



COUNCIL REPORT

DATE: December 10, 2024

CATEGORY: Consent

DEPT.: Public Works

TITLE: **Neighborhood Traffic Management Program—Wasatch Drive**

RECOMMENDATION

As recommended by the Council Transportation Committee, approve the closure of Wasatch Drive at Diericx Drive for a 10-month evaluation period starting from the date Wasatch Drive is closed to automobile through traffic.

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 NTMP process consists of a number of steps that include:

- A request from a neighborhood to initiate the process;
- Verification by the City confirming the road segment is eligible for the NTMP program and data collection;
- Community input on which, if any, traffic-calming devices are desired;
- Postcard survey to receive consensus from the residents on the selected devices;
- Council Transportation Committee (CTC) and/or City Council approvals as needed; and
- If approved, installations.

Wasatch Drive is an L-shaped residential street in the Grant Road/Sylvan Park neighborhood located approximately 1,400' north of Mountain View High School (MVHS) (see Figure 1). It has a posted speed limit of 25 miles per hour (mph) and connects to two collector streets: Levin Avenue to the north and Diericx Drive to the east (see Figure 2). Wasatch Drive fronts 24 single-family residential homes, surrounded by similar residential homes.



Figure 1: Neighborhood Area Map



Figure 2: Wasatch Drive

In January 2023, the City received multiple complaints from a resident of Wasatch Drive regarding vehicles speeding on Wasatch Drive and using it as a cut-through street to bypass the all-way stop sign at Diericx Drive and Levin Avenue, particularly the queuing, leading up to the stop sign during school travel times. Over the past years, Wasatch Drive residents had been working with the Police Department (PD) and MVHS staff regarding their concerns with speeding and cut-through traffic. PD and MVHS addressed the neighborhood concerns through targeted enforcement, education, and ongoing field observations. Meanwhile, residents along Wasatch Drive reached out to the Public Works Department to explore other potential solutions due to the recurring concerns over the years.

ANALYSIS

Staff conducted vehicle speed and cut-through studies in September 2023, from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., to verify the complaints received. For vehicle speed, staff evaluates the 85th percentile speed, which is the speed at or below 85% of drivers who are traveling on a road segment. The results showed that the 85th percentile speed along Wasatch Drive was 32.7 mph, identifying 15% of the vehicles on Wasatch Drive traveled at or above 32.7 mph. The study also identified 87 vehicles out of 125 vehicles (approximately 70%) used Wasatch Drive as a cut-through street, where 31 vehicles were using the cut-through between 8:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. A street qualifies for the NTMP if it meets either of the following criteria:

1. Having a posted speed limit of 25 mph with 15% or more vehicles traveling at or above 31 mph; or
2. 25% or more of the traffic using the street to cut through.

Both criteria were met; therefore, Wasatch Drive qualifies for the NTMP.

Staff held a neighborhood meeting on February 8, 2024, where 13 residents attended. The primary concerns shared were the speed of vehicles and the amount of vehicles using Wasatch Drive as a cut-through street. During the meeting, staff presented several proven traffic-calming devices for discussion and recommended the installation of speed humps and/or electronic speed-feedback signs. **The neighborhood voiced that they experience a new student driver population from MVHS yearly, including recurring speeding and cut-through traffic.** As a result, nearly all attendees were in agreement that their preferred solution was to close Wasatch Drive at Diericx Drive, rather than the staff-recommended measures. Staff identified that a subsequent community meeting would be needed to allow staff time to evaluate the feasibility of a street closure and potential improvement options, if feasible, for the request.

Staff reviewed different alternatives and met with the Fire Department, Recology (the City's trash and recycling hauler), and the Solid Waste Section of the Public Works Department to confirm feasibility and identify any operational impacts for the street closure. In summary, City staff and Recology did not have concerns with a street closure as developed by staff so long as it allowed access for their vehicles and equipment. The staff-developed concepts will provide this access.

On May 9, 2024, a second neighborhood meeting was held, and 11 residents attended. City staff presented two alternatives for discussion and consideration. Alternative 1 proposed to close Wasatch Drive at Diericx Drive, and Alternative 2 proposed to close Wasatch Drive at Levin Avenue. Both alternatives address Fire Department and Recology operational needs and include the same treatment measures: rubber curbs, delineator posts, striping, and signage (see Figure 3).

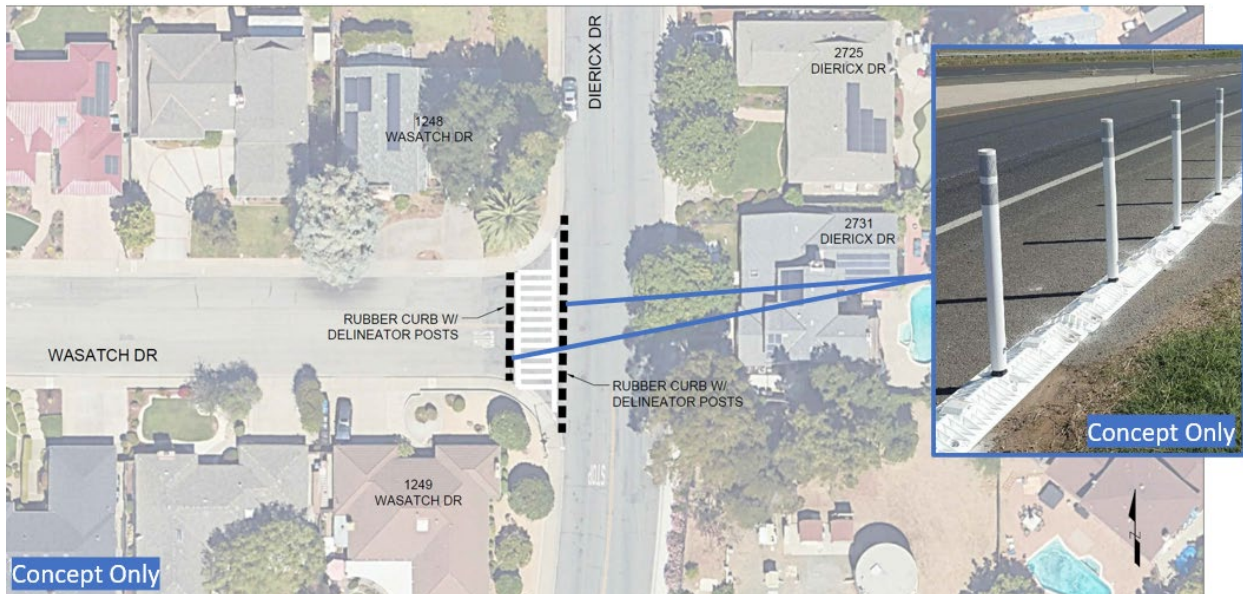


Figure 3: Wasatch Drive Closure at Diericx Drive (Concept Only)

All the residents in attendance came to a consensus to close Wasatch Drive at Diericx Drive with the treatment measures staff proposed. If approved, during the design phase, the details regarding the spacing of rubber curbs, specific type of flexible knock-down delineators, and striping/signage will be determined to ensure that emergency and trash vehicles can access the street closure area when needed and pedestrian and bicycle access is maintained.

Consistent with the NTMP guidelines, the City conducted a postcard survey of the Wasatch Drive neighborhood residents and property owners in June 2024 describing the proposed closure. Of the 24 residents and property owners who were mailed the survey, 16 (approximately 67%) responded, exceeding the 35% response rate required. The survey results are provided below:

	Yes	No
Votes in Favor—Installation of Proposed Improvements	14	2
Closing of Wasatch Drive at Diericx Drive	(88%)	(12%)

Per the NTMP guidelines, for a device to be installed, a supermajority (67%) support of the returned postcard survey is needed, and this was achieved with 88% support. Additionally, NTMP guidelines require approval by both the Council Transportation Committee (CTC) and City Council for street closures.

Further Staff Evaluation

After receiving support for the closure from the postcard survey, staff performed field evaluations to assess the traffic patterns at the Diericx Drive/Levin Avenue intersection during

the school year. From late August to mid-September of this year, staff collected data and observed patterns during peak morning traffic times, specifically between 7:45 a.m. and 8:45 a.m. The field evaluations over multiple days revealed a maximum queue of 11 vehicles at the eastbound approach to the Diericx Drive/Levin Avenue intersection happened only once or twice between 8:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. This maximum queue length consistently cleared within 90 seconds. The typical queue length was between two and six vehicles long during this time frame.

During the same 30-minute window, approximately 100 vehicles were observed turning right from Levin Avenue to Diericx Drive, and approximately 32 vehicles were observed turning right at Wasatch Drive, consistent with the data collected in September 2023. Applying the Wasatch Drive trips to the Levin Avenue/Diericx Drive intersection, staff expects the street closure would increase right-turning vehicles from Levin Avenue to Diericx Drive by 30%. With the typical existing queues of two to six vehicles at the Levin Avenue/Diericx Drive intersection, staff anticipates minor added delays at the Levin Avenue/Diericx Drive intersection. During the maximum-queue length/clearance time frame (11 vehicles and 90 seconds), an additional 20-second delay may be observed at the Levin Avenue/Diericx Drive intersection due to the additional vehicle trips diverted as a result of the closure.

Outreach to Residents Along Diericx Drive and Levin Avenue

Recognizing that the closure could add minor queuing to the Diericx Drive/Levin Avenue intersection, staff conducted additional neighborhood outreach specifically to those residents fronting and near this intersection, where existing queuing is taking place (see Figure 4). The Wasatch Drive residents were not included due to staff having held neighborhood meetings with those residents. As part of the neighborhood outreach, letters were sent on September 6, 2024 to 25 residents on Levin Avenue and Diericx Drive, outlining the proposed closure of Wasatch Drive and requesting their feedback and input.

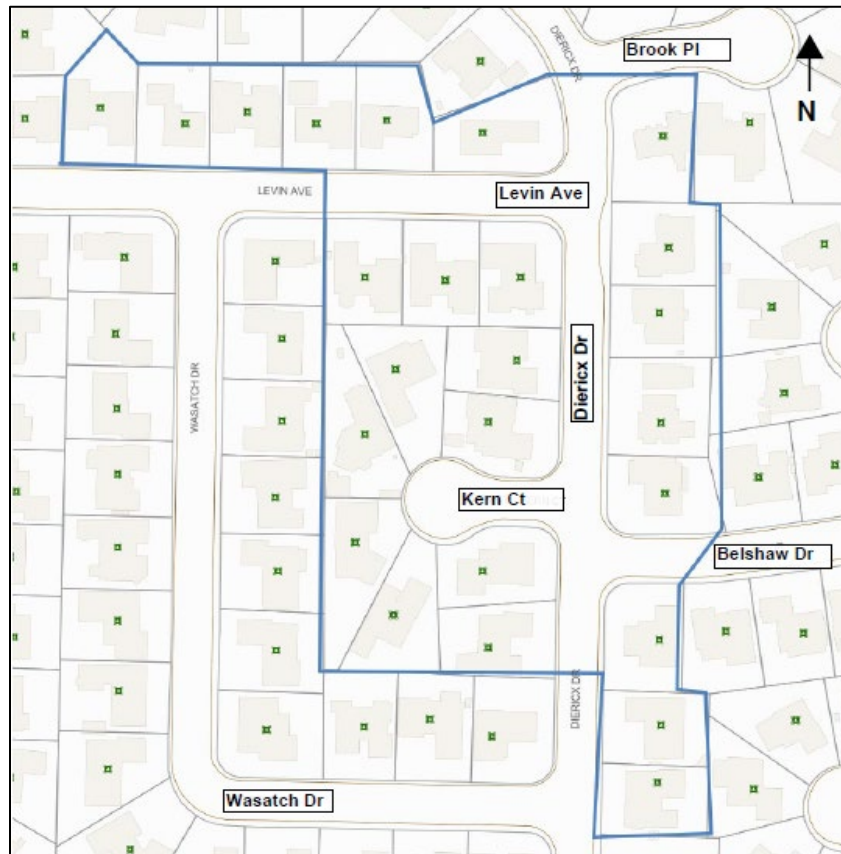


Figure 4: Diericx Drive/Levin Avenue Residents Notified

Eight email responses were received. Staff contacted all eight residents and spoke to seven of the eight residents to get a better understanding of their concerns. Staff left multiple voice mails for the eighth resident who did not return calls. A summary of the feedback received included the following:

- Frustration over queuing at the Diericx Drive/Levin Avenue intersection and confusion about why traffic was being diverted from Wasatch Drive to their streets;
- Questioning the fairness of using their residential area to resolve traffic issues on Wasatch Drive;
- Concerns about speeding caused by the lack of sufficient stop signs and other traffic-calming measures along Diericx Drive and Levin Avenue;
- Concerns with drivers not complying with existing stop signs; and
- Two residents requested traffic-calming measures be applied to Diericx Drive and Levin Avenue.

In response to the feedback received, staff will be taking the following steps to address these residents' concerns:

- Increase Police enforcement and educational outreach by MVHS staff to students and parents to reduce speeding and improve stop sign compliance.
- Conduct stop warrant studies at various intersections for possible conversions to all-way stop-controlled intersections. The intersections staff will evaluate for all-way stops include Levin Avenue/Katrina Way, Levin Avenue/Sun-Mor Avenue, and Levin Avenue/Yorkton Drive.
- Initiate the NTMP process on Levin Avenue and Diericx Drive without an NTMP petition, consistent with the NTMP guidelines due to the diversion of traffic from Wasatch Drive. Through the NTMP process, measures may include installation of speed humps or other traffic-calming devices to address speeding concerns.

These efforts aim to prioritize safety and respond to neighborhood feedback.

Demonstration Period (Evaluation)

The NTMP guidelines identify that a demonstration period for some traffic-calming measures could be utilized for a period of one year, including the use of temporary devices to be considered for a trial demonstration of street closures. Staff has determined that a trial implementation is feasible at this location and has designed such trial measures. In light of this, the successful postcard survey, and only minor delays anticipated at the Levin Avenue/Diericx Drive intersection, staff is recommending a trial demonstration period for the closure of Wasatch Drive with temporary devices of rubber curbs and flexible delineators. To address the Levin Avenue and Diericx Drive residents' feedback regarding the closure of Wasatch Drive, an evaluation period of six months was originally recommended by staff versus waiting a full year (in addition to the measures outlined above). This would allow sufficient time for staff to evaluate the project while reducing the typical trial period to identify how the measures are received by the community.

Per the NTMP guidelines, after the evaluation period, staff will conduct another speed or traffic survey to determine the results of the measures and queuing data at the Levin Avenue/Diericx Drive intersection. Once the results are obtained, three possible actions can be taken and are summarized as follows:

- If the traffic concern has been successfully resolved, queuing increase is minor, and the residents and property owners are satisfied with the results, staff will recommend a permanent installation to the CTC and/or City Council, pending funding resources.

- If the residents and property owners are unhappy with the installation, even though the traffic study shows the devices have been successful, they may request removal of the devices following the Traffic-Calming Device Removal process outlined in the NTMP guidelines.
- If the traffic study shows the speed of traffic or the volume of cut-through traffic has not been reduced and queuing is not minor as expected, staff may ask the CTC and/or the City Council for approval to remove the measures. Staff will arrange for another neighborhood meeting to gather resident feedback about considering a different device.

Council Transportation Committee (CTC)

On [October 29, 2024](#), the CTC reviewed staff's recommendation and approved recommending to Council the closure of Wasatch Drive at Diericx Drive with the amendment to establish a 10-month rather than a 6-month evaluation period starting from the date of installation (capturing a longer demonstration period while school is in session). The CTC also recommended staff:

- Work with the school district to communicate the closure of Wasatch Drive to students;
- Evaluate what, if any, changes should be made to the City's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program for driver education messaging; and
- Monitor the closure impacts on the surrounding streets and address any issues that may arise.

NEXT STEPS

If the proposed improvements are approved by Council, staff will finalize the design details based on field conditions, coordinate with the City's Streets Section staff to install the improvements in February 2025, and evaluate the impacts during and after the 10-month demonstration period. Staff will also undertake the CTC's additional recommendations noted above.

FISCAL IMPACT

The preliminary estimated cost to install the improvements is \$40,000. Annual Traffic Infrastructure, Project 23-16, has sufficient funding available for these improvements.

LEVINE ACT

California Government Code Section 84308 (also known as the Levine Act) prohibits city officials from participating in any proceeding involving a "license, permit, or other entitlement for use" if

the official has received a campaign contribution exceeding \$250 from a party, participant, or agent of a party or participant in the proceeding within the last 12 months. A city official is similarly prohibited from accepting, soliciting, or directing a campaign contribution exceeding \$250 from a party, participant, or agent of a party or participant to any proceeding involving a license, permit, or other entitlement for use for 12 months after a final decision is rendered in said proceeding.

Please refer to the “X” in the checklist below for information about whether the recommended action for this agenda item is subject to or exempt from the Levine Act.

SUBJECT TO THE LEVINE ACT

- Land development entitlements
- Other permit, license, or entitlement for use
- Contract or franchise

EXEMPT FROM THE LEVINE ACT

- Competitively bid contract
- Labor or personal employment contract
- General policy and legislative actions

For more information about the Levine Act, please see the Fair Political Practices Commission website: www.fppc.ca.gov/learn/pay-to-play-limits-and-prohibitions.html.

CONCLUSION

Wasatch Drive residents submitted an NTMP request indicating that there is regular speeding on their street and that Wasatch Drive has become a common cut-through route between Levin Avenue and Diericx Drive, due in large part to the yearly new student driver population from MVHS. Staff evaluated Wasatch Drive and confirmed the street qualifies for an NTMP and conducted two community meetings with the Wasatch Drive residents where they indicated support for a street closure. An analysis of the additional trips associated with a closure resulted in an expected nominal increase in delay at the Levin Avenue/Diericx Drive intersection. Staff conducted additional outreach to the residents on Levin Avenue and Diericx Drive to receive their input regarding the potential closure of Wasatch Drive. In response to the feedback received from Levin Avenue/Diericx Drive residents, staff will be initiating an NTMP process for these streets as well as providing other measures, including increased Police enforcement, communication with MVHS students, ongoing educational outreach to MVHS through the SRTS program, and conducting stop warrant studies.

The closure of Wasatch Drive is recommended for a period of 10 months, consistent with the recommendation of the CTC. Should Council approve the recommended action, the temporary

devices of rubber curbs, flexible delineators, striping, and signage, which will maintain bicycle and pedestrian access, can be installed by February 2025.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Do not approve the closure of Wasatch Drive at Diericx Drive and direct staff to implement other measures.
2. Modify the evaluation period of the closure of Wasatch Drive.
3. Provide other direction.

PUBLIC NOTICING

In addition to agenda posting, notices were mailed to the residents and property owners within 750' of the project boundaries.

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