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IRVINE'S STEEP RISE IN E-BIKE COLLISIONS PROMPTS NEW REGULATIONS

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER

With a unanimous vote, leaders in Irvine on Tuesday, July 1 took the city's first steps in implementing regulations for electronic bicycles and other forms of electric transportation.

The new regulations come as the popularity of e-bikes continues to swell, a trend that Irvine's Public Safety Department says has led to steep increases of bike collisions involving juveniles.

During the meeting, Lieutenant Matthew McLaughlin from Irvine Police Department's Traffic and Events Bureau, explained that traffic collisions involving bicycles in Irvine have increased nearly 200% since 2019.

More specifically, according to McLaughlin, e-bike collisions in Irvine have jumped nearly 25% between 2021 and 2022.

"Last year, there were 83 traffic collisions involving bicycles in Irvine, that total is 172% higher when compared to 2021 and nearly 200% higher when compared to 2020," he said. "Thirty-four percent of the bicycle collisions in 2022 involved an e-bicycle, as compared to only 10% in 2021. And 86% of the bicycle collisions in 2022 occurred less than 1,000 yards or less from a school."

In terms of new regulations, Irvine will soon be regulating many aspects of the road, including the direction in which e-bikes will be allowed to ride.

Once implemented, e-bike and electronic scooter operators will need to ride in the same direction as traffic. E-bikes will also be subject to a speed limit of 28 MPH on the highway and 20 MPH on bike paths and trails. New regulations will also make it illegal to modify e-bikes to achieve

higher speeds, and will also require passengers to have their own seat.

"In many instances, the proposed ordinances would coincide with the California Vehicle Code. These suggested amendments are intended to discourage the dangerous bike riding behavior that has been identified as common primary collision factors (PCF) in many of the bicycle accidents in Irvine," McLaughlin said. "The four most common PCF in 2022's bicycle collisions were unsafe speed for the conditions, failed to yield the right of way, unsafe turning movements and stop sign violations."

Despite the fact that Irvine prides itself on a bike-friendly master plan, prior to Tuesday's discussion, the city's municipal code did not contain regulations surrounding the use and operation of e-bikes.

The new ordinances will also restrict e-bikes from entering the Irvine Open Space, due to potential lithium-ion battery fire danger.

In 2022, Irvine Mayor Farrah Khan asked public safety to present needed amendments to the city's municipal code for city officials to consider.

The amendments, introduced by Irvine Public Safety and the city's Traffic Engineering Department in March, were ultimately approved by the city's Transportation Commission in May.

Weighing the benefits e-bikes bring to riders, Irvine Vice Mayor Tammy Kim said she understands the popularity, but said that unfortunately the trend for many riders is to ignore the rules of the road.

"I want to embrace e-bikes because I see the value in having them," she said. "But I also see how it is very much abused."

GREAT PARK BOARD VOTES TO TERMINATE NEGOTIATIONS WITH LIVE NATION

AS IRVINE LOOKS TO BUILD ITS LONG-AWAITED \$150 MILLION PERMANENT AMPHITHEATER, IT WILL LOOK FOR A THIRD-PARTY TO MANAGE ITS OPERATIONS.

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER

While elected officials in Irvine have emphasized a commitment to building a permanent amphitheater inside the Great Park, on Tuesday, July 25, the Great Park Board of Directors opted to terminate negotiations with concert promoter Live Nation.

Despite an effort by Great Park Director Tammy Kim to postpone the agenda item to the following Great Park Board Meeting, Board Members spent more than four hours listening to public testimony and questioning representatives of Live Nation.

By a 3-2 vote, Board Members agreed to a motion suggested by Great Park Director Larry Agran that effectively ends the city's previous design, construction and operation agreement (DCOA) with Live Nation, as well as directs Irvine City Manager Oliver Chi to present options for a timeline and process on the steps forward within the next 90-days.

Specifically, in their vote to end negotiations with Live Nation, the directors are seeking a pathway toward an 8,000 to 10,000 seat amphitheater, as a complementary component to the Great Park Framework plan. The hope is to build a venue that would ensure zero impact to residential noise levels.

As Live Nation and Irvine part ways, Irvine will focus on how to leverage the yet-to-be built venue into a revenue



stream, opting for it to become a venue open to all promoters. The city will also issue a request for proposal for a third-party operator.

Kim, a member of the Great Park Amphitheater Subcommittee, who ultimately voted in favor of Agran's motion, said she was asked to agendize the item for discussion, and wanted to show her commitment to continuing negotiations with the well-known

promoter. Kim added that she opted to postpone the special meeting discussion but was unable to do so due to procedural complications.

While many alterations have been made to the DCOA since its origin, the newest version of the 74-page agreement was released on July 18, just two days prior to Tuesday's meeting, giving residents and city staff little time to digest its nuances.

"In my opinion, we're not ready," she said. "I've asked this to be continued, residents – including myself – only had from Friday to look at the DCOA, my colleagues have not had an adequate time to take a look at it. I don't think it's in the best interest of our residents to ram this through."

Per the original DCOA which was signed in September, Live Nation and the city of Irvine were set to engage collaboratively on aspects of the venue's design as a key component of the city's \$1 billion Great Park Framework Plan.

Live Nation also agreed to contribute \$20 million toward the proposed 14,000 seat amphitheater. A base operating fee of 3.5%, with an annual increase of 3%, was included in the original DCOA.

Mike Carroll, Chairman of the Great Park Board, and the other half of the Amphitheater Subcommittee admitted that while the DCOA was the product of a dozen iterations involving thousands of hours of work, he was confident the terms remained economical for the city.

"The deal is economically, substantially better; there are parameters that have been changed significantly. The subcommittee has worked really hard with this joint venture partner to do something very meaningful and positive," he said.

More recently, however, discussions surrounding the venue's actual seating capacity have been a source of concern for residents, who fear a venue of that size would only invite more noise and traffic to Irvine.

Dozens of residents spoke out against the project during Tuesday's special meeting, many of them voicing their frustration over the lack of time they were given to review the item.

Lastly, per terms of Agran's motion, Irvine will create an Amphitheater project review committee consisting of Kim and one other Council Member.

"I would love to continue working with Live Nation. But with that being said, I continue to maintain my position that the Irvine Amphitheatre must be a truly open venue that's open to all promoters," she said.

MUSIC

A LIFE LESS ORDINARY

TEGAN AND SARA ARE ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC.

BY BRETT CALLWOOD



Tegan and Sara

Canadian indie-pop duo Tegan and Sara are proudly, unashamedly un-tabloid. They refer to themselves as “average,” in non-self-effacing terms, due to their proclivity to avoid the celebrity lifestyle (we know what they mean – but there’s nothing average about these amazing women).

When we think of Tegan and Sara, we think of their music. Who the twins are dating, hanging out with, wearing – nobody gives a shit and that’s to their immense credit.

“It’s hugely flattering,” says Sara Keirsten Quin. “It would be difficult to maintain a tabloid-esque career when you’re not. Some people are so naturally good at being a headline, and I don’t think Tegan and I have that.”

“It’s also choices,” adds Tegan Rain Quin. “I lived in L.A. for 12 years. Sara lived in New York for a handful of years and then L.A. for a handful of years. We said no to everything ‘red carpet.’ We were not that band. We’ve been lucky enough to make lifelong friends in this industry – musicians and actors – you don’t see them on our feed. We never used anything except music to sell ourselves. We curated this fence around us. No one really knows our private life, but you feel like you do. You don’t notice the absence of drama or celebrity. It’s meant at times that we’re really average. It doesn’t mean that someone couldn’t make drama if they wanted to. But as artists, we remained focused on our art.”

They surely do! Tegan and Sara have released 10 albums since 1999, starting with the *Under Feet Like Ours* debut and building up to the most recent full-lengther – last year’s *Crybaby*.

“Our goal with *Crybaby* was just to make something we would want to listen to,” Tegan says. “We produced it alongside John Congleton, and it was like a combination of songs that we had written during the pandemic, and then once we got into the studio, we were really inspired and wrote some more songs. The fan response has been great. We were laughing, when we first started touring and we’d play songs like ‘Smoking Weed Alone’ and ‘Fucking Up What Matters,’ people were jumping up and down – not moshing but pushing



PAMELA LITTKY



a little bit. My mom was on tour with us and she was like, 'There's so many men in your audience all of a sudden.' I have lots of theories about that, but ultimately people don't seem bummed when we play new songs."

Crybaby may have been largely written during the pandemic, but it doesn't sound like a 'pandemic album' at all. Not, at least, when it comes to the subject matter.

"Tegan and I are notoriously prolific," says Sara. "We're always working and always busy. We're two very high-

functioning people, so we're only doing half as much work as people think we are. I do feel like the pandemic was a brutal stoppage of all of that work, but it allowed us to prioritize in a way that we wouldn't have. I don't think the music is about the pandemic, but it did provide this opportunity to reflect and also start thinking about the future in this uncluttered way. I was very acutely going through trying to start a family. I was reflecting on the years that we'd been out on the road and touring, and then this sudden pivot into thinking

about something else really profound. It may not be the thing that people think of when they first hear the album or the songs, but I think there is this layer of the 'calm before the storm' feeling."

The pandemic isn't the biggest event to have occurred in Sara's life in recent years; she became a parent for the first time last year and just a couple of weeks celebrated baby Sid's first birthday.

"I keep thinking about how I have a lot of friends that had kids in 2020/21, and I definitely don't envy them," Sara says. "On the other hand, you really do turn in-

MUSIC

ward. I'm sure it's a survival mechanism, but when you have this new precious cargo in your life and you don't want to injure it or drop it, the thought of having it during a quiet, isolated time – I wonder if that would have been easier. We had Sid right when Tegan and I were about to launch an album, a TV show, a book, touring again, so I know for myself it's been quite a lot of juggling. Sid won't remember any of it, but we'll have stories to tell from his first year."

Ahh yes, the TV show. *High School* came out last October, based on Tegan and Sara's memoir of the same name. Shot in their hometown of Calgary, where it was set, the show has received almost universal praise.

6 "When we finished writing our memoir, we sent the manuscript to our friend Clea DuVall and she said that it could be developed into a TV show," says Sara. "We had talked about it, internally certainly. The pandemic gave us a lot of time to work on it, so we started pitching the big networks during the early months of the pandemic. We were really shocked how quickly the deal came together and the writing happened. There was a taste for it. Here is a story about queer girls, queer musicians, queer Canadians, in an era that is interesting for the culture right now – the 1990s. So it was the right place, right time. It wasn't a huge endeavor. We made it in Calgary, and are so delighted with the way the show came out."

A show about queer teens going through high school in Canada, written by strong gay woman who were teens going through high school in Canada – this was always going to be an important show and so it proved to be. At the time of writing, it's been just a couple of weeks since the end of Pride month, but for Tegan and Sara (and the *Irvine Weekly*), every month is Pride Month.

"Holy shit, am I ever glad I'm gay," says Tegan. "But we also toured through Pride month, so every night felt like a Pride event. Sara and I are also fixated on the protest part, and there's still so much to be done. We do a lot of fundraising for our Tegan and Sara Foundation. Vans have been an amazing partner of ours and they just agreed to pay for our entire LGBTQ summer camp program. Pride



for us is about work. Create safe spaces. Be out there and be queer. Raise money for the foundation, and extend it into every place."

You only have to look at states such as Florida and the swath of anti-LGBTQ+ laws that are being introduced under the heinous guise of being "anti-woke" to see that there's a lot of work still to be done. It's horribly frustrating to feel like we as a society are taking huge strides forward, only to be pulled backwards by backwoods bigots.

"I think we have an interesting perspective because we spend so much time traveling internationally," Sara says. "So while the gains in Canada and the U.S. have been so important, the work that we do as a band and a foundation, we're always aware of what is so out of reach for some people. I want to say that

I'm shocked about the rollbacks of rights regarding trans kids right now, but I'm not. I think that also speaks to how important it is to stay engaged and to avoid apathy wherever possible. We really believe that our rights cannot be taken away in places like the US and Canada, and that's just not true. It's about staying vigilant and educated, and celebrating our wins when we can. Especially when we're assimilating. We didn't get the right to marriage by saying 'Fuck you!' We got them by saying, 'We're just like you, straight people, don't be scared.' Well, there's a price that comes with assimilation. The more you don't blend in, the more those people say that they're uncomfortable and don't want to fall in line with what you care about."

On Monday, Aug. 14, Tegan and Sara play *The Bellweather*, a brand new

venue in L.A. owned by the same people that run the Teragram Ballroom.

"We've been building a show that reflects every era of Tegan and Sara," says Tegan. "It's our Eras tour – watch out Taylor Swift. We're playing music from all of our records. I mean, my dad cried! He's the most proud he's ever been of us. What more reason do you need? It's a smaller venue, which feels really exciting. It's been nice to reconnect with the audience."

That same tour will keep Tegan and Sara on the road for the remainder of this year at least. Besides that, they're working on a new book and, when the writer's strike is resolved, hope to finish a second season of *High School*.

Two decades into their exceptional career, and these decidedly un-average women won't slow down.

IRVINE'S \$4 MILLION CATTLE CAMP RENOVATION NOW OPEN IN BOMMER CANYON

ONE OF IRVINE'S MOST HISTORIC OPEN SPACE AREAS RECEIVED MUCH NEEDED UPGRADES TO ITS EXISTING FACILITIES.

EVAN J. LANCASTER



CITY OF IRVINE/FLICKR

Home to a rustic water tower and dozens of 100-year-old sycamore trees, Irvine's well-known Cattle Camp inside Bommer Canyon Preserve has recently received a massive upgrade. Now, after more than two years of construction and challenges caused by the pandemic, the \$4.2 million renovation project is open for the public to enjoy.

Stacy DeLong, Project Manager for the Cattle Camp Renovation Project, spoke to Irvine Weekly about what the new upgrades bring to the historic area.

"We started construction in March 2021 and we wrapped up construction on May 31, [2023]," he said. "The site is located in Bommer Canyon which is an open space preserve, so it's a very isolated location – we had to bring in some utilities. We constructed four buildings

out there – those consist of a stage, a fully accessible restroom facility, a catering kitchen and a trash enclosure."

Despite the project's success, DeLong explained that many challenges arose due to the fact that the rehabilitation project coincided with the difficulties of the pandemic.

"We did have a lot of challenges working during the tail end of the pandemic. We had supply chain is-

sues and labor issues," he said. "The area itself was indeed closed off for two-and-a-half years while we were building, but residents still had access to the trail system."

DeLong added that the rehabilitation project required the demolition of the existing buildings in order to build fully ADA-compliant structures.

"Because it is such an isolated location, we made sure we were constructing things that were fully accessible to people of all abilities. So we have a meandering pathways, decorative hardscape – to make sure anyone of any ability can come out there to enjoy that area."

Over the years, the three-acre Cattle Camp, which is part of Bommer Canyon's 15-acre footprint, has become a popular destination for weddings and other formal events in Irvine. The area is considered historic, as land within the Cattle Camp once served as a rest area for ranch hands working on the Irvine Ranch.

Prior to the rehabilitation project which was approved in 2018, DeLong said that despite its popularity, the area was much less welcoming.

"Before, there were a few rustic, trailer type buildings – there weren't flushable toilets or anything like that. There were very rudimentary types of buildings," he said. "What we wanted to do was provide an upgraded facility that had restroom facilities – somewhere where people could get married or businesses could have picnics."

Cattle Camp is located approximately one mile inside the Bommer Canyon.



