


CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM

Date: July 11, 2025

To: Honorable City Council
c/o City Clerk, Room 395
Attention: Honorable Heather Hutt, Chair, Transportation Committee
Honorable Tracy Park, Chair, Ad Hoc Committee on LA Recovery

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

Subject: **TOUR BUS OPERATIONS IN PALISADES FIRE RECOVERY AREA**

SUMMARY

As directed by Council File (CF) 25-0006-S80, this report provides a map of the area impacted by the January 7, 2025 Palisades Fire where tour bus operations are proposed to be restricted for the duration of the associated wind and wildfire emergency declaration.

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council ADOPT the accompanying RESOLUTION, making it unlawful to operate a Tour Bus within the area identified on the attached Palisades Wildfire map for the duration of the January 7, 2025 wind and wildfire emergency declaration.

BACKGROUND

The Los Angeles Municipal Code Section (LAMC) 80.36.1 discusses the restricted use of certain streets by vehicles exceeding a maximum 6,000 pound gross weight. LAMC 80.36.1 (c) provides exemptions for certain vehicles including emergency vehicles, public utility vehicles, and commercial vehicles for purposes of making deliveries within restricted areas. LAMC 80.36.1 (d) authorizes the Department of Transportation (LADOT) to erect signs prohibiting vehicles over 6,000 pounds gross weight upon those major or secondary highways of portions thereof, specified in this subsection. Sunset Boulevard between the city limits of Beverly Hills and Pacific Coast Highways is a street segment identified in 80.36.1 (d) that LADOT is authorized to erect signs.

Under California Vehicle Code Section 21118.(a), "a local authority may adopt rules and regulations by ordinance or resolution to restrict the routes or streets upon which a tour bus described in subdivision (b) of Section 612 may be operated if the local authority determines it is unsafe to operate those vehicles on those routes or streets." California Vehicle Code Section 612.(a) defines a "Tour Bus" as "a bus, which is operated by or for a charter-party carrier of passengers, as defined in Section 5360 of the Public Utilities Code, or a passenger stage corporation, as defined in Section 226 of the Public Utilities Code". Section 612.(b) goes on to specify that "a Tour Bus includes a bus described in subdivision (a) that has had its roof substantially structurally modified or removed."

The City Council approved ordinance No. 187, 078, amending the LAMC Section 80.36.11, and it became effective on April 15, 2020. LAMC Section 80.36.11 makes it unlawful for a Tour Bus to operate or travel on a City street, a segment of a street, or a route that LADOT has determined is unsafe for a Tour Bus to operate or travel on, either at any time or for certain hours of the day. LAMC Section 80.36.11.(d).(1) reads that “stopping, standing, or parking of a tour bus on a street determined to be unsafe for the operation of a tour bus” is a civil penalty and is enforceable by either LAPD or LADOT. LAMC Section 80.36.11.(c).(1) specifies that the “traveling of a tour bus on a street determined to be unsafe for the operation of a tour bus” is a criminal penalty for LAPD enforcement purposes. As these offenses are all justified based on public safety, including the safety of the passengers of the tour buses, there is a step increase for subsequent violations of 100 percent within the same 12-month period, up to the third offense. Due to the nature of this offense, where the Tour Bus driver may be following directions from their employer, the penalties shall be assessed to the Operator of the Tour Bus company.

The City of Los Angeles declared a Citywide wind and wildfire emergency on January 7, 2025 and the emergency declaration remains in effect until ended by the City Council. The City Council created the Ad Hoc Committee on LA Recovery January 22, 2025 to review and develop policies and regulation related to rebuilding and recovery. The Transportation Committee hears traffic and transportation-related items including tour bus regulations and the restricted use of certain streets by vehicles over 6,000 pounds gross weight. The City Council approved a motion, CF 25-0006-S80, on July 2, 2025 directing LADOT to report with a map of the proposed tour bus restrictions during the emergency declaration, and to revise LADOT guidelines for tour buses related to emergency declarations.

DISCUSSION

Sunset Boulevard east of Pacific Coast Highway is a street segment identified in LAMC 80.36.1 as a street that LADOT is authorized to erect weight restriction signage. Most tour buses exceed this weight limit. LADOT’s assessment indicates that these restrictions are missing from Sunset Boulevard in the Palisades wildfire area. The erection of these weight restriction signs will prohibit all vehicles in excess of this weight, including tour buses, and allow for immediate enforcement within the wildfire area while the City Council considers approval of a Resolution to specifically restrict tour bus operations.

Based on their size and weight, tour buses pose an apparent hazard on certain streets that are unsuited to accommodate a high volume of large vehicles. The nature of tourist operations also leads tour bus drivers to stop more frequently for customers to identify sites and take photos, often blocking the roadway and creating unsafe driving conditions for other drivers. The unique situation of tour buses operating in an area where significant construction activities to repair roadways, stabilize hillside slopes, repair utilities, reconstruct homes, and rebuild businesses on often narrow, winding roads may create situations where public safety is diminished and recovery is slowed. In order to consistently facilitate safe, orderly, and speedy rebuilding effort, LADOT therefore recommends to restrict these activities within the area outlined on the attached map, bounded to the north by the ridgeline of the Santa Monica Mountain, to the west by the City of Los Angeles city limit, to the south by Pacific Coast Highway, and the east by Chautaugua Boulevard, Sunset Boulevard, and Mandeville Canyon Road. Pacific Coast Highway is a State of California highway operated and maintained by Caltrans. While Pacific Coast Highway is a boundary street on the attached maps, LADOT does not propose tour bus restrictions on Pacific Coast Highway unless approved and permitted by Caltrans. Once approved, LADOT recommends that these restrictions remain in place for the duration of the emergency order. As directed by Council, LADOT will assess the area for long-term restrictions once the order is lifted.

Tour bus restrictions require posted signage that LADOT will fabricate and post at the existing entry points to the fire affected area. Enforcement for these restrictions is carried out by LAPD and will be outlined in a forthcoming report as directed by Council.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

LADOT does not anticipate any impact to the General Fund with this report. LADOT will use existing sign maintenance funds to install or replace 6,000 pound gross weight restriction signs on Sunset Boulevard in the Palisades Fire area as authorized under LAMC 80.36.1 and install tour bus restriction signs on entry points to the area upon approval of a Resolution defining the area of restriction.

LRC:MR:ck

Attachment

Palisade Fire Area: Tour Bus Restriction during Emergency Declaration



RESOLUTION

TOUR BUS RESTRICTIONS DURING EMERGENCY DECLARATION FOR PALISADE WILDFIRE

WHEREAS, The Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) Section 80.36.11 states that the City Council, by Resolution, may approve a determination by the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) identifying specific City streets, segments of a street, or route, which are unsafe for a Tour Bus to operate or travel on, either at any time or for certain hours of the day and direct LADOT to install signs providing notice of such Tour Bus restrictions; and

WHEREAS, LAMC Section 80.36.11.(b).(2) defines “Tour Bus” as a privately-owned bus or passenger vehicle for hire, which is operated by or for a charter-party carrier of passengers or a passenger state corporation, as set forth in California Vehicle Code (CVC) Section 612. (a), and as defined in California Public Utilities Code (CPUC) Sections 226 and 5359.(b); and as set forth in CPUC Section 612.(b), includes a bus that has had its roof substantially structurally modified or removed; and

WHEREAS, LAMC Section 80.36.11.(b).(2) specifies that a Tour Bus includes any for-hire vehicle that is used primarily for the conveyance of passengers over public streets for the purpose of visiting or viewing places of interest; and

WHEREAS, LAMC Section 80.36.11.(a) states that the LADOT shall establish rules, policies, and procedures to identify streets, street segments, or routes which, for safety reasons, shall be restricted or limited from the use by a Tour Bus; and

WHEREAS, the LADOT “Tour Bus Prohibition Guidelines” specify that Tour Bus operation may be prohibited for one or more continuous street segments once the LADOT has received a request in writing from either the affected Council Office, Neighborhood Council, Police Department, or an affected school, requesting that Tour Bus operations be prohibited, because one or more street segments are unsafe for tour buses to operate on, and then only after LADOT verifies that one of more of the qualifying conditions established by the LADOT exist, and after a Council Resolution has directed LADOT to install the signs; and

WHEREAS, on July 2, 2025, the City Council approved a motion introduced by the Eleventh Council District directing LADOT to provide a map of the area impacted by the January 7, 2025 wildfires where tour bus operations will be restricted for the duration of the associated emergency declaration: and

WHEREAS, the LADOT “Tour Bus Prohibition Guidelines” typically require both a safety issue to exist and a minimum tour bus volume to be required, and the safety issue needs to be specific to tour bus operations on each street segment evaluated; and

WHEREAS, LAMC Section 80.36.11.(a) states that the LADOT shall establish rules, policies, and procedures to identify streets, street segments, or routes which, for safety reasons, shall be restricted or limited from the use by a Tour Bus; and LADOT recommends that emergency declarations are conditions where the volume of tour buses should not be considered; and

WHEREAS, LADOT created a boundary map of the Palisades Wildfire area of roughly 16 square miles within the Eleventh Council District boundaries, which is it recommended that tour buses be restricted from operation for the duration of the emergency declaration starting at the north with the

- The ridgeline of the Santa Monica Mountains
- The westerly City of Los Angeles city limit (near Coastline Drive and Pacific Coast Highway)
- Pacific Coast Highway (State Route 1) south and east of the City of Los Angeles city limit
- Chautauqua Boulevard between Pacific Coast Highway (State Route 1) and Sunset Boulevard
- Sunset Boulevard between Chautauqua Boulevard and Mandeville Canyon Road
- Mandeville Canyon Road north of Sunset Boulevard

WHEREAS, on June 25, 2025, Councilmember Tracy Park, 11th Council District, via CF 25-0006-S80, requested LADOT to revise its guidelines, rules, and procedures during emergency declarations and to provide a map of the Palisades area where LADOT recommends tour bus restrictions for the durations of the emergency declaration; and

WHEREAS, LADOT is also directed within 120 days to report on streets where permanent tour bus restrictions should be considered; and

WHEREAS, LADOT has reviewed the area of the Palisades Wildfire, provided a map of the proposed Tour Bus restriction, and recommend the restriction of tour bus operations to preserve public safety in an area within a declared emergency while construction activities to repair roadways, stabilize hillside slopes, repair utilities, reconstruct homes, and rebuild businesses which often, narrow, winding roads.

WHEREAS, the satisfaction of the criteria listed above indicates potential roadway safety issues for both tour buses, their passengers, and other roadway users.

WHEREAS, LADOT recommends that the City Council determine it is unsafe for the operation of a tour bus for the duration of the emergency declaration in the map area provided by LADOT; and

WHEREAS, LADOT identified that Pacific Coast Highway is under the jurisdiction of the State of California subject to Caltrans guidelines, rules, regulations, and permits; and

BE RESOLVED that upon adoption of this Resolution, LADOT be directed to post signs prohibiting Tour Buses on roadway under their jurisdiction from operating within the area bounded by the provided map and listed above and from parking, stopping, or standing; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that upon adoption of this Resolution, LADOT be directed to request Caltrans to consider the prohibition of Tour Buses on State Route 1, Pacific Coast Highway, north of the City of Santa Monica; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that upon the end of the emergency declaration, LADOT remove signs prohibiting Tour Buses from operating unless a separate resolution identify specific street segments is adopted by Council meeting LADOT rules regarding safety and minimum tour bus volumes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that LADOT be directed to provide a map on the LADOT Website or NavigateLA system identifying the street segments where tour buses are restricted; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Transportation be authorized to make technical corrections or clarifications to the above instructions to effectuate this Resolution's intent.