



April 23, 2025

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To: Solana Beach City Council  
City of Solana Beach

**Re: Comments on Agenda Item C1 of 4-23-2025 City Council Meeting City “Council Review of Draft Work Plan for Fiscal Year 2025/26. Work Plan Item 20. CRT Extension at North City Limits”**

Honorable Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councilmembers,

We support Item 20 in the proposed work plan with modifications. The proposed CRT Extension at North City Limits would include a safe crossing at North End, Highway 101.

20. CRT Extension at North City Limits Summary: This would be a continuation of the City’s existing Coastal Rail Trail (CRT) from its current terminus near Ocean Street northerly to the City’s jurisdictional boundary with the City of Encinitas. The project would end at a proposed pedestrian crosswalk that would link the Harbaugh Seaside Trails to the Seaside State Beach in Encinitas. The project would include an extension of the concrete path, decomposed granite (DG) shoulders, landscaping, irrigation and minor concrete repairs to the existing concrete path. FY 2025/26 Actions: A. Prepare plans, specifications and estimate (PS&E) package. B. Advertise for construction once funding has been identified. Summary of Budgetary Projections for FY 2024/25/2025/26: Estimated total cost for this project is \$37500,000. The City is expecting to appropriate \$375,000 in Public Recreation Impact Fees for FY 2025/26 & FY 2026/27 Adopted Budgets for design (\$75,000) and construction (\$300,000). Staff has applied for construction grants through Congressman Levin’s office and State Assemblymember Boerner’s office.

The modifications we request are, first, separately from the crosswalk at Harbaugh Trails, the addition of a safe bicycle crossing at the South Cardiff State Beach (Seaside) Parking Lot entrance, and second, to ensure multiple funding alternatives are presented in the event the Coastal Commission does not permit use of Public Beach Recreation Fees.

We encourage the council to prioritize design and completion of the safe pedestrian crosswalk from Harbaugh Trails to Seaside as well as working with Encinitas and State Parks to ensure a safe bicycle crossing to the Seaside Parking Lot at the entrance to the parking lot.

Harbaugh Seaside Trails and the adjacent lagoon are very popular for pedestrians and hikers, and the addition of a pedestrian underpass under the railroad tracks has improved access to

Harbaugh Trails to many residents of northwest Solana Beach as well as lagoon area visitors. As a consequence of the opening of these trails, many more pedestrians are now crossing Highway 101 from Harbaugh trails to access Seaside Beach. Clearly this was anticipated as a consequence, as the 2018 permit from the Coastal Commission to the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy for the trail system specifically highlights a future safe crossing in this location:

The trail system has been designed to connect to the City of Solana Beach's Coastal Rail Trail and existing trails within the San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve. Additionally, the trail has been designed to connect to a future project that will connect the western portion of the trail to a future crossing of Highway 101 and Cardiff State Beach. (page 11)

The proposed trail system will also connect with existing San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Trail Reserve trails and future highway 101 crossing to Cardiff State Beach and the ocean (ref. Exhibit No. 5). (page 17)

<https://documents.coastal.ca.gov/reports/2018/11/Th16b/th16b-11-2018-report.pdf>



Currently, pedestrians must run across 4 lanes of high speed traffic to cross 101 and access the beach from Harbaugh Trails or visa versa. The frequency of this occurrence is demonstrated by the fact that Google Street View captured three people doing just this (Google Image capture from September 2022):



The only option for pedestrians to safely cross 101 from this location is to walk 0.3 miles south, cross at the light at Solana Vista Drive, and then walk back 0.3 miles north to Seaside Beach. Pedestrians will not add a 10 minute, ½ mile detour just to cross the street.



There is clearly a public safety issue at hand here. There is significant community support for addressing this issue as well. We urge the cities of Encinitas and Solana Beach to continue to work together to both improve beach access and prevent pedestrian injury and death by developing a safe crossing at this location as soon as possible. From the 2022 work plan, we see that engineering analysis supports a fully signalized pedestrian crossing, and we agree that is the safest and most effective option for ensuring everyone's safety. The 2019 and 2021 work

plans also included researching additional traffic calming measures for this portion of 101, which would be a welcome improvement.

Given that this item has been on the work plans for over 4 years, we respectfully urge council to commit to developing a safe-crossing project and sharing the project for public comment this year, with the goal of identifying the necessary funding to begin construction some time in 2024.

In addition, the City approved a DRP with the same discussion of a future crossing on February 28, 2018 as discussed in the staff report for Item B1.

[https://solanabeach.govoffice3.com/vertical/Sites/%7B840804C2-F869-4904-9AE3-720581350CE7%7D/uploads/Item\\_B.1\\_Report\\_\(click\\_here\)\\_-02-28-18.pdf](https://solanabeach.govoffice3.com/vertical/Sites/%7B840804C2-F869-4904-9AE3-720581350CE7%7D/uploads/Item_B.1_Report_(click_here)_-02-28-18.pdf) at page 3

Approximately 2,080 linear feet of trails would be constructed through the site and along the eastern property boundary as well an approximately 780 linear-foot extension of the Coastal Rail Trail along the western property boundary adjacent to Highway 101. The trail system would also extend to the north of the Property connecting with the recently constructed NCTD pedestrian underpass. These improvements would connect the CRT with the existing trail system in the Reserve. Additionally, it is anticipated that the extension of the Coastal Rail Trail would connect to a future Highway 101 crossing providing access to Cardiff State Beach. However, the design and funding for such a crossing have yet to be determined and are not a part of the current proposal. The trail improvements serve as a missing link in public access between the Reserve and the CRT. Additionally, the trails would provide visual access to the Reserve and the Pacific Ocean and physical access throughout the Property itself.

In addition, bicycle traffic in the vicinity of South Cardiff State Beach (Seaside Beach) often travels the wrong direction in the western bike lane. This is likely done to avoid crossing 4 lanes of traffic, which is especially dangerous when using a bicycle surf rack.

In the Facebook group, "Encinitas: PLEASE Restore Safety In Cardiff", there are photos showing wrong-way cyclists in the area. I have experienced it as well on my bike and walking but have not taken photos.



This article in the [SDUT](#) also shows the same issue. This photo from the article shows a wrong-way cyclist coming from Seaside northbound in the southbound lane.



The conceptual map below shows the locations where a safe pedestrian crossing are required in white and where a safe bicycle crossing is required in pink.



Also, the new alignment should allow for a complete lane diet from San Elijo Campground south. This would allow for retreat along 101 and in the Cardiff Parking Lot. Recently, State Parks applied for an emergency permit to add riprap in the Cardiff Parking Lot. Also, the Living Shoreline has been compromised several times over the last 2 years and may require further landward positioning. Making the road one lane all the way could accommodate some retreat in these locations.

We have additional concerns about funding as proposed:

The City is expecting to appropriate \$375,000 in Public Recreation Impact Fees for FY 2025/26 & FY 2026/27

Below is the LUP policy on Fee Expenditures

Policy 4.50 - Public Recreation Fees must be expended for public access and public recreation improvements as a first priority and for sand replenishment and retention as secondary priorities where an analysis done by the City determines that there are no near-term, priority public recreation or public access CIP identified by the City where the money could be allocated. The Public Recreation funds shall be released for secondary priorities only upon written approval of an appropriate project by the City Council and the Executive Director of the Coastal Commission.

Appendix C of LUP at page 4 with **emphasis added** requires direct improvements on access and recreation.

Policy 4.50 requires that Public Recreation Fees shall be expended for public beach access and public recreation as a first priority, and may be expended for sand replenishment and retention if the City determines that a near-term priority public recreation or public access project is not identified. **All projects funded by the Public Recreation Fees shall be located directly along the coast and projects shall result in direct improvements to coastal recreation or beach access.**

We have concerns that the Coastal Commission may not see this as a direct project similar to, for example, previously approved expenditure on stairway repairs to the beach access as Del Mar Shores. We ask that alternatives be pursued.

In summary, we support the proposed pedestrian crossing with some additional enhancements to the documents and plans to include a bicycle crossing along with identification of alternative funding as a backup.

Regards

Kristin Brinner & Jim Jaffee  
Residents of Solana Beach  
Co-Leads of the Beach Preservation Committee  
San Diego County Chapter, Surfrider Foundation