TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY COMMISSION AUGUST 20, 2025
NEW BUSINESS

SUBJECT: FOUNTAIN AVENUE STREETSCAPE PROJECT – PHASE 1

INITIATED BY: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
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STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT:

The Transportation and Mobility Commission will receive a presentation on the 30% Plans for Phase 1 of the Fountain Avenue Streetscape Project (Project), including a summary of input by the Fountain Avenue Streetscape Steering Committee, and provide feedback to staff, which will be summarized in an upcoming staff report to the City Council together with specific recommendations on safety, operations, and parking mitigation.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Receive and file a presentation by staff on the Project,
2. Provide input on proposed left-turn restrictions,
3. Provide input on proposed interim/immediate traffic calming measures, and
4. Make a recommendation to the City Council to approve the 30% Plans for Phase 1 of the Project.

BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:

Discussions about safety improvements on Fountain Avenue date back to 2003. In 2011, the Bicycle Task Force made recommendations in a report. In May 2017, the City Council adopted the Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility Plan, which included pedestrian improvements on Fountain Avenue. A 2018 traffic safety study informed the construction of priority projects in 2019. In 2021, the City Council directed staff to explore protected bike lanes, and in November 2022, staff presented two alternatives: protected bike lanes and standard striped/painted lanes, with the City Council selecting the protected bike lane alternative.

DISCUSSION:

Fountain Avenue experiences a high number of severe and fatal crashes. The Project prioritizes proven crash countermeasures (speed management, separation, and intersection treatments) to reduce severe injuries and fatalities while maintaining reliable access for emergency services, deliveries, and waste collection. The Project would encourage active transportation and reduce speeding and hazardous driving on a neighborhood-serving corridor with the City's highest concentration of multi-family housing.

The Project would correct unsafe roadway geometry due to street widening by Los Angeles County in the 1960s. In addition, the Project would make Fountain Avenue more consistent with its classification as a Collector Street in the West Hollywood General Plan, which is a neighborhood-serving street.

Currently, Fountain Avenue is wider, less consistent, and less friendly to vulnerable roadway users in West Hollywood than in neighboring Los Angeles, where the street is two lanes in each direction with stop signs, street trees, and bike lanes in one direction. As a result, Fountain west of La Brea, where it's two lanes in each direction, has 4 times the severe and fatal crashes as Fountain east of La Brea, where it's just one lane in each direction (Source: Transportation Injury Mapping System, Fountain Avenue between La Cienega and Bronson 2013-2025). This underscores that lane count and operating speed are key safety factors on this corridor. Additionally, there were only four fatal crashes in West Hollywood from 2017 to 2021 (the years analyzed in the City's WeHo Target Vision Zero Action Plan). Two of those were on Fountain Avenue, and there have been two additional fatal crashes on Fountain Avenue in the last two months.

Currently, Fountain Avenue has high traffic volumes consistent with an arterial street, with approximately 35,000 daily trips, of which 22,000 are pass-through trips. Proposed changes would slow traffic on Fountain Avenue, making it less attractive as a cut-through route for drivers without an origin or destination in West Hollywood and reducing the disparate impact those trips have on the surrounding neighborhoods' safety and quality of life.

The Fountain Avenue Streetscape Project would occur in two phases. Phase 1 involves near-term safety improvements to calm traffic and primarily uses materials that affix to the roadway's surface to establish a new street layout and the resurfacing of Fountain Avenue; Phase 2 delivers concrete sidewalk reconstruction, lighting, and additional streetscape amenities.

Materials used in Phase 1 of the Project include the following:

- Thermoplastic roadway striping (more durable and reflective than paint)
- High-visibility crosswalks
- Street signage indicating parking areas and bikeways
- Self-watering planters
- Speed wedges (within painted curb extensions)
- Extruded concrete curbs (printed concrete, which does not require being formed and is faster to construct)
- New bicycle loop detectors at select locations (in-asphalt wires that communicate with traffic signals)
- Asphalt, repaving the entire street

Overview of Conceptual Design

The proposed 30% plans would convert Fountain Avenue into a two-lane street, with public

on-street parking available on the south side without peak-hour parking restrictions, alongside the bikeway. Parking would be removed from the north side of the street to create continuous space for safety improvements such as traffic calming and protected bikeways on both sides of the street, separated from travel lanes with extruded concrete curbs and painted buffer areas. Extruded concrete is a method of “printing” concrete curbs without wooden forms or foundations, accelerating the construction process.

High-visibility roadway striping using thermoplastic, which has higher reflectivity than paint and is more durable, would be used for crosswalks and green conflict markings throughout the corridor. Green conflict markings would be used at bikeway crossings of intersections or driveways where bikeways are unprotected. This treatment is intended to make drivers more aware of bicycles and increase the likelihood of yielding before crossing the bikeway. Self-watering in-street planters are used to improve aesthetics and to help delineate parking areas. They are also used in some cases to prevent vehicles from entering the bikeway where the bikeway is wider than typical, due to some street segments being wider than others. Phase 1 also includes repaving to create a smoother road surface and a higher contrast between asphalt and thermoplastic striping. The complete 30% plan set is included as Attachment A.

Fountain Avenue Streetscape Steering Committee

The development of the plans was guided by a 10-member steering committee, which met 5 times to discuss a variety of topic areas, including waste collection, neighborhood access, materials selection, and concept plan review. The following individuals participated in the steering committee:

1.	Brandon Blau	Public Safety Commission (Fountain resident)
2.	Patricia Smith, ASLA*	Landscape Architect
3.	Emily Gable	City of Los Angeles Planning (Fountain resident)
4.	Garen Yolles	Architectural & Urban Designer (City staff)
5.	Jessica Harris	Planning Commission
6.	Kevin Burton	Weho Bike Coalition
7.	Nicole Payton	Public Facilities, Rec. & Infrastructure Commission
8.	Oliver Hou	City of Los Angeles Planner
9.	Steven Greene**	Transp. & Mobility Commission
10.	Helen Krieger (alternate)**	Transp. & Mobility Commission (Fountain resident)

**Patricia Smith retired during the steering committee process.*

***Jesse Harris and Kimberly Winick initially represented the Transportation & Mobility Commission until neither was reappointed to the Commission. Steven Greene and Helen Krieger were selected by their colleagues as the Commission’s new representatives to the Committee on May 21, 2025.*

****Disabilities Advisory Board members Wesley Schwartz and Margaret Mann were on the Steering Committee until neither was reappointed to the Board.*

At the fifth and most recent Steering Committee meeting, members reviewed the 30% plans and raised the following questions and comments:

- Could additional left-turn pockets be added to minimize delay?
- Would the concrete curb make it difficult for people to drive around left-turning vehicles?
- Will trash accumulate in the roadway with waste barrels and dumpsters staged there?
- Consideration for ADA parking and accessibility on the north side of the street.
- Question about the difficulty of removing the extruded concrete curb in the future.
- Question about plans for data collection and whether a bike counter is planned for 24/7 data collection.
- Question about whether the Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACoFD) reviewed the plans.

Additional Left-turn Pockets

Additional left-turn pockets could be added to the design at the expense of nearby parking spaces along the south side of Fountain Avenue. Additional left-turn pockets were not included in an effort to preserve parking.

Concrete Curbs Impeding Left-turning Vehicles

In many cases, there will be sufficient space to pass a left-turning vehicle; however, at some locations and in some situations, motorists will have to wait. It will depend on how the left-turning motorist is positioned within the intersection and the section of the corridor as concrete curb design varies throughout.

Trash Accumulation

Staff has met with the City's Facilities & Street Services Division, and a mini-sweeper can be procured for the City to sweep protected bikeways and tight spaces around concrete curbs and in painted curb extensions.

ADA Parking & Accessibility

On the north side of the street, the loading and unloading of passengers will have to occur on side streets, which is consistent with Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines. In Phase 2 of the project, sidewalk-widening will occur, as well as the planned removal of sidewalk obstructions and relocation of utility poles to improve accessibility for residents.

Removal of Extruded Curb

Removal of extruded curb is less intensive, disruptive, and time-consuming than the removal of poured concrete with foundations.

Data Collection and Bicycle Counters

Staff is currently researching bicycle counters to include as part of the project. Post-project data collection is also planned and will help inform the street design in Phase 2 of the project.

LACoFD Review of Project

LACoFD reviewed the project plans and provided input that informed the design of the

proposed project, ensuring access to fire hydrants and stand pipes. LACoFD has approved the 30% plans.

Left Turn Restrictions

The Steering Committee was divided on whether to keep or remove existing turn restrictions on Fountain Avenue for Phase 1 of the Project. Over the years, the City has made several safety improvements on an ad-hoc basis. This includes crosswalk enhancements and left-turn restrictions at select locations. Arguments in favor of leaving turn restrictions in place include potential safety benefits from reduced conflict points and the concern that making many changes at once could impact surrounding neighborhoods. Those in favor of removing turn restrictions noted that the roadway redesign is an entirely new layout with 40% less traffic volume forecast (during peak hours), fewer lanes of opposing traffic for drivers to contend with when making turns, and that turn restrictions would be unnecessary with other roadway changes.

The draft 30% plans (Attachment A) maintain all existing turn restrictions. However, staff is seeking input from the Transportation & Mobility Commission on this topic. Regardless of whether turn restrictions are included in the final design, a post-project traffic study of the corridor will help identify how traffic patterns have changed because of the Project and whether any additional measures are needed to address unanticipated nuisance patterns. Additional treatments could be considered immediately or implemented as part of Phase 2 of the Project.

Existing left-turn restrictions:

1. Fountain Ave & Harper Ave
2. Fountain Ave & Havenhurst Dr.
3. Fountain Ave & Hayworth Ave
4. Fountain Ave & Curson Ave
5. Fountain Ave & Formosa Ave

Recommendation: Retain the current set of restrictions through the after study; adjust only where cut-through spillover or turning delay persists after signal retiming.

Emergency Services Provider Review

The Fountain Ave Streetscape Project - Phase 1 30% plans were reviewed and approved by the Los Angeles County Central Fire Prevention Office. Their input helped inform the design, including ensuring adequate turning radii and lane widths to enable larger hook and ladder trucks to navigate the street. The layout ensures access to fire hydrants and standpipes (water valves found in front of apartment buildings). In addition, low-profile mountable curbs and speed cushions have been selected to ensure emergency vehicles can traverse any portion of the street when responding to an emergency.

The Project Team also presented the plans to the West Hollywood Fire Chief Drew Smith,

to hear comments on the project design and the team's operational needs. Chief Smith did not express concerns with the project design and expressed confidence in the Fire Department's ability to serve Fountain Avenue with the new street design. It was noted that painted buffer areas would provide additional space for emergency services to stage large equipment, such as stabilizers for ladder trucks, when needed during emergencies. Additionally, parking removal would improve access to the curb, hydrants, and standpipes.

The Project Team also presented the Project to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, and they also did not have concerns with the Project. They noted that they routinely operate on other two-lane roadways throughout West Hollywood without issues.

Parking Impacts

Public off-street parking would be removed from one side of Fountain Avenue to create space for safety improvements and protected bike lanes. The project design proposes eliminating public parking from the north side of Fountain Avenue.

- North side: on-street parking removed to create a continuous, protected operating space for the bikeway and buffer. The north side was selected as it currently provides less parking than the south side due to additional driveways and parking restrictions across the length of the corridor
- South side: on-street parking retained; peak-hour tow-away removed to provide predictable curb access all day.
- Consistency: a uniform cross-section reduces last-second weaving and improves safety for all users. This consistency is intended to improve uniformity and predictability for all roadway users, which is part of the City's overall approach to improve safety.

The City has contracted Chen Ryan Associates (CRA) to conduct a parking utilization study of the residential neighborhoods surrounding Fountain Ave. The study area is from Santa Monica Boulevard to Sunset Boulevard, bound by La Cienega Boulevard to the west and La Brea Avenue to the east. Although the analysis has not yet been completed, preliminary results show that parking utilization rates vary considerably throughout these neighborhoods. A heat map will soon be released, illustrating where public parking is available within a short walking distance, as well as other areas where it is more challenging to find available off-street parking.

As part of the ongoing study, CRA is also assessing where angled parking could be added to side streets off Fountain Avenue to mitigate proposed parking reductions on Fountain itself. Other parking options under consideration include adjustments to permit parking districts along Fountain Ave to offer more flexibility for residents.

Note: Statewide "daylighting" requirements at crosswalk approaches will remove some spaces citywide regardless of this project; consolidating changes within Phase 1 allows a coordinated, safety-first curb design.

Anticipated Traffic Impacts

In 2022, the Project Team used the City's traffic model to assess the potential traffic impacts of the Project. The City's GIS-based traffic model uses static inputs (traffic counts, land uses, etc.) and can help inform the conversation. However, it is important to note that the City's traffic model cannot predict mode shifts or changes in human behavior that may result from the Project. For example, if a Fountain resident elects to use newly installed bike lanes to run an errand they might have used their car for before, or to delay a discretionary trip to a less congested part of the day. Some behavior changes along these lines are often observed after projects of this type, but they are difficult to estimate precisely and usually take several months to stabilize after infrastructure changes are made.

In addition to the City's traffic model, the Project Team analyzed the Fountain Ave corridor using StreetLight Data. This tool relies on data from mobile devices and vehicle navigation systems to estimate traffic data. StreetLight data shows that 64% of trips on Fountain Ave are non-local (pass-through trips). The City traffic model indicates that the Project would reduce peak-hour traffic volumes on Fountain Ave by 40%. Modeling and StreetLight data together indicate substantial pass-through traffic that will redistribute to Sunset, Santa Monica, and Beverly boulevards, in addition to the western segment of Willoughby Avenue, when Fountain's operating speed and capacity are right-sized. For mode shift, although transportation analysis tools struggle to accurately predict the likelihood of converting vehicle trips to bicycle and scooter trips, studies of other protected bikeway projects around the country and in Canada indicate that bicycle and scooter trips increase when a protected bikeway is constructed. Although the exact percentage increase varies considerably, most jurisdictions see a corresponding increase in bicycle and scooter use after building protected bikeways.

Environmental & Mobility Benefits

Safety is the primary goal; co-benefits include improved access for short local trips by bike/scooter, calmer traffic, and organized curb uses. Installing protected bike lanes along a 1.85-mile-long corridor through the heart of the City would create a safe, low-stress east/west bicycle route. This would be the City's first protected bikeway project and would travel through high-density residential neighborhoods, many with low-volume streets ideal for cycling, walking, and scooter use. The Project would connect to Santa Monica Boulevard via Olive Drive and Kings Road, where existing bike lanes head west towards Beverly Hills, and south on San Vicente Boulevard to Beverly Boulevard, where a separate study of protected bike lanes is underway.

Additionally, this would be the only high-quality east-west bicycle facility on the City's Eastside, which is relatively low-income, transit-dependent, and home to more residents with fewer cars and mobility options than the rest of the City, making investments in this area especially important from an equity perspective. Bicycle and pedestrian upgrades to Fountain will also improve access to existing and upcoming transit investments, which are

especially important for these populations. These include existing peak-hour bus lanes on La Brea Avenue, additional peak-hour bus lanes being studied by the Westside Cities Council of Governments on La Cienega Boulevard, and future Metro rail service proposed along Santa Monica Boulevard at La Brea Avenue, Fairfax Avenue, and San Vicente Boulevard.

The Project is consistent with the City's vision of a multi-modal transportation network; with a growing number of e-bikes and e-scooters on City streets, the Project would not only improve safety but may also encourage more residents and visitors to use alternatives to driving.

Project Funding

The Fountain Avenue Streetscape Project received $4.9 million as part of a Sustainable Transportation and Equity Project (STEP) grant awarded to the City by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). The grant funds clean transportation and projects that increase transportation equity by addressing community residents' transportation needs, increasing resident access to destinations, and reducing GHG emissions. Phase 1 near-term elements are consistent with the grant's scope focused on near-term safety and equity outcomes; Phase 2 will leverage remaining and future funds for civil sidewalk work and streetscape. This Project is also slated to receive $1.7 million through the Metro Measure M Multi-Year Subregional Program through the Westside Cities Council of Governments. The remaining funds not used for Phase 1 will be used for Phase 2 of the Project.

Phase 1 Construction Timeline

Phase 1 is tentatively scheduled for City Council consideration on September 15, 2025. If approved, the Project would begin the design phase immediately. The design phase develops plans from the current concept plans (30%) to 100%, biddable construction documents. Following an accelerated schedule, construction is anticipated to begin in fall 2026 and conclude in winter 2027.

Phase 2 Timeline

Phase 2 of the Project would widen sidewalks where feasible, upgrade curb ramps, add protected bike lanes, add street trees/landscaping where feasible, upgrade street furniture, add upgraded pedestrian-oriented street lighting, and other streetscape amenities. The Project could involve burying overhead utilities, if possible. These elements require utility relocation, storm-drain adjustments, new signal foundations, and extensive public design selection. Sequencing sidewalks to Phase 2 allows the City to deploy life-saving speed and intersection treatments now while developing cost-effective, community-driven, permanent streetscape improvements.

A larger Steering Committee would guide the Phase 2 design process with open, in-person public meetings. Similar to the Design District Streetscape Project, the development of the

larger Phase 2 project would involve several detailed design decisions that would require extensive community input from high-level design tradeoffs related to roadway and bikeway configuration to specific landscaping, street furniture, and paving pattern selections. If the City Council authorizes the release of a Request for Proposals (RFP) at the September 15, 2025, meeting, staff would release an RFP immediately, and Phase 2 would begin.

Interim/Immediate Safety Measures

At the July 16, 2025, Transportation & Mobility Commission meeting, Commissioners discussed potential measures that could be implemented on Fountain Avenue immediately to improve safety. Staff discussed various options and suggested the following two measures that could be implemented within a very short period (1-3 weeks), and a third slightly longer option that requires signage changes. These measures would not impact the design schedule of the Project or require the installation of physical infrastructure that would need to be removed with the construction of the Project:

1. Adding Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPIs*) to all 12 traffic signals on Fountain Avenue. LPIs give pedestrians a brief head start at crosswalks before traffic lights change for vehicles, so that motorists have better sightlines of pedestrians and are less likely to turn in front of or into someone crossing the street.
2. Setting traffic signals to “recall,” to intentionally slow traffic flow by timing signalized intersections along the corridor so motorists must slow down to stop at additional red lights along the corridor, even when no traffic is present on cross streets
3. Lifting peak-hour parking restrictions, which would enable parking all day on both sides of the street, reducing travel lanes and capacity of the street prior to the new roadway construction.

**The Engineering Division is in the process of hiring a consultant to implement LPIs at all West Hollywood traffic signals.*

Next Steps

A Community Meeting on the Project is scheduled for August 19, 2025, at Plummer Park. Staff will provide an oral update to the Commission during staff updates. On August 26, 2025, the Public Facilities, Recreation & Infrastructure Commission will hold a special meeting to hear a presentation on the Fountain Avenue Streetscape Project – Phase 1. The Project will be presented to the City Council on September 15, 2025, for consideration. At the meeting, staff will seek authorization to:

1. Proceed with completing the design for Phase 1.
2. Release an RFP for Phase 2 of the Project.
3. Seek direction on whether to maintain existing left-turn restrictions.
4. Seek direction on immediate measures that can be taken to improve safety on Fountain Avenue.
5. Amend the Contract with Fehr & Peers to include optional scope tasks for

construction administration and design contingency to expedite project delivery.

ATTACHMENT:

Attachment A – 30% Conceptual Plan Set