CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

Date: October 17, 2019

To: Honorable City Council
c/o City Clerk, Room 395, City Hall
Attention: Honorable Mike Bonin, Chair, Transportation Committee

From: Seleta J. Reynolds, General Manager
Department of Transportation

Subject: MOBILE MAPPING APPLICATIONS (APPS) / IMPACT TO NEIGHBORHOOD CITY STREETS / REDUCE HAZARDS / FEASIBILITY REPORT

SUMMARY

As directed by Los Angeles City Council on April 4, 2019, this report responds to Council File (CF) 18-0304 and provides an update to LADOT’s ongoing negotiation with mapping applications including Apple Maps, TomTom, Google, and Waze to implement a traffic routing pilot program as a condition of entering into new data-sharing agreements.

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE and FILE this report.

BACKGROUND

Mobile mapping applications have changed the way people travel across transportation modes throughout the City of Los Angeles (City). Many travelers rely on these resources to use real-time information about the transit and traffic patterns of the region to inform their transportation choices and routes in real-time. The City communicates regularly with the developers of these mobile mapping applications including Apple Maps, Google Maps, and Waze to participate in this emerging technology, and share up-to-date traffic data to improve the accuracy of the information displayed and distributed through these applications.

In early 2018, communities and media began attributing negative traffic impacts from routes provided by mobile mapping applications. The City heard concerns from several citizens and neighborhood groups that mobile mapping applications do not accurately reflect posted regulatory traffic restrictions and often display inaccurate information, including erroneous closure of streets, which may contribute to cut-through traffic on neighborhood streets, unsafe behavior such as speeding and unprotected left turns, and additional traffic congestion. LADOT transmits corrections and updates to the mobile mapping application companies, however, many applications continue to incorporate edits suggested by users through crowdsourcing or volunteer map editors to update their map information, which may conflict with City data and information.
In April 2019, City Council directed LADOT to enter into negotiations with mapping application companies to develop data sharing agreements and pursue pilot project opportunities. The City proposed restricting vehicle routing onto impacted street segments as a condition of entering into any data-sharing agreements between the City and developers of mobile mapping applications. Council instructed LADOT to use Mobility Plan 2035 Street Designations as initial criteria to identify impacted street segments for a pilot program.

DISCUSSION

Proposed Pilot Project

On September 3, 2019, LADOT invited multiple mapping application companies to take part in a proposed pilot project to evaluate the impact of app-enabled navigation on congestion, safety, and driver behavior on neighborhood streets and surrounding school zones.

Pilot Project details communicated to the companies are detailed below:

*LADOT’s role:*

LADOT provides details on the pilot location streets, routing restrictions and times, school zone locations and speed restrictions, and shares the before/after vehicle counts for all arterial and neighborhood streets evaluated as part of the pilot.

*Mapping application requirements:*

Using the information provided by LADOT, mapping application companies must update routing directions to direct trips that begin or end outside the pilot area away from school zones, neighborhood streets, and problem turning areas during peak hours. They then share data on the number of users and travel behaviors that don’t follow suggested routing directions, and report on the feasibility of expanding the pilot to additional neighborhoods.

*Project Location:*

Staff determined the pilot location with input from residents and local stakeholders, focusing on neighborhood streets experiencing cut-through traffic from freeways and other high-traffic streets, as well as impacted school zones. The proposed project area is the area surrounding Sherman Oaks Hills, including Sherman Oaks Elementary Charter School, bounded by Mulholland Drive to the South, Ventura Boulevard to the North, Beverly Glen Boulevard to the East, and the 405 Freeway to the West. Alternate project locations include Encino Hills, Mar Vista, or Bel Air.
Project Timeline:

<table>
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<th>Weeks 1-2</th>
<th>“Before” data collection</th>
<th>LADOT conducts traffic surveys of existing conditions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Peak hour routing changes implementation</td>
<td>Communicate routing changes for mapping companies to implement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weeks 4-15</td>
<td>Pilot implementation, monitoring, and data collection</td>
<td>LADOT conducts traffic surveys and collects data from mapping companies on traffic volume and congestion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weeks 16-20</td>
<td>Project Evaluation and Analysis</td>
<td>Assess changes in travel behavior, traffic volume, congestion, and traffic collisions</td>
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Response from Mapping Companies

Representatives from Apple Maps, TomTom, and Waze (representing both Waze and Google Maps) responded to LADOT’s proposed pilot project. Apple Maps expressed willingness to participate in a limited-term pilot project for a specific area. TomTom remains open to a potential pilot project, but LADOT is still in early stages of communicating with the company and identifying the best path forward to implementation. Waze (and thereby Google Maps) declined to participate in the pilot project as proposed, but wants to keep open lines of communication with LADOT to pursue additional partnership opportunities in the future.

LADOT will continue to work with Apple Maps and TomTom to refine and implement a pilot project in a focused area, and to evaluate the impacts of routing and mapping data changes provided to the companies.

Street and Highway Classification

LADOT is working with Caltrans to better understand the differences between City and State street classifications, to ensure consistency when sharing classification updates with mapping application companies. Different mapping apps may use different information sources that conflict with City street classifications, affecting routing suggestions and estimates of traffic volume capacity on impacted streets. LADOT is sharing local street classification with Caltrans so the state can update their classifications to align with the City’s.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact at this time, however, if LADOT moves forward with implementing a pilot, staff resources or contractual services funds will be required to administer the pilot and collect and analyze traffic data.