



CITY OF SALINAS COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: JUNE 13, 2023

DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

FROM: DAVID JACOBS P.E., L.S., PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

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TITLE: 2023-2024 PRIORITIZATION OF TRAFFIC CALMING PROJECTS

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

A motion to approve the proposed neighborhood traffic calming project prioritization list for fiscal year 2023-2024.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Numerous requests for traffic calming projects have exceeded City's budgeted resources to respond to and provide traffic calming solutions for all the neighborhoods currently petitioning for projects. City staff evaluated and ranked traffic calming request using the Council approved prioritization criteria. The Traffic and Transportation Commission reviewed the draft prioritization ranking and modified the traffic calming project prioritization list for fiscal year 2023-2024. It is recommended City Council approve the proposed neighborhood traffic calming project prioritization list for fiscal year 2023-2024.

BACKGROUND:

The City receives numerous complaints and requests from residents regarding neighborhood traffic related issues. Many residential concerns relate to driver behavior in the form of speeding or cut-through traffic on residential streets.

In 2009, the City of Salinas adopted the Neighborhood Traffic Management Programs to respond to residents' requests to reduce the speed of vehicles and discourage cut-through traffic on residential streets. With the success and community support for the first complete traffic calming projects on Rosarita Drive and Little River Drive, requests for traffic calming projects began rapidly increasing. City staff evaluate requests as they are received but traffic calming projects are now backlogged due to limited time and budgetary resources. In 2017, staff recommended the adoption of a priority rating system based on fair and impartial methodologies to deliver projects based on identified needs and benefits. The recommended prioritization criteria was approved by City Council with Traffic and Transportation Commission support.

Staff estimates the average cost of a neighborhood traffic calming project typically ranges \$70,000 to \$150,000 depending on the size and complexity of the project. The project can take several months of community meetings with additional time for a voting period before advancing to implementation. The 2022-2023 budget for traffic calming projects was \$435,000, which is being distributed to four neighborhood traffic calming projects which include West Acacia Street, Paseo Grande, Iverson Street, and Victor Street. If there are remaining funds the City will work with the next neighborhood from the 2022-2023 prioritized traffic calming project list. Staff will continue working on the next highest priority until funds are depleted.

As of December 31, 2022, the backlog of traffic calming projects included 25 neighborhoods. Petitions for traffic calming projects received after December 31, 2022, will be included in the 2024-2025 prioritization report once traffic data is available. Staff prioritized the traffic calming projects based on the prioritization scoring from the approved criteria and presented it to the Traffic and Transportation Commission. The Commission adjusted the Coventry Street neighborhood to third highest priority despite receiving a lower prioritization score. Staff is recommending traffic calming improvement projects to be considered in the order shown in Table 1 for fiscal year 2023-2024 and continued on Attachment 1. Depending on the budget that the City Council allocates for traffic calming for the FY 23-24, City staff will work on the projects in the order listed in the table below until the budget is depleted. With an anticipated annual CIP budget for traffic calming of \$200,000, the staff expects to be able to complete three (3) projects for FY 23-24. Once the budget gets depleted, the backlogged traffic calming petitions will be held until resources become available or until the next re-prioritization list is developed.

Table 1: Traffic Calming Prioritization

Rank	Neighborhood	Score
1	Rainier Drive	61
2	Nogal Drive	52
3	Coventry Street	48
4	Rochex Avenue	51
5	Chardonnay Drive	50
6	Swaner Avenue	44
7	Ranchero Drive	39
8	Calaveras Drive	39
9	Alamo Way	36
10	Santa Teresa Way	31
11	Pueblo Drive	30
12	Alameda Avenue	27
13	Paloma Avenue	24
14	Pescadero Drive	23
15	Fairview Avenue	21
16	Mimbrera Way	20

**Streets with equal scores rank the highest collision history first*

For all other neighborhoods requesting traffic calming projects, which scored less than 20 out of 100, staff recommends closing out the request. The traffic studies found that these neighborhoods have relatively low speeds, volumes and collision history when compared to other neighborhoods. Given the abundance of traffic calming requests in the City it is reasonably foreseeable that these neighborhoods will not be prioritized for traffic calming in the foreseeable future. Therefore, staff recommends that requests for traffic calming projects that do not meet the threshold be closed and the petitioners notified.

The City developed the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program, which establishes a process for a community led effort to develop the design of a traffic calming plan that is supported by the residents themselves who will be most impacted by the project once it is completed. There are several countermeasures available to help mitigate traffic issues, however, the predominate request from the community are rubberized speed cushions. Staff notes that there are other countermeasures available which can be more effective, and may have additional benefits beyond traffic calming, such as curb extensions and raised pedestrian crosswalks. However, the planning and design of traffic calming projects is a community led effort which tends to result in more rubberized speed cushions.

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION:

The 2023-24 Prioritization of Traffic Calming Projects was presented to the Traffic and Transportation Commission at its May 11, 2023 meeting. The Commission voted (6-0) to approve a motion to approve a modification of staff's proposed neighborhood traffic calming project prioritization list for fiscal year 2023-2024, whereas the top three priorities include the Rainer Drive, Nogal Drive and Coventry Street neighborhoods. Furthermore, the Commission recommended that the City continue to keep all traffic calming petitions active and continue to collect data for neighborhoods with low traffic volumes and speeds which received a low priority score. However, continuing to monitor neighborhoods which are unlikely to rank high requires additional resources and funds to carry on. These operating costs will limit available traffic calming funds and consequently staff estimates the City may only be able to deliver two projects if all neighborhoods carry forward next fiscal year. Staff recommends that neighborhoods with scores less than 20 be closed so that operating funds can be allocated towards delivering projects.

CEQA CONSIDERATION:

Not a Project. The City of Salinas has determined that the proposed action is not a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378). In addition, CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 includes the general rule that CEQA applies only to activities which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. Because the proposed action and this matter have no potential to cause any effect on the environment, or because it falls within a category of activities excluded as projects pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378, this matter is not a project. Because the matter does not cause a direct or foreseeable indirect physical change on or in the environment, this matter is not a project. Any subsequent discretionary projects resulting from this action will be assessed for CEQA applicability.

STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

The 2023-2024 Prioritization of Traffic Calming Projects supports the Council goal of “Effective and Culturally Responsive Government”.

The City developed the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program to respond to residents’ concerns regarding traffic safety. Through before and after studies, the City has determined that the neighborhood traffic calming projects have some effect to lower traffic speeds and volumes. However, the City also completed a comprehensive 10-year collision analysis, the Vision Zero Action Plan, which reveals that very few traffic collisions occur on residential streets. The Neighborhood Traffic Management Program may help respond to residential requests, but the program has little effect to support the City Council’s goal of “Public Safety”.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

There will be no additional impact to the General Fund. Based on the FY 2023-2024 CIP budget for Traffic Calming, staff will work on the neighborhoods from the above table until the budget is depleted. Once the allotted budget has been depleted, the backlogged traffic calming petitions will be held until resources become available or until the next re-prioritization recommendation.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment 1: Neighborhood Traffic Calming Scoring Master List
- Attachment 2: Neighborhood Traffic Calming Scoring Worksheets
- Attachment 3: Neighborhood Traffic Studies
- Attachment 4: Neighborhood Traffic Management Program Manual