



CITY OF SALINAS COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: AUGUST 20, 2024

DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC WORKS, TRAFFIC & TRANSPORTATION DIVISION

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TITLE: 2024-2025 PRIORITIZATION OF TRAFFIC CALMING PROJECTS

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

A motion to approve a Resolution approving the proposed neighborhood traffic calming prioritization list for Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Numerous requests for traffic calming projects have exceeded City budgeted resources to respond to and provide traffic calming solutions for neighborhoods currently petitioning for projects. City staff evaluated and ranked traffic calming requests using the Council approved prioritization criteria. The Traffic and Transportation Commission reviewed and approved the draft prioritization list for Fiscal Year 2024-2025. It is recommended City Council approve the proposed neighborhood traffic calming project prioritization list for Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

BACKGROUND:

Over the years, the City has noted numerous concerns from residents regarding neighborhood traffic related issues. Many have been related 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 policy was reviewed and recommended by the Traffic and Transportation Commission and then approved by City Council Resolution.

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 ultimately supported by the residents themselves who will have to live with the project once it is completed. There are several countermeasures available to help mitigate traffic issues, however, the predominate request from the community tends to be 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 pedestrian ramps. However, the planning and design of traffic calming projects is a community led effort which tends to result in more rubberized speed cushions.

Staff estimates the average cost of a neighborhood traffic calming project typically ranges from \$40,000 to \$150,000 depending on the size and complexity of the project. The project can take several months for community input and approval before advancing to implementation. The FY 2023-24 budget for traffic calming projects was approximately \$400,000, which was distributed to four traffic calming projects include Rainier Drive, Nogal Drive, Rochex Avenue, and Coventry Street.

An annual CIP budget of \$200,000 was allocated by Council for traffic calming for FY2024-25. The City anticipates completion of three projects for FY2024-25. Once the budget is depleted, the backlogged traffic calming petitions will be held until resources become available or until the next re-prioritization list is developed.

The backlog of traffic calming projects includes 21 streets. An additional 21 new traffic calming petitions were received by December 31, 2023. Petitions for traffic calming projects received after December 31, 2023, will be included in the FY2025-26 prioritization report once traffic data is available. Based on the prioritization scoring from the approved criteria, staff is recommending traffic calming improvement projects to be considered in the order shown in Table 1 for FY2024-25. City staff will work on the projects in the order listed in the table until the budget is depleted.

Table 1: Traffic Calming Prioritization List

Rank	Street	Score
1	Las Casitas Drive	85
2	Arcadia Way	83
3	West Acacia Street	82
4	Van Buren Avenue	79
5	Antigua Avenue	68
6	Towt Street	66
7	Roosevelt Street	64
8	California Street	59
9	North Madeira Avenue	55
10	Acosta Street	53
11	Chardonnay Drive	50
12	Los Palos Drive	48
13	Swaner Avenue	47

14	Lorimer Drive	44
15	Calaveras Drive	42
16	Colton Drive	41
17	Emerald Drive	39*
18	Ranchero Drive	39*
19	Navajo Drive	38
20	Santa Teresa Way	34
21	Alamo Way	33*
22	Jackson Street	33*
23	Pueblo Drive	30
24	Pescadero Drive	29
25	Klamath Drive	28
26	Alameda Avenue	27
27	Los Coches Avenue	25
28	Paloma Avenue	24*
29	St. Francis Way	24*
30	Newport Court	24*
31	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. 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.

Traffic and Transportation Commission

The traffic calming project prioritization list was presented to the Traffic and Transportation Commission at its June 13, 2024, meeting. The Commission voted in favor to recommend City Council approve the proposed neighborhood traffic calming project prioritization list for Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

Note from the City Manager

Like many cities in California, Salinas has a robust traffic calming process that does a great job of ranking projects, however, because of budget and personnel resource considerations that does not mean that all projects are able to be done which leads to the backlog. This naturally leads to a lot of frustration.

Without question, this is an area of considerable interest, and it is an area that requires periodic updates and or review. As a result, staff will schedule a review of this program and process with the Council over the next few months.

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 2024-2025 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”.

DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION:

Public Works staff coordinates with the Salinas Fire Department regarding traffic calming devices and minimizing impacts to emergency response times. Public Works also coordinates with the Salinas Police Department if traffic enforcement assistance is necessary.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

There will be no impact to the General Fund. Traffic calming projects are budgeted with Measure X annual allocations. Staff will work on the traffic calming projects in the order that they are prioritized for Fiscal Year 2024-25, until the related CIP (Project 9163) budget is depleted.

ATTACHMENTS:

Resolution

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