



City of Santa Barbara
Downtown Parking Committee

Memorandum

DATE: December 12, 2019

TO: Downtown Parking Committee

FROM: Robert J. Dayton, Transportation Planning and Parking Manager
Victor Garza, Downtown Plaza and Parking Manager

SUBJECT: VISION ZERO STRATEGY - DOWNTOWN LOADING ZONES

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee receive an update on efforts to implement Vision Zero strategies by expanding commercial and passenger loading on the 00 blocks in the Downtown corridor.

DISCUSSION:

In September 2018, City Council adopted the Santa Barbara Vision Zero Strategy 2030 to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, and equitable mobility for all. Vision Zero is based on an underlying ethical principle that it can never be acceptable that people are killed or seriously injured when moving on public roadways. Vision Zero regards traffic collisions as a policy problem that can be addressed through enforcement, design, and education.

Of all traffic corridors in the City, Lower State Street has the third highest number of collisions. As a result, the City's Vision Zero Strategy identifies Lower State Street as a "priority corridor" for implementing strategies to improve safety. The primary concerns on Lower State are DUI occurrences, high pedestrian and cyclist traffic, and pedestrian and cyclist-involved collisions. The Vision Zero Strategy identifies enforcement of loading zones on State Street and the East/West 00 blocks and evaluation of locations of loading zones on State Street and the East/West 00 blocks as critical action items.

Currently, there are sixteen commercial loading zones ("yellow zones") located on State Street between Victoria Street and Highway 101. Use of these loading zones is prohibited after 10:00 AM, however, this restriction is not regularly enforced. With the growth of online shopping, rideshare services, the proliferation of delivery services, and new shared mobility options, demand for valuable curb space for loading and unloading has increased. Businesses located along State Street regularly receive deliveries from large commercial vehicles after 10 AM.

Loading behaviors on State Street cause traffic safety issues, particularly for cyclists, as delivery trucks frequently block the bike lanes. Commercial loading activities during peak daytime hours can disrupt pedestrian paths of travel on sidewalks, and commercial vehicles interfere with the operation of the Downtown Shuttle service. Uber and Lyft drivers often drive erratically while looking for their passengers and pull over to the curb to load or unload without warning, cutting across the bike lanes and creating hazards for cyclists.

For eleven days beginning Wednesday, October 30th, the Downtown Ambassadors observed and logged instances of loading and unloading on State Street between approximately 10 AM and 9 PM. In total, they logged 397 loading events, 232 of which were illegal commercial loading. Commercial loading peaked at around 1:00 PM, when approximately 59 instances were observed. The 800, 700, and 1100 blocks had the highest number of illegal loading activities, with 44, 37, and 33 observed instances, respectively. Fedex and UPS were by far the most frequent violators of loading restrictions, followed distantly by Sysco.

In addition to commercial loading, the Ambassadors observed 165 instances of passenger loading on State Street.

In an effort to implement Vision Zero and improve the safety of cyclists, pedestrians, and transit users on State Street, the staff proposes to expand loading zones on the 00 blocks in the Downtown core, begin regular enforcement of the 10 AM loading limit, and prohibit ride share drop-offs and pick-ups on State Street. Loading zones on the 00 blocks will be designated for 3-minute passenger/30-minute commercial loading in effect twenty-four hours a day. This program will be implemented in four phases: *Outreach*, *Implementation*, *Encouragement*, and *Enforcement*.

The goal of the *Outreach* phase is to inform the community and downtown stakeholders about the proposed changes and enforcement effort so that staff can ensure that the new loading zones meet stakeholder needs. Staff is especially sensitive to the needs of State Street businesses, which may not open until after 10 AM, and who cannot always control the arrival times of deliveries.

The *Installation* phase will involve re-painting curbs along the 00 blocks and posting new signage as needed to create 3-minute passenger/30-minute commercial loading zones that are in effect at all times.

Following Installation, staff will encourage businesses and drivers to discontinue loading on State Street after 10 AM in the *Encouragement* phase. Staff will identify a date certain for the start of *Enforcement*, and will encourage both commercial and passenger drivers to utilize the loading zones on the 00 blocks. Notices will be provided to businesses and drivers that the City will begin enforcing the 10 AM restriction on the identified date.

Staff will begin enforcing the State Street loading restrictions in the *Enforcement* phase.

Details of each project phase are described in the attached Downtown Loading Zone Expansion Plan.

Accessibility

Staff recognizes that people with disabilities may need to load and unload directly adjacent to their destination for accessibility purposes, and as such will not enforce loading limits for disabled passengers.

ATTACHMENTS

Downtown Loading Zone Expansion Plan
Project Information Sheet
Sample Notice for Public Posting