



DATE: August 25, 2020

CATEGORY: Consent

DEPT.: Public Works

TITLE: **Amend Resolution 18470 to Prohibit the Operation of a Bicycle, Electric Bicycle, Motorized Scooter, or Transportation Device on Closed Portions of Castro Street between West Evelyn Avenue and Mercy Street**

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt an Amendment to Resolution No. 18470 Temporarily Suspending and Designating Parking Restrictions and Prohibitions Pursuant to Mountain View City Code Chapter 19 and Temporarily Closing the 100, 200, 300, and 400 Blocks of Castro Street to Motor Vehicle Traffic Pursuant to California Vehicle Code Section 21101 to Facilitate Outdoor Dining, to be read in title only, further reading waived (Attachment 1 to the Council report).

BACKGROUND

On June 9, 2020, in an effort to support businesses in downtown Mountain View as they recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and in response to the June 1, 2020 Santa Clara County COVID-19 modification to the Shelter-in-Place order that allowed outdoor dining at restaurants, the City Council adopted [Resolution 18470](#) to temporarily close the 100, 200, 300, and 400 blocks of Castro Street, between West Evelyn Avenue and Mercy Street, to vehicular traffic with continued motor vehicle access across Castro Street for the cross streets ("Castro Street Closure") to facilitate the Outdoor Dining Program "Castro Summer StrEATS." This resolution only prohibits motor vehicles on the closed blocks of Castro Street.

The layout for the closed blocks of Castro Street includes a 10' pedestrian walkway in the street to provide adequate space for pedestrians and dining customers to practice social distancing in accordance with the State and County requirements. Since implementation of the Outdoor Dining Program on June 26, 2020, staff has received concerns from patrons and downtown business owners about bicycle riding in the pedestrian walkway and through the dining areas creating safety and social distancing issues. This was verified through staff observations of some bicyclists riding too fast, weaving through pedestrians and tables, and, in one instance, popping wheelies. Staff further observed similar

problems with people using skateboards and motorized scooters through the closed blocks.

To address these concerns, staff placed “Walk Your Bike” signs at the entrance of each block. When this proved inadequate in discouraging riding bicycles and other transportation devices, additional “Walk Your Bike” signs were posted midblock and bicycle detour signs were placed at each intersection. However, these signs are advisory only and are not enforceable.

On March 26, 2019, the City Council adopted [Resolution 18304](#) which prohibits the operation of a bicycle, electric bicycle, or transportation device upon sidewalks on Castro Street between Central Expressway and High School Way/Yosemite Avenue, with exception for children 10 years and under, pursuant to Section 19.53(c) of the Mountain View City Code. This prohibition was necessary to avoid mobility conflicts on Castro Street’s sidewalks, which experience a high level of pedestrian traffic.

ANALYSIS

The closed sections of Castro Street are experiencing the same mobility conflicts that the sidewalks face due to both the number of pedestrians and the need for social distancing. For this reason, staff recommends that Council amend the resolution prohibiting vehicular traffic along those blocks of Castro Street to include prohibiting operation of bicycles, electric bicycles, motorized scooters, and transportation devices. The California Vehicle Code authorizes local authorities to temporarily close a portion of any street for celebrations, parades, local special events, and other purposes by adoption of a resolution when the closing is necessary for the safety and protection of persons who are to use that portion of the street during the temporary closing. Closure of the street to these additional devices is needed to help maintain social distancing and address the mobility conflicts discussed above for persons participating in the Outdoor Dining Program and accessing the Castro Street Closure area. Consistent with the requirements of City Code Section 19.53(c), signs will be posted advising the public of the prohibition, and children 10 years and younger will be exempt from the prohibition as applied to bicycles, electric bicycles, and transportation devices.

Staff considered the following alternatives that were raised by the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee in the context of the City's Resiliency Plan at their June 24, 2020 meeting:

- Provide a separate bike lane along the closed blocks of Castro Street. This alternative is not recommended because it would significantly reduce the space available for the businesses, who must keep their tables more than 6' apart.
- Limit the prohibition to certain times of day when there is more restaurant activity. This is not recommended due to challenges in ensuring people are aware of and abide by the time restrictions. The prohibition of bicycle and transportation device riding on the sidewalks of Castro Street is not limited to certain times of the day, and it is recommended that a consistent approach be taken for the sidewalks and street along the closed blocks of Castro Street.

The closure of the four blocks of Castro Street is effective until September 30, 2020. Staff is consulting with the businesses about extending the closure until the end of the year. In addition, staff is studying the possibility of allowing other businesses, such as hair stylists and fitness studios along Castro Street, to operate within the closed section as long as it can be done in a safe manner with proper social distancing. A second amendment to Resolution 18470 may be brought to Council in September to extend the closure and/or expand the use beyond outdoor dining.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of the prohibition to operate a bicycle, electric bicycle, motorized scooter, or transportation device will require posting signs at the entrances to the 100, 200, 300, and 400 blocks of Castro Street. The cost to manufacture and post the signs will be nominal and will not require any additional funding allocations.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Do not adopt the amendment to Resolution 18470.
2. Modify the amendment to Resolution 18470.
3. Provide other direction to staff.

PUBLIC NOTICING

Agenda posting and e-mail distribution to the Downtown Committee, Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Downtown Association, Mountain View Chamber of Commerce, and Old Mountain View Neighborhood Association.

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AB/CL/6/CAM
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Attachment: 1. Amendment to Resolution 18470