

Walk-Bike-Bus-Rail

COAST provides advocacy, education and outreach to improve transportation options in the Santa Barbara and Ventura regions, promoting rail, bus, bike, and pedestrian access.

How to reach us

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E-mail discussion list

Participate in discussions of local and regional transportation issues; receive notices of meetings and events. Subscribing is free and easy. Just visit:

<http://groups.google.com/group/coastsb>

COAST General Meeting

Our General Meetings discuss transportation issues affecting the Santa Barbara region. Meetings are open to the public. Location: 15 E. Carrillo Street, Santa Barbara. They are held the second Wednesday of each month, 12 noon to 1:15 pm. Please check our website for updates.

Walking Wednesdays

COAST organizes monthly walking tours on the fourth Wednesday of each month during the summer that are free and open to the public.

Support COAST

COAST depends on you to create better transportation options in Santa Barbara and beyond. Support COAST by making a donation. Just use the enclosed envelope. Thank you!

Safe Routes for Seniors

By Eva Inbar



Photo credit: Dennis Mueller, Studio A, Santa Barbara

In August, 2013, COAST organized two Community Walks for seniors in Goleta, one on Hollister Avenue and one on Calle Real. In the photo, we are just setting out on Calle Real. We advocated successfully for safety improvements to the crosswalk at the Goleta Valley Community Center; a HAWK signal will be installed there soon. The walks are part of our new Safe Routes for Seniors project. Its goal is to

help seniors move around on foot safely. The walks are made possible by a grant from the California Department of Public Health as part of their "It's Up To All of Us" campaign. We thank Project Director **Caitlin Carlson** and Outreach Coordinator **Jennifer Stroh** for their outstanding work on this. If you like to walk and are interested in serving on our new Seniors Advisory Committee, please contact us.

Crisis at MTD

Our new bus riders' committee had barely gotten off the ground when a crisis erupted at MTD. The Federal Department of Labor is threatening to withhold 4.6 million in federal funding because of a labor dispute between the Teamsters Union and the Governor's office. This would force MTD to cut service by one-third. At our August meeting, we decided to protest the DOL's position and ask for the funding to be restored. The cuts would hit the most vulnerable people the hardest: low-income workers, seniors, the disabled and students who depend on the bus to get to work, school and medical appointments. Our organizer,

Zoyla Cabrera, expressed this eloquently, speaking in Spanish, at one of MTD's emergency meetings. We will not stand by silently to let this happen. MTD is too important to Santa Barbara: In 2012, they transported 21,644 people per day.

Teaming up with CAUSE, we are circulating a sign-on letter and a petition. We are calling the Governor's office, the Secretary of Labor, Thomas Perez, and our senators Feinstein and Boxer. We met with our representative Lois Capps who promised to help to the best of her ability. If you want to be involved in our campaign, please contact us.

The Plaza's March to the Sea: A History of State Street

By Alex Pujo

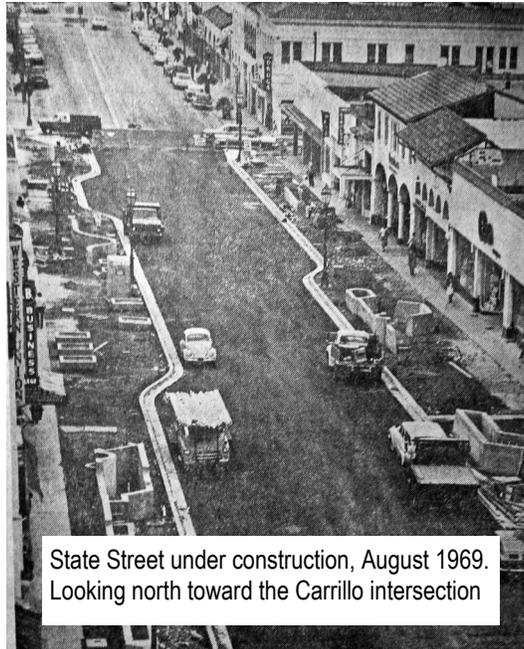
We take State Street for granted as the leafy promenade that we see today, but in 1967 it was just another main street with four traffic lanes, curbside parking and narrow sidewalks; its future hinged on the vote of a sharply divided City Council.

The idea of a downtown mall had begun in 1966 with shop owners in the 800 block of State convinced that the new suburban mall at La Cumbre would destroy downtown as it was happening everywhere. Conversations with the Downtown Organization (DO) lead to plans for a mall similar to those just completed in Fresno, Riverside and Pomona. There was talk of a purely pedestrian street but eventually the DO agreed to a "semi-plaza" on State Street with widened sidewalks and no parking from Ortega to Victoria.

The leader of this 6-block project was **Roy Dempsey**, Executive Director of the DO who gathered petitions and put pressure on City Council to act promptly. The DO selected **Robert Ingle Hoyt**, a prominent local Architect, and **Julio Juan Veyna** as the Landscape Architect to design the Plaza. Old Town, the original "main street" between Gutierrez and Ortega, was excluded because of its older buildings and less fashionable shops. Hoyt thought that people would not walk "that far"; Old Town was happy to be left out but right next to a revitalized area. Thus the proposed assessment district to pay for the project covered 14 city blocks: from Ortega to Victoria and from Anacapa to Chapala.

Regardless of the competition uptown, opposition from businesses, property owners and City Council was strong. Some people objected to the presence of any traffic on the Plaza (as opposed to a pedestrian mall), although the majority of the opposition was based on higher taxes, higher rents and loss of curbside parking.

The DO argued for "an aesthetically pleasing and convenient pedestrian environment for shoppers, tourists and residents, with a steady but leisurely



State Street under construction, August 1969. Looking north toward the Carrillo intersection

flow of traffic, with trees, shrubs, planter boxes, fountains, rest areas and ornamental lighting to enhance the mood of relaxation amidst the bustle of business". Referring to the reconstruction after the 1925 earthquake, Dempsey added that "the beautification project may well prove to be as valuable and important to this community in the coming decades as was the 'Spanish Renaissance' of 40 years ago". And that was "well worth five months of disruption and inconvenience".

Over time, many of those who first opposed the Plaza came around to endorse it enthusiastically. The assessment to average businesses was estimated at \$40/mo. and 61.61% voted in support. The crucial vote took place when the creation of the Downtown Assessment District was debated at City Hall. By the narrowest margin of a 4-3 vote, Council agreed to move forward.

A year later, when the plans were completed and Council met to approve the winning construction bid, support from the assessed parcel owners had grown to 88.75%. But some remained bitterly opposed, including **Irene Hayes Suski**, owner of the Old Paseo and the adjacent 5-story building. As chronicled by the News Press, "Mrs. Suski objected to the 'skid row types'

that the street furniture would attract, and traffic problems from the street narrowing. Others protested the removal of curbside parking. Architect **John Russell** called for a comprehensive study of the Central Business District before going forward. The First Baptist Church at Victoria & Chapala also objected."

Construction began on March 3, 1969 and it went on longer than expected. In October, responding to complaints about "the stark nature" of State Street, the News Press asked for patience until the landscape was installed and the Plaza complete "to the embarrassment of those who were too quick to assume the worst". The landscape finally arrived, the ribbon was cut on November 6 and the Plaza became an instant success.

The establishment of the Redevelopment Agency a few years later generated funds to extend the Plaza down to Cota Street in 1980 and to Haley in 1984. When the crosstown freeway was completed in 1989 with an elaborate undercrossing, it became possible to continue the promenade all the way to the beach, but auto-mobility prevailed and the roadway was left just as wide as State Street was in 1967. This was rectified in 1998 when the City approved "La Entrada" project on the first two blocks of Lower State with the condition that the roadway be narrowed, sidewalks widened and landscaping added. Litigation and the Great Recession delayed these improvements until this summer.

With the exception of two unremarkable blocks between Gutierrez and the railroad, State Street has finally come to fulfill that vision of "...relaxation amidst the bustle of business" heralded 44 years ago. From beginning to end, dire predictions of congestion, lack of parking, high taxes, "vagrants", "loss of views" and accusations of "selling out to developers" accompanied every step of its colorful history. But the sky did not fall and the Plaza found its way to the sea.

Walking and Rolling with Montecito Union School By Greg Janee



Can you guess the activity these children are describing?

It doesn't give the Earth any exhaust.

—Maria, first grade

We take our time.

—Shensu, Kindergarten

It's fun!

—Nicole, second grade

Answer: walking to school! More specifically, these are all quotes from children participating in Montecito Union School's hugely successful *Walk & Roll* program. Led by energetic parent **Lauren Kenly**, the program encourages students to bike or walk to school, thereby promoting healthy bodies, a healthy community, and a healthy planet (no exhaust!). Lauren's enthusiasm for walking and biking is infectious, as evidenced by the fact that she has attracted both a large number of participants and a cadre of parent volunteers to help run the program. The program started with 160 children participating in its first event, and over the course of the school year has edged towards 200 children participating, or almost half the school! This is a remarkable achievement for a school like Montecito Union, whose student population is spread over a wide, relatively rural geographic area.

How does the *Walk & Roll* program work? A number of Santa Barbara area schools have implemented the program, and while there is no set for-

mula, they're all variations on a theme. Montecito Union's *Walk & Roll* program runs once a month. At the beginning of the school year children interested in participating are given refrigerator magnets listing the event days, and punchable luggage tags that they can attach to their backpacks. The walk/bike event days are well-advertised beforehand with posters and the like, and then students walking or biking to school on an event day get another "punch" on their tag, adding to their eligibility for year-end prizes. They also have an opportunity to pick up healthful snacks, drinks, stickers, and other enticements. All those are good incentives for participating, but the idea of the luggage tags is ingenious, for the tags advertise the program to other students (as can be imagined, the response on seeing one is often, "how can I get one of those?") and they're a source of pride for those students who participate in every event day, and thus have every hole punched.

To ensure safety and encourage parental involvement, Montecito Union also coordinates three "walking school buses," or organized walking groups, led by school administrators. The buses convene at convenient gathering locations (e.g., a shopping mall parking lot) a half-mile or so from school. With so many parents and students gathered in one place, the event immediately becomes social, with parents meeting other parents, children

chatting with playmates, and all enjoying the spontaneously festive atmosphere. After a brief photo op the leader gives the call and then it's off to school! And the gaggle of children on foot, bicycle, and scooter snakes down the walking path. Many echo Kindergartner Erin's thoughts: "It's fun to go as a group."

Montecito Union's program is thriving and evolving. February's *Walk & Roll* event featured an extra tasty incentive: Baskin Robbin's ice cream coupons! Student participation is on the rise, parents are getting more involved, and come June, when the program comes to an end, the big year-end prizes are sure to be a hit. Altruism is one thing, but prizes are another!

The benefits of Montecito Union's *Walk & Roll* program are real. Walking and biking to school are not commonplace in our area. But by trying it on a weekly or just monthly basis, and by experiencing the possibility and tasting the benefits, the *idea* of walking and biking to school becomes more accepted. Dagny, a Montecito Union parent volunteer, explained why she believes *Walk & Roll* is beneficial: "It promotes a healthy form of travel, the kids get to enjoy nature, they get exercise, there are fewer idling cars, the parking lot isn't jammed, and the event fosters family bonding." COAST couldn't agree more. Congratulations, Montecito Union!



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It's free! Just click on the "Shop to support COAST" button on the COAST website and you will find almost 700 stores. When you go through the i-give portal, these stores will donate a percentage of your purchase to COAST.

You are invited to our
Annual Fall Gathering
Thursday, September 26 , 5-7 P.M.
at the Spanish Garden Inn.
Please watch your e-mail for your personal invitation.



Join us for this exciting event, a first for Santa Barbara.

When: November 2, 2013
10 am to 4 pm

Where: Cabrillo Boulevard.

The street will be closed to traffic and open to people. Visit our website for more information. The event is coordinated by COAST with marketing support from Traffic Solutions.

We thank our Individual Supporters

We thank these people who joined COAST or renewed their support during the past three months: **Robert Rainwater and Brigitta Van Der Raay, Greg Janee, Cass Ensberg, Debbie Castanha, Roger&Eileen Horton, Vicki Blum & David Lebell, Mary Byrd & John Fisher, Frank Schmidt, James&Beverly Shipley, Martha Siegel, Sam&Darlene Chirman, Eric Lassen, Barbara Lindemann, Owen Patmor & Doris Phinney, Michael Chiacos, Adrienne Davis, Meredith McMinn, Betty Wells, Deborah Schwartz & Hap Ziegler, Susana Ricaurte.**

We thank our Major Supporters

We thank the **McCune Foundation**, the **Fund for Santa Barbara**, the **Southern California Gas Company**, the **Goleta Valley Cycling Club** and **Santa Barbara Mountain Trail Volunteers** for supporting our major projects. Further thanks go to our business sponsors, **Allen Associates, Harrison Associates** and **Point2Homes**.