


CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM

Date: March 20, 2019

To: Honorable City Council
c/o City Clerk, Room 395
Attention: Committee Chair

From:  Seleta J. Reynolds, General Manager
Department of Transportation

Subject: Roadside Memorial Sign Program / Fatal Bicycle Crashes

SUMMARY

Council File 18-0895 directs the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) to provide options for creating permanent roadside memorial signs at the locations of fatal bicycle crashes in the City of Los Angeles. This report describes program options for memorial sign content, design, and placement; lifespan and cost; and memorial sign request procedure.

RECOMMENDATION

LADOT recommends the Los Angeles City Council receive and file this item.

BACKGROUND

Since 2003, more than 160 people have died in traffic collisions while bicycling in the City of Los Angeles. The locations of these fatalities are often marked by friends and families of victims with beautiful temporary memorials which can include flowers, candles, letters, photos, and "ghost bikes."

In 2015, Mayor Garcetti signed Executive Directive 10 to establish a goal of zero traffic fatalities by 2025 and included a set of policies and programs to achieve this goal. Vision Zero recognizes that all people have the right to move about their communities safely. As part of our mission, LADOT works to raise awareness of traffic fatalities and to develop a culture of safety in Los Angeles. LADOT does this through in-school education, digital and physical social change campaigns, and community engagement.

A long-term memorial sign program will honor people who die in traffic collisions while riding their bicycles and raise awareness of bicyclist fatalities. The suggested sign design will also educate drivers about key safe-driving behavior that can save lives. The proposed program furthers the City's Vision Zero goals and will help develop the culture of safety.

DISCUSSION

In order to develop this report, LADOT researched similar programs in other cities and states and reviewed LADOT's existing sign costs and procedures.

Sign Content and Design

The bicycle memorial sign can include a driver direction, bicycle icon, and memorial language. Options for driver direction include language that broadly promotes motorist-cyclist safety like "WATCH YOUR SPEED" and "GIVE THREE FEET IT'S THE LAW." Driver direction options also include text related to the cause of the fatal crash like "DON'T TEXT AND DRIVE," "DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE," and "RIGHT TURNS YIELD TO BIKES." Memorial language can read "In memory of [name of victim]."

LADOT recommends that all language and icons be on a single sign. Per the California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices, the memorial sign should be rectangular with a blue background and white writing. This color-scheme is consistent with the state's Victim Memorial Sign Program. In order to be seen by all road users, signs should be 36 inches across and 42 inches high. See Attachment 1 for sample sign design.

Sign Placement

LADOT can install signs on existing electroliers (light poles) within 500 feet of incidents based on crash reports. If a nearby electrolier is not available, LADOT can install the signs using new or existing sign posts. The sign should be installed at a location agreed upon by LADOT and the victim's family. For maximum visibility, LADOT can install two signs at each location on either side of the pole.

LADOT can only install signs on City of Los Angeles streets. This stipulation excludes freeways and state highways, such as portions of Pacific Coast Highway or Santa Monica Boulevard, from the proposed Roadside Memorial Sign Program.

Cost and Lifespan of Sign

Per location, LADOT estimates the cost of two signs and installation to be \$485. LADOT could install up to 20 per year at a total cost of \$9,700. Other city and state governments charge a fee for installation of these signs. However, LADOT believes in the importance of the program and that the department can and should shoulder this cost. These costs include an anti-graffiti coating which prolongs the life of the sign.

The lifespan of each sign is five to seven years. LADOT will print, install, and maintain the sign for seven years. If at the end of the sign's useful life the family or third party wishes to install a new sign, they will be asked to pay the full cost of print and installation.

Procedure

LADOT will create a request intake form for memorial signs requests. Details to be included in the form are the name of person applying, relationship to the victim, contact information, date of fatal crash, location of crash, and the victim's name as it appears on the accident report and as it should appear on the sign. The requestor must be a member of the victim's family or a third party with consent from the victim's family. The form will include a line for immediate family signature. LADOT staff will review the application for completeness and contact requestor for follow-up.

Prior to installation, LADOT recommends that the Bureau of Street Services, the Bureau of Engineering, and LADOT conduct a site visit to ensure existing infrastructure is maintained to each department's standards and guidelines.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

An annual program of up to 20 Bike Memorial Signs is expected to cost the City approximately \$9,700. LADOT will accommodate this cost within its existing funding.

Attachments

Attachment - Sample Bike Memorial Sign Designs

