

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

Agenda date: 12/1/08
Reviewed by: BP

SUBJECT: Adoption of Traffic Calming Warrant Criteria and Process for evaluating the installation of traffic calming measures in residential neighborhoods

FROM: Aleida Andrino Chavez, Transportation Planner
Ann Chaney, Community Development Director

TRAFFIC AND SAFETY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Approve Resolution #08-63 adopting the Traffic Calming Warrant Criteria and Process as recommended by the Traffic and Safety Commission.

BACKGROUND

As a result of the Traffic Management Plan (TMP) process, the City Council adopted warrant criteria for stop sign installation in 1999. In addition, the TMP identified a project list that included traffic calming measures on residential streets, most of which have been implemented. Currently, the original TMP project list is 40% complete with an additional 14% of projects in progress.

Nevertheless, the City has continually received new requests from residents for traffic calming measures in neighborhoods. The most common request is for the implementation of speed humps. Currently, there is no established policy to help guide City decisions regarding the placement of new traffic calming devices. When neighborhood requests are received, staff has addressed these issues by conducting speed and volume surveys using the Police Department's speed trailer. The results are presented to the Traffic and Safety Commission, and evaluated using the stop sign warrant criteria. The individual(s) requesting the speed treatment is notified of the meeting. If the 85th percentile speed is 6 mph over the posted speed limit (per the Stop Sign Warrant policy), a determination is typically made that the particular street is experiencing consistent speeding. Interestingly, all the speed surveys conducted by the City have yielded results that do not warrant further analysis for the implementation of traffic calming measures under the current informal process. However, because of the absence of a clear criterion, the Commission and staff have been uncertain in how to proceed to ensure a fair and consistent approach in responding to traffic calming requests. Therefore, the Commission chose to embark on a process to develop such a criteria.

DISCUSSION

In 2007 staff compiled and reviewed traffic calming policies of Bay Area cities with similar characteristics to Albany. Working with the Commission, staff prepared a draft set of criteria. It is intended that this criteria must be first be met in order to consider a petition for traffic calming measures. When the Traffic and Safety Commission reached a point of general agreement, Bill Burton, a traffic engineer with DMJM Harris, was hired to evaluate the criteria and advise the Commission. He provided written comments that are attached (Attachment B). The Commission held several meetings, including one with Mr. Burton, whose comments were incorporated into the criteria shown in the attached Resolution (Attachment A).

As noted above, thus far, all of the speed surveys conducted on residential streets have yielded results that do not warrant traffic calming measures under the current informal process. Based on recommendations by the consultant, the proposed warrant criteria decreases the 85th percentile from 6 mph to 5 mph over the posted speed limit. Of the streets surveyed to date, only the 900 block of Cerrito Street would satisfy the new speed warrant for the implementation of traffic calming measures.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

Slowing traffic on neighborhood streets encourages walking and bicycling. This in turn promotes a reduction in the City's Carbon Footprint, and thus a reduction in Greenhouse Gas emissions.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The proposed policy provides a formal process to assess traffic calming requests. As such, it has the potential to add projects to the original TMP list. A review of the Measure F budget indicates that approximately \$130,000 remains in Measure F funds for use toward all new traffic calming projects (not just speed humps). The cost to install one speed hump is estimated at \$5,000 each. In addition, if a traffic calming measure is warranted in the proximity to a school, it could potentially qualify for a Safe Routes to School or Office of Traffic Safety grant.

Attachments

1. Resolution # 08-63 *Traffic Calming Warrant Criteria and Process* (includes Exhibit A)
2. Letter from Bill Burton, DMJM Harris, dated January 16, 2008
3. Traffic and Safety Commission minutes of May 22, 2008 and October 23, 2008