



Wednesday, April 22, 2020

Mayor Eric Garcetti  
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Bureau of Street Services (StreetsLA)  
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LA County Department of Public Health  
313 N. Figueroa St. Room 806  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Cc: Los Angeles City Council

## **RE: Mobility & Open Space Access in Los Angeles during COVID-19**

To our City Leaders,

The above organizations urge the city to promptly implement a plan to keep Angelenos physically and mentally healthy during the COVID-19 crisis.

COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on the City of Los Angeles, disrupting lives, costing lives, and severely hampering our economy. Despite all the disruption, essential workers still need to get to and from their place of work, while maintaining 6' of distance between each other. People also still need to get to and from critical doctor appointments, pick up prescription medication, and access groceries and food centers. Making active transportation safer can provide all Angelenos mobility alternatives, especially for those without access to a vehicle.

The road space in Los Angeles is now dramatically overbuilt for the current vehicle traffic volume, causing vehicles to travel at dangerous speeds - average speeds are up 30% on our wide open roads according to LADOT. At the same time, the average width of our sidewalks is 4.4', too narrow to allow people to pass each other while maintaining 6' of distance. As a result, people are forced to be in close proximity with each other, risking proliferating the virus or walking, running, scooting, or biking in the street next to speeding cars. This isn't just a street safety issue, but a public health issue as well.

All Angelenos should be able to maintain their physical and mental health during this pandemic. Park space comes at a premium in Los Angeles, with many neighborhoods lacking access at a reasonable per capita rate. L.A. County's 2016 Park Need Assessment found 28 of the 42 studied neighborhoods in the City of Los Angeles had "Very High" or "High" need. This amounts to millions of residents who can't access local parks without crowding, and more often than not overlap with areas of concentrated poverty, obesity, asthma, particulate matter, and the city's High Injury Network. Many Angelenos - those most vulnerable according to the City's community equity and health index - live in denser areas next to major arteries and have no safe space for much needed maintenance of psychological and physical health.

While the top priority is limiting COVID-19 spread and saving lives and livelihoods, there must be a long term plan to sustain the mental and physical well being of Angelenos. Isolation and inactivity can lead to increases in chronic health conditions like heart disease and obesity and pose other mental and physical health risks that we may pay for as a society for years to come.

Therefore, for the critical reasons of equity, mental health, safety, and the physical well-being of Angelenos, we ask you to authorize the creation of an emergency people street network - using cones or other temporary infrastructure - to create additional sidewalk and open space for people to walk, run, scoot, and bike in, while maintaining 6' of distancing. On neighborhood streets, this could be as simple as a few cones and a "slow down" sign taking up some of the street, calming traffic but still allowing local and emergency vehicle access. On major arteries, this could be redistributing a parking lane and/or single vehicle traffic lane on each side of the street, while taking care not to interfere with bus stops. These treatments may also advance the Mayor's goals under L.A.'s Green New Deal to "Activate Streets" and "Prioritize Land Use and the Right-of-Way" in [Executive Directive 25](#). All of this can be accomplished inexpensively and without the need of distracting our police or fire departments with enforcement during this critical time.

Los Angeles would be in good company, as cities large and small across the US have taken similar emergency measures to insure people can safely provide critical goods and services as well as maintain physical and mental health while avoiding spreading the virus. Examples include Minneapolis, Oakland, Denver, San Francisco, Boston, Brookline, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Burlington, Duluth, Edmonton, Louisville, Portland, New York, St. Louis, and St. Paul ([Detailed list](#)). As summer weather is nearly here in Los Angeles, and keeping people strictly indoors becomes even more challenging, it's critical now more than ever that we follow suit. To prevent creating an "attraction" and potential crowding, it's also critical that this is implemented city wide.

Attached is a route map for major streets for you to consider and examples of possible treatments. Additionally, many Neighborhood Councils will be taking up this issue in May and some have already passed motions of support and chosen their local streets; we would be happy to do legwork to help organize local communities in choosing their own neighborhood streets. We look forward to working with you to implement this critical plan for our city's short term and long term well being.

Undersigned:

Michael Schneider  
Founder  
Streets For All

Daniel Bezinovich  
Community Partnerships, SoCal  
SPIN

Scott Gamzon  
Co-Founder  
Neighborhoods United for Safe Streets

Denny Zane  
Executive Director  
MoveLA

John Rossant  
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Marissa Rodriguez-McGill  
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Lyft

Tim Harter  
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Nancy Matson  
Chair, Transportation Committee  
Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance

Hilary Norton  
Executive Director  
FastLinkDTLA

Christopher Chavez  
Deputy Policy Director  
Coalition for Clean Air

Marilú Guevara  
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League of Women Voters of Los Angeles

Christine Louise Mills  
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LA River Communities for Environmental Equity

David Diaz  
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Active San Gabriel Valley

Cynthia Rose  
Director  
Santa Monica Spoke

David Coles  
President  
Bike Culver City

Khristina Rhead  
Sunrise LA Political Engagement Team Coordinator  
Sunrise Movement

Michael Skiles  
Founder  
Westwood Forward

Brian Hanlon  
President & CEO  
CA YIMBY

Kevin Burton  
Administrative Chair  
West Hollywood Bicycle Coalition

Kyle Wagenschutz  
Director of Local Innovation  
People For Bikes



**Suggested treatment of a “major street”** using the parking lane and/or one vehicle traffic lane, while making sure bus stops are not impacted:



**Suggested treatment of a “neighborhood street”** calming traffic to make it safer and more accessible to people walking, running, scooting and biking while still allowing local and emergency vehicles to pass (photo courtesy of the City of Oakland):



## Los Angeles Emergency Safe Streets Network - Major Streets

Link to digital version: <https://bit.ly/2UWOx8g>

☒ City of LA Border

 *Untitled*

☒ Third Priority

 All items

☒ Second Priority

 All items

☒ First Priority

 All items

