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January 3, 2022

San Diego City Council
City Administration Building
202 C St.
San Diego, CA 92101

SUBJECT: Support for Vision Zero and a Quick Build Network in Budget Letters

Dear City Councilmembers:

On behalf of Circulate San Diego, whose mission is to create excellent mobility choices and vibrant, healthy neighborhoods, I am writing to urge you to include additional funding for Vision Zero and a quick-build network in your budget letters for FY 2023.

This network should offer bicyclists of all ages and abilities safe paths throughout the urban core, and serve as a proof of concept for future projects throughout the city. Such a network is essential to achieving San Diego's commitment to end traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2025, and to achieving San Diego's Climate Action Plan mode shift goals. Put simply, quick build will save lives.

The City and SANDAG have already taken steps towards implementing a network of protected bicycle facilities. The 30th street bikeway, the downtown bike lanes, the Pershing Drive quick build project, and the SANDAG projects on Meade Avenue, 4th, and 5th avenue provide safe travel on those streets.

Moreover, Mayor Todd Gloria has shown an admirable commitment to the quick build approach by creating the Safe and Sustainable Transportation All Ages and Abilities Team (STAT team). The quick build approach delivers immediate safety improvements at a low cost by using cheap materials, like flex posts and paint.¹ It also leaves room for further community engagement and project modification based on community feedback.

Despite these efforts, road users are still dying at alarming rates on San Diego streets.² An investment in quick build bicycle infrastructure is a necessary and cost-effective

¹ Alta Planning and California Bicycle Coalition, *Quick-Build Guide: How to Build Safer Streets Quickly and Affordably* (2020), p.4, available at <https://www.calbike.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Quick-Build-Guide-White-Paper-2020.pdf>.

² Jesse O'Sullivan, *Hope for Vision Zero*, Circulate San Diego (2021), available at <https://www.circulatesd.org/hopeforvisionzero>.

investment in saving lives. Studies show that bicycle lanes create safety for all road users, not just bicyclists.³

Moreover, current San Diego bicycle infrastructure lacks a system-wide continuity. For example, in order to travel safely between the 30th street bike lane in South Park to the 4th avenue bike lane in Hillcrest, a bicyclist must either navigate the dangerous, fast moving traffic on University Avenue, or make a detour to Meade avenue that adds over a mile to their trip. If a bicyclist is unsafe for even a portion of their route, it may be enough to deter that person from going by bike. Alternatively, riders may be the victims of crashes when they choose to take a route despite gaps in safe infrastructure.

In order for San Diego's bicycle network to succeed, San Diego needs to prioritize connecting existing segments of bikeway in areas with the highest number of crashes.⁴

Once completed, a quick build bicycle network will be far more useful to San Diegans than the scattered sections that exist today. The network will also serve as a central hub to which new sections of bikeway can connect.

The quicker such a network is implemented, the quicker San Diegans of all ages and abilities will have safe access to their city by bike, e-bike, or scooter. While the process of change is difficult, San Diegans will get on board when they see the benefit of the bicycle network.

Recommendations:

- **Prioritize projects in dangerous corridors that connect existing segments of bikeway**

In order to achieve its Vision Zero goals, the City must prioritize improvements along the most dangerous corridors.⁵ Moreover, the City must ensure that bicyclists of all ages and abilities can stay safe for their entire journey.

³ "Cycling Lanes Reduce Fatalities for All Road Users, Study Shows," Science Daily (May 19, 2019)

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/05/190529113036.htm>

⁴ Alta Planning and California Bicycle Coalition, *Quick-Build Guide: How to Build Safer Streets Quickly and Affordably* (2020), p.14, available at <https://www.calbike.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Quick-Build-Guide-White-Paper-2020.pdf>. ("Don't let isolated project ideas or requests (especially from elected officials or neighborhood groups) sideline the greater goal of building a robust network that can offer connections for both bicyclists and pedestrians.")

⁵ Kathleen Ferrier and Maya Rosas, *Vision Zero: Zero Traffic Deaths in San Diego by 2025*, Circulate San Diego (2014) p. 4, available at <https://www.circulatesd.org/visionzerosd>.

- **Ensure adequate funding for STAT team**

The FY 2022 budget included a line item for \$1.1 million in funding for the STAT team. This funding should be doubled to \$2.2 million for FY 2023.

- **Ensure adequate mileage targets to create a useable network**

The STAT team currently has a target of creating 9 miles of protected bicycle facilities per year. In order to meet our Vision Zero target of ending traffic fatalities by 2025, that number needs to increase. The STAT team should aim to complete 18 miles of protected bicycle facilities per year.

- **Complete a useable network through the urban core by the end of 2023**

A useable bicycle network where San Diegans can ride safely from the beginning of a trip to its end will create more safety than individual sections on their own. The quicker this happens, the more lives will be saved, and the sooner San Diegans will understand its benefits.

Conclusion

Riding a bicycle or a scooter on city streets should not be a life and death decision. As the deaths of Jonathan Sepulveda, Laura Shinn, Matthew Keenan, and too many others have shown, San Diego streets are far too dangerous for their most vulnerable users. Investment in safe bicycle infrastructure is a necessity.

Sincerely,



Jesse O'Sullivan
Policy Counsel
Circulate San Diego

CC: Mayor Todd Gloria
Brittany Bailey
Mike Hansen
Alyssa Muto