



CITY OF SALINAS

COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: **SEPTEMBER 4, 2018**

DEPARTMENT: **PUBLIC WORKS, TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION DIVISION**

FROM: **JAMES SERRANO, TRANSPORTATION MANAGER**

TITLE: **RIKER STREET TRAFFIC CALMING UPDATE: SIGHTLINE CLEARANCE AT RIKER STREET INTERSECTIONS**

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

A motion to approve a Resolution approving parking restrictions along the Riker Street intersections for sight clearance.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Receive an update from staff on the Riker Street Neighborhood Traffic Calming Plan; and
2. Approve a Resolution approving parking restrictions along Riker Street intersections for sightline clearance.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In response to concerns expressed regarding sightlines and mobility at the recently implemented Riker Street Traffic Calming Project, staff has reviewed requests for increased on-street parking restrictions for sightline clearance. Staff re-evaluated the intersections with the consideration of a more conservative setback for approaching vehicles by proposing additional red zones to improve sightlines and mobility at the intersection for turning movements. Using the more conservative assumptions in response to residents' concerns, staff is recommending the restriction of an additional total of 936 feet of parking at the Riker Street traffic circles and its adjacent streets. It is however important to note that removing parking to clear sightlines may undo the intended benefits of the traffic calming project.

BACKGROUND:

At its meeting on February 20, 2018, the City Council directed staff to implement the Riker Street Neighborhood Traffic Calming Plan based on results of the support vote for the plan. The project was implemented with construction completed on May 23, 2018. The traffic calming project has received much attention and comments from those who travel on Riker Street.

It is important to recall the reason for the neighborhood traffic calming plan and the goals of residents who supported the plan. Residents of Riker Street and Capistrano Drive neighborhood submitted a petition requesting the City to investigate speeding and traffic volume issues on Riker

Street and Capistrano Drive neighborhood. Traffic studies were conducted in various locations along these streets, and the results confirmed high speeds and high vehicle volumes on Riker Street (between Blanco Road and Acacia Street).

It is also important to also note that the City of Salinas Traffic and Transportation Division held two community meetings with residents of Riker Street and Capistrano Drive neighborhood to develop a neighborhood traffic calming plan. With residents' input received at these meeting, the traffic calming plan was developed and finalized.

Per the City's Traffic Calming Policy, the plan was taken to a vote to determine support from residents. In November 2017, the neighborhood met the support vote requirement as prescribed by the City's Traffic Calming Policy. The City received ballots from 69% of all applicable households, with 79% of the returned ballots in favor of the Plan. The neighborhood plan therefore met the support requirement.

The Riker Street neighborhood traffic calming plan included the installation of striping (lane markings) on Riker Street, to narrow the travel lanes for vehicles, thereby inducing drivers to lower their speeds. Additionally, the plan included the installation of traffic circles along Riker Street. Traffic circles are speed-reducing tools placed at intersections to slow vehicle speeds as well as provide an overall traffic calming effect along the entire corridor. The attached plan (Exhibit B) shows the approximate location of the traffic circles and striping limits.

The City Council approved the traffic calming plan in February 2018 and subsequently approved funding and implementation of the Riker Street Neighborhood Traffic Calming Plan. The construction phase of the project started in April 23, with the last day of construction on May 23, 2018.

Additional Parking Restrictions along Traffic Circles

Traffic circles are traffic calming treatments at intersections where a horizontal deflection is introduced and traffic moves counter clockwise around a central island. With these devices, all traffic controls, such as stop controls from the side streets remain effective. In regards to the traffic circles installed along Riker Street, the intersections remain single-side or two-way stop controlled from the minor streets. Vehicles approaching from the minor streets must stop and wait for acceptable gaps in traffic before entering the traffic circle. Similarly, drivers making left turns need to wait for a gap in traffic as they would at traditional intersections.

Staff received reports of concerns from those that travel through Riker Street regarding the recently installed traffic circles. The concerns relate to the sightlines for both entering vehicles and pedestrians, and mobility at the intersection; including a request to bring back the Riker Street Project to the City Council.

In response to the concerns, traffic staff evaluated the requests propose additional red zones, and increased signing and striping. Traffic staff collected additional data from site visits and re-evaluated the need for additional red zones. Staff is proposing the removal of additional parking along Riker Street, West Romie Lane, Orange Drive, Woodside Drive and Nissen Road that would potentially improve sightlines at the intersections (Exhibit A). Staff notes that increased red zones

will improve sightlines and mobility at the intersections but may inadvertently undo some of the intended benefits of the traffic calming project.

Before the Traffic Calming Plan was approved, the Traffic and Transportation Commission recommended the removal of parking at the Riker Street and Woodside Intersection at its November 2017 meeting. Implementation of this recommendation was intentionally delayed after the traffic calming design was completed so that staff could accommodate changes resulting from the traffic circles. The previously proposed “No Parking” zones were approximately 60 feet on Riker Street adjacent to Woodside Drive. With the addition of the traffic circles the new proposed “No Parking” zones are approximately 130 feet, a net increase of 70 feet.

Current Operations

New traffic control devices may take a few months to allow street users to change travelling behavior with the new devices. Typically, staff collects data and reports on new installations after 6 months to a year. The Riker Street project has only been completed for 3 months, which is not sufficient time to measure the effectiveness because changing user behavior takes time. Traffic calming is a relatively new program in the City. Additionally, traffic circles on Iris Drive and Riker Street are the first use of these devices as traffic calming tools in Salinas.

The neighborhood project has received much attention and staff will be available to answer questions on the use of traffic circles or other aspects of the plan. Staff may also discuss additional measures for the traffic calming project that will assist with changing behaviors for driving on Riker Street.

Staff will return after 6 to 12 months with operational information on the Riker Street Neighborhood Traffic Calming Plan for another update.

Traffic and Transportation Commission

The recommendation for additional parking restrictions along the Riker Street traffic circles and adjacent streets was presented to the Traffic and Transportation Commission at its August 2018 meeting. The Commission voted 6-0 to recommend to the City Council to approve a resolution to increase parking restrictions along the Riker Street traffic circles and adjacent streets.

CEQA CONSIDERATION:

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 addition of “No Parking” red zones along the Riker Street traffic circles and adjacent streets supports the Council of “Well planned city and excellent infrastructure.”

DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION:

The City’s Traffic Calming Policy was developed with multi-department coordination and included consultation with City first responders and other entities (i.e., ambulances, waste services). The specific recommendations for neighborhoods include consultation with Fire Department staff.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

The estimated labor and material cost to install “No Parking” red zones along the Riker Street traffic circles and adjacent streets is estimated at \$700.00. Sufficient funding is available in the streets account to fund the installations.

ATTACHMENTS:

Exhibit A - Proposed Parking Restrictions
Exhibit B- Riker Traffic Calming Plan
Resolution