

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

DATE: September 21, 2018

CF 18-0057

TO: The Honorable Members of the
Arts, Entertainment, Parks and River CommitteeFROM: Sharon M. Tso *SMT*
Chief Legislative Analyst

WAS #18-07-0666

SUBJECT: **Supplemental Report: Feasibility of the Dixon Study recommendations
regarding access to the Hollywood Sign viewing areas.****RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the City Council,

1. Subject to the approval of the Mayor, approve recommendations 31 through 35, as detailed below, regarding the recommendations in the Dixon Study to provide instructions to staff to initiate the next steps for those Strategies that have been determined to be feasible.
2. Instruct the City Administrative Officer (CAO) to review the Strategies approved by the City Council, if any, and recommend potential funding sources and a funding plan for this fiscal year and future budgets, as appropriate.

SUMMARY

On June 18, 2018, the Arts, Entertainment, Parks and River (AEPR) Committee held a hearing in which the Committee discussed and heard public comment on a June 15, 2018 Joint Report from Recreation and Parks and the CLA regarding the "Dixon Study." The Dixon Study was released in January 2018 and offered 29 strategies to address vehicle and pedestrian traffic issues at various access points near the Hollywood sign. The Joint Report from Recreation and Parks and the CLA, prepared in response to the City Council's instructions, explored the feasibility of 23 of the 29 strategies, and requested additional time to research and report on the remainder.

This Supplemental Report addresses the remaining strategies, which are as follows:

- Strategy 4.2 – Implement a Districtwide Wayfinding Strategy
- Strategy 5.1: Temporarily Close Narrow Streets with the Highest Safety Risks During Peak Periods
- Strategy 5.2 – Convert Narrow Streets to One-Way
- Strategy 6.1- Adjust Existing Preferential Parking District Time Limits and Days of Operation
- Strategy 6.2 - Consolidate Preferential Parking District Regulations
- Strategy 6.4 - Increase citation amounts in high-impact tourist locations

(NOTE: Recommendations in this report continue the numbering from the prior report.)

In addition, as requested by the Chair of the AEPR Committee at the June 18, 2018 hearing, this report provides additional information regarding Strategy 2.1, 7.2 and 7.4, which propose an electric shuttle through Beachwood Drive, the development of a Hollywood Sign Visitor Center, and a Hollywood Sign Art Program, respectively.

SUMMARY

In January 2018, Dixon Unlimited Inc. (Dixon, Dixon Study) released a report entitled “Comprehensive Strategies Report - Improving Access, Safety, and Mobility around Griffith Park & the Hollywood Sign.” The City Council subsequently instructed Recreation and Parks, with the assistance from the LADOT, Bureau of Engineering, CLA and others to report on the feasibility of the strategies proposed in the report. On June 15, 2018, Recreation and Parks and the CLA submitted a Joint Report addressing 23 of the 29 strategies. This report addresses the six remaining strategies that required additional time to review (4.2 - Districtwide Wayfinding; 5.1 - Temporary street closures during peak periods; 5.2 - Convert Narrow Streets to One-Way; 6.1 and 6.2 regarding Preferential Parking Districts; and 6.4 regarding citation amounts).

Strategy 4.2 – Implement a Districtwide Wayfinding Strategy

Feasible: Yes, but may be premature.

Responsible Department(s): LADOT, Recreation and Parks.

Funding identified: Yes. Budgeted Funds.

The Dixon Study states that “inconsistent signage throughout the (Hollywood sign adjacent) neighborhoods can be confusing to visitors” and, with no consistent branding or messaging, vehicles and pedestrians visiting the area often wander lost or confused through the neighborhoods in search of viewing locations for the Hollywood sign. Dixon proposes the development of a strategy that provides accurate signage consistent with the wayfinding design implemented in downtown Hollywood.

The Dixon Study recommends that the wayfinding strategy promote the primary “vista points” and the routes to those viewing locations. The difficulty with the immediate implementation of this strategy is that identifying the preferred routes and viewing locations, and installing signage to encourage use of those locations, would occur before the City implements other strategies to address existing vehicle and pedestrian congestion at those locations. Implementing a wayfinding strategy at this time could exacerbate the situation at these locations.

Many of the recommendations in the Dixon Study are intended to address existing conditions. As such, development and implementation of a wayfinding strategy should be initiated only following the successful implementation of any Council-endorsed strategies to reduce congestion and improve access. Please note, however, that Recreation and Parks has already begun developing and installing wayfinding signage on Recreation and Parks property.

Recommendation regarding Strategy 4.2

31. Temporarily hold the development of a wayfinding strategy for neighborhoods near Hollywood sign viewing locations until such time as other strategies are implemented to control vehicle and pedestrian congestion at targeted locations.

Strategy 5.1: Temporarily Close Narrow Streets with the Highest Safety Risks During Peak Periods

Feasible: No, unless State law is changed.

Responsible Department(s): LADOT, Bureau of Engineering, Bureau of Street Services.

Funding identified: No

According to the Dixon study, the width and/or configuration of some of the roadways near the Hollywood sign often results in congestion, especially during peak periods on weekends and holidays, which can inhibit emergency vehicle access. The report suggests temporarily closing streets during ‘peak’ periods of traffic in the interest of public safety, and offers as one example San Francisco’s 2014 temporary closure of Lombard Street, a popular tourist attraction often referred to as the “Crookedest Street in the World” that experiences significant traffic congestion, especially on weekends and holidays.

California Vehicle Code (CVC) Section 21101.6 specifically prohibits the closure of any street to deny or restrict the access of certain members of the public to the street, while permitting others unrestricted access. This law notes that it is intended to codify the Court of Appeals decision in the case entitled *City of Lafayette v. County of Contra Costa*.

In 1987, Senate Bill 733, authored by Senator Quentin Kopp, was enacted to amend the law to allow San Francisco to selectively limit vehicular access on the congested portion of Lombard Street to residents, those with business on that street, and emergency vehicles. This bill included a sunset date of January 1, 1990. While this bill was eventually enacted, it is unclear if San Francisco ever utilized this authorization prior to its 1990 sunset date.

However, in 2014, in response to public safety concerns, the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board approved on a pilot basis the **temporary** closure of the congested section of Lombard Street from noon to 6 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays from June 21st through July 13th, and on Friday, July 4, 2014. During this pilot closure, vehicular access was still offered to residents, those with business on the street, and public safety vehicles. News reports following the pilot closure noted that, during the temporary closure, pedestrians freely wandered in the roadway and onto private property, turning the street into more of a park setting, and causing some conflict with authorized vehicles attempting to travel this street.

Given the specific prohibition against selective street closures in CVC Section 21101.6, it is unclear how San Francisco was able to implement their pilot closure. According to the LADOT, the City of Los Angeles adheres to the restrictions in CVC Section 21101.6 and will not

implement temporary street closures that include selective access provisions. In 1994, Citizens Against Gated Enclaves (CAGE) successfully sued the City of Los Angeles and the Whitley Heights Civic Association to challenge the installation of gates that would have restricted access to the Whitley Heights neighborhood in the Hollywood Hills to residents, their guests, and emergency vehicles. The decision was appealed and both the Appellate Court (March 23, 1994) and the California Supreme Court (June 2, 1994) upheld the original court's decision that the City permit authorizing installation of the gates violated CVC Section 21101.6. The City was ordered to rescind the permit and arrange for removal of the gates, pillars, and any associated signage. Selective street closures, therefore, are not feasible in the City of Los Angeles.

Recommendation regarding Strategy 5.1

32. Receive and File the proposed strategy to temporarily close narrow streets to public use while allowing selective access, inasmuch as State law prohibits such partial closures.

Strategy 5.2 – Convert Narrow Streets to One-Way

Feasible: Yes.

Responsible Department(s): LADOT

Funding identified: Yes. Budgeted funds.

The Dixon Study suggests that one option to improve traffic flow is to convert certain streets in the area surrounding the Hollywood sign from two-way streets into one-way streets with an emergency vehicle lane. As noted in the Study, any proposed conversion would need to be assessed by the LADOT to determine the impact on traffic flow in the surrounding neighborhoods.

In our discussions with the LADOT, conversion of streets from two-way to one-way is a feasible option that has both benefits and some drawbacks. One-way streets improve emergency vehicle access and are designed to reduce congestion by improving the flow of traffic, especially during peak times. Converting a street to one-way also provides the opportunity to incorporate a pedestrian walkway into the redesign in order to improve pedestrian safety. One drawback, however, is the added inconvenience to residents near the area that have become accustomed to the two-way traffic option along the converted street.

The LADOT clarified that, while one-way streets are an option, the Department will not unilaterally install a one-way street. Any proposal to convert a street is discussed extensively with the affected community, and must be supported by the representative City Council office and the Neighborhood Council. A recent street conversion near Bronson Canyon implemented by the LADOT for public safety reasons took nearly six months to complete, as the Department worked extensively with the community on the redesign of the street from two-way to one-way.

Recommendation

33. Request that the LADOT survey the areas and neighborhoods surrounding the Hollywood sign viewing areas to identify streets that can potentially be considered for conversion from two-way to one-way to address traffic congestion. The results of that survey should be communicated to the representative Council Office to determine which, if any, should proceed to the community and public input phases for possible implementation.

Strategy 6.1- Adjust Existing Preferential Parking District Time Limits and Days of Operation

Strategy 6.2 - Consolidate Preferential Parking District Regulations

Feasible: Yes.

Responsible Department(s): LADOT

Funding identified: Yes. Budgeted funds.

There are currently eight Preferential Parking Districts (PPDs) in the neighborhoods near the Hollywood sign viewing areas (PPDs 180, 184, 186, 188, 189, 190, 192 and 195). Parking permits for all PPDs are issued by the LADOT pursuant to the requirements of Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 80.58 and the revised LADOT guidelines adopted by the City Council in February 2016 (CF 15-0600-S62). Issued permits are only valid in the PPD to which they are assigned.

The parking restrictions for all eight PPDs in this area currently limit parking from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on weekends and holidays, only. However, according to the LADOT, a petition was recently submitted to further restrict the hours for PPD 192 (Deronda Drive and Rockcliff Drive). The Dixon Study suggests that, based on their survey data, the hours of operation for the established PPDs should be adjusted to reflect increased congestion during hours outside of the current restrictions.

The LADOT states that the Department will support adjustments to PPDs as recommended in the Dixon Study, including the consolidation of all PPDs in the Beachwood Canyon area, for those proposals that meet the requirements of the law. The adopted “Rules and Procedures for Preferential Parking Districts” require that any consolidation of, or adjustments to existing PPDs must be supported by the affected properties through a petition signed by 75 percent of the housing units on the affected block.

Recommendation

34. Instruct the LADOT to conduct outreach to the residents, neighborhood organizations, and community groups, as well as the representative Council Office within the boundaries of the existing preferential parking districts to discuss potential adjustments to the hours of operation and/or the consolidation of one or more existing PPDs.

Strategy 6.4 - Increase citation amounts in high-impact tourist locations

Feasible: No.

Responsible Department(s): State of California

Funding identified: No.

The Dixon Study proposes to increase citation amounts in “high impact” locations near the Hollywood sign viewing areas. The Study suggests that such a change would encourage higher compliance rates with parking, driving, and smoking regulations, and proposes that the resulting revenue increase be allocated to fund additional enforcement in the area.

According to the City Attorney, California Vehicle Code Section 40203.5(a) states that: "...the schedule of parking penalties for parking violations and late payment penalties shall be established by the governing body of the jurisdiction where the notice of violation is issued. **To the extent possible, issuing agencies within the same county shall standardize parking penalties**" (emphasis added). The City Attorney notes that any significant variation in parking penalties within the City or between cities in the County would need to be supported by evidence that the higher penalty being charged in different areas for similar parking offenses is reasonable.

With regard to traffic violations, the Judicial Council of California sets the standard bail amount and base fine for traffic tickets when the Legislature has not set a mandatory base fine. Fines and charges above the base fine are added by the California State Legislature as mandatory penalty assessments and fees and are required by statute. The resulting revenue from these penalties and fees is distributed to different city, county and state programs for such activities as the collection of DNA for criminal cases, emergency medical services, local criminal justice facilities, emergency medical air transportation, and court facility maintenance and construction.

We are not aware of any jurisdiction that is currently allowed to add additional amounts because the violation occurred in a tourist zone.

Recommendation

35. Note and File the Strategy 6.4 which proposes to increase citation amounts in high impact areas.

Strategy 2.1: Implement an electric shuttle service connecting nearest Metro Station with North Beachwood Drive park entrance.

Strategy 7.2: Develop a Hollywood Sign Visitor Center

Strategy 7.4: Implement a Hollywood Sign Art Program

During the June 18, 2018 AEPR Committee hearing, the Chair requested that the CLA and Recreation and Parks report regarding the outreach efforts that were undertaken for Strategies 2.1, 7.2, and 7.4.

The Dixon Study, and related outreach efforts, were structured in a manner that incorporated most, if not all, strategies into every stakeholder meeting, rather than holding breakout discussion of individual strategies with subsets of stakeholders. As summarized in Dixon's Comprehensive Strategies Report, a meeting was held on November 11, 2017 to discuss with residents, business owners, and community organizations the progress of Dixon's study and the preliminary results of their data collection efforts. Dixon requested feedback from attendees on the proposed short-term recommendations in their report. According to Dixon's report, much of the group discussion focused on wayfinding, Preferential Parking Districts (PPDs), street classifications, and cellphone service, although the position of individual attendees on each of these issues varied widely.

According to the Dixon Study, the consultant discussed the issues and recommendations in their report with individuals from and groups representing the following organizations:

- Beachwood Canyon Neighborhood Association
- Friends of Griffith Park
- Griffith Park Advisory Board
- Hollywood Chamber of Commerce
- Hollywood Hills West Neighborhood Council
- Hollywood Knolls Community Club
- Hollywood Sign Trust
- Hollywood United Neighborhood Council
- Hollywoodland Homeowners Association
- Lake Hollywood Homeowners Association
- Los Feliz Improvement Association
- Los Feliz Neighborhood Council
- The Oaks Homeowners Association
- LADOT - DASH
- METRO
- RAP

The participants at this meeting provided Dixon with feedback on preliminary recommendations and some offered alternatives. Stakeholders were encouraged to reach out after the meeting discuss any recommendations and concerns via a specialized email to provide them with quicker access to the Dixon study staff. Links were also placed on public websites to facilitate access. Dixon followed up with a response to each inquiry.