

**CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Date: June 7, 2021
Reviewed by: NA

SUBJECT: Update to City of Albany Traffic Calming Policy

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SUMMARY

The action before the City Council is to adopt a resolution updating the city policy for evaluating traffic calming measures petitioned by residents.

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a resolution updating the City of Albany Traffic Calming Policy as presented by staff with amendments to impose a five-year moratorium on reconsideration of treatments for a block, remove the street width of 40 feet, and include language for engineering judgement if there is a documented collision pattern.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Council adopt Resolution No. 2021-51, updating the City of Albany Traffic Calming Policy.

BACKGROUND

The City of Albany Traffic Calming Policy details the process by which residents can petition for traffic calming measures on their block and the criteria by which the city evaluates these requests. The City Council last updated the Traffic Calming Policy on January 20, 2015.

Residential streets must comply with this policy in order to be eligible for the implementation of traffic calming measures such as speed humps, mini traffic circles, and chicanes. The most common form of traffic calming implemented in the City has been speed humps because they are relatively more cost effective to design and implement. ‘Soft’ treatments that have been implemented include striping lane edge lines and in-roadway speed limit markings.

The policy outlines a resident petition process for requesting traffic calming measures. In response to requests for traffic calming on the requested blocks, speed and volume data is collected in a 1-week traffic survey with pneumatic tubes. Whenever possible, monitoring is done during normal weather conditions while schools are in session.

The traffic calming policy establishes a threshold of less than 3,000 average daily traffic and 85th percentile speed of over 30 mph for speed treatments (and between 28-30 mph for soft treatments).

There are currently four blocks awaiting approved traffic calming measures, with four additional blocks having received speed humps or lane striping treatment in 2019. Additional traffic calming requests have been awaiting resumption of the City conducting traffic surveys. New surveys have been on hold during COVID-19 due to demands on staffing and changes to traffic patterns making it difficult to evaluate new requests.

The Transportation Commission discussed potential changes to the policy at its September 24, 2020 meeting and appointed Commissioners Jordan and Javandel to a subcommittee to review data and develop a risk value based on traffic speed and volume. The subcommittee presented its findings to the Commission on December 3, 2020 and the Commission recommended the policy update with amendments at its meeting of January 28, 2021. These amendments are incorporated into the draft policy presented (Attachments 2 and 3).

DISCUSSION

The proposed policy update changes the metric for prioritizing traffic calming measures from the existing eighty-fifth percentile speed (the speed at which 85% of vehicles travel slower and 15% of vehicles travel faster) and three thousand vehicle volume threshold (roads where fewer than 3,000 average daily vehicles travel). The new proposed metric is the number of average weekday daily vehicles traveling over the speed limit.

The proposed update also eliminates the requirement that a street not be wider than forty feet, places a five-year moratorium on reconsideration of traffic calming treatments for a block after installation, and allows for engineering judgement to override criteria if there is a documented collision pattern.

ANALYSIS

The proposed update is the result of the Commission review of how to evaluate the risk of severe injury associated with speeding vehicles on blocks where residents are requesting traffic calming measures. This is consistent with the 'Vision Zero' focus on vehicle collisions causing severe injury. The subcommittee looked at evaluation formulas that incorporated the higher risk of severe injury associated with higher vehicle speeds. After analyzing various alternative formulas, the subcommittee found that the volume of vehicles was the determining risk factor and that the simple metric of number of vehicles traveling over the speed limit replicated the prioritization generated by a more complicated formula. In essence, the more speeding vehicles there are on a block, the higher the risk to a pedestrian. The subcommittee recommended this as the prioritization metric for its simplicity and its clear relation to risk of injury, and the Commission incorporated this metric in the recommended update to the policy.

The proposed update also removes the current cap of 3,000 average daily vehicles for roadways to qualify for traffic calming in favor of avoiding roadways that are major arterials, bus routes, or truck routes. The Commission has not found vehicle diversion to be an issue with previous traffic calming installations which have included roadways such as Masonic Avenue with greater volumes. In case this is found to be an issue in the future, the policy update does include a note that traffic calming measures may be removed by the City if they are found to be causing significant traffic diversion.

The result of the change in the speed metric and removal of the volume threshold is that higher-volume streets get higher priority over lower-volume streets compared to the current 85th percentile speed, where a smaller number of vehicles traveling faster can lead to a higher 85th percentile speed measure. In reviewing a sample of historical traffic surveys, streets like Santa Fe and Key Route moved up in prioritization under the change.

The other main effect of the proposed change is the utilization of a prioritization score (the number of average weekday daily vehicles traveling over the speed limit) rather than meeting yes/no thresholds. The Commission and staff would then regularly review the prioritization list and determine when requested traffic calming measures proceed to design. The intent with this change is so that design of calming measures can be more closely aligned with project delivery.

The Transportation Commission discussion did include the question about whether the four prior-approved pending projects should be kept on the delivery list or be re-evaluated along with new requests. As these blocks already proceeded through design recommendations staff is recommending that they be kept in the queue for implementation and not re-evaluated.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Improving roadway safety for vulnerable users helps achieve active transportation mode share goals and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicles.

CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE

Updating the Traffic Calming Policy to better align with risk of injury supports Goal 1: Foster a Healthy & Sustainable Urban Village, Objective 3, Promote Active Transportation & Safety.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution 2021- 51
2. Draft 2021 Traffic Calming Policy Redline Changes
3. Draft 2021 Traffic Calming Policy Clean Version

~~FINAL~~ TRAFFIC CALMING POLICY AND PETITION PROCESS WARRANT
CRITERIA¹

~~AND PROCESS~~

Updated on January 20, 2015_____.

CITY OF ALBANY

STEP 1 - Initial Step – Resident Request

Request for speed treatment must be made in writing to staff by a resident of the street and block in question.

Staff explains the range of traffic calming options available, including soft treatments (striping), common issues with traffic calming measures, and the evaluation process.

Staff confirms traffic calming treatments have not been installed on the subject block within the previous five years.

Residents requesting the speed treatment submit a form with block resident signatures showing support for potential traffic calming measures along the block.

¹ For projects not listed in the Traffic Management Plan

STEP 2 - Street Geometry and Physical Conditions necessary for consideration (Does the street meet these standards?)

Street (block) should:

- Be residential with a speed limit of 25 mph or less
- Be at least 300' in length
- Not be a bus route, unless City Engineer determines that special circumstances warrant discussions with transit agency for type of treatment.
- Not exceed 40' feet in width
- Not be identified as a Major Arterial in the Albany General Plan nor a Truck Route in the Albany Municipal Code
- The street grade (slope) does not exceed eight percent (8%), per Institute of Transportation Engineers guidelines

~~The street grade, not to exceed eight (8) percent (according to ITE guidelines). Further analysis required for particular circumstances.~~ Special circumstances: Engineering judgment may supersede specific criteria in this policy if there is a documented collision pattern.

~~**IF THE STREET (BLOCK) MEETS THE PHYSICAL CONDITIONS ABOVE, A VOLUME AND SPEED SURVEY WILL BE CONDUCTED BY THE CITY.**~~

CRITERIA STEP 3 — If the street (block) meets the physical conditions in Step 2, a traffic survey will be conducted by the City. Speed and Volume Criteria to warrant traffic calming measure

Volume	<p><u>Speeding Vehicle Volume:</u> <u>The block will receive a project prioritization based upon the average weekday daily volume of vehicles traveling over the speed limit as measured by the city traffic survey.</u> <u>Less than 3,000 ADT (Average Daily Traffic)</u></p>
Speeds	<p><u>85th percentile is 5 m.p.h. over the speed limit Block may be eligible for speed treatments. Please see Step 3 below.</u></p> <p><u>If 85th percentile speed is between 28-30 mph, the block is eligible for soft treatments. Staff can proceed accordingly with the implementation of soft treatments as feasible.</u></p> <p><u>If 85th percentile speed is less than 28 mph, no changes are implemented on the block.</u></p>
Special Circumstances	<p><u>Engineering judgment may supersede specific criteria in this policy.</u></p>

STEP 3-4 – Notification to Resident(s) and Transportation Commission

~~If the criteria do not warrant traffic calming measures, the resident(s) is informed that the process stops at this point. At this stage the resident(s) will be notified of the speeding vehicle volume measured and the Transportation Commission will be presented with the new traffic survey information along with an updated project prioritization list and list of projects ready for delivery. The Commission can recommend additional projects for design at this point as appropriate.~~

~~If the criteria are met, the Traffic and Safety Commission may either recommend a change on the street and the type of treatment², or suggest that staff collect additional information, such as accidents within the last three available years, analysis of nearby pedestrian generators and pedestrian counts.~~

- ~~• The Traffic and Safety Commission may recommend a change on the street. This could be hard treatments like speed humps, chicanes, etc. or soft treatments, like striping.³~~
- ~~• The type of treatment will be determined by the Traffic and Safety Commission in consultation with a traffic engineering consultant.~~
- ~~• Speed treatments shall not punish motorists driving at or below the speed limit.~~
- ~~• Resident who initiated the process is informed of the intent to install a traffic calming measure on the street.~~

~~Depending on Commission's recommendation, the process may stop here, or continue to the next step.~~

STEP 4-5 – Neighborhood Petition Process and Project Design

~~When Traffic and Safety transportation Commission recommends a traffic calming measure(s) block for project design:~~

- ~~• Staff will develop a design recommendation and coordinate with resident(s) for review by neighbors of the block~~
- ~~• Resident(s) who initiated the process, or a block representative, must circulate a neighborhood petition (petition forms available through City staff).~~
- ~~• Approval of at least 67% of the block residents is needed-required for installation of traffic calming measures(s).~~
- ~~• If petition is verified to have 67% approval, project is submitted to City Council for possible inclusion onto a Neighborhood Traffic Calming Project List.~~

² A traffic engineer should be consulted regarding the type and number of traffic calming treatment being recommended

³ When soft options are opted for, staff would monitor speed after implementation of striping, and if the speeding problem persists, consideration of physical options would be offered in cases when the speeds are at or exceed 30 mph. If decisions are to be made about striping options staff could implement those without bringing the issue back to the Commission.

STEP 5-6 – -Design Review by Transportation Commission Implementation by Staff

- Petition is verified by Staff to have 67% approval
- Project design is brought before the Transportation Commission for review
- Transportation Commission may recommend the project for inclusion on the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Project List and is ready for project delivery at this point
- ~~City installs traffic calming measure(s) based on available funding.~~
- ~~Prior to the installation of traffic calming measure(s), a pre and post volume and speed survey will be conducted on parallel roadways, as well as a post survey on the subject roadway.~~
- ~~The City will remove any traffic calming measure if City's traffic engineering consultant determines that the measure is inefficient or causing significant traffic diversion to parallel roadways.~~

STEP 7 – Implementation

- City installs traffic calming measure(s) based on available capacity and funding
- The City may remove any traffic calming measure if the City determines that the measure is inefficient or causing significant traffic diversion to parallel roadways

TRAFFIC CALMING POLICY AND PETITION PROCESS¹

Updated on _____.

CITY OF ALBANY

STEP 1 - Initial Step – Resident Request	
	<p>Request for speed treatment must be made in writing to staff by a resident of the street and block in question.</p> <p>Staff explains the range of traffic calming options available, including soft treatments (striping), common issues with traffic calming measures, and the evaluation process.</p> <p>Staff confirms traffic calming treatments have not been installed on the subject block within the previous five years.</p>
STEP 2 - Street Geometry and Physical Conditions necessary for consideration (Does the street meet these standards?)	
	<p>Street (block) should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be residential with a speed limit of 25 mph or less• Be at least 300' in length• Not be a bus route• Not be identified as a Major Arterial in the Albany General Plan nor a Truck Route in the Albany Municipal Code• The street grade (slope) does not exceed eight percent (8%), per Institute of Transportation Engineers guidelines <p>Special circumstances: Engineering judgment may supersede specific criteria in this policy if there is a documented collision pattern.</p>
STEP 3 – If the street (block) meets the physical conditions in Step 2, a traffic survey will be conducted by the City.	
	<p>Speeding Vehicle Volume: The block will receive a project prioritization based upon the average weekday daily volume of vehicles traveling over the speed limit as measured by the city traffic survey.</p>

¹ For projects not listed in the Traffic Management Plan

STEP 4 – Notification to Resident(s) and Transportation Commission

At this stage the resident(s) will be notified of the speeding vehicle volume measured and the Transportation Commission will be presented with the new traffic survey information along with an updated project prioritization list and list of projects ready for delivery. The Commission can recommend additional projects for design at this point as appropriate.

STEP 5 – Neighborhood Petition Process and Project Design

When Transportation Commission recommends a block for project design:

- Staff will develop a design recommendation and coordinate with resident(s) for review by neighbors of the block
- Resident(s) who initiated the process, or a block representative, must circulate a neighborhood petition (petition forms available through City staff)
- Approval of at least 67% of the block residents is required for installation of traffic calming measures(s)

STEP 6 – Design Review by Transportation Commission

- Petition is verified by Staff to have 67% approval
- Project design is brought before the Transportation Commission for review
- Transportation Commission may recommend the project for inclusion on the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Project List and is ready for project delivery at this point

STEP 7 – Implementation

- City installs traffic calming measure(s) based on available capacity and funding
- The City may remove any traffic calming measure if the City determines that the measure is inefficient or causing significant traffic diversion to parallel roadways