

**Transportation Commission Response to:
Resolution Regarding Community Engagement and Approval Processes for City Related
Improvement Projects¹**

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May 2019

Background

Previously, the city has expressed support for improving pedestrian safety through commitment to Vision Zero principles and implementation of numerous pedestrian safety initiatives, including road diets. By requiring Council approval for every lane reduction, this resolution could impede efforts by our experts on city staff to improve pedestrian safety by subjecting them to the whims of non-experts. Also, as it stands this resolution would only apply to lane reductions and not lane increases or any other changes to road configuration.

Furthermore, this resolution references level of service as a reason to object to road diets. As it stands, level of service only accounts for vehicle delays at specific intersections, and ignores other factors entirely. In fact, the state of California has recognized this and moved away from level of service as a metric.² If we really believe in Vision Zero, the city should be moving away from using level of service as a metric rather than citing it as a reason to object to road diets.

It should be noted that the requirement for Council approval for road diets is new - while language to add this requirement was in a proposed 2018 resolution,³ that resolution was amended prior to adoption to remove said requirement. The 2018 resolution also noted that no such requirement existed at that time.

Given this, the resolution represents a step backward as far as pedestrian safety and our Vision Zero goals. It subjects decisions on safety to non-experts, singles out lane reductions without considering other changes to road configuration, and emphasizes the use of auto-centric level of service metrics.

Recommendations

- 1. The City of Ann Arbor Transportation Commission suggests a return to the earlier process of managing road diets and lane restrictions, which does not insert council approval into the process of each decision.**

Additional considerations: City Council input in the form of larger policy and direction, especially as they support the City's Vision Zero endorsement, is an important part of the larger engineering process.

¹ [Resolution Regarding Community Engagement and Approval Processes for City Related Improvement Projects](#) (R-19-139)

² <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/sb743.html>

³ [Resolution Regarding Citizen Input and Process for City Street-Related Improvement Projects](#) (R-18-275)

- 2. City staff in consultation with the Transportation Commission should prepare educational materials to explain the value of road diets, the data and statistics that show how they contribute to public safety, and other material that can be used in an informative and educational exchange.**

Educational materials/information packets should:

- **Incorporate the Transportation Commission work on the 6 Es (Education, Enforcement, Engineering, Encouragement, Evaluation, and Equity), particularly a call for education as part of the process.**
- **Be available to Council Members, their constituents, and for city staff fielding questions from the public.**
- **Be distributed through council members, staff, commissions, social media, and special events and public engagement opportunities.**
- **Be updated as needed to maintain current information.**

Additional considerations: Educational materials may be helpful not only for lane reductions, but also roundabouts, protected bike lanes, explaining bike lane markings, pedestrian hybrid beacons (formerly known as HAWK signal) and Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs), priorities for sidewalk gaps, and more.