

San Bernardino County  
Department of Public Works  
Transportation

# Lytle Creek Canyon Traffic Management Plan

April 2021



## Executive Summary

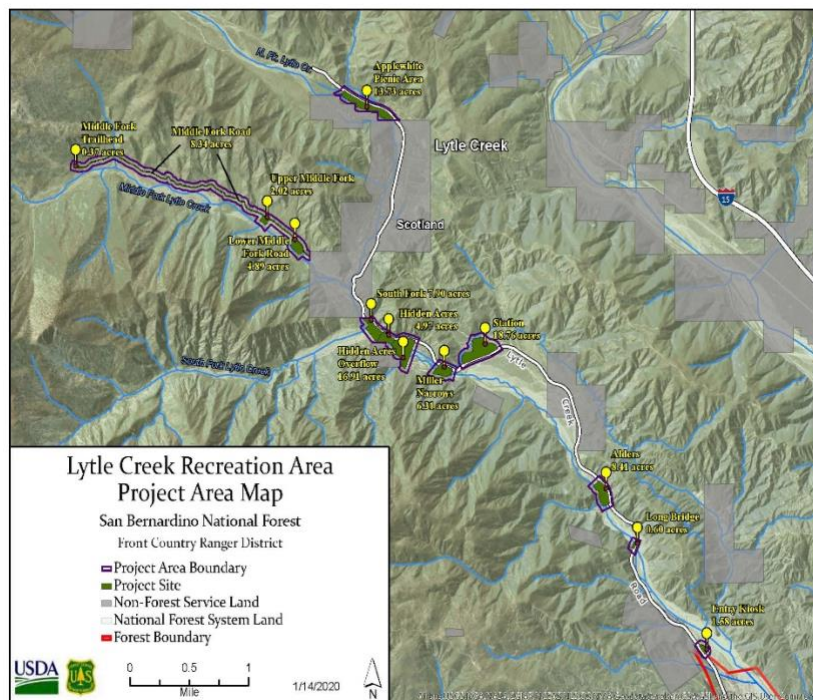
The San Bernardino National Forest, Front Country Ranger District, is developing the “Lytle Creek Canyon Recreation Area Management Plan.” The plan states it will, “Provide strategic direction and guidance to improve recreation opportunities within the Lytle Creek Recreation Area and to protect the natural and cultural resources of the canyon. The plan provides a framework for informed decision making, while guiding resource management, practices, uses, and projects.”

The Lytle Creek area receives extreme recreation use, especially during the summer months and holiday weekends. This results in user conflict, excessive trash, graffiti, and other activities that impact the health of the watershed and other natural resources. The impacts also create frustrations with local residents due to trash, crowds, and traffic. The existing facilities are inadequate to educate and service the recreational uses of the public in this area.

The following Traffic Management Plan is designed to supplement the United States Forest Service (USFS) Recreation Plan and will address specific traffic volume trigger points to mitigate traffic issues that arise during peak recreation seasons.

The overall goal of this Traffic Management Plan is to address key points to activate the following guiding principles:

- I. Improve public safety
- II. Mitigate traffic impacts for residents
- III. Improve communication to visitors during peak periods
- IV. Improve emergency response



## **Authority**

The County Road Commissioner has the authority to establish closures to protect the traveling public per San Bernardino County Code section 53.0801 (a) & (b) as shown below.

### **53.0801 Powers of the County Road Commissioner to Close or Restrict Use of County Highways.**

Pursuant to the authority of Streets and Highways Code § 942.6, the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Bernardino hereby delegates to the County Road Commissioner the powers to restrict the use of, or close, any County highway whenever the Commissioner considers such closure or restriction of use necessary:

- (a) For the protection of the public;
- (b) For the protection of such County highway from damage during storms;
- (c) During construction, improvement or maintenance operations thereon.

### **Vehicle Code § 21101.4**

“(a) A local authority may, by ordinance or resolution, adopt rules and regulations for temporarily closing to through traffic a highway under its jurisdiction when all of the following conditions are, after a public hearing, found to exist:

(1) The local authority finds and determines that, based upon the recommendation of the police department or, in the case of a highway in an unincorporated area, on the joint recommendation of the sheriff's department and the Department of the California Highway Patrol, one of the following concerns exists along the portion of highway recommended for closure:

- (A) Serious and continual criminal activity.
- (B) Serious and continual illegal dumping.

(2) The highway is not designated as a through highway or arterial street, or, if the highway is so designated, the local authority, in conjunction with law enforcement and traffic engineers, has determined that a temporary closure may be accomplished without significant impact on the normal flow of traffic.

(3) Vehicular or pedestrian traffic on the highway contributes to the concern described in paragraph (1).

(4) The closure will not substantially adversely affect traffic flow, safety on the adjacent streets or in the surrounding neighborhoods, the operation of emergency vehicles, the performance of municipal or public utility services, or the delivery of freight by commercial vehicles in the area of the highway proposed to be temporarily closed.

Case law provides that a County's police power allows it to regulate traffic and close roads within its jurisdiction; however, this does not include the right to close a public road to some, while keeping it open to others.

**§ 52.0117 Stopping or Standing Prohibited in Specified Places.**

(a) The Road Commissioner is hereby authorized to prohibit stopping, standing or parking and to place signs or curb markings as described in § 52.0121, at any of the following places when such prohibition as indicated by a traffic engineering investigation will alleviate dangerous hazardous traffic conditions, facilitate the full use of the roadway, or serve the convenience of the public:

- (1) At any place within 100 feet of the intersection of two or more highways;
- (2) At any place within 25 feet of a railroad grade crossing;
- (3) Adjacent to either side of a crosswalk or driveway entrance for a distance not to exceed 20 feet from either side of such crosswalk or driveway;
- (4) Adjacent to any fire hydrant when it has been determined that stopping, standing or parking of any vehicle, whether attended or unattended, would present some special hazard or would prevent ready access to the fire hydrant;
- (5) At any place in connection with a street or highway vehicular parking layout or plan;
- (6) On either side of a highway in those areas where any highway has been cleared of snow by snowplows, and the width of the highway is restricted by reason of snow conditions.

(b) When the Road Commissioner, upon the basis of a traffic engineering investigation, finds that the conditions because of which stopping, standing or parking was prohibited as authorized in § 52.0117(a) no longer exist, he or she shall remove such signs and such curb markings from such portion of such street or highway.

**Public and Private Road Regulations:**

Owners of private roads may post signs indicating private property, no trespassing, and/or no parking as long as those signs comply with the sign regulations set forth in County Code Sections 83.13.010 – 83.13.130. Owners of private roads may also tow vehicles impermissibly parked on their property if the provisions of California Vehicle Code § 22658 are strictly followed.

For public roads within the County that are not maintained by the County, there is no direct authority in the Vehicle Code to regulate or prohibit parking on such roads. There is also no direct authority to do so in the County Code, as the definition of “highway” used in both statutory schemes is limited to roads that are open to the public and “publicly maintained.”

Private roads: Posting of signs along private roads should be in plain view at all entrances to the property, a sign not less than 17 inches by 22 inches in size, with lettering not less than one inch in height, prohibiting public parking and indicating that vehicles will be removed at the owner's expense, and containing the telephone number of the local traffic law enforcement agency and the name and telephone number of each towing company that is a party to a written general towing authorization agreement with the owner or person in lawful possession of the property.





## **Background:**

Lytle Creek lies at the eastern-most extension of the San Gabriel Mountains, just east of the San Gabriel Mountains National Forest. It serves as a local point for recreational activities such as hiking, picnicking, and creek-side enjoyment. When the few designated USFS parking areas reach capacity, visitors rely on the on-street shoulder parking and turn-out area parking. These can get quickly overwhelmed and traffic flow stops preventing residents and emergency responders from traveling in a timely manner.

In July 2020, DPW placed traffic counters at the lower end of Lytle Creek Road and obtained the following data:

Friday 7/24/20 thru Monday 7/27/20.

Table 1: Average Daily Traffic July 2020

	A.M. South bound	A.M. North bound	P.M. South bound	P.M. North bound	South bound Daily Total	North bound Daily Total	DAILY TOTAL
Friday 7/24/20	928	738	1849	2073	2777	2811	5588
Saturday 7/25/20	843	1477	3385	2675	4228	4152	8380
Sunday 7/26/20	1045	1842	4403	3132	5448	4974	10422
Monday 7/27/20	717	619	2069	1184	2786	1803	4589

Previous Average Daily Traffic (ADT) at the same location prior to 2020 was 2,442. Per the table above the busiest day was a Sunday with an ADT of 10,422, this is an increase of approximately 425% during a summer weekend peak. The heaviest traveled hours are on Sunday afternoon in the southbound direction with a traffic volume of 4,403 vehicles leaving the Lytle Creek area.







Shoulder

Parking Congestion 2020

## **Traffic Management Approach**

### 2020 Traffic Mitigation Measures:

- During COVID, USFS kept Applewhite picnic area closed for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend to minimize impacts to local residences (it's located next to residential area). Fire staffing was available throughout this weekend and recreation technicians were working throughout the weekend to help control illegal parking along the roadways
- County Department of Public Works (DPW) added temporary "no parking" signs to Bonita Falls parking area and along the road between Bonita Falls and Hidden Acres, and also along Long Bridge. DPW added an extra electronic sign at the mouth of Lytle Creek that stated "TRAFFIC CONGESTION, OVER TWO HOUR DELAY." In addition, existing electronic signs displaying fireworks are illegal in County areas were also placed. These measures helped reduce traffic impacts.
- County Fire Marshal provided officers to partner with USFS fire prevention technicians to patrol for illegal fires/charcoal grills over the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend.
- County Fire staffed the County Fire Station in Lytle Creek on July 3, 4, and 5
- Press releases were used by the USFS for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend. DPW posted the information on social media.



For the 4<sup>th</sup> of July DPW installed:

33 sticks of K-rail, 55 Type I barricades with temporary NO PARKING signs, and 2 Changeable Message Boards

Goals:

- Installation of traffic counting devices (e.g. loops) – May 2021
- Determine current parking capacity on road and parking lots
- Establish traffic volume triggers based on traffic volume and parking space availability – Summer 2021
- USFS and DPW to coordinate USFS parking lot current capacity and road volume. – Ongoing
- Purchase Permanent real time traffic volume devices –FY 22/23
- Purchase electronic message Boards to alert visitors when parking areas are full-FY 22/23



Example Overhead Sign

When USFS lots are full and roadway traffic triggers are met:

1. USFS to notify DPW when USFS parking lot reaches capacity. Division Chief DPW Traffic will also provide traffic volume information on the roadway to USFS, emergency responders/law enforcement via email.
2. Law enforcement (CHP/Sheriff) implement increased patrols for parking enforcement.
3. DPW will activate its changeable message boards (if available) with: **FOREST PARKING CLOSED**
4. USFS, DPW, Law Enforcement to contact their social media for posting parking closure on various platforms.



**END**