

MOTION

Permanent Slow Streets Program

On May 15, 2020, during the COVID-19 Emergency Declaration and the City’s Safer At Home and Safer LA orders, Mayor Eric Garcetti announced a new Slow Streets program. Slow Streets allow local residents more space for recreation activities in their neighborhoods, while protecting Angelenos from overcrowding on sidewalks and promoting social distancing. Slow Streets are requested by sponsor organizations on residential streets and administered by LADOT. Local traffic -- including access by delivery vehicles and emergency vehicles -- and local parking are still allowed on Slow Streets, however, non-residential cut-through traffic is prohibited.

Community feedback on Slow Streets is being received by LADOT, and the response from a wide range of residents and groups in participating neighborhoods has been overwhelmingly positive. LADOT has also been developing other people-centered programs in recent years, including Play Streets, People Streets, and Great Streets. This work has allowed LADOT to refine their methods and approaches, particularly around community engagement and partnerships between the City and local groups. Recommendations and best practices from many of these programs can be incorporated into Slow Streets.

The City of Los Angeles has jurisdiction over more than 6,500 center lane miles of streets, which are the largest public spaces the City has to offer. New parks are difficult and costly to develop in Los Angeles’ real estate market. Sidewalks are only widened in piecemeal fashion as new private developments are approved. Slow Streets and similar people-centered programs are an emerging and efficient strategy to increase safe neighborhood recreation Citywide.

Slow Streets also can play a role in reducing cut-through commuter traffic and limiting the negative impacts of traffic navigation apps, such as Waze, Google Maps, and Apple Maps which often direct commuters down formerly quiet neighborhood streets. However, the program is currently a temporary measure for the duration of the COVID-19 Emergency Declaration.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Department of Transportation, with assistance of the Chief Legislative Analyst, City Attorney, and Streets LA, report back on the feasibility of developing a permanent network of Slow Streets to enable wider access to open spaces for all Angelenos, including but not limited to a potential program structure, eligibility criteria, staffing needs, and a plan that would enable interested neighborhoods to implement a Slow Streets pilot program.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Chief Legislative Analyst, with the assistance of the City Attorney and LADOT, report on whether changes to the State Vehicle Code, in particular CVC 21101, would need to be made in order to legally effectuate this program and if so, to draft a Resolution to support state legislative action to make the necessary changes.

PRESENTED BY: 
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SECONDED BY: _____
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