



DATE: June 22, 2021

CATEGORY: Consent

DEPT.: Public Works

TITLE: **Neighborhood Traffic Management Program Revisions**

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the proposed revisions to the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program as recommended by the Council Transportation Committee.

BACKGROUND

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 of the program were made in September 2002.

In 2019, the City Council requested staff review the NTMP and propose changes to the program that would streamline the processes and allow staff to implement improvements more quickly. Staff conducted a full review of the NTMP Guidelines, taking into account comments from the public and Council, and provided an overview and update on the NTMP to obtain Council direction on possible revisions to the program at a City Council Study Session on February 11, 2020 (Attachment 1 to the Council report).

On June 1, 2021, the Council Transportation Committee (CTC) considered staff's recommended revisions to the NTMP Guidelines and unanimously recommended Council approval. The CTC also provided some comments related to implementation, which are detailed in this report.

ANALYSIS

The NTMP process consists of the following seven steps, which are described in more detail in Attachment 1:

- 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 CTC/City Council.
- Step 6: Installation of Traffic-Calming Device(s).
- Step 7: Evaluation, Permanent Installation, or Removal After One Year.

At the February 11, 2020 Study Session, staff recommended four modifications to the NTMP, all of which were unanimously supported by Council. Council also provided additional direction for changes. The staff-recommended modifications and those directed by Council are described below and are indicated as redlined edits in the NTMP Guidelines (Attachment 2 to this Council report).

Modification to Step 1 – Petition

Staff recommended changing the petition signature requirement to be a minimum of five signatures or a minimum of 10% of the residents or property owners on the street in question, whichever is higher. The current requirement is a minimum of 10% for the signatures required without setting an actual minimum number. This change was recommended and supported by Council because petitions signed by only one or two residents do not provide a good indication that there is a consensus that a problem exists and can result in failed attempts to get traffic-calming improvements approved by the affected residents.

Staff also modified Step 7 to apply the same thresholds of a minimum of five signatures or 10% of residents or property owners for a petition, whichever is higher, if, after the

one-year evaluation period, a resident is unhappy with a traffic device installed and wants it removed.

Modification to Step 2 – Lower Speed Threshold

Council requested that staff bring back an analysis for reducing the speed criteria from 32 miles per hour (mph) to 31 mph for the 85th percentile on local residential streets. Staff reviewed NTMP speed data for the past 10 years, and 28 streets with a posted speed limit of 25 mph did not qualify for the NTMP because they did not exceed the 32 mph 85th percentile requirement (30 mph in a school zone). Five streets would have qualified for NTMP if the speed threshold was lowered from 32 mph to 31 mph. Staff considers it to be a reasonable change to lower the threshold to 31 mph and has included this in the recommended revisions to the NTMP Guidelines.

Modification to Step 3 – Eligible Traffic-Calming Devices

Staff recommended that the Guidelines be modified to add electronic speed feedback signs to the list and to also allow staff to authorize additional traffic-calming measures as new techniques/devices are developed and approved per the California Manual on Uniform Traffic-Calming Devices (CA MUTCD) and other State and/or Federal standards. Council unanimously supported this recommendation.

Modification to Step 4 – Postcard Returns

Staff recommended requiring a minimum 35% return rate for the postcards and a supermajority (67%) approval of the returned postcards to ensure that there is adequate support for the traffic-calming devices to be installed. The current Guidelines do not have a minimum return rate and only require a minimum 67% approval of the returned postcards. Council supported this revision for a minimum return rate to help ensure there is a good level of support for the devices.

Staff has also added to the NTMP Guidelines process that staff will send out at least one additional notice by mail or email to remind residents and property owners to vote to promote the highest response rate possible.

Council also directed staff that if there are multiple recommended traffic-calming devices to be voted on by the neighborhood, each device should be itemized on the postcard survey, and each device's approval shall be independent of any other device rather than using an all-or-nothing approval approach. This modification has been included in the recommended revisions to the NTMP Guidelines.

Modification to Step 5 – City Approval Process

Depending on the type of device(s) approved in the postcard survey, staff approves the installation of the device or brings a recommendation to the CTC and, in some instances, to the City Council. Staff recommended, and Council concurred, that the Guidelines allow staff more discretion and use of professional judgment in determining whether it is necessary to take a recommendation to the CTC or Council. Streamlining the approval process by giving staff more discretion will allow certain devices to be installed more quickly. The table below (which is Table 3 in the NTMP Guidelines) provides staff’s recommended changes in the approval process.

Device	Approval Process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speed/warning signs and striping 	Public Works Director approval
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn restriction signs • Curbside trees 	Public Works Director and resident/property owner approval (67% majority)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speed humps • Narrow median islands • <i>Added: Electronic speed feedback signs</i> <p><i>The following devices that currently require City Council approval would be added per Public Works Director discretion to approve or to take to CTC for approval:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Traffic circles</i> • <i>Chokers/bow-outs/bulb-outs</i> • <i>Raised intersections/crosswalks</i> 	Public Works Director recommendation and resident/property owner approval (67% majority). <i>Added text: Approval by the CTC will be at staff’s discretion and judgment.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street closures/ cul- de-sacs • One-way entrance/exits to two-way streets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forced turn channelization • One-way chicanes • Woonerf <p>Public Works Director recommendation, resident/property owner approval (67% majority), and approval by the CTC and City Council</p>

Other Modifications

- Funding Section: Council indicated that if funding to implement the NTMP is exhausted (or near exhausted), staff should request additional budget from Council rather than carrying over the project to the next fiscal year. The revision added to the NTMP Guidelines states that staff will request additional budget from Council if funding is available.
- Process Introduction: No changes were recommended by staff or requested by Council regarding the practices and timing used to install traffic-calming devices.

However, as discussed in the February 11, 2020 Study Session memo, the reference to specific implementation timelines was removed from the NTMP Guidelines to avoid setting unrealistic expectations.

- Appendix: Traffic Management Device Inventory – Minor updates were made to the descriptions of the devices, and electronic speed feedback signs were added.

Council Transportation Committee

As noted above, the CTC recommended approval of all the revisions listed above and indicated as red-lined edits in Attachment 2. The CTC also provided the following comments:

- Use online petitions and postcard ballots to the extent feasible. Staff will work with applicants who would like to use an online petition process. The petition is generated by the applicant and must include a statement explaining the traffic concern and the names and addresses of residents signing the petition. The applicant is also responsible for gathering the signatures; therefore, the applicant will have to inform the applicant's neighbors on the street of how to sign the petition online. Staff will continue to mail a postcard ballot to every residence; however, the postcard will also include instructions on how to submit votes online.
- Prioritize the use of trees and other greenery as a traffic-calming measure balanced with assuring visibility and safety. The NTMP toolbox includes the use of curbside trees where feasible. It also includes traffic circles, chokers, bow-outs, and bulb-outs, which could create spaces for plantings. Staff will take advantage of these measures wherever possible and as supported by the residents. The limiting factors typically are a lack of a planting strip for trees between the sidewalk and street and/or lack of right-of-way to add a planting strip. In addition, care must be taken in the placement of trees and shrubs to ensure they do not create sight line obstructions.

Next Steps

The approved modified NTMP Guidelines will be posted on the City's website and will be used for future NTMP inquiries and processes. Staff will also promote awareness of the new streamlined guidelines through social media and other outreach.

FISCAL IMPACT

The NTMP improvements are funded by the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Annual Traffic Infrastructure Maintenance/NTMP Improvements. The annual allocation to the project is \$613,000 in Fiscal Year 2021-22, increasing to \$665,000 in Fiscal Year 2025-26 in the five-year CIP. The funding sources are the Construction/Conveyance Tax Fund (90% to 95%) and Shoreline Regional Park Community Fund (5% to 10%). As indicated in the revised NTMP Guidelines, if funding to implement the NTMP is exhausted (or near exhausted), staff will request additional budget from Council if funding is available.

CONCLUSION

The recommended revisions to the NTMP Guidelines are consistent with Council's direction received at the Council Study Session on February 11, 2020. The revisions will provide for quicker implementation of several typical traffic control devices by providing authority to the Public Works Director to approve these particular devices with resident/property owner approval. Additional modifications related to minimum number of signatures on a petition, a minimum postcard ballot return rate, and voting on each device separately will help ensure there is a good level of support for the devices that are approved.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Do not approve all or some of the recommended modifications to the NTMP Guidelines.
2. Direct staff and/or the CTC to consider additional modifications to the NTMP Guidelines.
3. Provide other direction.

PUBLIC NOTICING

Agenda posting and emailed notices to Neighborhood Associations.

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Attachments: 1. February 11, 2020 Study Session Memo
2. NTMP Guidelines with Recommended Revisions (redlined)