

**DATE:** April 10, 2023

**TO:** Council Transportation Committee

**FROM:** Tim Cheng, Associate Civil Engineer  
Lorenzo Lopez, City Traffic Engineer  
Edward Arango, Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer

**VIA:** Dawn S. Cameron, Public Works Director

**SUBJECT:** Latham Street Neighborhood Traffic Management Program

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**RECOMMENDATION**

Authorize an exception to the minimum 35% return rate for postcard ballots and direct staff to proceed with the Latham Street Neighborhood Traffic Management Program recommended improvements, including speed humps and electronic speed feedback signs.

**BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS**

In 1996, the City Council adopted the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP) to establish a consistent set of guidelines to provide residents and property owners a means to obtain relief from traffic-related concerns, namely speeding vehicles and cut-through traffic on residential streets. The most recent modifications to the program were approved by the City Council in June 2021.

As a general summary, the NTMP process consists of the following seven steps:

Step 1: Initial Inquiry and/or Petition by Residents.

Step 2: Traffic Study, Identification of Appropriate Measures, and Establishment of Notification/Voting Area.

Step 3: Neighborhood Meeting with Affected Residents/Property Owners to Identify Preferred Traffic-Calming Measures.

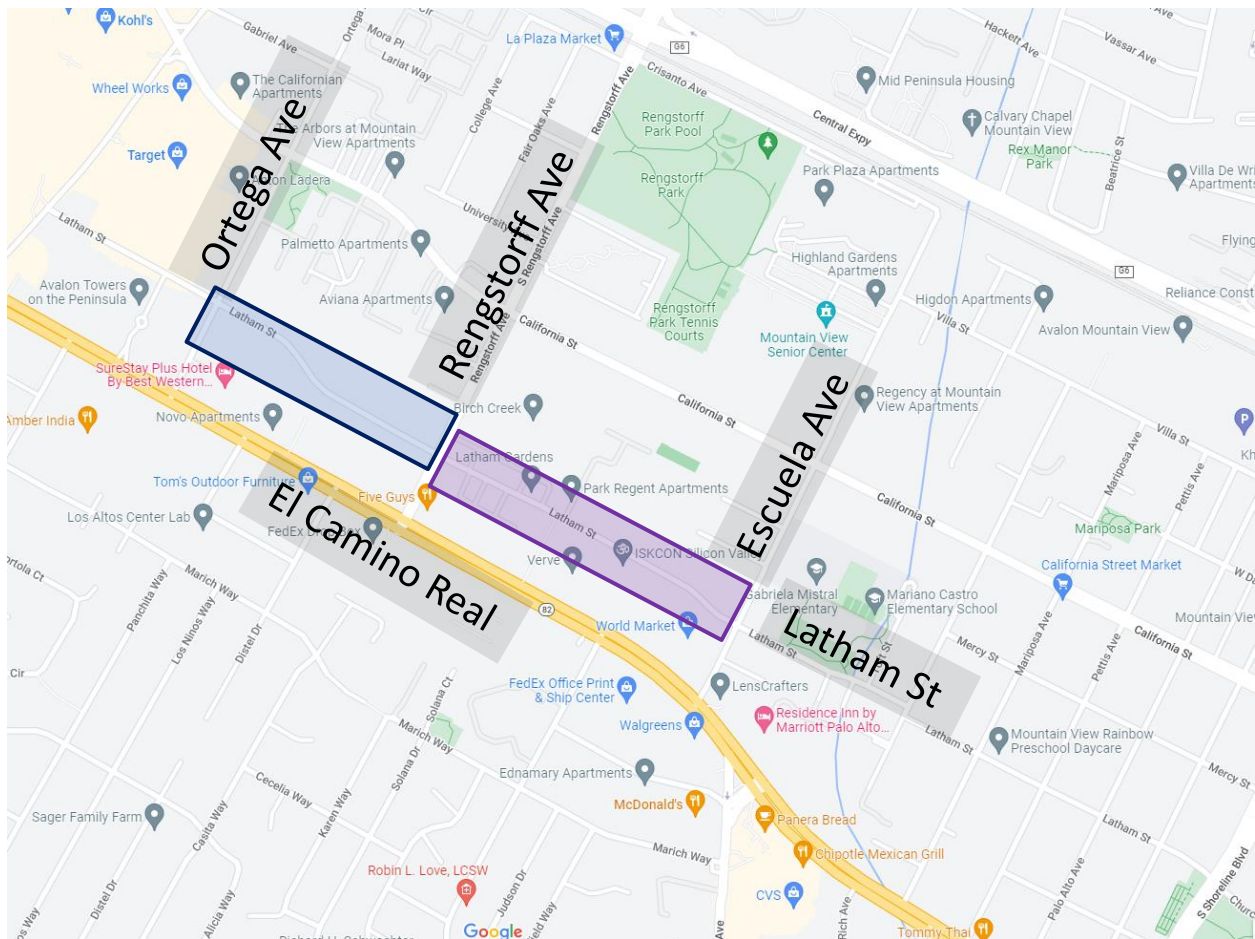
Step 4: Postcard Survey.

Step 5: Approval by Staff and/or the Council Transportation Committee or City Council.

Step 6: Installation of Traffic-Calming Device(s).

Step 7: Evaluation, Permanent Installation, or Removal after One Year.

In September 2021, the City received a petition signed by the residents of Latham Street between Ortega Avenue and Rengstorff Avenue requesting a traffic survey to address speeding on their street. Staff contacted the petitioners and, due to similar complaints received between Rengstorff Avenue and Escuela Avenue, requested the petitioners reach out to residents of this second segment (Rengstorff Avenue to Escuela Avenue) for the two segments to be surveyed together. In April 2022, the City received another petition signed by residents of Latham Street between Rengstorff Avenue and Escuela Avenue. Figure 1 shows both segments of Latham Street between Ortega Avenue and Escuela Avenue.



**Figure 1: Latham Street NTMP Limits**

Latham Street is a local collector street with a posted speed limit of 25 miles per hour (mph). For a local collector street with a 25 mph speed limit to qualify for the NTMP program, a traffic study must show that 15% (85th percentile speed) of the vehicles on the street exceed 31 mph; or over

150 vehicles per day are traveling above 31 mph. A speed study was conducted on Latham Street in March 2022 showing 154 vehicles traveling above 31 mph in the segment between Ortega Avenue and Rengstorff Avenue and 420 vehicles traveling above 31 mph in the segment between Rengstorff Avenue and Escuela Avenue, exceeding the NTMP criteria and qualifying the petitioned segment of Latham Street to move forward in the program.

On August 2, 2022, 11 residents attended a neighborhood meeting held by staff to obtain feedback and determine the potential traffic calming devices to include in a postcard survey of the neighborhood. The attendees' primary concerns were the speed of vehicles and safety on this section of Latham Street. The residents came to the consensus that the best solution to reduce speeds on Latham Street is to install speed humps, electronic speed feedback signs, or a combination of these traffic calming devices. Examples of these proposed improvements are shown in Figures 2 and 3.



**Figure 2: Example of Speed Hump**



**Figure 3: Example of Electronic Speed Feedback Sign**

Staff mailed a postcard survey to 1,200 of the Latham Street neighborhood residents and property owners in October 2022. Per the NTMP guidelines, a minimum of 35% of the postcard ballots must be returned (equating to a minimum of 420 postcard ballots for this survey), and of the returned postcards, a super-majority (minimum 67%) approval is required to approve installation of traffic-calming devices. The 35% threshold, in combination with the super-majority approval, was set into the guidelines to ensure that there is adequate support for the traffic-calming devices to be installed. Staff initially received 101 postcard ballots and, in response, performed two additional outreach efforts: staff worked with interested community members who volunteered to go door-to-door to encourage residents to return postcard ballots, and staff resent postcard ballots to residents who had not already returned postcards. As a result of this additional outreach, 236 additional postcards were returned, for a total of 337 responses, still short of the minimum required amount of 420.

Table 1 summarizes the results of the 1,200 residents and property owners who received a postcard survey by multiple mailing and door-to-door volunteer efforts.



**Table 1: Postcard Ballot Results**

<b>Votes in Favor— Installation of Proposed Improvements</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Blank Vote</b>
Speed Humps	290 (86%)	26 (8%)	21 (6%)
Electronic Speed Feedback Signs	272 (81%)	29 (9%)	36 (10%)

The votes received show a strong support of the improvements, exceeding the minimum 67% super-majority needed. As an additional exercise, staff evaluated the scenario if 84 additional postcards were returned to meet the minimum return rate and assuming those all indicated a “No” vote. In this scenario, speed hump improvements would still have met the super-majority criteria.

The Latham Street NTMP process is currently at Step 5: Approval by Staff and/or the Council Transportation Committee (CTC) or City Council. This step in the NTMP guidelines identifies either to have staff approve the installation or bring a recommendation to the CTC. Due to the minimum 35% postcard ballots return rate not being met, staff is bringing a recommendation to the CTC. Staff recommends an exception to the minimum 35% postcard ballot return rate and proceeding with installation of speed humps and electronic speed feedback signs for the following reasons:

- The public complaints received, validated with survey data, regarding speeding on Latham Street;
- Due diligence and additional efforts taken to obtain the minimum return rate;
- Other NTMP criteria being met; and
- Strong support for the improvements from the postcards returned.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The preliminary estimated cost to install the above improvements is between \$100,000 and \$150,000. There will be sufficient funding available (\$282,000) in Project 22-16, Annual Traffic Infrastructure Maintenance/NTMP Improvements, to fund this project.

**NEXT STEPS**

If the recommendation is approved by the CTC, staff will determine the most appropriate locations and design details based on conditions in the field, install the improvements, and evaluate the impact on vehicle speeds during the one-year demonstration period. If the speed concern has been successfully resolved and the residents are satisfied with the results, the installation will be kept in place permanently. Staff is currently processing two other NTMP requests where both are at the postcard survey step, and if those receive support for the improvements, staff may combine all three into one project with anticipated construction in early 2024.

TC-LL-EA/LL/2/PWK

979-04-10-23M

cc: PWD, APWD—Arango, CTE