



CITY of CALABASAS

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

DATE: JULY 22, 2021

TO: TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: ROBERT YALDA, PE, TE, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR/CITY ENGINEER
THOMAS MERICLE, TRAFFIC ENGINEERING SERVICES

SUBJECT: NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC CALMING PROGRAM

MEETING

DATE: JULY 27, 2021

BACKGROUND:

The City has implemented several traffic calming measures over the years. These have included placement of speed feedback signs, speed enforcement, posting of speed limit signs, and posting signs that restrict vehicular movements. Radar speed trailers and traffic enforcement are typically the first response from the City when asked by a resident to address concern about driver's speeds. However, ongoing targeted enforcement is sometimes necessary and speeding may resume in the long run without. The City has also implemented individual capital projects focused on neighborhood wide physical traffic calming measures such as speed humps or cushions, raised medians, curb extensions with marked crosswalks, flashing beacons, and neighborhood roundabouts. However, a comprehensive approach to provide residents with a programmatic way of addressing their concerns has never been adopted.

DISCUSSION:

Traffic calming is the combination of policies, education, and implementation measures that help mitigate the negative impacts to residential neighborhoods caused by motor vehicles. The overall objective of a traffic calming program is to utilize, where applicable, traffic calming measures to improve the quality of life in residential neighborhoods. These traffic calming measures range from speed enforcement to signing and striping and physical changes to the roadway.

An important component of affecting change is neighborhood ownership of the problem(s) and solution(s). This is done through a citizen education/participation component which encourages the neighborhood to take responsibility to work together and with the City.

Neighborhood Traffic Calming Policy

Attached to this report is a draft Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program (NTCP) to consider as a starting point for discussion by the Commission, staff, and City Council. The draft NTCP includes a three level process so that less impactful and less expensive measures can be explored first to maximize efficient use of City resources both during the program and long term maintenance. The three levels and traffic calming measures for each level are describe as follows:

Level 1. Education and Enforcement

- Police Enforcement
- Temporary Speed Trailer Placement

Level 2. Signing and Striping

- Posting of Speed Limit Signs
- Installing a Permanent Speed Display Sign
- Striping narrower vehicle lanes
- Turning movement and/or commercial vehicle restrictions

Level 3. Physical Changes

- Medians
- Curb Extensions
- Neighborhood Roundabouts
- Speed Cushions

In order to be eligible for Level 2 or Level 3 measures certain criteria would need to be met. These criteria will ensure that that the measures are being placed along appropriate roadways and will not decrease safety. The recommended seven criteria that requests would need to all meet are:

1. The street shall be designated as a local street (not an arterial or collector street) by the City's General Plan and is primarily residential in nature.
2. The street shall have fronting residential buildings in a density that matches the California Vehicle Code local street designation and for setting speed limits (13 separate dwelling houses or business structures per ¼ mile on one side or 16 per ¼ mile on both sides).
3. Vehicular traffic volumes in both directions are equal to or exceed 800 vehicles per day.
4. Speeds measurements show that the 85% measured speed is at least 7 mph over the legally posted speed limit.
5. Street must have a grade of 8% or less to be considered for Level 3 speed cushions.
6. Any proposed changes in traffic flow are not expected to divert a significant amount of traffic to other local residential streets.
7. The LA County Sheriff and Fire Departments do not have significant evidence of any major public safety concerns regarding the proposed neighborhood traffic Calming measures.

Public Participation

In order to ensure that the public has a chance to participate and have a say in identifying and confirming the concerns and in the recommendations. The NTCP specifies three tools:

1. Neighborhood Action Request Form. This form would need to be filled out to be eligible for Level 2 measures. It provides a tool for neighbors to demonstrate a level of concurrence regarding their concerns by requiring seven or more residents to concur with the concern.
2. Petition. For the more impactful and permanent traffic calming measures in Level 3 a petition will need to be completed. The petition will demonstrate an area wide level of support of the property owners directly affected by the implementation of the recommended Level 3 measures.
3. City Survey. When implementing any Level 3 measure, if the petition process has been met, the City will install (to the extent possible) temporary measures to measure the affects and inform the public of the possible impacts. Following the temporary installation the City will conduct a survey to determine support for a permanent installation

Once a final recommendation has come through the process the recommendations from the community will be brought to the City Council for final approval.

Legal foundation

The State of California has preempted the field of traffic control (see section 21 of the Vehicle Code), and no local authority is allowed to enact or enforce any ordinance on the matters covered by the Vehicle Code unless expressly authorized by statute. This includes how enforceable speed limits are set to who can use a public street. The State requires that all persons have an equal right to use public roadways, and local agencies may not determine which traffic shall and which shall not use these public roadways. Based on this a city may not restrict the right to travel upon one of its streets to its residents or to other exempted drivers. There are a few exceptions. Some examples in the Vehicle Code of such specific authority to regulate travel upon streets are:

- If the City Council determines the street is no longer needed for vehicular traffic [§ 21101(a)] and then no one can use it.
- If needed to implement the Circulation Element of a General Plan [§ 21101(f)]
- If due to criminal activity (§ 21101.4).
- If regulating or prohibiting processions or assemblages [§ 21100(a)], which would generally be public events such as parades.
- On streets dividing school grounds to protect students attending such school or school grounds. Typically this is done to either permanently close a road through a school or close it by time of day (school hours).

When a local agency decides to utilize the express delegation of such authority, the local agency may only utilize "official traffic control devices" authorized by the Vehicle Code Section 21400. Additionally, local authorities may not place gates or other selective devices on any street which deny or restrict the access of certain members of the public to the street, while permitting others unrestricted access to the street.

Private Streets

Some streets in the City have been either initially built as privately owned or have been converted over to private. The City does not have ownership or control over these existing private streets for either enforcement, installation of traffic control devices, or placement of physical changes to the roadway surface or curb lines. Owners of a private street may install traffic calming devices on their private roads, without any need for City permission, as long as the project does not change the general circulation pattern, street location, or any access points to and from any property.

Next Steps

Staff is presenting this draft NTCP for Commission review and comment. Following the meeting staff will be incorporating Commission comments and suggestions into a revised draft NTCP. The revised draft document will then go through internal cross-departmental review (including LASD and LADFD) before being brought back to the Commission for final consideration and recommendation to City Council.

FISCAL IMPACTS:

Adoption of a NTCP will have increased costs associated with staff time, data collection, interim and final installations, and ongoing maintenance. If the program is supported by the Commission, staff, and City Council more detailed estimates will be developed for consideration prior to final adoption of a program and budget.

REQUESTED ACTION:

Staff recommends that the Traffic and Transportation Commission review the proposed NTCP program and provide comments to staff.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A - Draft Neighborhood Traffic Calming Policy