

SUBJECT: PROTECTED BIKE LANES

INITIATED BY: MAYOR PRO TEMPORE JOHN M. ERICKSON
COUNCILMEMBER CHELSEA BYERS

PREPARED BY: COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
(Yvonne Quarker, Director)
(Hernan Molina, Governmental Affairs Liaison)

STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT:

The City Council will consider adopting a Citywide policy by which only protected bike lanes will be planned and implemented throughout the City.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Direct Community Development Department (CDD) staff to develop a policy by which only protected bike lanes will be planned and implemented in West Hollywood.
2. Staff to conduct outreach to residents and businesses to gather input and incorporate the findings as feasible into the draft policy for Council consideration.
3. Staff to return to City Council as soon as feasible with different options to amend applicable plans to achieve the above-referenced policy goal.

BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:

The City of West Hollywood is highly urbanized in one of the busiest areas of the Westside. The region, which is highly transited, is surrounded by employment centers in Beverly Hills, Century City and Santa Monica in the West and Hollywood, Burbank and Downtown in the East. As such, and without close access to a freeway, the City is a pass-through location for many motorists who commute to some of the aforementioned

destinations from other places in the region. Santa Monica Boulevard, Sunset Boulevard, Beverly Boulevard, Fountain Avenue, and Melrose Avenue see high volumes of pass-through traffic.

Protected Bike Lanes

Providing protected bike lanes in West Hollywood's urban environment can offer many community benefits. These benefits extend beyond just cycling and can positively impact the overall quality of life, environment, and well-being of the city's residents. Protected bike lanes provide a designated and separated space for cyclists, reducing the risk of accidents with motor vehicles. This, in turn, enhances safety for both cyclists and motorists. Bike lanes encourage people to choose cycling as a means of transportation, promoting physical activity and healthier lifestyles. Bike lanes also improve accessibility for people who cannot drive, such as those who are too young or old to drive or those with disabilities. This promotes inclusivity and ensures that more people can access key destinations. Encouraging cycling reduces the environmental impact of transportation. Fewer cars on the road mean lower emissions of greenhouse gases and air pollutants, improving air quality and helping combat climate change. Bike lanes can also provide a safe space for vulnerable road users, such as children, seniors, and novice cyclists, who may be less comfortable sharing the road with cars. These are a few of the community benefits that protected bike lanes can contribute to West Hollywood.

Santa Monica Boulevard Reconstruction

In 1999, as the City redesigned and reconstructed Santa Monica Boulevard, new striped bike lanes were incorporated into some sections of the boulevard. However, these bike lanes are not protected.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility Plan

In 2003, the City Council approved the City's Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility Plan (Plan), which was later amended and updated in May 2017. As presented on the publicly available document *"The Plan provides a vision and set of prioritized strategies and tools to enhance the City's streets to be more comfortable, safe, and inviting to pedestrians and bicyclists of all ages and abilities. The Plan offers a balanced strategy for providing*

transportation alternatives (walking, bicycling, transit riding, driving, etc.) in the public realm, by using a ‘Complete Network Approach.’” This document does not explicitly recommend protected bike lanes as a strategy or tool.

Willoughby / Vista / Gardner Greenways

The City has completed concept plans, including traffic calming measures on Willoughby and protected bike lanes on Vista/Gardner. This item is scheduled for the Public Facilities Commission and City Council consideration in early 2025.

Design District Streetscape Master Plan

On August 5, 2013, the City Council approved the Design District Streetscape Master Plan, which includes Beverly Boulevard. The plan includes creating opportunities for bicyclists to use newly designated striped bike lanes. However, these bike lanes, like in the case of Santa Monica Boulevard, are not protected.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Incorporating protected bike lanes into an existing mobility or streetscape plan is a complex process that requires thorough planning, interdepartmental coordination, and a commitment to public engagement and safety. If approved, this item will have a high impact on CDD staff as it will require starting a process of amending the current Plan and the Design District Streetscape Master Plan, items that are beyond existing division work plans and staff capacity. Additional staffing resources are required, including contracting with consultants to amend existing plans and assist with community outreach efforts. Planning staff must dedicate time and resources to update the plans with new information about protected bike lanes. Staff may require additional training and expertise in bike lane design, safety standards, and best practices. This could involve sending staff to educational training sessions or hiring experts in bicycle infrastructure. Staff will also need to collect and analyze data on existing traffic patterns, accident history, and potential routes for protected bike lanes. This may require additional resources for data collection and analysis tools. Planning staff will need to engage with the public, stakeholders, and interest groups to gather input on the proposed changes. This could involve public meetings, surveys, and communication efforts. Incorporating protected bike lanes into a

mobility or streetscape plan requires technical expertise, and staff may need to hire transportation engineers or consultants with the necessary knowledge. Amendments to the plans may necessitate a review of existing policies and legal considerations. Staff may need to work with legal experts to ensure the changes align with local laws and regulations. Furthermore, adding protected bike lanes may trigger environmental reviews or assessments to ensure compliance with environmental laws. Staff may need to coordinate these assessments and address potential impacts with environmental consultants. These staffing impacts and resources will be required to implement the proposed policy change.

CONFORMANCE WITH VISION 2020 AND THE GOALS OF THE WEST HOLLYWOOD

GENERAL PLAN:

This item is consistent with the Primary Strategic Goal(s) (PSG) and/or Ongoing Strategic Program(s) (OSP) of:

- OSP-4: Transportation System Improvement.

In addition, this item is compliant with the following goal(s) of the West Hollywood General Plan:

- IRC-1: Provide functional, safe and well-maintained circulation and public infrastructure throughout the City.
- LU-1: Maintain an urban form and land use pattern that enhances quality of life and meets the community's vision for its future.

EVALUATION PROCESSES:

N/A

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND HEALTH:

N/A

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

Staff will post the agenda as required by law and it will also reach out to community stakeholders such as the bicycle coalition and neighborhood groups.

OFFICE OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY:

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT / LONG RANGE PLANNING DIVISION

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

ATTACHMENT:

None.