

TO: Mayor and Council Members
Marlene Best, City Manager
Shawn Hagerty, City Attorney

FROM: Annette Ortiz, CMC, City Clerk

DATE: February 8, 2023

SUBJ: Updated Council Meeting Materials – February 8, 2023

CONSENT CALENDAR:

6.4 RAISE Grant Program Application

Adoption of a Resolution Authorizing the Submittal of a Grant Application to the Federal RAISE (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) Grant Program for State Route 52 (SR 52) Improvements and Finding the Action is Not a Project Subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”).
(Development Services - Engineering)

The attached correspondence for above mentioned Item was received and is provided for your consideration.



From: [Will Rhatigan](#)
To: [John Minto](#); [Laura Koval](#); [Ronn Hall](#); [Rob McNelis](#); [Dustin Trotter](#); [Clerk Info](#)
Subject: Re: Public Comment on Item 6.4 of 02/08 City Council Agenda
Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 7:27:26 PM

Dear Mayor Minto and City Council,

I have to apologize for a major error in sending this email. I represent the San Diego County Bicycle Coalition, not the San Diego City Council. I made this error in rushing to send off this letter.

I sincerely apologize for any confusion this may have caused. Thank you for hard work for the citizens of Santee.

Best,

Will Rhatigan

On Wed, Feb 8, 2023 at 7:30 PM Will Rhatigan <will@sdbikecoalition.org> wrote:

Dear Mayor Minto and City Council,

I'm writing on behalf of the San Diego City Council to comment on item 6.1 of today's City Council Agenda: RAISE Program Grant Application. We're very supportive of the proposal to relocate the SR-52 bike path to the south side of SR-52, although we do not support the planned freeway expansion. Please see our full comments attached as a pdf below.

Thank you for taking our recommendations into consideration.

Best,

Will Rhatigan

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Will Rhatigan (he/him/his)
Advocacy Director
San Diego County Bicycle Coalition
will@sdbikecoalition.org // 617-775-9112



Advocate. Educate. Celebrate!



San Diego County Bicycle Coalition
300 15th St
San Diego, CA 92101

February 08, 2023

Mayor John Minto and City Council
City of Santee
10601 Magnolia Avenue
Santee, CA 92071

Subject: Comments SR-52 Road Widening Project

Dear Mayor Minto and City Council,

I'm writing on behalf of the San Diego County Bicycle Coalition to provide input on the City of Santee's SR-52 Improvements Project, which is being discussed on Item 4 of the Consent Calendar during Santee's February 8th City Council Meeting.

Since 1987, the San Diego County Bicycle Coalition has acted as the voice for everyone who rides bikes throughout the San Diego Region. We advocate for safer bike lanes and paths, host world-class cycling events like Bike the Bay, and actively provide safe cycling classes to hundreds of San Diegans every year.

As the leading advocate for cyclists in San Diego County, the San Diego County Bicycle Coalition thanks the City of Santee for considering the need to relocate the SR-52 bike path to the South side of the freeway during the SR-52 improvements project. **We enthusiastically support the proposal to relocate the SR-52 bike path to the South side of the freeway. However, we do not support the widening of SR-52 and ask that the City of Santee not move forward with this portion of the RAISE Grant application.**

Importance of Relocation:

The SR-52 Bicycle Path is a crucial route for cyclists throughout San Diego, as it is the only safe route connecting the City of San Diego's Tierrasanta neighborhood with the City of Santee. This path is an essential connection that allows residents of Santee, San Diego and other nearby communities who may not have access to vehicles to access the rest of San Diego County on foot or by bicycle.



However, the SR-52 bike path's location on the north side of the SR-52 freeway creates unnecessary conflict zones with vehicles and adds additional travel time for cyclists, making it impractical for most trips. The north side of SR-52 is adjacent to MCAS Miramar, meaning there are no possible northbound destinations that a cyclist could access from the bike path. Moreover, the path's location on the north side of the freeway creates a safety hazard by forcing cyclists to cross the freeway on and off-ramps to access it from both sides. Freeway on-ramps are often some of the most dangerous areas for cyclists, as drivers exiting the freeway often merge onto surface streets at high-speed without registering that they are entering an environment in which cyclists and pedestrians may be present. Separated bike paths like the SR-52 bike path are often the only places in San Diego where less experienced cyclists feel safe and comfortable riding; forcing them to cross freeway ramps to access this resource may prevent many people from riding their bikes altogether.

Moving the bike path to the south side of SR-52 would solve most of the current safety and accessibility issues by removing the need to cross freeway ramps for access to the trail, allowing cyclists to access the path from relatively low-stress streets safely. Furthermore, this would allow cyclists to enter and leave the path at many points throughout from trails within Mission Trails Regional Park and the City of Santee.

Need for Maintenance Agreement

Although the SR-52 bike path remains a popular route for cyclists, persistent issues with more maintenance and debris on the trail have made it an uncomfortable and unsafe experience for many cyclists. We receive regular complaints about debris, potholes, and other hazards on the bike path. Since the path's completion, Caltrans has consistently failed to maintain the path to a reasonable standard. The grant application must include a regular maintenance agreement with Caltrans for the bike path in any contract for the SR-52 freeway improvements.

Comments on the SR-52 Widening Project

Despite the importance of relocating the SR-52 bike path, the San Diego County Bicycle Coalition does not support the larger SR-52 widening project. Decades of research have confirmed that adding freeway lanes may reduce congestion for a short period of time but ultimately leads to equal or greater congestion with more vehicles on the road. With the urgent need to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the face of the climate crisis, an outcome that would increase VMT without decreasing congestion is destructive and unacceptable. Rather than invest in a polluting freeway expansion, Santee should seek to expand the convenience, speed, and reliability of alternative modes such as public transit and cycling as much as possible throughout the SR-52 corridor. Better transit and active transportation options are the only proven solution to congestion.



Conclusion:

The SR-52 Bike Path is an invaluable resource for the citizens of Santee, and we appreciate the City's efforts to relocate it to a safer and more convenient alignment. Relocating the bike path to the South side of the SR-52 freeway is essential, as will be signing a long-term maintenance agreement with Caltrans. However, we do not believe widening the SR-52 freeway will ease congestion in the long term, and strongly recommend that the City instead pursue projects that will improve public and active transportation options.

Thank you for considering our recommendations. The San Diego County Bicycle Coalition is excited to continue partnering with the City of Santee to improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians.

Sincerely,

Will Rhatigan
Advocacy Director
San Diego County Bicycle Coalition

Jacob Mandel
Advocacy Committee Chair
San Diego County Bicycle Coalition