



Kate Harrison
Councilmember District 4

CONSENT CALENDAR
October 31st, 2017

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmembers Harrison, Bartlett, and Droste
Subject: Expanded Criteria for the Installation of Stop Signs

RECOMMENDATION

1. Refer to the Transportation Commission consideration of additional or supplemental stop sign and traffic calming criteria ~~to which increase prioritization of addresses~~ the existing and projected needs of bicyclists and pedestrians, in particular the elderly, children, the disabled and other vulnerable non-vehicular populations, as well as the presence of bicycle boulevards, and the difficulty ~~of~~ for bicyclists and pedestrians in crossing particular intersections.
2. Direct that staff consult with the Bicycle Subcommittee of the Transportation Commission when making decisions impacting bicycle boulevards, whenever possible.
3. Request that the City Manager provide an informational report ~~on the particular~~ outlining state and federal warrants and local policies ~~that prevent applicable to~~ stop signs ~~being used as and~~ traffic calming measures.

BACKGROUND

The most recent in a series of accidents involving young bicyclists occurred at the intersection of Dwight and California on September 26, 2017. This intersection is a crossing for a bicycle boulevard and a major route for children bicycling to nearby elementary and middle schools.

Current criteria for installation of stop signs, guided by state and federal standards, include traffic volume, the occurrence of five or more crashes in the last year, travel time delay, or otherwise uncorrectable sight lines. Stop sign installation criteria do not include consideration of the presence of vulnerable populations such as children biking to school or seniors crossing to senior centers, the presence of bicycle boulevards, or the width and design of the street being crossed. Stop signs are not considered an appropriate measure for traffic calming. Meanwhile, traffic calming criteria, a category which excludes stop signs, include proximity to a school or park (within two blocks) or senior center (within one block) and the need to mitigate a documented collision pattern.

These stop sign and traffic calming criteria are challenging in two significant ways. First, they are car and vehicle-centric, with pedestrians and bicyclists considered as secondary or incidental elements in the traffic equation. Second, they are based entirely on evaluating and addressing existing conditions, and thus do not support the use of stop signs or traffic calming measures as tools to create new conditions. This limits the City of Berkeley's ability to use stop signs and traffic calming measures to support our goals of increasing biking and walking as primary modes of transit. Traffic signs and features, under current criteria, reinforce the existing, vehicle-centric status quo and thus undermine our climate action and community health goals. Updating our criteria to increase priority to bikers and pedestrians and to allow stop signs and traffic calming to be deployed pro-actively will rebalance the equations used to determine the appropriateness of these measures and align them with Berkeley's stated bicycle, pedestrian and climate action goals.

Further, the public has expressed a desire for more public input into the process of making our City's bicycle boulevards safer for bicyclists. To address both these issues, this item directs staff to work with the Transportation Commission to consider expanded criteria for stop signs and traffic calming. The findings of both staff and the Commission shall be presented to Council for approval. If the Council accepts the expanded criteria, staff shall send the updated criteria to the California Traffic Control Device Committee as a recommendation for addition to the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. This item also directs staff to consult with the Transportation Commission's Bicycle Subcommittee on decisions in relation to or substantially affecting designated bicycle boulevards, whenever possible. Finally, this item requests that the City Manager provide the Council an informational report on outlining state and federal warrants and local policies ~~that prevent~~ applicable to stop signs ~~being used as~~ and traffic calming measures.

FISCAL IMPACTS

Staff time to evaluate the additional criteria.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Consistent with the City's climate and environmental goals.

CONTACT PERSON

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Attachments:

1: Minimum Criteria to Qualify for Traffic Calming

Minimum Criteria to Qualify for Traffic Calming

SHALL meet the following two conditions AND at least one of these conditions

1) Any residential street area; AND	- Where the 85th percentile speed profile is greater than 5 mph over the speed limit; OR
2) In the case of “physical” traffic calming measures, where 50% + 1 of households, within one block of the proposal, who have expressed their opinion in a City-sponsored poll, such as a questionnaire, support the proposal;	- Proximity to school or park (within two blocks), or senior center (within one block) combined with 85th percentile speed profile greater than 3 mph over the speed limit; OR
	- Mitigate a documented collision pattern (bike, pedestrian, motor vehicle); OR
	- Where there is a documented problem of a significant or inappropriate number of “through” motor vehicles on the street or in the neighborhood, per ITE volume guidelines for neighborhood streets (2500 vpd average)