



# Staff Report

## City Council

Item No. {{section.number}}.{{item.number}}

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**Meeting Date:** January 8, 2025

**From:** John A. Corella, Director of Public Works

**Title:** Traffic Calming Policy and Guidelines: January 2025 Update

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### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff is presenting an update on the Traffic Calming Policy and Guidelines to the City Council for discussion, comments and recommendations to review and adopt at a later date.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Nationwide, vehicles speeding on streets has been a challenge since the invention of the automobile. As urban areas expanded, so did roadways and vehicular traffic. As vehicles became more powerful, speeds increased accordingly. With respect to the aforementioned, residential neighborhood streets have also been affected by speeding vehicles, despite the efforts of the residents and local law enforcement over the years.

The City of Cathedral City is not immune to the challenges of vehicles speeding in residential neighborhoods. The city Public Works (Engineering and Public Works Maintenance Divisions) and Police Department are working together to address our resident's concerns for the subsequent implementation of the appropriate traffic calming measures to reduce speeding on our streets.

On Wednesday, April 13, 2023, the City Council unanimously approved a 5-Year Strategic Plan to provide a longer-term perspective for service delivery and budgeting as well as addressing current needs and priorities in the city. One of the priorities in the strategic plan is to develop a traffic calming plan with strategies for addressing location specific speeding issues.

The city created the Traffic Calming Committee, composed of city staff from various Departments/Divisions, including Public Works Maintenance, Fire, Police, Fleet Maintenance, and Engineering.

The committee implemented a "Temporary Traffic Control Measures Process", where each step initiates an increased effort in the enforcement of the regulatory

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speed limit on residential streets.

As approved through the budget process, the committee procured temporary equipment including portable speed humps, flashing regulatory speed signs, speed feedback signs, and an enclosed storage trailer.

The temporary traffic calming devices and supporting equipment were mobilized and installed at the first location in July 2024. Since then, five residential streets have been evaluated in response to residents' complaints regarding speeding in their neighborhoods. Memorandums outlining the results for each location are attached to this report.

Based on the evaluation and results from the initial temporary traffic calming efforts, as well as additional research, the Engineering Division has developed the Traffic Calming Policy and Guidelines. This policy outlines a comprehensive set of measures designed to enhance neighborhood safety and quality of life through a variety of roadway improvement strategies.

## **DISCUSSION:**

Traffic calming is the process of minimizing the negative impacts associated with neighborhood vehicular traffic interacting with residents, pedestrians, bicyclists and school children. When implemented, traffic calming measures can reduce neighborhood speeding, cut-through traffic, and reckless driver behavior on city streets.

The purpose of traffic calming measures falls into two fundamental categories:

- Devices that reduce speed
- Devices that reduce volume

The process to successfully provide traffic calming improvements is separated into two parts, each consisting of specific components and steps that should be considered during the development of a street/neighborhood traffic management plan.

The two parts in this process are:

1. PART A: Investigation - Temporary Traffic Control Measures
2. PART B: Actions - Permanent Traffic Control Measures.

PART A, Investigation - "Temporary Traffic Control Measures" is the first part of the process and implementation of traffic calming measures. This part describes how the traffic calming process is initiated and how requests are handled and considered for treatment.

The parameters for the implementation of traffic calming devices in residential areas are as follows:

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- Parameter 1: The measured 85th percentile traffic speed shall be equal to or greater than 35 mph, and/or;
- Parameter 2: 70% of the measured speeds shall be more than 25 mph (speed limit).

At least one of the above-mentioned parameters needs to be met in order to proceed to the next step in the temporary traffic control measures process. If none of the parameters are met, no additional step is required. If parameters are met for additional traffic control measures, available options shall be recommended for implementation in the “Permanent Traffic Calming Measures” part of the process.

PART B, Actions – “Permanent Traffic Control Measures” is the second part of the process for implementing traffic calming measures, which includes three distinct components: one for city actions, another for localized traffic calming measures, and a third for the neighborhood traffic control plan.

Within these components, staff resources and funding need to be identified to start the traffic calming plan; all relevant participants, residents and committees and the study area need to be determined; surveys and/or petitions assessing neighborhood support may be required; and needed funding is identified prior to the construction of the project.

#### Traffic Calming Measures Available Options

The design of traffic calming measures can be organized into four categories to assist in understanding the available options.

- Option 1 – Awareness Measures
- Option 2 – Vertical Deflection Measures
- Option 3 – Horizontal Deflection Measures
- Option 4 – Diversion Measures

The available options, placement and design considerations of traffic calming measures are explained in detail in the attached Traffic Calming Policy and Guidelines document.

The challenge of traffic calming is selecting the appropriate measures and locations to reach a balance between the need to provide an efficient transportation network and maintaining a livable and safe environment for bicyclists, pedestrians, and other street or street-adjacent users. Traffic calming also involves trade-offs such as travel time impacts, emergency response times, noise and street diversion.

Staff is presenting an update on the Traffic Calming Policy and Guidelines to the City Council for discussion, comments and recommendations to review and adopt at a later date.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

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There is no fiscal impact associated with this discussion item.

**FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN:**

City Council Goal B: Community Investment

Cathedral City roads, gateways, public spaces, and other city infrastructure are well planned, designed, constructed, and maintained.

Action B-10

Develop a traffic calming plan with strategies for addressing location specific speeding issues.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1 – Traffic Calming Guidelines

2 – Temporary Traffic Measures - Memorandums