

SUBJECT: **PROTECTED BIKE LANES ON FOUNTAIN AVENUE AND
SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD**

INITIATED BY: **COUNCILMEMBER JOHN M. ERICKSON
MAYOR LINDSEY P. HORVATH**

PREPARED BY: **COMMUNITY & LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS DIVISION**
 (John Leonard, Manager)
 (Andi Lovano, Supervisor)

STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT:

The City Council will consider directing staff to take steps necessary to amend the adopted Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility Plan to include protected bike lanes on Fountain Avenue and Santa Monica Boulevard to increase public safety for bicyclists, drivers, and pedestrians.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Direct staff to take necessary steps to analyze the inclusion of protected bike lanes on Fountain Avenue and Santa Monica Boulevard in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility Plan.
2. Direct staff to issue a Request for Proposal to conduct feasibility studies for bike lanes on Fountain Avenue and Santa Monica Boulevard.
3. Direct staff to return to City Council with the results of the feasibility studies and recommended amendments to the Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility Plan based on the results of staff's analysis.

BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:

In May of 2017, the West Hollywood City Council adopted the Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility Plan (PBMP) which provides a roadmap to improving the City's pedestrian and bicycle environment. The vision for the PBMP is to create the foundation for a pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly West Hollywood that provides comfortable, safe, healthy, and convenient places to walk and bicycle in the context of a balanced, multi-modal transportation network serving pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and motorists of all ages and abilities.

The PBMP identifies several categories of projects including improvements at unsignalized crosswalks, signalized intersections and bicycle improvements throughout the City. The PBMP also identified five priority projects. Item 4.B. on this agenda provides an update from staff on the implementation status of projects identified in the PBMP.

When the PBMP was originally proposed in 2017, staff included improvements to Fountain Avenue as one of the priority projects. The proposed improvements included enhancing pedestrian crossing safety with specific localized improvements. Staff also recommended long-term improvements that included the widening of sidewalks and the installation of bicycle lanes. The long-term recommendations on Fountain Avenue included a lane reduction to accommodate additional bicycle lanes, wider sidewalks, and increase public safety. During their deliberations, the City Council decided to remove the long-term recommendations for Fountain Avenue from the PBMP, which would have included the potential reduction of vehicular travel lanes, installing bicycle lanes, and widening sidewalks. The City Council approved moving forward with short-term pedestrian safety improvements on Fountain Avenue.

The City currently has three types of on-street bike facilities: bike lanes, signed bike routes, and bike sharrows (shared lane markings). However, there are gaps in this network – especially east/west connectors – that need to be addressed in order to provide an effective bicycle network and to increase public safety for those biking and driving. Fountain Avenue is a designated bicycle route, but it currently only has sharrows – something many drivers do not understand, and bicyclists may not feel safe utilizing. Part of Santa Monica Boulevard has designated bike lanes, but it is not consistent through the full length of the City. In September 2019, the City Council approved a project to provide bike lanes on Santa Monica Boulevard between Doheny Drive and Almont Drive, which completed a missing link in the bike lane network. This extension of the bike lane, which was included in the 2017 PBMP update, requires the removal of parking on the south side of the street adjacent to the Melrose Triangle development and small reduction in the north edge of the median.

This item directs staff to analyze how the City could install protected bike lanes on Fountain Avenue and Santa Monica Boulevard and return to the City Council with recommendations for amending the PBMP to include bike lanes as future projects.

As part of the PBMP, staff performed high level studies of Fountain Avenue, but more comprehensive studies would be required. No study has been done on Santa Monica Boulevard. The currently proposed analysis will include performing feasibility studies on Fountain Avenue and Santa Monica Boulevard to determine how and where bike lanes can be installed. The study will also include what type of protected bike lanes are recommended – such as grade separated lanes or lanes separated from vehicle traffic with plastic barriers. The installation of bike lanes may require reductions in street parking, changes to landscaped medians, potential lane reductions (specifically on Fountain Avenue), adjustments to sidewalk widths, or some combination thereof at multiple locations.

In recent years, there have been concerns raised by the community regarding safety on Fountain Avenue. The City has responded by prioritizing projects to increase safety such

as enhanced crosswalks, medians restricting left turns, adjusting traffic signaling and speed radar feedback signs. The proposed recommendation to install bike lanes is intended to increase safety and comfort for people who drive, walk, and bike along the street.

Staff will return to City Council with the results of these studies and the recommendations for moving forward with amending the PBMP. Staff will also include projected cost estimates and an implementation timeline for these long-term projects. As the project moves forward, staff will reach out to neighborhoods, community members, and businesses to discuss the potential upgrades and impacts and to present various options.

CONFORMANCE WITH VISION 2020 AND THE GOALS OF THE WEST HOLLYWOOD GENERAL PLAN:

- OSP-4: Transportation System Improvement.
- PSG-1: Maintain the City's Unique Urban Balance with Emphasis on Residential Neighborhood Livability.

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

- M-5: Create an environmentally and financially sustainable transportation network that provides for the mobility and livability needs of West Hollywood residents, businesses and visitors.
- M-3: Maintain and enhance a pedestrian-oriented City.

EVALUATION PROCESSES:

Staff will continue to monitor the implementation and provide the City Council with periodic updates.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND HEALTH:

Potential environmental benefits include road safety, increased comfort and mobility for non-motorized travel encouraging active transportation choices.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

N/A

OFFICE OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY:

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT / LONG RANGE & MOBILITY PLANNING DIVISION – Planning and outreach

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS / CITY ENGINEERING DIVISION – Design and Construction

FISCAL IMPACT:

The recommended feasibility studies will cost approximately \$100,000 and will provide staff with a more accurate preliminary cost estimate for the bike lanes. Based on direction from this item, funds for the feasibility studies will be appropriated as part of the FY22 budget process and the Long Range Planning Division work program will be adjusted accordingly due to ongoing budgetary and staffing constraints.

Cost estimates for bike lanes on Fountain Avenue and Santa Monica Boulevard may vary widely depending on the level of road and sidewalk reconstruction, ADA ramps, utility relocation, etc. needed to safely install the bike lanes. While there is no immediate fiscal impact associated with this staff report beyond the recommended feasibility study, staff estimates the longer-term capital costs could exceed \$10 million. Capital funding is not being identified, recommended, or appropriated at this time.

The Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility Plan allows staff to prioritize projects which will be integrated in future work plans. Staff will return in the future with updated costs as specific projects are developed.