

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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W17a

6-22-0748 (National City, Bayshore Bikeway)

May 10, 2023

CORRESPONDENCE

From: SanDiegoCoast@Coastal
To: [Escaron, Melissa@Coastal](mailto:Escaron_Melissa@Coastal)
Subject: FW: Public Comment on May 2023 Agenda Item Wednesday 17a - Application No. 6-22-0748 (National City Bayshore Bikeway Segment 5, National City)
Date: Friday, May 5, 2023 12:32:07 PM

Hi Melissa,

Please see below for public comment.

Thank you,

Adriana Palato
Management Services Technician
California Coastal Commission
7575 Metropolitan Drive #103
San Diego, CA 92108

From: Ted Godshalk <paradisecreek@me.com>
Sent: Friday, May 5, 2023 11:09 AM
To: SanDiegoCoast@Coastal <SanDiegoCoast@coastal.ca.gov>
Cc: Ted Godshalk <paradisecreek@mac.com>
Subject: Public Comment on May 2023 Agenda Item Wednesday 17a - Application No. 6-22-0748 (National City Bayshore Bikeway Segment 5, National City)

Public Comment for May 10, 2023 for Application 6-22-0748 from Mr. Ted Godshalk:

The application for the Segment 5 of the Bayshore Bikeway in National City should be modified by the Coastal Commissioners before approval. In my discussion with San Diego region CC staff, I learned that the Coastal Commission's authority over this project is primarily involved with the section adjacent to the Paradise Marsh wetlands and uplands. Commissioners, your involvement with the protection of the Salt marsh wetlands in National City and California is very much appreciated.

I have been involved with protection of the wetlands in National City since before 1999 when my wife, Margaret Avalos Godshalk, myself, and a group of concerned teachers and community members founded the non-profit organization, Paradise Creek Educational Park Incorporated. Our organization provides environmental education and restoration programs in National City including some in the area of this application and including bike and kayak trips with young students and families in the area described in this application. We have also led the successful charge for restoration of Paradise Creek as it passes through the city and into the USFWS National Wildlife Refuge and San Diego Bay.

In 1999, while serving as a Planning Commissioner for National City, I was very active in crafting the

Harbor District Specific Plan (HDSP) as part of National City's Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan. This document has provided guidance for some of the significant development in the area of this application.

My comments to you are divided into two parts, first about the section of bike path north of Bay Marina Drive and secondly, about the section along Paradise Marsh.

The northerly section of the Segment 5, parallel to I-5, has been included in the Port District Master Plan update and the Balanced Plan. The McKinley Avenue route was chosen from three alternatives a part of a process dominated by Zoom meetings concentrating on bigger ideas like hotels, an RV park, and street closures for the largest Port tenant in National City, PASHA. The City did not do focused neighborhood outreach. I feel the public's input was given little regard with staff needs and commercial business interests, as well as time- constrained financing and grants, weighing largely on the final decision of routing. I contend that the alternative route on Cleveland Avenue would better serve the community due to parking needs on McKinley Avenue, the need for two-way traffic flow, unsafe transitions at the Harbor Drive and Bay Marina Drive intersections, difficult traffic maneuvers required by trucks, and the large expense for a new bikeway that many bikers may not bother to use.

The Harbor District Specific Plan never called for the use of McKinley Ave for a bikeway, but instead required the city to encourage truck flows to move through the 19th Street underpass and out to I-5 as sensible and safer alternatives to the historically heavily used Bay Marina Drive-Cleveland Avenue-I-5 ramps and intersections.

Of additional concern to me is the southerly section of Segment 5. The Harbor District Specific Plan called for the proper routing of the Harrison Avenue extension(now called Marina Way) with a 12 foot wide shared bike and pedestrian path seen in that document of figure 2.4

This path, along with the traffic calming measures in place on Marina Way, has been a safe and adequate way to get to the Paradise Marsh, Sweetwater Channel, Pepper Park and Pier 32 area in the Coastal Zone for vehicles, bikes, and walkers. The HDSP called for the bikeway to follow in the buffer along the parcel identified as B-1, and the current plan does as well. If you could move it back to the west on this vacant pad, currently supporting Coastal Sage Scrub uplands, the 100 foot buffer would be maintained. The HDSP in section 5.5.1 also called for two parks, more appropriately called mini parks or rest areas, and two vista view points along the bike trail, (Figure 2.1). The most significant of the parks locations is at the southerly most place on the path before it turns eastward along the channel. This is one of the few view points in National City where the casual bicyclist or pedestrian can see southward over the water of San Diego Bay and out to the Strand and islands offshore. It is unacceptable that the City of National City and the Port District have not included these public amenities in this routing and application. Please modify the plan to include these.

The HDSP section 5.4 called for a "Harbor District Advisory Committee," to meet about plans and issues in the area of this application. This committee has not met in decades and should be a condition of this application and future developments in the Coastal Zone. You could require it again with this application now.

The HDSP section 4.3.3 calls for all developments in the area to be accompanied by a complete grading plan, a landscape plan, and requires that non- native grasses, trash cans, etc. be provided. The issue of non- native grasses is a serious one as a plant specie was planted in the parkway of Marina Way and has spread throughout the neighborhood and threatens the Paradise Marsh edges and habitat. The maintenance of this bikeway by the City Of National City must be guaranteed and codified in this application because the city has a history of neglect in this area. Trash has accumulated, campers have damaged the sensitive habitat, much graffiti is present on the retaining wall, and illegal open fires have occurred. Enforcement has been ineffective and you could require more.

Actions by the Coastal Commission in November of 1998 and early 1999 set the stage for improvements in our community. The HDSP furthered the progress and led to the marina, hotel, and street and bike path. The section of this application that is most troubling is the routing along the retaining wall in the area known as the "Narrows," and within 40 feet of the wetlands.

When the Harrison Avenue extension was designed, the street was constrained by the railroad tracks on the west and the Marsh on the east. While a negotiation could have resulted in moving the tracks back, instead the solution was an encroachment into the 100 foot buffer with the retaining "living" wall, with plants, to shield and protect the habitat and wildlife.

Coastal Commission policy is generally: **"The Commission considers a 100-foot buffer to be the minimum distance necessary to protect wetland habitat from adverse impacts related to development such as polluted runoff from developed areas, construction-related erosion and sedimentation, and disturbance from noise, light, traffic, debris and other activities related to increased human and domesticated animal use. "**

Pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicle drivers have moved along this street for years. For this application to now allow for the bike path to be constructed inside that buffer below the wall is a mistake. It is another "death by a thousand cuts" situation which can lead to negative impacts happening over a long period of time and cumulatively deteriorating yet another wetland resource. The bike path route in the lower section of the marsh buffer will increase edge effects on the plant and wildlife present. It may have an effect on Special status species. It will construct a barrier to the wildlife corridor and habitat linkage to the uplands. The path, unseen from the street above will lead to continuing human activities mentioned in the paragraph above which may have spillover impacts. The maintenance that has been poor over the years could persist. Many bicyclists will simply use the Marina Way's street and the shared path.

To conclude and condition this application for approval:

1- The Coastal Commission should require that the City of National City and the San Diego Unified Port District to use, and modify if necessary, the currently built shared path to the west of the retaining wall at the Narrows for this section of the San Diego Bayshore Bikeway Segment 5, and that

2- The bikeway will include the two parks and the two view points as detailed in the earlier approved Harbor District Specific Plan of the City of National City, and that

3- The City of National City will design traffic measures so heavy trucks to and from the Port District use Harbor Drive and 19th Street to access the Port area and I-5.

Thank you,
Ted Godshalk
629-851-5623

May 8, 2023

Chair Brownsey and Members of the Commission
California Coastal Commission
San Diego Area
7575 Metropolitan Drive, Suite 103
San Diego, CA 92108-4421

SanDiegoCoast@coastal.ca.gov

SUBJECT: Letter of Support for Item 17a (National City Bayshore Bikeway, Segment 5), Wednesday, May 10, 2023 Coastal Commission Hearing

Dear Honorable Chair Brownsey and members of the Commission,

I am pleased to submit this letter of support for the “National City Bayshore Bikeway, Segment 5” Coastal Development Permit (Item 17a) at the Wednesday, May 10, 2023 meeting of the California Coastal Commission (Coastal Commission).

Since the 1970s, the Bayshore Bikeway has been planned as a continuous 24-mile bicycle path around San Diego Bay, and has been designed, funded and constructed in segments. It is a heavily used recreational corridor that lies adjacent to the shoreline of San Diego Bay. The CDP that is the subject of Item 17a will provide nearly one and a half miles of protected bicycle facilities in National City, and close one of the few remaining gaps of the Bayshore Bikeway.

The proposed Bayshore Bikeway segment in National City will enhance bicycle connections to public transit, parks, and the working waterfront, which includes Naval Base San Diego and operations such as ship builders, ship repairers, and other industrial businesses. The project will promote bicycling and public transportation as a safe and viable travel choice that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and promotes a healthy and active lifestyle.

I urge you to approve the Coastal Development Permit for the Bayshore Bikeway Segment 5 in National City.

Sincerely,



Commissioner Sandy Naranjo