

SAN CLEMENTE

SUN POST NEWS



FRED SWEGLES, REGISTER FILE PHOTO

Cyclists try to negotiate traffic in downtown San Clemente. The city is considering local policies and projects to make bicycle travel safer and easier.

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Commission meeting to focus on cyclists, walkers

By FRED SWEGLES
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

San Clemente planning commissioners will look Wednesday at putting bicyclists and pedestrians on equal footing with motorists in the design of local roadways.

It isn't really a question of if, but how, as the Planning Commission reviews a proposed Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan that will be integrated in a new San Clemente General Plan.

Since Jan. 1, 2011, a state law known as the Complete Streets Act, or AB1358, has required California cities to provide for all forms of transportation when updating their general plans, as San Clemente is doing now.

"Car transportation doesn't trump the other forms of transportation," said Jeff Hook, San Clemente's principal planner.

The draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan is crafted to create game-changing policies and suggest physical changes to the city's traffic-circulation system. The Planning Commission is reviewing the plan in stages, and public participation is welcome.

- At 6 p.m. Wednesday at City Hall, 100 Avenida Presidio, commissioners will review proposed policies designed to make it safer and easier for bicyclists and pedestrians to get around town.

- On Nov. 7, commissioners expect to review a list of possible projects to help bring that about. The ideas could include designating the slow lane along San Clemente's principal highway - El Camino Real - for shared use by bikes and cars by painting it green and adding "sharrows," a shared-use emblem.

San Clemente's General Plan Advisory Committee helped craft the plan. Planning commissioners will review GPAC's recommendations along with advice from a local cycling advocacy group known as PEDal. Commissioners will then give direction to city staff to meld into a refined draft.

The City Council will have final say over policies and projects.

In March, Mayor Jim Evert took an 11-mile bike tour of Long Beach with other San Clemente officials and came away "super impressed" with the way Long Beach has become bicycle-friendly. He cited things such as placing bike racks all over the city, creating separate lanes where feasible and winning over the business community while painting two of the four lanes on a thoroughfare green to em-



FRED SWEGLES, REGISTER FILE PHOTO

During a bicycle tour of Long Beach in March, San Clemente officials learned how Long Beach painted some lanes green to emphasize shared use by motorists and cyclists. San Clemente could do something similar.

phasize shared use.

"We as the city - as the authority figure - clearly (are indicating) that not only are we tolerating bicycles in Long Beach, we're welcoming bicyclists here, and in some cases, we're actually in the business of seducing bicyclists and saying that bikes belong here," Long Beach's mobility adviser, Charlie Gandy, told the San Clemente entourage. "This is a cultural shift that is happening in Long Beach."

Some businesses have not bought into the program, he said. But most have, and Long Beach's bike-friendly streets are attracting new businesses that want to embrace that atmosphere, he added.

"When I can show that businesses are moving to downtown in part because we're creating this environment, we get past the opposition," Gandy said.

The green lanes in Long Beach's Belmont Shore area have taken unwanted bicyclists off the sidewalk, maintained the previous volume of conventional traffic and attracted cyclists to the district, Gandy said.

Before, Second Street - Belmont Shore's main street - carried 400 cyclists a day. A year later, it carried 800 and now has 1,000, Gandy said. "And we have, at any one time, 150 to 200 cycles parked

down there, spending money in those places."

SOME PROPOSED POLICIES IN SAN CLEMENTE

- Support skateboarding as legitimate transportation.
- Provide convenient bicycle parking at commercial areas, parks, schools, public buildings and high-density housing areas.
- Develop standards that require facilities for cyclists such as parking, lockers and showers in new or significantly rehabilitated nonresidential developments.
- Promote education for safe bicycle and pedestrian behaviors and skills, as well as risk avoidance by motorists.
- Consider designating a law-enforcement officer as liaison to the bike/pedestrian community.
- Establish a program to encourage alternative transportation for business employees and customers.
- Make it a goal to provide children with safe ways to walk, bicycle and skateboard to school.
- Require construction or rehabilitation of bike facilities or bike-friendly improvements as a condition for approving new developments.



FRED SWEGLES, REGISTER FILE PHOTO

Bike riders cruise El Camino Real through San Clemente. Could this section of highway designate one lane as a green lane for shared use by cyclists and motorists? The city is looking at options.