

September 15, 2017

Honorable Members of the City Council,

I am writing to inform you that I have vetoed the recent Council resolution requesting a full traffic and economic impact study whenever bike lanes are planned and implemented.

I recognize that this Council resolution is a formal request and the administration is not legally bound to change our processes, whether I veto it or not. However, I believe that the resolution is sending a public message contrary to both our city's policy and to prior Council actions supporting Complete Streets. These Complete Street measures enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. While I remain committed to working with the Councilmembers to address any concerns they have heard from constituents, there are more appropriate and practicable avenues to do so.

Under my administration, the City has made the decision-making process behind bicycle lane projects more transparent and inclusive through the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC). In this process, traffic studies are typically conducted when the implementation of bike lanes reduces the number of vehicular travel lanes along a street. When no such change in lanes or other significant change in traffic patterns would occur, it would be a waste of city resources to conduct additional traffic studies.

When BPAC meetings to review potential bike lane projects occur, the City also notifies local stakeholders including merchants and invites them to public hearings to voice input. We are also more than happy to conduct or participate in other neighborhood meetings, and have done so related to bike lanes on numerous occasions.

Furthermore, economic impact studies generally show that bike lanes are, if anything, positive for business. It does not make sense to conduct such a study every time we determine that a new bike lane should be installed. To the extent that bike lanes are proposed in areas where they are not a good fit for the surrounding area, we have decided not to put them in and will continue to carefully consider all of the relevant factors in making these decisions.

Safety studies universally show that bike lanes dramatically reduce the number of, severity of, and likelihood of crashes and deaths. The City has a responsibility to keep bike riders safe, just as we need to do our best to keep drivers, pedestrians, wheelchair users and transit users safe on our City streets.

We will continue to deploy robust community engagement processes when implementing bike lanes. For example, we have heard from small business owners who feared losing public parking spaces as a result of new bike lanes. We have reassured them that such is not the case, and any new measures would take into account the local community's needs. I look forward to continuing to work with you to address the concerns of businesses and residents, and to do what we can to enact Complete Streets for all users, and support a vibrant and safe City for everyone.

Sincerely,

Jorge O. Elorza
Mayor