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January 24th, 2018

To: Public Safety and Livable Neighborhoods Committee Chair Councilmember Chris Cate, Committee Vice-Chair Councilmember Barbara Bry, Councilmember Lorie Zapf, and Councilmember Georgette Gómez

From: Circulate San Diego

Subject: Response to Councilmember Comments at Public Safety and Livable Neighborhoods Committee Meeting on January 24th, 2018

Dear Public Safety and Livable Neighborhoods (PSLN) Committee Members,

On behalf of Circulate San Diego, whose mission is to promote excellent mobility choices and vibrant, healthy neighborhoods, I am writing in response to comments regarding distracted pedestrians made at the PSLN meeting today.

Our comments are in response to the discussion of Item-1: Committee Discussion Regarding PSLN Committee Priorities and Work Plan for 2018. Circulate does not support the criminalization of pedestrians that would result from any ordinance targeting distracted pedestrians. Every road user should be aware and safe, and Circulate supports education, encouragement, and awareness programs that promote safe walking, cycling, and driving.

Vision Zero is the City's adopted goal of eliminating all traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2025. The approach promotes a data-driven strategy to specifically target the systemic causes of traffic collisions. A 2017 study comparing pedestrian fatality rates nationally shows that the safest cities for pedestrians are those that invest in infrastructure and programs.¹ Another analysis released last month shows that increasing walking, biking, and transit trips and reducing car trips results in a reduction of collision rates.² The City of San Diego's Climate Action Plan also requires increased walking, which would be deterred if pedestrians were threatened with criminal sanctions.

State law already requires that pedestrians use due care: "no pedestrian may suddenly leave a curb or other place of safety and walk or run into the path of a vehicle that is so close as to constitute an

¹ Greg Walz-Chojnacki, Study suggests investment pays off in safety for walkers, bicyclists, UWM Report, July 27, 2017, available at <http://uwm.edu/news/study-suggests-investment-pays-off-safety-walkers-bikers/>.

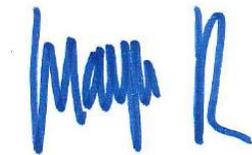
² Todd Litman, A New Traffic Safety Paradigm, Victoria Transport Policy Institute, December 18, 2017, available at <http://www.vtpi.org/ntsp.pdf>.

immediate hazard.”³ In addition, any traffic safety legislation must be passed by the California legislature, not a local jurisdiction.

Education programs are necessary to ensure that everyone follows the rules of the road and travels safely. Circulate’s current work with the San Diego Police Department provides a positive example of an education and awareness program that promotes safety by educating children and encourages safe habits through the media and other activities. The City should immediately pursue Caltrans Active Transportation Program or other grant sources to increase funding for education, encouragement, and awareness programs. Circulate San Diego has already begun speaking with City staff about such opportunities, and council offices can support that effort by asking the City administration to apply for these grants.

Circulate and PSLN share the same goal of making San Diego’s streets safer. The City’s Vision Zero and Climate Action Plan goals will be met through a commitment to traffic safety improvements and encouraging safe walking, cycling, and driving habits.

Sincerely,



Maya Rosas
Advocacy Manager

³ California Vehicle Code, Division 11, Rules of the Road, Chapter 5, Pedestrians’ Rights and Duties, available at https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=21950.&lawCode=VEH.