



Susan Wengraf
Councilmember District 6

CONSENT CALENDAR
January 30, 2018

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmembers Susan Wengraf, Linda Maio, Lori Droste, and Mayor Arreguin

Subject: Request that the City Manager Write a Letter to Navigation Service Providers to Help Mitigate Increased Neighborhood Traffic Volume and Unsafe Driving

RECOMMENDATION

Request that the City Manager write a letter to navigation service providers such as Waze, Google, and Apple, reporting that their apps have led to an inappropriate increase in traffic volumes and speeds on many local residential streets, and requesting specific adjustments to assumptions that guide their algorithms. The goal of the letter is to help mitigate increased traffic volume on neighborhood streets and unsafe driving in the City of Berkeley.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Staff time.

BACKGROUND

Many residents in Berkeley are experiencing an increase in traffic volume and dangerous driving on their residential streets. Construction projects for infrastructure upgrades are slowing traffic through several of the city's main arteries. The rise in UC Berkeley's attendance has increased the number of pedestrians crossing streets, contributing to slowing traffic. In response, GPS programs are directing increased numbers of frustrated drivers through our residential neighborhoods.

Traffic volume on residential streets can be influenced if the navigation service providers adjust their algorithms per the recommendations from the Transportation Manager in the attached draft letter.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Redirecting traffic out of residential neighborhoods aligns with Berkeley's environmental sustainability goal.

CONTACT PERSON

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Attachments:

1: Draft letter from Transportation Manager

The City of Berkeley appreciates the real time navigation and route guidance services provided by your company. Concurrent with the launch and expansion of services such as yours, the Berkeley Community has experienced a marked and inappropriate increase in traffic volumes and speeds on many of our local residential streets prompting calls from neighborhoods to block through access to their streets or take other relatively severe actions that would significantly limit public mobility. In light of increased crash risks associated with distracted drivers and less than ideal adherence to posted traffic regulations by those who are seeking the fastest bypass to crowded freeways, the City of Berkeley seeks your support in achieving more responsible driving behaviors and route choices by motorists using your service. Specifically we ask for the following adjustments to the assumptions used by your guidance algorithms:

1. For local residential streets as designated by the City of Berkeley General Plan your travel time predictions should be based on the lesser of a) the prima facie speed limit (25 mph) for such streets under the California Vehicle Code and b) the actual travel speed collected from mobile devices in vehicles using said street. This would ensure that the guidance to your users is not based on an assumption of illegal driving behavior.
2. The General Plan designates Arterial and Collector Streets as the appropriate routes for through traffic and the City has provided appropriate facilities including traffic signals and in some cases higher speed limits on such streets. Thus we do not seek a change in your travel time projections for such streets.
3. As provided for by State Law, the Berkeley City Council has established and posted 15mph speed limits in school zones as illustrated on the attached map (*we need to provide this*). Thus your travel time predictions should be based on the lesser of 15mph and the actual travel speed collected on designated school zone streets during the hours when children are present. While there is some variation in school schedules it would be reasonable to use the hours of 7:30 AM to 3:30 PM (*we need to confirm with BUSD*). At all other times the 25mph local residential speed limit would apply.

