PLANNING & LAND USE MANAGEMENT
PUBLIC WORKS

MOTION

Through Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) 12.37 and the Highway Dedication process, the City of Los Angeles mandates street widening via dedications and required improvements for new multifamily and commercial developments. Although there is relief available through a waiver of dedication and/or improvement (WDI), City standards for street widths based on street classification frequently result in widenings even when a WDI would have been desirable. These spot widenings often create incoherent streets that degrade neighborhood character, undermine active transportation, reduce tree canopy, and expand impermeable surface area—all contrary to the City's mobility and sustainability goals.

An aerial image of Moorpark Street between Mammoth Avenue and Woodman Avenue

New State laws to advance the production of housing will compound these issues. As the City meets our housing goals through small lot subdivisions, fourplexes, and other types of by-right multifamily development in established neighborhoods; the City's current regulations will increase the number of inconsistent spot widenings that provide minimal public benefit and make our neighborhood streets more dangerous and inhospitable. Without process changes, these undesirable dedications and improvements will happen automatically on a parcel-by-parcel basis, and will not consider the neighborhood context.

Mobility Plan 2035 identified the City's street dedication process as an obstacle to creating world-class, multimodal streets. While the WDI and appeals process, which was introduced in 2017, has provided some flexibility, recent cases of inappropriate dedications illustrate the need for further reform. By its nature, the waiver process assumes that widening is appropriate unless an exception is warranted. Given the potential harms of roadway widening and the limited benefits, the onus of this process should be reversed, with no roadway widening unless under exceptional circumstances. In some cases it may be appropriate to accept a dedication of right-of-way for future flexibility without requiring it be built out to its full width. The Bureau of Engineering should adopt new procedures that do not mandate street dedication in most cases, with limited exceptions, while still requiring appropriate public improvements to promote multimodal accessibility, good street design, and sustainable infrastructure.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council instruct the Bureau of Engineering, in consultation with the Department of City Planning (DCP), the Department of Transportation (DOT), DCP's Urban Design Studio, and any other relevant departments, to report back within 60 days with:

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- Recommendations to reform the waiver of dedication and/or improvement (WDI) process as well as the initial requirement process to achieve the following objectives:
    - Preserve consistent roadway widths and curb lines on each block (eliminate spot road widenings);
    - Prioritize consistent pedestrian experience with no or minimal sidewalk meandering, context-appropriate sidewalk and parkway width, and consistent interfaces with street-facing building entrances on each block face;
    - Prioritize pedestrian safety and visibility by minimizing crossing distance at intersections and other crosswalks; ensuring alignment between pedestrian paths of travel, crosswalks, and curb ramps; minimizing curb radii to the greatest extent feasible (including retaining historic curb radii); and promoting curb extensions where feasible and appropriate;
    - Protect existing trees and parkways and create opportunities for planting new and larger shade trees;
    - Incorporate green infrastructure elements where feasible and appropriate; and
    - Ensure accessibility for people with disabilities;
- A checklist of public benefit findings that must be made through an administrative process prior to requiring a street dedication and/or improvement that results in a roadway widening, including:
    - Specific and articulable traffic safety or mobility benefits, such as closing a bike lane gap or eliminating a pinch point, at the request of LADOT; and
    - Specific and articulable pedestrian realm or urban design benefits, at the request of City Planning;
- Any revisions to street design standards needed to accomplish the above objectives and allow context-sensitive application of street standards;
- Any revisions needed to LAMC 12.37 and/or other policies and regulations to accomplish this direction; and
- Any other recommendations to implement street design best practices in the development process.

PRESENTED BY:

for

NITHYA RAMAN
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SECONDED BY: