

January 5, 2022

Vernacular Architecture Forum
Advocacy Award Nomination
c/o Sam Palfreyman
870 Crimson Lane
Kaysville, UT 84037

Re: Coast Walk Trail Letter of Support

Dear Mr. Palfreyman:

It is with great pleasure that the La Jolla Community Planning Association enthusiastically supports the nomination of Friends of Coast Walk Trail (FOCWT) for the 2022 Vernacular Architecture Forum Advocacy Award. Historically designated in 1990 as Site #288 by the City of San Diego, Coast Walk Trail is a unique Cultural Landscape dating to at least the 1860s. It was delineated as a public street on the original 1887 Subdivision Map for the community of La Jolla, but has always been used as a pedestrian trail, most likely dating to Native American origins. Today, the 0.6 mile Coast Walk traverses a precipitous coastal bluff overlooking Scripps Coastal Reserve. While passing toney private residences, it accommodates thousands of visitors who gawk at the stunning views, abundant wildlife and glimpse into early La Jolla.

By 2010, Coast Walk's popularity jeopardized its very existence. Its' management fell between bureaucratic cracks at the City of San Diego, where it is located in the Transportation Department, physically managed by the Stormwater Division, and used like a public park. Due to parsimonious city budgets and extensive deferred maintenance, a crush of tourists and a fragile ecology, the trail and its environs were crumbling. Adjacent neighbors formed Friends of Coast Walk, a 501 (c)(3) non-profit, to raise money, develop a habitat restoration plan, secure Right of Entry Permits, hire contractors and engage volunteers. Over the past 10 years, FOCWT has raised over \$200,000 to remove invasive vegetation, arrest, repair and control erosion, rebuild damaged trail sections and revegetate with native species. Homeless encampments were relocated, tons of trash were removed and significant coastal views were restored.

Leading first by example, and later by enthusiasm, Friends of Coast Walk Trail has conducted an exemplary campaign to involve multiple segments of the local community in the various phases of trail and landscape rehabilitation. Through a website, public outreach in the local paper, personal appeals to schools, scouts and service organizations and extensive Social Media presence on Facebook and Instagram, their decade-long effort has yielded impressive results. Not only is the trail in much better condition, FOCWT has de-bugged administrative processes and connected bureaucratic silos at City Hall. In developing solid working relationships with city staff, their example is serving as a model for other citizen-led efforts to improve San Diego's city parks and recreational facilities.

The rehabilitation of Coast Walk Trail has also proven a transformational experience for the many school-age volunteers who have made new friends, developed useful skills and grown in maturity through their participation. Volunteer Clean-Up days and Sponsored History Walks have engaged hundreds of community members, who have provided thousands of hours of service. Web-based educational videos and QR codes to engage visitors in the trail's history and ecology are under development to continue local management and maintenance efforts into the future.

FOCWT serves as a model, not only for preservation and stewardship of a beloved vernacular historic resource, but also for community transformation through public engagement and participation. The La Jolla Community Planning Association heartily salutes their efforts and strongly endorses their nomination for VAF's 2022 Advocacy Award.

Sincerely,

Diane Kane, President
La Jolla Community Planning Association

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