



Board Report

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**REGULAR BOARD MEETING
MAY 28, 2020**

Motion by:

DIRECTORS GARCETTI, SOLIS, GARCIA, BONIN, AND FASANA

Open Streets Program Response to COVID-19

The COVID-19 emergency has required limiting or closing traditional public spaces, depriving residents from safe ways of spending time outside. As an alternative, many cities are reconfiguring streets through temporary traffic calming to create spaces for residents to get outside and maintain their physical and mental health. As a transportation authority, Metro can help local jurisdictions in Los Angeles County implement these reconfigurations.

Through the Metro Open Streets Grant Program, the Board recently awarded over \$5 million for various open streets events in Los Angeles County. However, due to the Safer at Home order and widespread call for social distancing in public, several large-scale, single-day, open streets events such as CicLAvia, 626 Golden Streets, and Long Beach's Beach Streets have been postponed, and their feasibility in the immediate future remains unclear.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the May 13, 2020 Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Safer at Home Order permits local public entities to elect to temporarily close streets to through automobile traffic to allow more space for recreational activity in compliance with Social (Physical) Distancing requirements.

As such, residents of Los Angeles County may, in addition to traveling for essential trips, use the public right-of-way to walk and cycle for recreation or exercise close to home while maintaining safe physical distance. Many residents do not have easy access to open space and maintaining safe physical distances can be challenging on existing sidewalks, especially in densely populated neighborhoods. Easily accessible alternatives to beaches, trails and parks are needed throughout the county so that all residents can safely get outside. Allowing local entities to provide this additional space in streets through full or partial closure to motor vehicles, while avoiding impacts to transit operations where practicable, will relieve pressure on recreational facilities like beaches and trails, and reduce travel to them.

Temporary use of local streets to allow increased pedestrian and bicycle use at safe physical

distances has been deployed in several cities in the U.S. during the COVID-19 crisis and is variously known as Healthy, Safe, Family-Friendly, or “Slow Streets.”

Since some Open Streets Grant Program awardees are unable to use their grants as intended, this funding can be put to different and effective use in the COVID-19 crisis response.

SUBJECT: OPEN STREETS PROGRAM RESPONSE TO COVID-19

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE Motion by Directors Garcetti, Solis, Garcia, Bonin, and Fasana that the Board authorize the CEO to negotiate administrative scope changes to awarded events in the Open Streets Grant Program, at the written request of the grantee, such that funds may be used for COVID-19 response Slow Streets or similar programs, including but not limited to:

- Expanding one-day events to longer-term temporary traffic interventions;
- Replacing a large, single-corridor event intended for regional audiences with many smaller, neighborhood-scale interventions catering to local audiences;
- Creating spaces within the public right-of-way to support economic activity such as dining and vending; and
- Providing education, encouragement, and monitoring for safe physical distancing in accordance with the Safer at Home Order in partnership with and supporting community-based leadership.