

April 29, 2020

RE: Recommendations for Transportation Actions as COVID-19 Response

Dear San Diego Region Mayors and City Councilmembers,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we are writing with recommendations for how to address the public health crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic through addressing transportation needs. *Our recommendations aim to aid essential travel needs for individuals and household units and relieve pressure from overcrowded sidewalks; in no way do we aim to encourage group activities with these recommendations.*

Based on the need to allow for safe physical distancing of at least six feet to reduce the risk of transmission, we recommend the following immediate actions be taken:

- **Replace Push-Activated Pedestrian Signals with Automatic Pedestrian Signals** - Some streets with pedestrian buttons require that they be pushed to change the light and activate the walk sign. Some streets provide more time to cross the street safely when the pedestrian crosswalk button is activated. Yet no one should need to push a button – and risk spreading or contracting the virus – to cross the street safely during this pandemic.

Pedestrian crosswalk buttons should be switched to automatically provide the walk sign to a pedestrian without having to press it. This is especially true for seniors and people with disabilities, who may find it more difficult to press the button without using their hands. With fewer cars on the road, vehicular delay has been reduced significantly. In addition, with fewer cars that create congestion, more drivers are speeding, which increases the danger for a pedestrian crossing the street.

- **Prioritize Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safe Travel on Crowded Corridors** - People are walking and cycling, either for essential travel needs or for their physical and mental health. At the same time, car travel has significantly declined. We recommend that you take action to provide appropriate safe space for people by widening walking space and opening streets where pedestrian overcrowding already is occurring and where people access essential needs such as grocery stores by walking, cycling, or accessing transit.

Issues relating to enforcement in communities of concern remain and it will be vital for the region to implement these safe physical distancing measures equitably. In no way do we desire to impede the travel needs for essential workers, many of whom are residents in underserved communities. Emergency vehicles and residents who live on those streets will still be able to access the roads by motor vehicle.

After addressing the immediate need to provide space where overcrowding on sidewalks is already occurring, we recommend analyzing additional corridors and connected routes to ensure safe travel in all communities to reduce the likelihood that newly opened streets become attractors to people who would not have gone to those locations without

these changes. We are available to work collaboratively to identify next phases of the transportation response to the COVID-19 crisis.

We thank you for your leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic. We urge you to take the above actions to further flatten the curve and reduce unnecessary loss of life.

Signed,

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