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September 24, 2024

**Re-imagining and Accelerating Safer Streets through the Equitable  
Implementation of the LA County Bicycle Master Plan**

In 2012, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (DPW) undertook an effort to update Los Angeles County’s 1975 Bicycle Master Plan (LACBMP). The LACBMP is part of the Mobility Element of the County’s General Plan and is intended to serve as a guide for the development of safe and accessible bikeways and paths within unincorporated Los Angeles County (LA County) and along County flood control district channels. However, implementation of the Plan was stymied due to limited funding and resources available for planning, design, installation, operation, ongoing maintenance, appropriate environmental analysis, physical and right-of-way constraints, and challenges in balancing the needs of local stakeholders.

Based on the California Highway Patrol (CHP) collision data provided to DPW, fatal traffic crashes on County-maintained roadways increased by over 35 percent between 2017-2022. In 2022 alone, 106 fatal traffic collisions were recorded, resulting in 125 deaths. In 2023, another 87 fatal traffic collisions occurred throughout LA County’s unincorporated communities resulting in another 95 deaths. According to “Vision Zero

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Los Angeles County: A Plan for Safer Roadways 2020–2025”, developed by DPW and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH), although pedestrians and bicyclists were involved in just 16 percent of all collisions resulting in injury, they accounted for 28 percent of fatal and severe injury collisions.<sup>1</sup>

The report further notes that during the same period, 85 percent of fatal and severe injury collisions on LA County unincorporated roadways were caused by six primary factors: unsafe speeds, improper turning, driving or bicycling while under the influence of drugs or alcohol, drivers failing to yield to another driver, pedestrian violations, and failure to yield to traffic controls. Vehicle speed, in particular, is a critical factor in collision outcomes. If a pedestrian or bicyclist is struck by a vehicle traveling 40 miles per hour, they have a 90 percent chance of death or severe injury, whereas they have a 10 percent chance of death or severe injury if struck by a vehicle traveling at 20 miles per hour. Slowing down motor vehicles is essential to eliminating traffic deaths.

Beyond the tragic and incalculable loss inherent in the death or injury of a human being, there are economic costs that impact families, communities, and the County. The United States Department of Transportation assigned the value of a human life at \$13.2 million and the value of a serious injury at \$1.386 million.<sup>2</sup> In 2023 alone, there were 87 fatalities and 375 serious injuries on LA County's unincorporated roadways. Using these

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<sup>1</sup>LA County (2019) “Vision Zero Los Angeles County: A Plan for Safer Roadways 2020-2025” [online] <https://pw.lacounty.gov/visionzero/docs/SCAG-LACounty-VZ-Action-Plan-ver-D-hiRes-single-11-25-2019-rev.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation (2023). Revised Departmental Guidance on Valuation of a Statistical Life in Economic Analysis. [online] US Department of Transportation. Available at: <https://www.transportation.gov/office-policy/transportation-policy/revised-departmental-guidance-on-valuation-of-a-statistical-life-in-economic-analysis>. U.S. Department of Transportation (2016) Guidance on Treatment of the Economic Value of a Statistical Life (VSL) in U.S. Department of Transportation Analyses – 2016 Adjustment. [online] <https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/docs/2016%20Revised%20Value%20of%20a%20Statistical%20Life%20Guidance.pdf>

values, the economic cost of traffic deaths and serious injuries in LA County was \$1.668 billion. While LA County has a goal to achieve zero traffic-related fatalities by 2035, to date, only 22 percent of the 2012 LACBMP improvements have been implemented.

In 2023, DPW began work to update the LACBMP which will propose new bikeways, revisit the feasibility of installing bikeways from the 2012 plan that are yet to be constructed, incorporate new policies to share bikeway facilities with micro-mobility devices, and identify first/last mile bikeway improvements to further connect to transit stations and bus stops. The next phases of work include the development of feasibility and community impact analyses, community outreach, a programmatic environmental impact report, and a draft plan and implementation strategy. Once complete, the LACBMP update will be provided to the Board for consideration and adoption into the County's General Plan.

Over the last decade, LA County residents have expressed increased support for transit and mobility improvements that would usher in a host of safe, active, zero-emission alternatives to commuting by car. In 2016, LA County voters approved Measure M, which instituted a half-cent sales tax to help fund the expansion of rail and rapid transit, make public transportation more accessible, and repave local streets, repair potholes, and synchronize signals to improve traffic flows. In 2018, California voters affirmed their support for the Road Repair and Accountability Act (SB1), which invests \$5.4 billion annually to fix roads, freeways, and bridges in communities across California and puts more dollars toward transit and safety. Most recently, City of Los Angeles (City) voters overwhelmingly approved Measure HLA, intended to implement the City's Mobility Plan

which laid the foundation for upgrades to more than 2,500 miles of city streets to better support movement for drivers, pedestrians, transit riders, and cyclists.

Unfortunately, most pedestrian and bicycle projects in the County of Los Angeles are heavily reliant upon competitive grant funding, the primary source being the California Active Transportation Program (CA-ATP). While the program has become increasingly competitive, the failure of the County to secure CA-ATP funding is not due to a lack of need. Unincorporated Los Angeles County is home to many of California's highest-need, most pollution-burdened neighborhoods – communities such as East L.A. and Florence-Firestone.

The County has encountered challenges in early CA-ATP funding cycles. From 2019-2023, only 27 percent of the County of Los Angeles' requests scored high enough to receive funding. In Cycle 4 (2019), only \$2.4 million was awarded to the County for Public Works projects, and in Cycle 5 (2021) Public Works was not recommended for any funding. These early challenges are in stark contrast to recent funding cycles (2023) in which Public Works was recommended for 6 out of the 9 applications submitted resulting in an award of \$32.1 million out of the requested \$35 million by the California Transportation Commission (CTC).

The difference in the rates of success in early versus later CA-ATP funding cycles stems in part from a focus on Class II and Class III "paint over protection," which conflicts with the CTC's focus on protected bike lanes. This is infrastructure that includes a portion of the roadway that is striped for one-way bike travel or facilities that are shared with pedestrian or motor vehicle traffic, which quite simply do not generate the safety benefits or the numeric scoring that CA-ATP is looking for. Considering the current traffic safety

challenges resulting in fatalities throughout the County, coupled with only 22% of the 2012 LACBMP being implemented, the County should focus on changing the approach to identifying, designing, and funding protected bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in unincorporated LA County.

**WE, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors instruct the LA County Department of Public Works to report to the Board of Supervisors in 120 days with:

- 1) The status of the development of the updated LACBMP and its associated environmental impact report;
- 2) An update on the working methodology for prioritizing corridors and treatments identified in the updated LACBMP, including but not limited to corridors of greatest need, an established equity index, opportunities for regional and inter-jurisdictional connectivity, properties over which LA County has jurisdiction to develop a regional network of bike facilities, such as the County Flood Control District; and funding availability, among others;
- 3) A comprehensive list of corridors and treatments identified in the LACBMP that includes a range of costs associated with the recommended treatments, an estimate of unmet funding needs, and a list of projects and funding requests submitted by LA County Department of Public Works in response to the CA-ATP Cycle 7 Call-for-Projects;
- 4) The development of a program that would identify and prioritize the treatments called out in the LACBMP and Vision Zero program and integrate those treatments and improvements into the LA County Department of Public Works 5-year Pavement Preservation Program and other road maintenance work; and

5) The feasibility, including potential cost savings that might be realized through a countywide program and ordinance similar to that of the City of Los Angeles' Measure HLA in which every time a street is repaved or repaired, any corresponding mobility improvements must also be implemented.

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