some places she has to either take a full traffic lane or jump on the sidewalk. She knows that sort of maneuvering doesn't appeal to everyone.

"I learned very early on that you survive on the roadway by behaving like a vehicle," she said. "The only people out there doing it are people who are comfortable doing it. And they typically tend to be male and they tend to be younger."

With the San Clemente bike plan, Miller hopes to change that.

# CLUB: City argues for changes

FROM PAGE 1

"We are vastly improving the functionality," Councilman Tim Brown said. "If I felt like in any way we were impinging on the beauty, on the continuity, on everything we are doing in the city, I wouldn't do it. I feel like the changes we are making today are in line with (architect Virgil) Westbrook's original design work. I think that having a double door is perfectly in continuity with the balcony, which has a double door above it."

Councilman Chris Hamm said the pool doorway would enhance and emphasize a previously unused archway.

Councilwoman Lori Donchak, who voted no, suggested that a legal protest under the California Environmental Quality Act could delay the reopening and said the exterior changes would be wrong. "We've been entrusted with the family jewels," she said.

"The Ole Hanson Beach Club is gorgeous and historic just the way

**"The Ole Hanson Beach Club is gorgeous and historic just the way it is. This building is already perfect. Historical authenticity is a treasure ... There is so much junk in San Clemente. Please fix up the junk and leave the treasures alone."**

LIZ HANSON KUHNS  
 GREAT-GRANDDAUGHTER  
 OF OLE HANSON

it is," said a letter from Liz Hanson Kuhns, great-granddaughter of Ole Hanson. "This building is already perfect. Historical authenticity is a treasure. Let the public experience the real thing. There is so much junk in San Clemente. Please fix up the junk and leave the treasures alone."

Members of the Architectural Guild of South Orange County liked the changes, which local architect Ricardo Nicol said support the symmetry of the design.

"The secretary of the Interior allows for adaptive reuse," said lo-

cal architect Cheryl Moe, who suggested a variation on one of the double doors that won over the City Council.

Historical Society speakers said the city makes private owners preserve historical buildings and to alter a city building would be a step backward.

"It's arguably the most important building in San Clemente," said Larry Culbertson, president of the society.

Georgette Korsen, a former president of the group, said what started as a rehab has morphed into a redesign at the expense of historic features.

The council authorized \$655,000 in enhancements beyond an original \$2.5 million budget to rehabilitate the building. Add-ons include pool repairs; a new tile roof; balcony restoration; restoration of tile, metalwork, windows and doors; and kitchen improvements.

# San Clemente approves a plan for speedier backup ambulance

City will use OCFA in peak season.

BY FRED SWEGLES  
 ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

San Clemente residents could get speedier backup ambulance service on a seasonal basis under a plan approved Tuesday night by a 4-0 vote of the City Council.

Council members directed city staff to negotiate a deal with the Orange County Fire Authority to provide a second San Clemente ambulance during peak season, which could run from May to October or some variation, when demand for calls runs highest.

The city could do that at minimal expense - little more than \$2,500 for six months of backup service - because ambulance fees would recoup most of the extra costs of the second ambulance, said Tom Rendina, the city's business-services officer.

He said, the city has one full-

time OCFA ambulance. When two calls coincide, Doctor's Ambulance provides private backup service that is dispatched from a nearby city, often San Juan Capistrano.

Rendina said contracting with OCFA for a second full-time ambulance would be expensive - a net of about \$303,000 per year. He asked the council to let staff negotiate a contract with OCFA to provide a backup ambulance dispatched from a fire station within San Clemente. The seasonal service might run during June, July and August or could stretch to six months.

During the offseason, backup service would revert to Doctor's Ambulance, which doesn't cost the city anything but doesn't generate revenue for the city either, Rendina said.

Councilman Chris Hamm excused himself from the deliberations and the vote, as he works for OCFA.