

**MEMORANDUM**

Public Works Department

DATE: February 24, 2021

TO: Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee

FROM: Lorenzo Lopez, City Traffic Engineer
Edward Arango, Assistant Public Works Director
Dawn S. Cameron, Public Works Director

SUBJECT: Sign Placement in City Rights-of-Way

RECOMMENDATION

Receive report on standard operating procedures (SOPs) for sign placement in City rights-of-way, and confirm whether this information satisfies the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee motion (Item 7.2) from January 27, 2021.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting on January 27, 2021, the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (B/PAC) passed a motion to add an item to the work plan to discuss official guidelines for sign placement in the right-of-way. This issue was raised due to the installation of signs in 2020 to implement the ordinance to prohibit oversized vehicle parking on certain streets adjacent to Class II bikeways. The installation of these signs followed the Public Works Department's SOPs for sign installation which have been used for street signs in the past. Concerns were raised that the placement of such signs where sidewalks are narrow interfered with pedestrian use of the sidewalks. The B/PAC was further concerned that the installation of signs to enforce the ordinance prohibiting oversized vehicle parking on streets that are 40' wide or less will exacerbate this situation. The installation of these new signs is scheduled to begin in May 2021.

City Council Policy A-23 provides specific direction for advisory bodies to request additions to their annual work plans. If the topic will have minimal impact on staff resources, the City Manager may request that the Mayor and Vice Mayor jointly authorize the work item be added. Any topic that would have a significant staff impact in preparing for the advisory body's review shall require authorization from the full City Council.

Prior to analyzing the workload impact of the B/PAC's request and submitting the request to the City Manager, staff is providing this report on the revised SOPs for sign installation in City rights-of-way. Staff anticipates that this report may satisfy the B/PAC's request. The City Traffic Engineer will be available at the B/PAC meeting to help respond to questions on this matter.

ANALYSIS

The City has historically provided the following SOPs to field crews when installing new signs and sign posts:

- Utilize existing sign posts or streetlight poles where available;
- Maintain 18" clear space from the edge of curb to sign post;
- Where there is no landscaping strip, provide for at least 36" of clear space on the sidewalk adjacent to the sign post, which exceeds the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) minimum requirement of 32" at a pinch point.

Based on the concerns expressed after installation of the signs prohibiting oversized vehicle parking on streets with bike lanes, the Public Works Department has revised its SOPs for sign installation. The revised SOPs strive to balance the City's commitment to minimize impacts on pedestrians for new sign post installations with the challenges presented by streets with narrow sidewalks and limited right-of-way. The SOPs for positioning new sign posts within City rights-of-way are listed below in order of priority:

1. Use an existing sign post or streetlight pole if there is one in the right location and it has room for the sign.
2. Install a new sign post in the landscaping strip between the sidewalk and roadway if a landscaping strip exists.
3. For wider sidewalks (6' or wider), ensure there is a minimum of 48" clear space on the sidewalk adjacent to the sign post (after leaving 18" clear space on the curb side).
4. For narrower sidewalks (less than 6' wide), place the sign post behind the sidewalk if there are no obstructions such as landscaping, fences, retaining walls, etc., and the sign post can remain within the City's right-of-way.

5. For narrower sidewalks where the sign post cannot go behind the sidewalk, place the sign post in the sidewalk as close as possible to the back of sidewalk, providing a clear space all the way to the curb.

In no situation will a new sign post be positioned with less than 36" clear space on the sidewalk adjacent to the sign post, which as noted above, will exceed the ADA minimum requirement of 32" at a pinch point.

The presence of sign posts, streetlights, fire hydrants, and other equipment in the sidewalk will continue to present ongoing challenges for the City, especially where there is no landscape strip/furniture zone. While the City can strive to minimize the impacts of new poles or equipment, it will not always be possible to avoid all impacts where right-of-way is limited. In addition, moving existing installations would require significant capital investments and may not be feasible in all cases. This issue and possible strategies for improvement could be further explored in the upcoming Pedestrian Master Plan update.

NEXT STEPS

If a more thorough evaluation of sign placement SOPs is sought prior to completion of the Pedestrian Master Plan update, staff anticipates that this effort would involve more than minimal staff resources and would significantly affect the planned work flow for the coming year. For this reason, staff expects that such a request would need to be directed to the full City Council.

If B/PAC members or members of the public have questions or concerns about specific locations of new poles, they are also encouraged to submit *AskMV* requests at [City of Mountain View: Submit Request \(Streets: Street Signs\)](#).

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