

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

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July 11, 2017

4 – East Valley - # 70681
Sherman Oaks Hills West NTM

Dear Resident:

RE: WEST SHERMAN OAKS HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT (NTM) PLAN UPDATE

The Department of Transportation has been asked by Councilmember David Ryu, 4th Council District, to provide you with an update on the status of the “West Sherman Oaks Hills Neighborhood Traffic Management (NTM) Plan”, since it has been several months since the Public Hearing on this matter was conducted on January 10, 2017, and this matter has not yet been resolved. Please be assured that this matter is still pending, and that despite a significant amount of opposition, the Department is working with the staff from Councilmember Ryu’s Office to address the major issues identified at the Public Hearing and during the public comment period, that ended February 13, 2017, and to develop an acceptable path forward to providing you and your neighbors with some relief from the excessive peak hour commuter traffic that has plagued your neighborhood in recent years.

WHAT’S BEEN DONE SINCE THE HEARING?

The Department of Transportation has received 1,503 comments on this proposal, in the form of ballot cards, speaker card comments, presentations at the public hearing, e-mails, letters, and even multi-page reports. We have almost finished reading and tabulating all of the comments, except for about 50 very detailed reports with multiple recommendations that were too lengthy to include on a spreadsheet. All of the comments, except for the 50 reports, entered onto the spreadsheet, were sorted by the nature of the comment; with the comments reviewed by staff to identify critical oversights, major flaws in the proposal, or areas where the NTM plan could be easily modified to address other concerns.

Each comment was also coded as “Plan A”, “Plan B”, or “Plan C”, and then entered onto a color coded map of the neighborhood to reveal geographical areas of support for each alternative. Within the project boundary area, there is a 4 to 1 desire to do something, compared to doing nothing. However, outside your neighborhood, there are some areas where there is a significant amount of opposition to this project. (The exact totals will be available later once the “Hearing Officer’s Report” is finalized.)

The Department met with representatives of the many schools along Mulholland Drive to further discuss the proposal and to better understand the concerns of the schools. The Department has done additional research, and has discovered a standard sign that prohibits turns during certain times of the day, but exempts carpools; which appears to be a compromise that will be acceptable to the schools.

The Department has discussed the preliminary results with Councilmember Ryu, and based upon strong support for the NTM plan within the neighborhood, it was determined that the Department should move forward on a modified NTM plan; incorporating the suggestions from the public comments, performing additional studies, working with the schools along Mulholland Drive to get their support for a modified diversion plan and the new “carpools exempt” signs. Although the support within the neighborhood is strong, the opposition outside the neighborhood is just as strong, and some consensus building and compromise is necessary before the project can move forward.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS AND TIMELINE?

The following items need to be addressed before Councilmember Ryu can take the next step forward and recommend an NTM plan for the "West Sherman Oaks Hills NTM Plan" and the Department of Transportation can implement it (the estimated completion dates are also provided):

- Finish reading the remaining 50 reports, finalize the comment spreadsheet, and identify the modifications to the plan that are essential. [COMPLETION DURING JULY]
- Revise the NTM plan based on critical comments, including the replacement of a full-time "No Right Turn on Red" restriction for westbound Mulholland Drive at Woodcliff Road with a substitute strategy that is more restricted to a specific time of day and that produces gaps in a different manner, and elimination of any diversion onto Longbow Drive where there is a documented deer habitat and deer crossing. [COMPLETION DURING AUGUST]
- Conduct a second "Travel Time Comparison Study" of the four routes between Valley Vista Boulevard and Mulholland Drive, on a school day. [ITEM COMPLETED]
- Modify the NTM plan to incorporate the "carpool exempt" signs, and to modify the hours of the turn restrictions, based on the comments from the schools along Mulholland Drive, and then meet with the school representatives to present the revised plan, in order to get their support. [COMPLETION DURING AUGUST, depending on when the affected schools re-open following summer break]
- Perform a "Trip Distribution Study", as strongly requested by one of the adjacent neighborhoods, to identify the traffic diversion patterns that would occur from the proposed NTM Plan. Staff was just identified that could conduct this study, so we will not have to hire a consultant to do it. [COMPLETION DURING AUGUST]
- Develop an NTM Plan for the neighborhood to the south, approximately bounded by Valley Vista Boulevard, Ventura Boulevard, Sepulveda Boulevard, and Colbath Avenue, for the AM peak hours. Although this study would not be done before the "West Sherman Oaks Hills NTM Plan" is finalized, it is essential to at least be able to identify the resources necessary to conduct a similar NTM study for that neighborhood, so that it would be assured of being taken care of as a "Phase 2", at some point after the "West Sherman Oaks Hills NTM Plan" is implemented. The Department of Transportation has recommended to Councilmember Ryu's Office that the study be required as part of the continuing Buckley School traffic mitigation effort. Otherwise, alternative funding would need to be identified, and a consultant would have to be hired to conduct this study. [RESOURCES IDENTIFIED IN SEPTEMBER]
- Department of Transportation to prepare "Hearing Officer's Report" and submit it to Councilmember Ryu. [COMPLETION BY OCTOBER 1, 2017]

Although the progress on this project has been slowed for a variety of reasons, including an overwhelming amount of very detailed comments and suggestions that we were not able to get through as quickly as initially projected, this project is still very important to both Councilmember Ryu and the Department of Transportation. Hopefully this status letter will let you know that we are still moving forward; with a renewed desire to strengthen the plan, avoid some unexpected problems discovered during the hearing and comment process, build additional support in the larger community for it, and to get it approved by City Council and implemented in your neighborhood before the end of the year.

Sincerely,



BRIAN R. GALLAGHER
Principal Transportation Engineer
District Operations Bureau

BRG:brg: ltr WestShermanOaksHillsNTMPlanUpdate17

c: Councilmember David Ryu, 4th Council District
Councilmember Paul Koretz, 5th Council District
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