CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM

Date: August 7, 2025

To: Honorable City Council
c/o City Clerk, Room 395
Attention: Honorable Heather Hutt, Chair Transportation Committee

From: Laura Rubio-Cornejo, General Manager
Department of Transportation

Subject: **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES OF TEMPORARY CLOSURES OF ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES**

SUMMARY

As directed by Council File (CF) 20-1469-S1, this report outlines existing and proposed policies and procedures to notify and protect users during the temporary closure of active transportation facilities (sidewalks, off-street paths, and bike lanes) in the City of Los Angeles (City) including notification, signage, and equivalent facility and/or safe detour requirements.

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council NOTE and FILE this report.

BACKGROUND

Public agencies, private developers, and utilities (Applicants) often conduct work in the public right-of-way that requires the closure or alteration of traffic lanes, bicycle lanes, and sidewalks. These closures and alterations sometimes require the applicant to prepare a traffic control plan (TCP) for the placement of temporary traffic controls during construction, particularly when the work is complex or of extended duration. The Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) through its Metro Programs, Public Infrastructure, Permit Plan Review & Airport Divisions and Major Construction reviews, approves and inspects these TCPs. The Department of Public Works (DPW) is the permitting agency that ultimately approves and inspects the permits required to perform construction in the public right-of-way, including the closure of any portion of the roadway, or sidewalk.

In October 2024, the City Council directed LADOT, with the support of the DPW Bureaus of Engineering and Street Services, to report with existing and/or proposed policies and procedures to notify and protect users during the temporary closure of active transportation facilities (sidewalks, off-street paths, and Class II and Class IV Bicycle Lanes), including notification, signage, equivalent facility and/or safe detour requirements.

DISCUSSION

The temporary closure of pedestrian and bicycle facilities can change the user experience. Temporary closure of sidewalks and the detour of pedestrians can result in a longer pedestrian route and an

inconvenience to users. Similarly, when bicycle facilities are temporarily closed on a subject road, bicyclists either continue to ride on that road, often traveling in shared general-purpose lanes, or they are detoured onto streets with different infrastructure and characteristics.

Although Applicants implementing such closures or detours are required to provide a minimum of five days notification to impacted users, these notifications may not reach the general public in advance of the work taking place. Furthermore, the Public Right-of-Way Reservation System (PWRS), a site where all activities in the public right-of-way are shown in a report and map format to improve coordination of construction activities, does not provide notification of sidewalk or bike facility closures. The result can be an unexpected condition for bicyclists and pedestrians that may last for an extended period of time.

Existing Policies and Procedures

For both short and long term TCPs, the City keeps pedestrian and bicycle facilities open during construction whenever possible. LADOT, Street Services, and Bureau of Engineering (BOE) apply existing federal, state and city policies, standards, and guidance to determine when closures are necessary, and address bicycle and pedestrian facility closures and detours. Street Services and BOE are the permitting agencies for work within the City right of way and LADOT assists with the acceptance to the TCPs that allows for the construction activity.

There are two types of TCPs: short-term (duration of less than 72 hours) and long-term (duration of 72 hours or more). Short-term work typically involves the use of cones and barricades that are set up and removed each day when work is taking place. Long-term work typically involves changes to signs, markings, and sometimes traffic signals and the use of rigid barriers.

The Applicant, when requested by LADOT, provides notification to affected residents and users, such as adjacent property owners, nearby schools, transit operators, and/or Los Angeles Fire Department. In addition, the use of portable message signs in advance of construction may be required to notify the public of an upcoming closure.

The Bureau of Contract Administration and Streets Services are responsible for inspecting permitted work, including accompanying Short-Term TCPs. The LADOT Major Construction Section inspects Long-Term TCPs. Any complaints submitted to either department will be investigated to ensure compliance with the approved plans.

BOE maintains the Public Way Reservation System (PWRS). PWRS is a location guide for all entities that intend to engage in activity or work in major, secondary, and collector City streets. This on-line geographic information system mapping application generates a report of all the construction activities within a certain distance of a location.

Pedestrian Facilities and Class I Bikeways (Bike Paths)

Bike paths are bicycle facilities at sidewalk level, fully separated from the road where vehicles travel. For the purposes of temporary traffic control, they are treated similar to sidewalks. In both short and long-term closures, pedestrian access is maintained on sidewalks whenever possible. However, a pedestrian path closure is considered if the contractor has demonstrated that the adjacent construction cannot

safely be performed while pedestrians continue to use the sidewalk or pedestrian path, or if there is construction on the sidewalk or pedestrian path.

For short-term pedestrian and bike path closures, the City requires a pedestrian and bike detour with posted signage. As a condition for the closure, the contractor is required to notify impacted stakeholders a minimum of five days in advance, such as schools, transit operators, public safety agencies, offices of elected officials, and affected property owners.

The decision and approval to close a sidewalk, pedestrian path, or bike path for a long-term period follows a similar protocol as short-term closures, but due to the extended duration of the closure and impact to the public, additional coordination and review is conducted in consultation with Council Offices via LADOT's District offices. Additionally, in some cases, a long-term temporary pedestrian or bike path of travel may be feasible adjacent to the closed facility, which may be facilitated with the use of canopy structures, temporary access ramps, etc.

Class II (painted Bike Lanes) and Class IV Bikeways (separated/protected Bike Lanes)

In both short and long-term TCPs, bike lanes are kept open whenever possible. The closure of a bike lane is considered if the Applicant has demonstrated that the adjacent construction cannot be performed safely while keeping the bike lane open, or if the construction falls within the footprint of the bike lane.

For short-term TCPs, it is rare that traffic lanes can be closed or shifted in lieu of bike lanes because bike lanes cannot be easily shifted with the use of cones and barricades. Long-term TCP closures of bike lanes require the same demonstration of construction impacts, but because long-term TCPs require roadway restriping as part of construction, and bike lanes can be better maintained through restriping than the use of temporary cones and signage, long-term closures also require Applicants demonstrate that maintaining the bike lane as a part of the required restriping is not feasible.

When a bike lane is closed for a short or long-term TCP, the following measures are required:

Existing Bike Lane Closure for Short Term TCP

Streets with speed limits of 35 mph or less:	Streets with speed limits greater than 35 mph:
Provide "Bike Lane Closed Ahead" and "Share the Road/Bikes May Use Full Lane" signage	Provide a speed limit reduction of 10 mph in the construction zone and include changeable message signs and static signs in advance to notify roadway users of the bike lane closure
For streets with higher traffic volume, install changeable message signs five days prior to the start of construction to notify road users of the upcoming bike lane closure.	

Existing Bike Lane Closure for Long-Term TCP

Streets of any speed limit:
Maintain the existing bike lane through the work zone
Or close the bike lane with “Bike Lane Closed Ahead” and “Share the Road” or Bikes May Use Full Lane” signs.

Proposed Changes To Policies And Procedures

LADOT recognizes that even with the existing policies and procedures in place, the user experience for cyclists and pedestrians through a construction zone can be negatively impacted. Bike lanes provide a level of comfort and separation on roads where vehicle speeds are typically significantly higher than bicycle speeds. Under existing policies for bike lane closures, speed limits are reduced by 10 miles-per-hour (mph) so that cyclists can comfortably share traffic lanes with drivers, and signs are posted so that drivers are made aware of the shared condition. The following changes can be made to improve these efforts:

Class II (painted Bike Lanes) and Class IV Bikeways (separated/protected Bike Lanes)

When a bike lane is closed in either a short or long-term TCP, on streets with speed limits of 35 mph or more, the speed limit should be reduced to a maximum of 30 mph in the construction zone. This speed limit reduction would be implemented with changeable message and static signs in advance of the construction to notify roadway users of the speed reduction, and install changeable message signs at least five days prior to the start of construction to notify road users of the upcoming bike lane closure.

Proposed Changes for Bike Lane Closure in either Short or Long-Term TCP

Streets with speed limits of 35 mph or more:
Reduce speed limit to maximum 30 mph in the construction zone and include changeable message signs and static signs in advance to notify roadway users of the bike lane closure
Or provide a reasonable alternate path of travel on adjacent streets with bike detour signage along the alternate path.

In addition to this speed limit reduction, bike lane closures in long-term TCPs may require additional traffic control devices, such as additional signs and pavement markings, to promote the reduced speed limit as a condition of approval. An option of a reasonable alternate path of travel on adjacent streets may be required, providing a bike detour signage along the path of travel. Detours should feature roads with characteristics similar to the road with the closed facility or better, including the presence of a bicycle facility, and/or lower speed limits, controlled crossings of intersecting streets, etc. Detours should not excessively increase cyclist travel time or distance and have satisfactory roadway conditions for cyclists.

Class I Bikeways (Bike Paths)

Bike paths provide a similar user experience as a Class IV Bikeway or a shared condition on a very low speed street (speed limit of 25 mph or less). As such, detours for bike path closures for short and long-term TCPs should be provided on streets with similar characteristics.

Notification to the Public

BOE will explore whether the PWRS can be updated to show sidewalk and bike facility closures. The PWRS System tracks permits in the public right of way, but does not provide notification to the public. Currently, LADOT requests Applicants to notify affected residents and users, such as adjacent property owners, nearby schools, transit operators, and/or Los Angeles Fire Department, as part of their TCP approval.

LADOT recommends that Applicants notify the corresponding Council Office in advance of construction taking place for long-term bike facility closure and detours. Due to the unknown duration and project schedule of short-term TCPs, notification of bike lane closures and detours would be captured with the use of changeable message signs to notify the public.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no impacts to the General Fund from the recommendations in this report.

LRC:DM:tf