



City Council Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: JANUARY 10, 2023
FROM: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT WARDS: 5 & 6
SUBJECT: ESTABLISHMENT OF AXLE RESTRICTION ON SEGMENT OF LA SIERRA AVENUE – ORDINANCE

ISSUE:

Establishment of an axle restriction prohibiting commercial vehicles exceeding three axles and cutting through La Sierra Avenue from the southerly City limits to the State Route (SR)-91 Freeway.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council introduce and subsequently adopt the attached Ordinance amending Section 10.56.050 of the Riverside Municipal Code to establish an axle restriction prohibiting use by commercial vehicles exceeding three axles on La Sierra Avenue from the southerly City limits to the SR-91 Freeway.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION:

On November 2, 2022, the Transportation Board (Board) reviewed this matter with eight members present and voted unanimously to recommend establishment of the proposed axle restriction on La Sierra Avenue from the southerly City limits to the SR-91 Freeway.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On December 8, 2022, the Mobility and Infrastructure Committee reviewed this matter, with three members present. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the City Council approve the establishment of an axle restriction on La Sierra Avenue from the southerly City limits to the SR-91 Freeway.

BACKGROUND:

The Public Works Department may establish weight limit or axle restrictions to prohibit use of

select streets by larger commercial vehicles. These types of restrictions reduce commercial truck traffic on certain local, residential, and/or collector roadways by directing truck traffic onto arterial roadways. Weight limit restrictions assist in preserving the pavement and promoting safe use of streets which may have distinctive roadway conditions, are residential in nature, or experience cut-through truck traffic. Such restrictions do not prevent use for the purpose of delivering or picking up of materials/merchandise or the performance of services in connection with a property within the specific block.

Historic classification counts conducted on La Sierra Avenue between the southerly City of Riverside (City) limits and the SR-91 Freeway each year between October 2019 and May 2022 to assess truck traffic volumes along the corridor had previously not reflected excessive truck traffic (exceeding 3 % of total traffic) for a multi-lane arterial roadway, thus implementation of an axle restriction had not been recommended. Periodic reassessment of truck traffic volumes on this segment of La Sierra Avenue was supported due to area resident concerns and reported increases in commercial truck traffic.

DISCUSSION:

The Public Works Department is proposing establishment of an axle restriction prohibiting use by commercial trucks exceeding three axles on La Sierra Avenue from the southerly City limits to the SR-91 Freeway to reduce cut-through traffic to improve quality of life and help preserve the road. The axle restriction is now recommended based on updated classification count data performed over an aggregate three-day consecutive period analysis in September 2022 which resulted in the percentage of truck traffic above the maximum 3% truck traffic threshold utilized by the City and consistent with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidelines. The maximum 3% truck traffic threshold has historically been utilized to determine if there are excessive truck traffic cutting through a particular arterial. As the September 2022 classification counts reflected a combined truck traffic volume of 3.8% of total traffic volumes, an axle restriction was recommended to prohibit cut-through truck traffic by larger trucks exceeding three axles to reduce higher commercial truck traffic volumes and to restore expected levels of truck use (3% or below) along this stretch of the La Sierra Avenue corridor.

The proposed axle restriction will address cut-through commercial truck traffic utilizing this segment of La Sierra Avenue to bypass congestion on the I-15 Freeway to access the SR-91 Freeway. The proposed axle restriction would also aid in reducing safety and noise concerns created by large truck use and preventing excessive asphalt damage on this segment of roadway.

As a portion of La Sierra Avenue also traverses the County of Riverside (County) south of the City limits, the Public Works Department consulted the County regarding the proposed axle restriction. The County has reviewed and is in support of the City's proposed axle restriction along La Sierra Avenue from the southerly City limits to the SR-91 Freeway. The County has also agreed to work collaboratively with the City to select appropriate locations for the posting of advance and turn-restriction signage associated with the axle restriction within the County jurisdiction including, but not limited to, County roadways connecting to La Sierra Avenue such as El Sobrante Road and Cajalco Road if the proposed axle restriction is approved. Axle restriction ahead signage and turn-restriction signage within the County jurisdiction would be fabricated by the City and subsequently installed and maintained by the County. The advance notification signs in the County jurisdiction are intended to supplement signage within the city to

notify truck drivers and to provide ample opportunity to take an alternate route or return to the I-15 Freeway. The joint effort between the City and the County is anticipated to deter cut-through commercial truck traffic from utilizing routes within the County which connect to La Sierra Avenue and would ultimately cross the axle restricted segment of La Sierra Avenue within the city.

Implementation of the proposed axle restriction would aid in regulating heavy truck traffic on this segment of La Sierra Avenue keeping larger trucks on local area freeways promoting safer operations and reducing impacts to residential neighborhoods which sit adjacent to or back up to this segment of La Sierra Avenue. Trucks which exceed three axles directly enroute to business locations in the vicinity and/or engaged in pick-up and/or delivery activities within this area would be compliant with the regulations and not considered in violation of the posted axle restrictions and vehicles with three axles or less would not be impacted.

If the proposed ordinance is adopted changeable message signs will be deployed for two weeks to provide advance notification of the truck axle restrictions to truck drivers prior to the initial police enforcement.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This item contributes to **Strategic Priority 6 – Infrastructure, Mobility and Connectivity** and **Goal 6.2** - Maintain, protect and improve assets and infrastructure within the City's built environment to ensure and enhance reliability, resiliency, sustainability, and facilitate connectivity.

This item aligns with each of the Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust:** Establishment of axle restrictions develop Community Trust through the assessment of commercial truck activity on public roadways to ensure that commercial truck volume levels do not exceed standards. Excessive truck activity may be the result of cut-through truck traffic associated with elevated traffic volumes, noise, and damage to roadway pavement.
2. **Equity** - The establishment of axle restrictions on roadways improves the quality of life within neighboring communities by reducing noise, cut-through traffic, and by improving safety.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** - Axle restrictions are a cost-effective measure to mitigate cut-through commercial truck traffic and notify commercial truck drivers of the prohibited use by trucks exceeding three axles.
4. **Innovation** - This proposed axle restriction represents a continuation of innovative uses of successful axle restrictions implemented in the past.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** - Axle restrictions help to restore commercial truck traffic to at or below standard levels while allowing for commercial truck activity related to local business and pick-up and delivery of goods and services and enable police enforcement to address trucks in violation. Adopted and posted restrictions help to deter cut-through activity enhancing safety, reducing noise, and helping to preserve roadway pavement condition.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The total estimated fiscal impact of this action is \$4,465. This amount is for the cost of sign fabrication and installation. Funding is budgeted and available in the General Fund, PW-Streets Maintenance, Signing Supplies account number 4110100-424143.

Prepared by: Gilbert Hernandez, Public Works Director
Certified as to availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Interim Assistant City Manager/Chief Financial Officer/City Treasurer
Approved by: Kris Martinez, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form: Phaedra Norton, City Attorney

Concurs with:



Chuck Conder, Chair
Mobility and Infrastructure Committee

Attachments:

1. Ordinance
2. Site Map
3. Truck Analysis
4. Presentation