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Parts of Barrio Logan Have No Sidewalks – Does Anyone Care?

by [John P. Anderson](#) on April 24, 2013 · [3 comments](#)

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Voice of San Diego doesn't want to make judgment calls...

By John Anderson



Harbor Drive East – Towards
Downtown

Voice of San Diego (VOSD) has been operating a Tumblr site featuring the damaged state of sidewalks across San Diego coined [The Stumblr](#). San Diegans are encouraged to send in photos from their neighborhood and the images are added to the site. It's a great idea to bring a public issue to light and has even received some love nationally including a nod from [The Atlantic](#).

In preparation for our SDFP focus on Barrio Logan, fellow writer Brent Beltran noted the poor (read: non-existent) status of sidewalks in parts of the

neighborhood, specifically along Harbor Drive. Brent has a young son and mentioned he, and other Barrio residents, would like to be able to walk up to Seaport Village, the bayfront, Convention Center, and other destinations in the south-western part of Downtown. No surprise – that area of Downtown is popular with locals and visitors alike and is a great place for a stroll, picnic, or throwing a frisbee.



Harbor Drive West – Towards Cesar Chavez

I was already familiar with the area, but am usually on my bicycle and not paying particular attention to sidewalks. I went out to specifically check out the area and take some photos. There are large distances with nary a bit of cement sidewalk. The options for a pedestrian are to walk on a dirt path, or on the shoulder of Harbor Drive, which has a posted speed limit of 40 mph and to my eye is often exceeded by passing traffic.

In addition to Harbor Drive, I noticed this stretch of Sigsbee Street that also lacks sidewalks. However, where train and trolley track upgrades have recently taken place sidewalks have been installed. On both sides of the tracks, however, the sidewalk abruptly ends to be replaced by rock-strewn dirt.

Not having sidewalks is bad enough but this block of Sigsbee ends on one corner of Perkins Elementary. The proximity to a school alone should be enough to get sidewalks installed here.

The lack of sidewalks builds on the severe environmental issues that Barrio Logan residents face. As noted by the Environmental Health Coalition (EHC), the neighborhood ranks [among the very worst in the state for environmental, health, economic, and social disadvantage issues](#). Sidewalks

may be a small issue but they are another small slight and disadvantage that makes it more difficult to walk, get outdoors, and encourage healthy habits for neighborhood residents young and old.



Sigsbee at Harbor,
facing North East

Ernie McCray recently wrote about the extreme differences between the two communities at the ends of the Coronado Bridge: the city of Coronado and the neighborhood of Barrio Logan. It's [a moving read](#) and especially if you have children likely to make you feel a bit tight in the throat, chest, and eye corners. A lack of sidewalk infrastructure doesn't create severe disabilities, but it is another chip stacked against those living in the area having a healthy environment to live, work, and play in.

I took these photos of spots in Barrio Logan that would seem to be likely candidates for sidewalk installations and sent them to VOSD as a submission for The Stumblr. I thought it was a great example of what they were looking for, but my submission was turned down. I was informed that “sometimes it's unclear whether they're not there for a particular reason” and VOSD doesn't want to make judgment calls on that issue. I was surprised, but that makes sense – there are likely plenty of areas in town (along highways, in more rural sections, etc.) that might not warrant sidewalks.

At the same time, this lack of recognition for an environmental slight in Barrio

Logan seems fitting. 43 years after the establishment of Chicano Park there remain large murals stating ‘Hasta La Bahia’ (Until the Bay) representing the desire of the neighborhood to have access to San Diego Bay. Crosby Park offers bay access at the foot of Cesar Chavez Parkway but most of the parking is utilized by workers of the businesses on the bayfront.



Sigsbee at Harbor –
Rail Project
Improvement
Sidewalk

It's Barrio Logan – who cares? Large diesel trucks come through the neighborhood, often using the side streets rather than Harbor Drive. It's Barrio Logan – who cares? And many years ago: We need to build a freeway. It's Barrio Logan – who cares? The same could be said for the lack of sidewalks accessing downtown. It's Barrio Logan – who cares?

The past weekend saw celebrations in San Diego for both Chicano Park Day in Barrio Logan and Earth Day in Balboa Park. The coincidence is fitting and a reminder that although some good has been done for the health and environment of our world and community in the past few decades there is much work remaining. As with every journey it begins with a single step – ideally on a safe surface for those doing the walking.

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John was an accountant in a former life and now devotes his time to child-rearing, reading, writing, and working to ensure that San Diego is truly America's Finest City. Interested in environmental issues, John enjoys connecting with others that want to improve the health of our world and community. You can find John at www.johnpatrickanderson.com or on Twitter (@j_p_a_). Comments, suggestions, wisdom, and complaints are enthusiastically welcomed.

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bob dorn [April 24, 2013 at 9:16 am](#)

Great job, John Anderson. The city celebrates its Harbor Drive only so far as the tourist zone; once it reaches Barrio Logan it tells the vecinos to eat dirt. We don't have the money for sidewalks maybe because it's going to be given to the hotels and their expanded convention centers, and to the not-so-needy Spanos family for a nearby stadium for their Chargers? Or because we're still trying to pay off Petco Park? There's a metaphor somewhere in all this.

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John Lawrence [April 24, 2013 at 10:07 am](#)

When is the city going to pave the sidewalks from the Convention Center south on Harbor Drive to Barrio Logan? Is this city for tourists and the hotel and restaurant industry or is it for the people who live here? Maybe they should be given some consideration too.

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[Liam Dillon April 24, 2013 at 10:44 am](#)

Hello-

I'm Liam, the reporter who runs TheStumblr (thestumblr.com) for Voice of San Diego. I'm glad John highlighted this issue, and wanted to add a few more details about our sidewalks coverage.

We care very much about missing sidewalks in underserved communities and near schools. Our coverage of a dangerous half-mile stretch of missing sidewalk outside San Ysidro High pushed the city to find \$4.5 million to fully fund the sidewalk installation.

(http://www.voiceofsandiego.org/infrastructure/article_a9e06884-7b83-11e2-93aa-0019bb2963f4.html). We've also written about a homeowner who wants to put in a sidewalk near a school in Pacific Beach.

(http://www.voiceofsandiego.org/infrastructure/article_7a3314aa-6fea-11e2-bad3-0019bb2963f4.html).

But sometimes it might be unclear for one reason or another why a sidewalk doesn't exist, and whether it's necessary or desired. During my coverage of the District 4 council race, I heard from some residents in Encanto that they prefer some sidewalk-less sections of their neighborhood because it gives the area a more rural feel.

My point in my exchange with John is that it's tough for us to fully report out the reasons surrounding every missing section of sidewalk. So for our sidewalks blog, TheStumblr, we limit the photos to broken ones.

Hope this helps provide some context. Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

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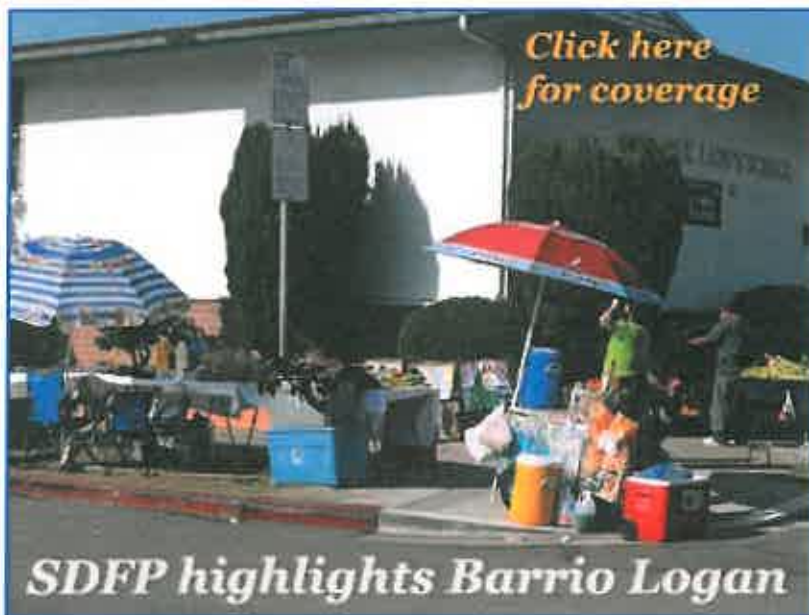
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