February 15, 2023

Chairperson Nathan Fletcher and the MTS Board
1255 Imperial Ave, Suite 1000
San Diego, CA 92101

RE: Support for Gaslamp Promenade on Fifth Avenue

Dear MTS Board:

On behalf of Circulate San Diego, whose mission is to create excellent mobility choices and vibrant, healthy neighborhoods, I urge the MTS Board not to oppose the Gaslamp Promenade on Fifth Avenue. The Gaslamp Promenade would promote pedestrian safety, economic activity, and cultural vibrance in one of San Diego's most iconic neighborhoods.

Concerns from MTS staff about the efficiency of the bus system are understandable. As articulated in our *Fast Bus!* report, Circulate also believes in a fast reliable bus network. However, that network need not come at the expense of vibrant pedestrian spaces.

In fact, pedestrianized spaces work in tandem with better transit service. A 2009 study of showed that MTS ridership was higher where walkability was better.[1] Patrons of restaurants and entertainment venues in the Gaslamp will be more likely to ride the bus if the Gaslamp Promenade is completed.

The MTS board should reject the staff proposal to oppose the Fifth Avenue Promenade. They should also direct staff to identify appropriate mitigation and alternative routing for Bus Routes 3 and 120, which currently run along Fifth Avenue. While these solutions may still impact transit service, they are worthwhile when considering the benefits that a pedestrianized Gaslamp will bring to the region.

Sincerely,

Jesse O'Sullivan
Policy Counsel, Circulate San Diego

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[1] Sherry Ryan and Lawrence Frank, "Pedestrian Environments and Transit Ridership," Journal of Public Transportation, Vol. 12, Issue 1, p. 39 (2009), available at https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1077291X22002429.

Creating excellent mobility choices and vibrant, healthy neighborhoods.