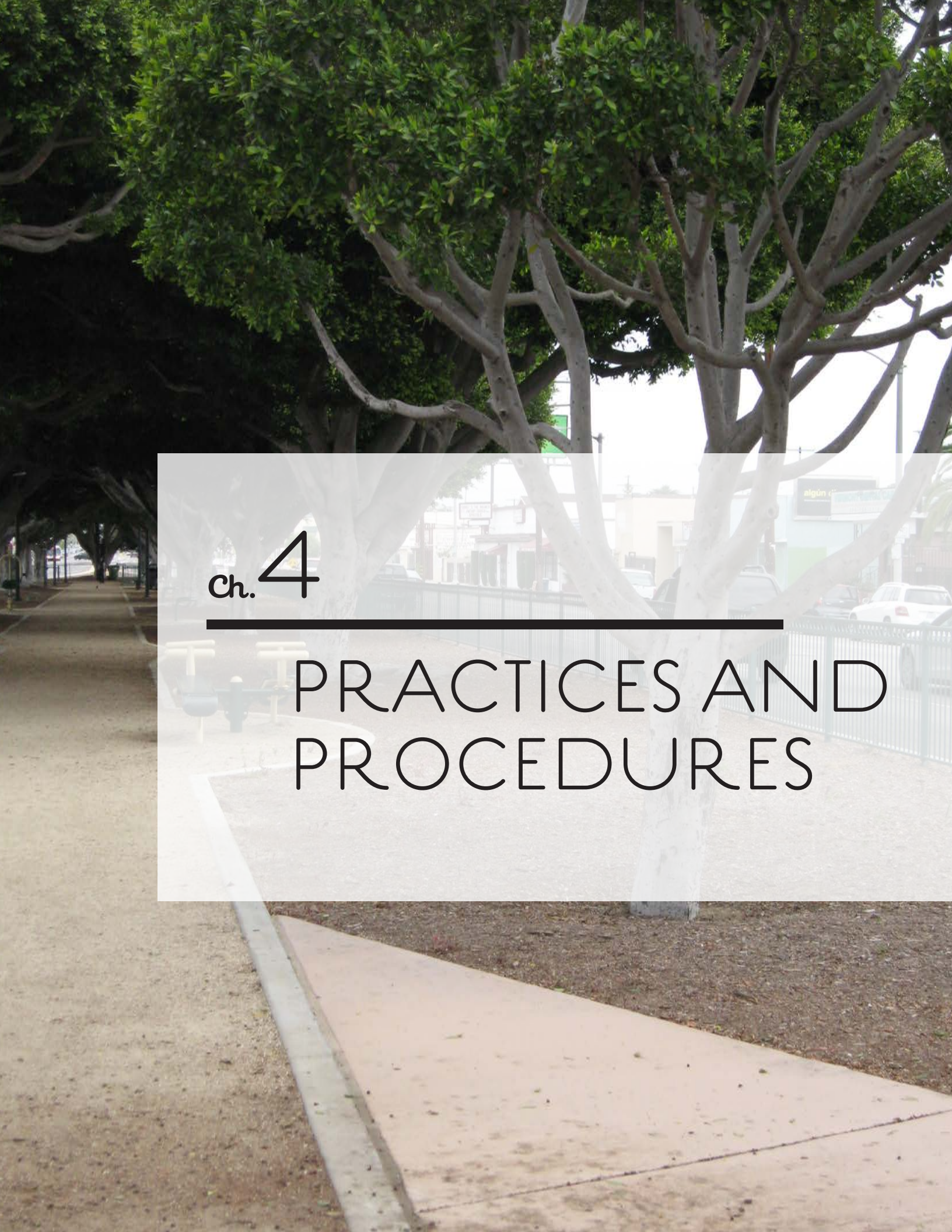

Ch. 4

PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

Updates to the County's existing pedestrian infrastructure procedures can enhance safety and create a more comfortable pedestrian network. As funding becomes available these procedures can be updated.

PAVEMENT AND SIDEWALKS

Los Angeles County Public Works is responsible for managing and maintaining over 3,400 centerline miles of paved roads and sidewalks. Public Works inspects sidewalk conditions annually to identify needed repairs.

Public Works performs a visual survey of each street every five years to collect information regarding the size and frequency of any observed cracks. The data is then inputted into the County's Pavement Management System (PMS) which interprets the data and generates a rating from zero (completely failed road) to 100 (road in excellent condition), which is known as Pavement Condition Index (PCI). The County determines a PCI for every street. Typically, streets with PCI ratings above 74 are considered to be in good to excellent condition. Streets in this category are generally treated with a minor surface treatment that focuses on rejuvenating and sealing the road.

Streets that have a PCI rating between 58 and 74 are in fair condition and are mostly treated with a thin paving layer. Streets that have PCI ratings below 58 are in poor or failed condition and require major pavement resurfacing or reconstruction.

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS

- Continue inspecting sidewalks annually.
- Continue routine maintenance of striping and pavement markings, including crosswalk markings, every 30 months for painted material, and every five years for thermoplastic material.

PARKWAYS, TREES, AND MEDIANS

Vegetation near sidewalks is typically in front of or on the side of a residential or business property. According to the California Streets and Highway Code, the property owner is responsible for maintaining the property's frontage. This includes but is not limited to grass, shrubs, and weeds within the public right-of-way. When there are concerns with vegetation in this area, the County reminds the adjacent property owner of their maintenance responsibilities.

The County is responsible for any trees located in parkways, including all routine trimming and removal of parkway trees. However, adjacent property owners are responsible for the regular watering of parkway trees. The County also maintains all medians, whether or not they are landscaped.

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS

- Continue routine maintenance of parkways and medians.
- Continue communicating with property owners about their responsibility to maintain vegetation in front of or on the side of residential or business properties.

SIGNALS AND BEACONS

Traffic Signals

If a traffic signal becomes non-operational, residents may report the incident to Public Works via online request or phone. Traffic signal incidents include, but are not limited to: signals flashing red, all signals are out, or traffic signal damage.

Signals are also modernized through Public Works' Traffic Signal Synchronization Program (TSSP), which implements low-cost operational enhancements to traffic signals on major streets throughout the county. Typical TSSP projects involve upgrading all the traffic signals along a corridor to keep the signals synchronized, placing vehicle detectors in the pavement to detect the presence of vehicles, coordinating the timing of signals between successive intersections, and automatically adjusting traffic signals to facilitate the movement of vehicles through the intersections.

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS

- Develop a replacement plan to upgrade pedestrian push buttons to meet current Americans with Disabilities Act standards.

Pedestrian-Activated Warning Systems

Like traffic signal incidents, residents may report any non-operational pedestrian-activated warning systems to Public Works via online request or phone. Currently, pedestrian-activated warning systems are inspected by Public Works on a quarterly basis.

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS

- Continue to check pedestrian-activated warning systems on a quarterly basis to ensure proper functionality.

CROSSINGS

Currently, County standards require minimum travel lane widths of 11 feet, right-turn lane widths of 11 feet, and left- or center-turn lane widths of 10 feet. Excessive lane widths can increase driver speeding, making pedestrian crossing uncomfortable and challenging.

The County typically installs marked crosswalks at uncontrolled locations based on projected pedestrian volumes and taking into account adjacent land uses. Some examples of land uses with marked crosswalks at uncontrolled locations are schools, parks, or community centers. The County is currently developing new crosswalk installation guidelines. Regarding maintenance, Public Works routinely restripes painted crosswalks every 2 1/2 years, and thermoplastic crosswalks every five years.

Caltrans Standard Plans and Standard Plans for Public Works Construction (SPPWC) indicate design standards for curb ramps, including width and slopes. The design standards include multiple design cases that include two-ramp corner installations, also known as paired curb ramps, and one-ramp corner installations, also known as single shared curb ramps. Paired curb ramps allow pedestrians to be aligned with the crossing direction while waiting to cross the street, particularly those in wheelchairs, with vision impairment, or pushing strollers or carts. Single shared curb ramps are aligned diagonally with the intersection and provide access where factors such as available right-of-way, turn radius, drainage, and sight distance preclude the use of paired curb ramps

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS

- Reduce travel lane widths to 10-foot standard for local residential streets and for inside lanes on other streets, to reduce pedestrian crossing distances, where feasible and appropriate. Consider 11-foot outside lanes for streets with designated truck and/or bus routes, where feasible and appropriate.
- Continue routine maintainenance of striping and pavement markings, including crosswalk markings, every 30 months for painted material, and every five years for thermoplastic material.
- Enhance guidelines for marked crosswalk installation, which may be based on factors that include, but are not limited to, existing pedestrian activity, adjacent land use, and proximity to other marked crosswalks. These guidelines could include:
    - Direction on marking crosswalks and applying the appropriate countermeasures at unsignalized locations based on the number of vehicle travel lanes, average daily traffic, posted speed limit, and other factors based on engineering judgment
    - Direction on the use of adult crossing guards, school signs and markings, and/or pedestrian-activated warning devices at unsignalized street crossing locations
- Install two curb ramps per corner at marked crosswalks, where feasible considering factors such as right-of-way, turn radius, drainage, and sight distance.

MULTI-WAY STOP CONTROL AND YIELD CONTROL

The installation of multi-way stop control at an intersection requires an engineering study. These studies look at vehicular and pedestrian volumes, collision rates, geometric roadway conditions, and vehicular speeds.

If a STOP or YIELD sign is damaged or missing, residents may report these incidents and their locations to Public Works via online request or phone.

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS

- Continue to respond to online and phone requests for repair of damaged or missing STOP or YIELD signs.
- Continue to inspect multi-way stop control signage every three years to ensure graffiti, vegetation overgrowth, or fading is addressed and signage remains legible.

NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Currently, Los Angeles County provides a process to implement traffic management measures and treats each location on a case-by-case basis. Potential streets for implementation are primarily residential and carry between 500 to 5,000 vehicles per day. Depending on feasibility and approval by a Public Works Project Engineer, treatments that may result in a high level of traffic restrictions must obtain approval by two-thirds of the total number of community members affected by the proposed changes in traffic flows.[1]

1 Los Angeles County Public Works. Neighborhood Traffic Management Program. http://www.ladpw.org/traffic/ntmp/program.cfm

More information on types of treatments used in the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program can be found here: http://www.ladpw.org/traffic/ntmp/toolbox.cfm

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS

- Develop guidelines for installing traffic management measures such as, but not limited to, curb extensions, curb corner radii reduction, traffic circles, and roundabouts.
  - Guidelines should take into account street classification, considering exceptions based on, but not limited to adjacent land uses, pedestrian count data, pedestrian-related collision data, and designated bus/truck routes.
- Evaluate minimizing curb radii to lower turning vehicle speeds to enhance pedestrian safety. Evaluate setting a standard for minimum curb radii, where feasible and appropriate.

DRIVEWAYS

The County's existing driveway standards (outlined in Title 16) allow a minimum driveway width of 10 feet and a maximum width of:

- 20 feet if the driveway serves only residential buildings/apartments
- 20 feet for lots or parcels of land that are less than 100 feet wide
- 30 feet or 20 percent of the front frontage of the lot or parcel of land (whichever is greater), but not to exceed 60 feet, when the driveway serves uses other than residences or apartments on a lot or parcel of land greater than 100 feet wide

When driveways are required to be used as a Fire Apparatus Access Road, as defined in Chapter 5 of the County of Los Angeles Fire Code (Title 32), and is labeled as "No Parking – Fire Lane" for on-site Fire Department access, the minimum required width for detached single family dwellings is 20 feet.[1] The minimum width of the driveway is required to be increased to a minimum width of 26 feet[2] for a building(s) other than detached single family dwellings, which are 30 feet or less. The minimum width of the driveway is increased to 28 feet when the building(s) is greater than 30 feet in height.[3]

The number of, and width of driveways can make walking challenging. To enhance pedestrian safety and comfort, the County will consider limiting each of these, where feasible and appropriate.

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS

- Develop a process to consolidate, reduce widths of, or close excessive driveways at sites adjacent to intersections with a history of pedestrian-involved collisions, where feasible and appropriate, in accordance with Los Angeles County Code Title 16, and considering prior planning approval for the site.

1 2017 County of Los Angeles Fire Code (Los Angeles County Code Title 32), Chapter 5, Section 503.1; Appendix D, Section D103.1
2 2017 County of Los Angeles Fire Code (Los Angeles County Code Title 32), Appendix D, Section D103.2
3 2017 County of Los Angeles Fire Code (Los Angeles County Code Title 32), Appendix D, Section D104.2

PEDESTRIAN COUNTS

Currently, pedestrian counts may be conducted in conjunction with land development and pedestrian-related projects, such as this Plan. In 2013, the DPH PLACE Program acquired automated bicycle and pedestrian counters to support the development of active transportation plans by PLACE grantees and technical assistance recipients. The DPH PLACE Program deployed the automated counters and recruited community volunteers to assist with collecting manual count data for the Community Pedestrian Plans. To date, counts have been conducted in the cities of Carson, Cudahy, El Monte, Monterey Park, San Gabriel, and South El Monte using this program.

However, the County does not currently conduct pedestrian counts on a regular basis, nor have locations for regular pedestrian counts been identified.

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS

- Modify future revision of Traffic Impact Analysis guidelines due to SB743 adoption to include pedestrian facility analysis.
- Establish a process for collecting and analyzing pedestrian data and making recommendations for additional enhancements after projects are complete.
- Establish a process to conduct regular pedestrian counts and identify pedestrian count locations; selected based on criteria that consider land use, current pedestrian volumes, ADT, proximity to transit, collision history, community input, and other factors to evaluate the effectiveness of Step by Step Los Angeles County.
    - Refer to Appendix D for information regarding potential funding sources for counts; and refer to Community Pedestrian Plans for potential ongoing count locations at which baseline counts have already been established.

LIGHTING

Streetlights

Southern California Edison owns and maintains the majority of the streetlights within the County Lighting Maintenance Districts serving unincorporated areas and 18 incorporated cities.

Residents may petition Public Works for new or additional streetlights with signatures of property owners representing at least 60 percent of the benefited area, followed by a process that meets the requirements of Proposition 218 (the 1996 "Right to Vote on Taxes Act"), and approval from the Board of Supervisors. Property owners in a County Lighting Maintenance District pay an annual assessment through their property tax bill, which partially pays the operation and maintenance cost of street lighting. For rural communities in the County's Rural Outdoor Lighting District, installation of streetlights is restricted in accordance with the Rural Outdoor Lighting District Ordinance.

It typically takes up to 12 months to process a street lighting petition and install streetlights, if the area is within an existing lighting maintenance district. If the area is not within a lighting maintenance district, it typically takes 12-18 months to annex the area, plus an additional 8-12 months for Southern California Edison to install the streetlights after annexation.

If a streetlight is burned out or needs repair, residents may contact Southern California Edison Company at 1-(800)-611-1911 or online at www.sce.com/info/PowerOutages/default.htm. Public Works can also be reached at (626) 458-1700 or at dpw.lacounty.gov/contact/.

Pedestrian-Scale Lighting

Distinct from streetlights, which are meant to light the roadway for motorists, pedestrian-scale lighting is typically shorter, more frequent and closely spaced, focused on illuminating the sidewalk or walking path. Pedestrian-scale lights can work alongside streetlights to illuminate crosswalks and sidewalks to increase visibility of people walking and provide a sense of personal safety. Decorative pedestrian-scale lighting, while costlier to install, operate, and maintain, can enhance the look of the neighborhood or business district when properly implemented.

There are limited unincorporated county areas that have pedestrian-scale lighting in operation; however, currently there is no formal County or SCE process to request new pedestrian lighting because a secure source of funding for the installation, operation, and maintenance costs needs to be identified on a case-by-case basis.

Grants have been the main source of funding for the installation of pedestrian-scale lighting. These existing lights are generally operated and maintained through funds that also pay for other street and highway maintenance projects in the unincorporated areas of the county, including pavement enhancement; pavement widening; sidewalk work to prevent erosion; construction of concrete driveways, sidewalks, curbs and gutters to enhance drainage; traffic safety projects; and graffiti removal work.

The County is currently exploring ways to provide more sustainable operation and maintenance funding for pedestrian-scale lighting. Once a secure source of operation and maintenance funding is identified, additional pedestrian-scale lighting can be provided in unincorporated areas.

In the near term, the County is developing a financial and implementation plan to retrofit all streetlights with light-emitting diode (LED) lamp fixtures, which can provide greater illumination in and around the roadway, increasing visibility of people walking.

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS

- Finalize development of a financial and implementation plan to retrofit all streetlights with LED lamp fixtures.
- Continue to explore ways to purchase, operate, and maintain pedestrian-scale lighting.