

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS HILDA L. SOLIS AND
JANICE HAHN

May 26, 2020

Slow Streets are Safe Streets: Establishing a Slow Streets Program for Unincorporated Communities

Since the state’s stay-at-home order was issued in March 2020, vehicle miles traveled have dipped to half of their pre-pandemic levels according to a recent analysis conducted by Inrix, a traffic data company. This sudden change in travel behavior has created emptier roads and freeways which has led to a significant increase in speeding incidents throughout the state. In April 2020, the California Highway Patrol saw an 87% increase in citations for speeding in excess of 100 miles per hour while traffic volumes were down 35% from 2019. Many local roads throughout the county have also seen upticks in travel speeds due to the County of Los Angeles (County) Safer at Home Order, which discourages non-essential activities.

Prior to the pandemic, the County completed its Vision Zero Action Plan which charts the path towards zero traffic-related fatalities on unincorporated roadways by 2035. The Plan identifies collision concentration corridors in unincorporated communities where traffic injuries and fatalities occur frequently. Many of the roads identified in the Plan’s list

MOTION

SOLIS _____

RIDLEY-THOMAS _____

KUEHL _____

HAHN _____

BARGER _____

of 20 priority collision corridors are located in underserved and disadvantaged communities that also lack adequate access to parks and open space. Pacific Boulevard in Walnut Park, for example, is identified as a top collision corridor and is located in a community where residents only have 0.1 park acres per 1,000 people, which is 33 times less than the County average of 3.3 park acres per 1,000 people.

Many unincorporated communities lack sufficient access to parks, open space and sidewalk that is wide or large enough to use for active recreation and/or travel while still adhering to physical distancing guidelines. The COVID-19 pandemic has made the inequities that exist in these underserved communities readily apparent, and there is an opportunity to leverage the data collected through the County's 2020 Vision Zero Action Plan and 2016 Parks Needs Assessment in order to create a program that allows neighborhoods to minimize traffic on local roads and create safe environments for residents conducting essential activities.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Direct the Department of Public Health's PLACE Program to collaborate with the Department of Public Works to develop design guidelines for the creation of Slow Streets in unincorporated areas. The Slow Streets guidelines should provide simple design solutions such as signage and other interventions to help communities minimize or eliminate traffic from local roads and increase safety for pedestrians;

2. Direct the Department of Public Health's PLACE Program to collaborate with the Department of Public Works to identify 5 – 10 road segments in unincorporated communities that make viable Slow Streets candidates;
3. Direct the Department of Public Works to develop and offer a special temporary permit that allows residents, community-based organizations, nonprofits, and/or other organizations to apply for designation of a road segment as a Slow Street. The permit should utilize a simple application process and should be offered for free or at a low cost; and
4. Direct both Departments to report back in 14 days on Directives 1 through 3.

#

HLS:mr