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August 9, 2017

Hon. Scott Sherman
Councilmember, District 7
City of San Diego
202 C Street, MS 10A
San Diego, CA 92101

RE: Serra Mesa Community Plan Update/Road Connection Project

Dear Councilmember Sherman:

On behalf of Circulate San Diego, whose mission it is to create excellent mobility choices and vibrant, healthy neighborhoods, I am writing to share our support for the road connection between Phyllis Place in Serra Mesa and Franklin Ridge Road in Mission Valley. The connection is proposed in the Serra Mesa Community Plan Amendment. We feel that this connection with bicycle and pedestrian facilities is particularly important because it will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, support smart growth development, and increase connectivity for our communities in a manner that promotes transit, mobility, and bicycle accessibility.

When the City of San Diego adopted the Climate Action Plan, it committed to taking action to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Phyllis Place/Franklin Ridge Road connection will help the City reach these goals. By providing a more direct link for travelers to I-805, as well as from Serra Mesa to destinations in Mission Valley, the connection reduces out of direction travel and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by more than 13,000 miles each day—a nearly two percent reduction in the project area.¹ If the City hopes to reach the ambitious goals outlined in the Climate Action Plan, it is important that we take every opportunity to reduce VMT and greenhouse gas emissions.

The connection will also serve an interconnected bike and pedestrian network. The Quarry Falls Specific Plan shows Class II bike lanes and 6' sidewalks for Via Alta and Franklin Ridge Road.²

¹ Serra Mesa Community Plan Amendment Roadway Connection Project: Recirculated Draft Environmental Impact Report (March 2017), Appendix C, available at https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/appendix_c_traffic_impact_study.pdf.

² Quarry Falls Specific Plan (October 21, 2008), page 4-13, figure 8 available at <https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/planning/community/profiles/missionvalley/pdf/plans/quarryfallsspecificplan.pdf>.

Murray Ridge Road is anticipated to be expanded to a four lane connector which may impact existing bike lanes. This lane expansion is presumably intended to address Level of Service impacts. However, the recent changes to California Law from AB 743 dictate that San Diego should be focused on reducing VMT, not increasing road capacity.³ Lane expansions at the cost of bicycle facilities should be reconsidered and removed from the City's plans.

The Phyllis Place/Franklin Ridge connection is also important to support continued smart growth development. One of the most important features of a vital smart growth community is an interconnected transportation network that provides multiple connections for transit, bicycles, pedestrians, and vehicles. While this connection might shift some existing traffic elsewhere, new smart growth neighborhoods in Mission Valley like Civita will retain the walkability from their robust sidewalk network and benefit from additional mobility and connectivity.

When this connection is made, it will not only relieve congestion on overburdened surrounding roads, but it will provide an important north-south link for cyclists to the Mission Valley bicycle network, and will increase access to transit for residents in Serra Mesa.

We urge you to adopt the Serra Mesa Community Plan Amendment to allow this important connection to move forward.

Sincerely,



Colin Parent
Interim Executive Director, Circulate San Diego

cc: Stephen Haase, Chairman, City of San Diego Planning Commission

³ Circulate San Diego, Smart Mobility for Smart Growth (March 10, 2016.), available at <http://www.circulatesd.org/sb743>.