

RESOLUTION NO. 64,732-N.S.

REVISED TRAFFIC CALMING POLICY AND RESCINDING RESOLUTION 63,508-N.S.

WHEREAS, the City Council adopted an initial Traffic Calming Policy in 2006, which was consistent with both the policy approved by the Transportation Commission the year before, and Policy T-20 of the Transportation Element of the General Plan; and

WHEREAS, the 2009 Traffic Calming Policy is consistent with General Plan Policy T-20 for a residential traffic calming program with objective criteria for evaluating neighborhood traffic problems, and adds an annual cycle with specific timelines for processing traffic calming requests, along with conducting data collection and traffic calming studies to evaluate and prioritize requests; and

WHEREAS, the amount of funding available for traffic calming studies and implementation of traffic calming projects is projected to remain at \$50,000 each fiscal year, unless additional grants or other one-time funds are received, and this amount may limit the number of competitive projects that can be implemented, based on their total budgets; and

WHEREAS, establishing an annual cycle with specific timelines for processing traffic calming requests will result in a more efficient use of staff time, more reliable annual costs associated with data collection and studies, and an annual, updated list of prioritized Traffic Calming Capital Improvement Projects to make the most effective use of available funds to address areas of greatest need.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City shall adopt the Traffic Calming Policy – 2009 as set forth in Exhibit A to: 1) establish an annual cycle with specific timelines and procedures for submitting, qualifying and processing traffic calming requests, regardless of where the request originates; 2) conduct data collection and traffic calming studies for requests with a validated problem and that meet specified criteria; 3) generate an annual, updated prioritized list of traffic calming CIP projects; and 4) allocate available funds for implementation of projects according to their priority.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Resolution No. 63,508-N.S. is rescinded.


The foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Berkeley City Council on December 15, 2009 by the following vote:

Ayes: Arreguin, Capitelli, Maio, Moore, Wengraf, Worthington, and Wozniak.

Noes: None.

Absent: Anderson and Bates.

Attest:   
Deanna Despain, CMC, City Clerk

  
Linda Maio, Mayor Pro Tempore

**CITY OF BERKELEY  
TRAFFIC CALMING POLICY – 2009**

The scope and purpose of this policy is to affirm &/or establish:

- A. The objectives and general application of traffic calming.
- B. A predictable annual cycle and orderly process for any request that involves traffic calming funds, regardless of where the request originates, and with clear distinctions between identification of a problem by residents and analysis and solutions developed by professional consultants and traffic engineering staff.
- C. Criteria for the review of traffic calming requests to determine further analysis and validation of significant problems and potential traffic calming measures.
- D. Procedures to formally evaluate requests, including data collection, traffic calming studies, and neighborhood meetings to select a preferred solution.
- E. A more equitable ranking procedure, establishing a clear and convincing case to generate an annual, updated prioritized list of traffic calming CIP projects, which can be employed when there are more traffic calming projects proposed than funds available to construct all projects.

This policy neither lists all traffic calming measures, nor attempts to specify which measure would be implemented in certain road or traffic operation scenarios. Such “tool kits” exist and are used by our staff and consultants to develop appropriate solutions.

**A. OBJECTIVES AND GENERAL APPLICATION OF TRAFFIC CALMING**

Traffic calming is intended to reduce the impact of motor vehicles on roadways, residents and road users. In Berkeley, this means primarily the reduction of motor vehicle speeds. The reduction of motor vehicle traffic volumes on specific streets is a sensitive issue because of the risk of diverting traffic onto a neighboring street. Conversely, some chronic neighborhood traffic problems concern levels of traffic volume on local streets that the residents believe is excessive. Typically, a significant portion of the traffic in these cases is considered “through” traffic, because it neither originates from nor is destined to the broader neighborhood. Traffic calming has been used to reduce the impact of this unwanted traffic.

Collision mitigation might be accomplished by prohibiting the turn movements of a relatively low number of motor vehicles. In these cases, the benefits outweigh other considerations, unless the risk is simply transferred to a neighboring intersection.

**Physical Traffic Calming Measures**

There is a considerable range of options for traffic calming, from enforcement, traffic signs and pavement markings, to construction alternatives including traffic circles, median refuges, and bulb-outs. Construction improvements are referred to as “physical” measures in this policy.

Physical traffic calming measures are categorized in two ways:

1. Vertical deflection: raising the road by using speed humps or speed tables; and
2. Horizontal shift: moving vehicles off a certain alignment from one side or another (e.g. traffic circles).

Generally, physical traffic calming measures are the most effective form of traffic calming available. The use of these measures requires careful application, so that large vehicles can still navigate where needed. Installation of any new speed humps, speed tables or platforms would be based on authority to reintroduce these measures.

Historically, some physical traffic calming has been installed at the request of the Berkeley Police Department when responding to neighborhood concerns about illegal, threatening or socially disruptive driving or other behavior. Such issues will continue to be considered and evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

The Transportation Element of Berkeley's General Plan includes an Emergency Access and Evacuation Network map (Figure 9, page T-33) and a Transit Network Map (Figure 7, T-31). The application of physical traffic measures on primary evacuation and transit routes is particularly sensitive, and the use of traffic calming circles is discouraged on these routes.

Some forms of horizontal shift physical traffic calming can be applied to major roads, but even greater care must be taken when high speeds and/or high traffic volumes are concerned, so that road users are not placed in greater risk than by the traffic operation condition being mitigated.

#### Application of Traffic Calming Measures

If the problem submitted in a traffic calming request is validated by recent traffic records and subsequent data collection, a traffic calming study will be authorized. If the request involves an intersection, or street portion, neighboring streets and intersections must be considered in view of the traffic calming measures proposed, and potential impacts on the immediate neighborhood assessed if a "spill-over" effect is anticipated. In recommending solutions, less costly and restrictive methods of calming should be considered first.

#### A. ANNUAL CYCLE AND PROCESS FOR TRAFFIC CALMING REQUESTS

The steps in the revised request process over the cycle of a calendar year are:

1. Residents submit Request Forms defining a problem in their neighborhood (through December 31st of year prior to start of new cycle)
2. Staff uses criteria to evaluate Request Forms submitted by residents in prior year, along with recent traffic records for the areas associated with the requests (January – February)
3. If request qualifies, staff defines petition area (February)

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Roundabouts are usually significantly larger than traffic calming circles, and can be an effective design tool on major roads, including the Evacuation and Transit Networks.

4. Residents collect signatures from the defined area (March)
5. Perform data collection to validate conditions reported (April – June)
6. Validate “Significant Problem” based on data that was collected (July)
7. Conduct traffic calming study to identify potential solutions (August – September)
8. Meet with neighborhood to select preferred solution (October – November)
9. Prepare draft cost estimate and project priority for review with neighborhood (November – December)
10. Prepare final prioritized list of traffic calming projects for CIP list for the budget development/update process (December)

The steps in the implementation process during the budget/funding cycle are:

1. Prioritized Traffic Calming CIP list is generated from the request process
2. Projects on CIP list are funded in order of priority until current funds are exhausted
3. If funded in current year → project constructed; if not funded → placed on CIP list for next budget/funding cycle

#### B. CRITERIA FOR REVIEW OF TRAFFIC CALMING REQUESTS

Traffic calming requests are submitted to the Public Works Transportation Division on a simple form, providing information about observable hazardous conditions and impacts. The City’s traffic engineering staff reviews the request and recent traffic records for the area (collisions, speed and volume, and roadway geometry).

The following criteria are used in the initial staff review of traffic calming requests and validation of “significant problems” for further analysis and potential implementation:

1. Any residential street area; **and**
2. To mitigate a documented collision pattern (bike, pedestrian, motor vehicle);  
**and/or**
3. Where the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed profile is greater than 5 mph over the speed limit;  
**and**
4. Where there is a documented problem of a significant or inappropriate number of “through” motor vehicles on the street or in the neighborhood.

If there is a good safety record, and the speed profile (85<sup>th</sup> percentile) is within 5 mph of the speed limit, and the traffic volume is appropriate for the street, the applicant will be advised that no further action will be taken.

If this request was not previously denied and review indicates a probable cause for further analysis, City traffic engineering staff defines a petition area for signature collection by the residents. When the petition is returned and qualifying support is

established from 50% + 1 of households within the defined petition area, evaluation procedures are initiated.

### C. PROCEDURES TO EVALUATE REQUESTS FOR TRAFFIC CALMING

Data collection is conducted by a traffic count firm, related to the type and degree of the problem that was defined in the request. This may include raw speeds, vehicle counts, and field surveys to observe conditions. If the data validates the request as a "significant problem," a traffic calming study is scheduled to identify potential solutions.

Staff meets with neighborhood residents to select a preferred solution, after which a cost estimate is drafted and project priority established. These are again reviewed with the residents, and based on the outcome, projects are prioritized in a list of traffic calming CIP projects for funding consideration in the next budget development or update process (see E, next).

### D. RANKING PROCEDURE AND PRIORITIZING TRAFFIC CALMING PROJECTS

A ranking procedure is applied when evaluation is completed for all projects in the current cycle. The following point system is used to prioritize traffic calming projects for the annual, updated CIP list. These projects may include both unfunded items from the prior year (this is usually due to limited funds to construct physical traffic calming measures) that still qualify for consideration as significant problems, and new requests in the current process.

#### 1. Traffic Speeds (85<sup>th</sup> percentile)

10 points for each mile per hour the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile is above the speed limit plus 5 mph. (e.g., if the speed limit is 25 mph, and the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile is 32 miles = 2 X 10 points = 20 points) [Average 85<sup>th</sup> percentile of two directions]

#### 2. Safety Rating (Collision History)

a) 10 points for each reportable motor vehicle-to-motor vehicle collision in the past five years which would have been preventable with traffic calming (e.g., if a collision is caused by a drunk driver, it may not be correctable with traffic calming, and therefore may not factor into the rating).

b) 25 points for each reported pedestrian or bicyclist injury or fatality in the last five years that is considered preventable with traffic calming.

#### 3. Crosswalks and Sidewalks

a) 25 points for each uncontrolled intersection or mid-block crosswalk.

b) 25 points if there is no sidewalk on a portion of the street in question.

#### 4. Traffic Volume

a) 1 point for each 100 vehicles of average daily traffic above the following thresholds:

1) 2-way volume on local streets – above 1,000

2) 2-way volume on collector streets – above 2,500

3) 2-way volume on major streets – above 10,000

b) 1 point for each 10 pedestrians crossing above these thresholds during 8 peak hours:

- 1) Crossing an uncontrolled local street – above 100
- 2) Crossing an uncontrolled collector street – above 200
- 3) Crossing an uncontrolled major street – above 300

5. Bus Stops

15 points for each bus stop area

6. Proximity to Designated Community Facilities (schools, recreation centers, senior &/or community centers, senior multi-family housing, hospitals or clinics, parks, libraries, and BART Stations)

25 points for each of these types of institutions within 500 feet of the road section or intersection in question.

7. Bike Facility

25 points if the proposal is on a bike road facility.

8. Driveways (Conflict Points)

1 point for each driveway.

9. Proximity to Traffic Control Devices (signals, stop signs)

10 points if there are no traffic control devices within 400 feet.

10. Proximity to Existing Physical Traffic Calming Measures (speed humps, circles)

25 points if there are no traffic calming measures within 400 feet in any direction.

11. Trial of Less-Restrictive, Non-Physical, Corrective Traffic Calming Measures

25 points if other methods have been tested already, and proven to be unsuccessful.