



Agenda Item 8A

Approvals:

City Manager PLJ

Dept. Head SH

Attorney

Finance TC

AGENDA REPORT

SAN CLEMENTE CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Meeting Date: September 17, 2013

Department: Beaches, Parks & Recreation/Marine Safety Division
Prepared By: Bill Humphreys, Marine Safety Chief

Subject: *CONSIDER MODIFICATION OF REGULATIONS FOR BIKE RIDING ON THE BEACH TRAIL SOUTH OF THE PIER DURING SUMMER MONTHS.*

Fiscal Impact: None.

Summary: Staff and members of the Orange County Sheriff's Department have reviewed restrictions for bike riding on the San Clemente Pedestrian Beach Trail (Beach Trail or trail). Based on this review, staff recommends reducing the length of the bike "walk zone" on the service road south of the pier. Staff recommends allowing bike riding south of the wooden bridge at Trafalgar canyon throughout the year, except on summer holidays and major special event days during the summer. The Beaches, Parks & Recreation Commission recommends no changes to the current policy for bike riding on the trail (bike riding is prohibited on portions of the trail that overlay the service road during summer months).

Background: The Beach Trail was designed for use by pedestrians, dog walkers, and bike riders. However when the trail was in the design stages, dogs and bike riding were prohibited on the beach emergency service/access road. Therefore, the ordinance prohibiting these activities required modification.

Because of the overlap of the trail and the emergency service road south of the pier, regulations were put in place to address large crowds on the beach and pier in the summer (trail users and beach goers); use of the road by delivery, maintenance, and trash trucks; and the need for public safety vehicle access (sheriff, lifeguard, and fire). The adopted regulations required that riders walk their bikes on the section of the trail that overlapped with the beach service road from June 15 to Labor Day.

At its July 2, 2013 City Council meeting, the City Council requested that staff review the bike riding policy for the Beach Trail south of the pier, looking for options to reduce the restrictions on bike riding.

For clarification, the area of the trail being discussed is south of the asphalt at the base of the pier (bike riding is prohibited on the asphalt at all times) and west of the railroad tracks. There are other areas east of the railroad tracks and further south where bike riding is prohibited (bridges) which are not the subject of this discussion. Additionally, the proposed modifications only apply to summer months since bike riding is permitted on this section of the trail during the off-season.

8A-1

Staff reviewed the current municipal code (SCMC 12.32.010) with members of the Orange County Sheriff's Department and discussed potential modifications with an emphasis on improving trail safety and user enjoyment. Three options were identified and discussed:

1. *Reduce the Distance of the Restricted Area* - This option would allow bike riding south of the wooden bridge at Trafalgar canyon.
 - Benefits: A reduction in the bike "walk zone" would allow people to continue riding their bikes for further distances.
 - Potential Issues: Depending on beach and trail crowds, there may be conflicts between trail users, beach goers, and/or vehicle traffic on the emergency service road.
2. *No Change – Maintain Current Regulations*
 - Benefits:
 - This maintains the highest level of safety for bike riders and the trail users (including safety from vehicle traffic which is much higher in the summer).
 - This option reduces confusion for the public who have "learned" the rules by now.
 - Potential Issues: There will be times when the trail crowd is light, yet bike riding would still be prohibited - creating frustration for bikers who must walk their bikes on an "empty trail."
3. *Allow Bike Riding with Time Restrictions* - Allow bike riding prior to 10:00 a.m. and after 6:00 p.m. south of the pier starting at the southern end of the asphalt near the Crab Shack/Restrooms.
 - Benefits: Bike riding would be permissible during the morning and evening hours when the trail may be less congested.
 - Potential Issues:
 - Enforcement: This would create a very confusing regulation. The modified ordinance and signage would need to state that biking is prohibited on the emergency access road south of the pier between 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. from June 15 through Labor Day. Due to the confusion for the public and the difficulty in enforcing this, staff and the Sheriff's representatives recommended against this option.
 - Crowd issues: Although there are times in the morning or evening when the trail crowd is light, there are many other days when there are large crowds of people going to and from the beach or using the trail during these time periods.

Staff presented these options to the Beaches, Parks and Recreation Commission at the August 13, 2013 meeting.

Discussion: At the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting, the Commission and staff considered the options described above and combinations thereof (such as reduced time restriction and reduced distance of the bike "walk zone").

After the Commission reviewed and discussed these options, the Commission recommended against making any changes to the current policy. This recommendation was based, in part, on concerns of large crowds in the T-Street area. Concerns included: pedestrians coming off of the T-Street overpass, coming out of the restrooms, and using the concession and beach – all intersecting with large numbers of trail users. Additionally, concerns were expressed related to vehicle use because the road is used by maintenance, concession, and safety vehicles – especially in summer months. Although T-Street was the area of highest concern, there were also concerns expressed for the remainder of the trail south of the pier due to large beach crowds using the access road combined with a large number of trail users. The Commission felt that this congestion would create a safety hazard if bike riding was allowed.

Staff is likewise concerned with the safety of trail users and beach goers. However, staff believes that the crowds in this area are not substantially different than other areas of the trail where bike riding is allowed. Since the trail has opened there have been very few bike vs. pedestrian injuries in those other areas. Because of the safety record for the remainder of the trail, staff does not believe that the danger of bike riding in this area would be substantially different than in areas where it is currently allowed. Therefore, staff's recommendation is to allow bike riding on the trail south of the wooden bridge throughout the year, except on summer holidays and major special event days.

.ecommended
Action:

THE BEACHES, PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT the City Council make no change to the current policy for bike riding on the Beach Trail.

STAFF RECOMMENDS THAT the City Council direct staff to prepare an ordinance that would modify the San Clemente Municipal Code to allow bike riding south of the wooden bridge at Trafalgar Canyon except on holidays and major special events from June 15 to Labor Day, unless otherwise restricted, and return to the City Council for adoption.

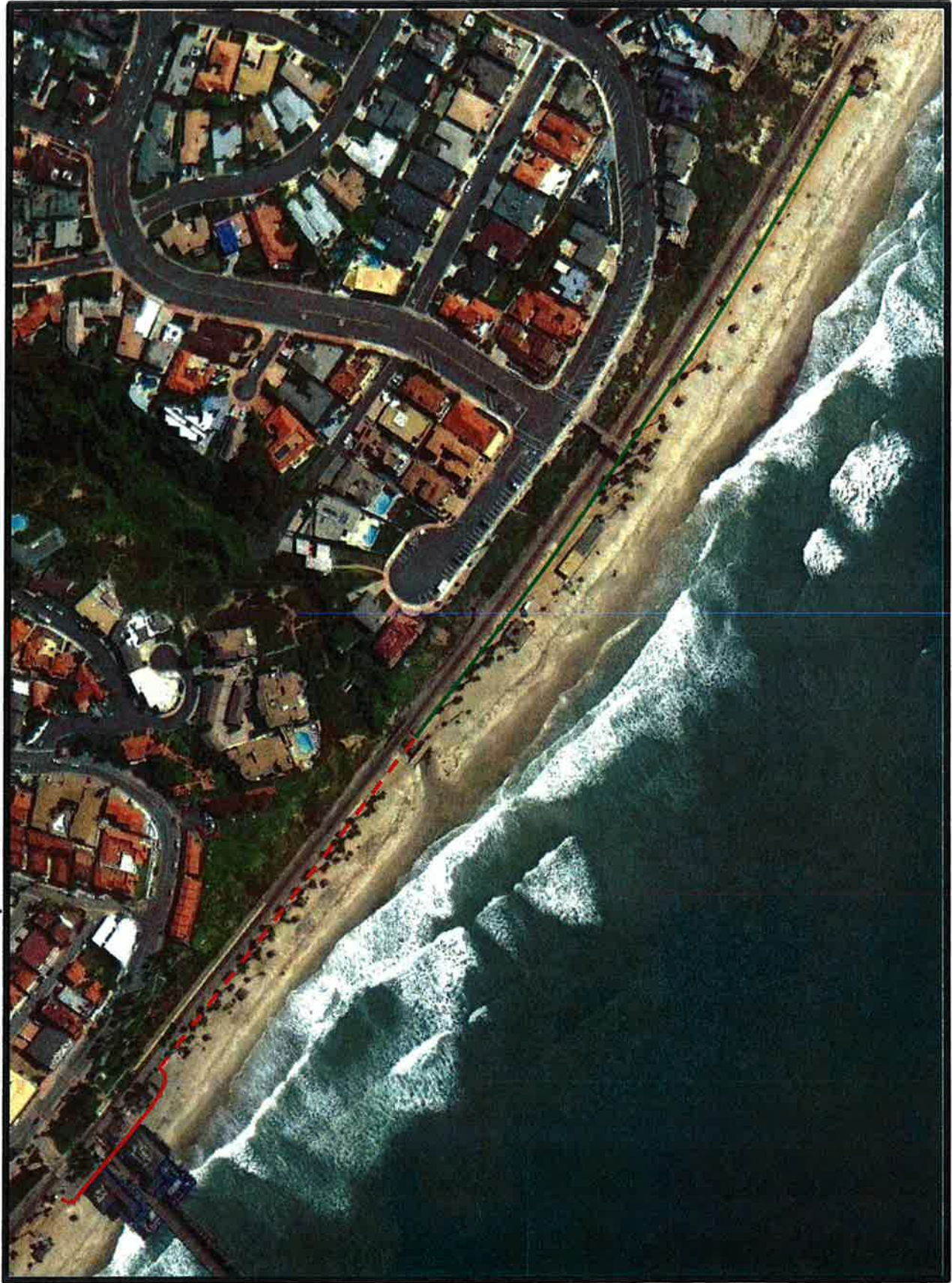
- Attachments:**
1. Diagram for Option #1 - Reduce the "Walk Zone"
 2. Diagram for Option #2 - No Change
 3. Diagram for Option #3 - Allow Bike Riding with Time Restrictions

Notification: Beaches, Parks and Recreation Commission

SAJ

Option #1 – Reduced Walk Zone

Attachment #1



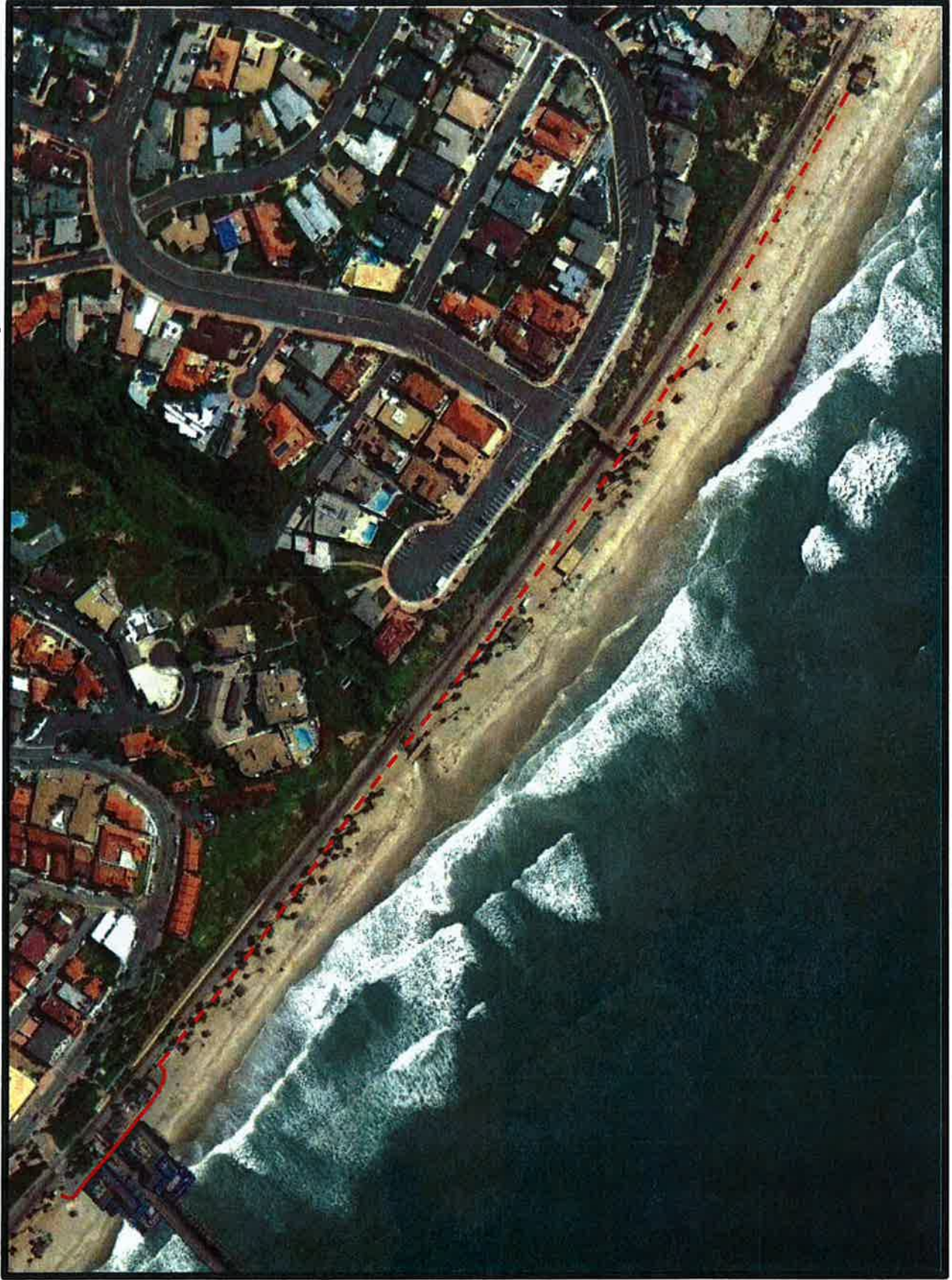
— No bike riding at any time

- - - No bike riding between June 15 & Labor Day

— Bike riding allowed at all times

Option #2 – No Change to Current Policy

Attachment #2



— No bike riding at any time

- - - No bike riding between June 15 & Labor Day

8A-4

Option #3 – Time Restrictions

Attachment #3



— No bike riding at any time

- - - No bike riding between June 15 & Labor Day between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.

- - - Bike riding allowed between June 15 & Labor Day before 10 a.m. and after 6 p.m. (and remainder of year)