



October 6, 2020

San Diego City Council President Georgette Gómez
202 C Street
San Diego, CA 92101

CC: Mayor Kevin Faulconer, Council President Pro Tem Barbara Bry, Councilmember Jennifer Campbell, Councilmember Chris Ward, Councilmember Monica Montgomery, Councilmember Mark Kersey, Councilmember Chris Cate, Councilmember Scott Sherman, and Councilmember Vivian Moreno

RE: Support healthy communities and equitable investments by passing a strong Mobility Choices ordinance

Dear President Gómez, Mayor Faulconer and Councilmembers:

Events of the past several months have called attention to the value of getting outside and breathing clean air, as well as the pressing need for long-overdue justice for underserved communities. With racial, climate, economic and health crises raging simultaneously, advancing sustainable and equitable policies is not only timely but crucial.

In collaboration with San Diego's Communities of Concern, we are writing to respectfully request the City Council pass the Mobility Choices ordinance to realize the equity, health, and climate benefits of this policy for San Diego. We believe that passing this ordinance would be a significant achievement for the City, the environmental community and the development community. Mobility Choices won the full support of the City's Mobility Board on June 3, 2020 and was passed by the Planning Commission and Land Use and Housing Committee earlier this year.

The City of San Diego is now three months past the state deadline of July 1, 2020 to adopt a local threshold for Senate Bill 743 (SB 743). Mobility Choices aligns the City's climate goals with the State requirement in SB743 to analyze transportation impacts using VMT (vehicle miles traveled).

Mobility Choices also starts to address long-standing inequities in City investment. **With less than five percent of the City's Development Impact Fees spent in Communities of Concern since the 1980s, policies guiding more equitable investment in San Diego are long overdue.**¹ The Mobility Choices ordinance guarantees that at least half of the funds collected will be invested in Communities of Concern. These communities are, and have been, bearing the brunt of the impacts of racism and climate change, decades of under-investment, and as a result have the fewest resources to combat these effects. Transportation investments in

¹ Statistic presented by Planning Department Director Mike Hansen to [City Council's June 24, 2020 Land Use and Housing Committee meeting](#) (time marker 58:20)

Communities of Concern can help improve health and safety and connect people to good jobs and opportunities.

1. Mobility Choices would make healthy, sustainable forms of transportation such as biking, walking and public transit safer and more convenient. With only five years left to achieve the City's goal of zero traffic-related fatalities or severe injuries, infrastructure that reduces single drivers and gives people on foot and bikes more space, protection, and visibility will be key to achieving Vision Zero commitments.
2. Mobility Choices supports public health: walking and biking are healthy options, and cutting down on car trips will reduce air pollution that threatens the health of all San Diegans, especially residents with conditions such as asthma. With California currently experiencing its worst wildfire season in its history, adopting policies that reduce harmful air pollution in San Diego is critical.
3. Mobility Choices will also help the City start to make real progress toward achieving its binding Climate Action Plan goals. These goals aim for a mode split by 2035 that includes:

25 percent of San Diegans commuting by transit,
18 percent by bike, and
7 percent by foot.

For context, the most recent Climate Action Plan report shows this mode split in 2018:

8 percent commuting by transit,
2 percent by bike, and
3 percent by foot.

Mobility Choices will spur walking, biking and transit investments where they are needed the most and will be used by the most people. With transportation accounting for more than half of all greenhouse gas emissions in the City of San Diego, creating more walkable neighborhoods is essential to creating a more sustainable future.

As an additional benefit, Mobility Choices would streamline development near transit, accelerating much-needed housing production in areas that align with the City's Climate Action Plan. Mobility Choices can help San Diego reach statewide infill development goals while achieving more affordable and efficient commute options for more San Diegans.

For the reasons listed here, **we believe it is critical that City Council pass a strong Mobility Choices ordinance as soon as possible.** We respectfully urge you to vote to support clean air, equitable investments and healthier transportation options.

Signed,

Elizabeth Stampe
City Strategist
Natural Resources Defense Council

Brian Pollard
Executive Director
The Urban Collaborative Project

Danielle Berger
Director of Planning
Circulate San Diego

Kyle Heiskala
Interim Executive Director
Bike San Diego

Andy Hanshaw
Executive Director
San Diego County Bicycle Coalition