NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Murrieta
a great place to grow

Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.

PUBLIC WORKS AND ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

Approved by City Council Action

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Table of Contents

	Page
Introduction	2
Neighborhood Traffic Management Program	5
NTMP Application	17
Traffic Related Issues and Solutions	18
Criteria for Traffic Measures	19
Funding Priority	22
Category One Measures	23
Category Two Measures	26
Category Three Measures	27
Appendix	
• Educational Brochure (Speed)	37
• Commonly Asked Questions	38
• Speed Limits	
• Children At Play	
• Stop Signs	
• Glossary	41

Introduction

Two of the most emotional concerns by residents is speeding and short cutting on residential streets.

Neighborhood Traffic Management is the combination of policy, education and implementation of measures that help mitigate the negative impact of motor vehicle on residential streets and neighborhoods.

Traffic Management measures were developed to reduce speeding and traffic volume caused by short-cutting on residential streets. These measures are used to make a neighborhood more "livable". The following are some of the characteristics of a "livable" neighborhood:

- **Residents feel safe and secure**
- **Residents of a neighborhood are able to walk or ride a bicycle in a safe environment**
- **Measure help foster an atmosphere for effective neighborhood interaction**
- **Community has a sense of identity**

There needs to be a comprehensive approach to Neighborhood Traffic Management.

The basis of Neighborhood Traffic Management is a comprehensive resident education and participation program. This program encourages the neighborhood to take responsibility for the solution. Experience has shown that, except for the rare cases of cut through traffic, a majority of the speeding violations in a residential area are from residents who live in the neighborhood itself.

Establishing Qualifying Criteria

Requests for the implementation of Neighborhood Traffic Management measures on public streets will be considered by the City for those streets that meet all of the following criteria:

a. **The street should be a residential street with fronting residences as defined by the California Vehicle Code**

> **California Vehicle Code Section 40802 " a local street is defined as a street or road that primarily provides access to abutting residential property and meets the following three conditions. 1) Roadway width of not more than 40 feet. 2) Not more than one-half mile of uninterrupted length. Interruptions shall include official traffic control signals as defined in Section 445 of the California Vehicle Code. 3) Not more than one traffic lane in each direction"**

b. **The City's Police and Fire Department must not have significant public safety concerns such as a decrease in emergency response times**
c. **The changes in traffic flow will not divert significant amounts of traffic to other residential streets**
d. **The requested action is authorized by legislative authority in State law, Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), California Supplement to the MUTCD, California Vehicle Code and California Highway Design Manual.**

The City of Murrieta's Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP)

is a comprehensive process for reducing and managing traffic volumes, vehicle speeds and traffic noise on local residential streets where traffic issues have been identified. The primary purpose of the NTMP is to address neighborhood concerns and reduce the speed and volume of traffic on neighborhood streets. The NTMP is focused primarily on "local residential streets". These local streets provide direct access to adjacent properties only, while collector streets carry traffic from local streets to other collector streets or arterial streets.

GOALS

- **Improve the safety and convenience of motorist, pedestrians and bicyclists**
- **Discourage traffic intrusion and short cutting through residential neighborhoods**

The program outlines a variety of traffic management measures to improve the quality of life in local residential neighborhoods. The program provides an opportunity for local residents to work closely with City staff and the Public Safety and Traffic Commission to identify traffic issues and concerns, and to determine appropriate solutions.

OBJECTIVES

- **Increased awareness on the part of residents and drivers about their obligation to be good neighbors when driving through residential neighborhoods**
- **Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety by reducing traffic speeds, and cut-through traffic on residential streets by means of education, enforcement, and engineering measures**
- **Establish a well defined formal process to devise and implement traffic management measures in an efficient, fair, and timely manner in response to residents concerns**
- **Provide an annual budget for traffic management projects, staffing and consultants**

What is Neighborhood Traffic Management?

Traffic management calming is the balancing of the "3 E's"

- ✓ **EDUCATION**
- ✓ **ENFORCEMENT**
- ✓ **ENGINEERING**

These are the commonly accepted elements needed for the successful implementation of a neighborhood traffic management program. Experience has shown that the use of only one of the "E's" without the other two generally brings about less than satisfactory results.

- ✓ ***EDUCATION*** **– Residents will be provided with information, through a variety of outlets to make informed decisions about neighborhood traffic concerns and influence driver behavior. These include such means as brochures on neighborhood traffic issues and the speed display trailer. Residents need to become involved and get neighborhood consensus before any program can evolve.**

- ✓ ***ENFORCEMENT*** **– Some strategies can be put into place through targeted police enforcement to increase community awareness of speed problems. Studies have shown that a large portion of speeding violators in residential neighborhoods are residents.**

- ✓ ***ENGINEERING*** – Traffic management strategies involving physical features can be developed using a combination of engineering principles, community input and established traffic management practices.

*Implementation process*s

The City of Murrieta's Neighborhood Traffic Management Program involves a three-step strategy or implementation process (figure 1). The first step is a series of preliminary actions, designed to determine the extent and severity of the traffic concern. The second step of the implementation process involves neighborhood input and the identification of the appropriate traffic management tools to address neighborhood concerns. The third step of the process involves the implementation and funding of the identified traffic management strategy.

Step One - Preliminary Actions

This part of the process involves understanding the specific neighborhood concerns, making field observations, data collection, and determine what actions are appropriate to address these concerns.

- Initial contact from resident: Most concerns are generally related to either safety or maintenance (sight distance problems related to tree trimming or

the replacement of a sign, etc). If it is commuter speeding through a neighborhood street, then enforcement, the speed display trailer or additional signs, such as speed limit signs, might be needed. These concerns can usually be addressed immediately. If the resident feels that the issues still exists then the resident initiates the next stage of the NTMP process.

- Submit a NTMP Application Request: Refer to page 17 for the Application Form. This form should also be made available on the City's web site. This form will document the traffic concern, identify a potential neighborhood coordinator, and requires an indication of support from the neighborhood to participate in the NTMP process.

- Data Collection and Analysis: Upon receipt of the application, it will be validated as to the traffic issue and area or streets involved. Data will be collected from the neighborhood (volume, speed and accident information) to determine the traffic conditions. The traffic issue will also have to be clearly identified and confirmed that it is a real issue.

Step Two – Neighborhood Involvement and Implementation

This second step of the process allows the residents of the neighborhood to be involved in the process.

- **Identifying the traffic problem: This involves accurately identifying the cause of the neighborhood concerns. It is important to determine whether the concern is vehicle safety, pedestrian and bicycle safety, noise, speeding or shortcutting traffic through the neighborhood. The concern and issue needs to be correctly identified to allow the Public Works and Engineering Department to help select the appropriate traffic management measures.**
- **Setting goals: It is important that the neighborhood has reached consensus on the desired outcome of the traffic management strategy. A goal must be identified to measure against for success. The goals must be realistic during this development phase. It may not be practical to reduce or eliminate peak hour congestion adjacent to schools, or reduce the volume on a neighborhood street. However, peak hour school congestion could be better managed.**
- **Selecting the traffic management tools: There are a number of appropriate traffic management tools. These tools are shown in more detail starting on page 27.**

Step Three – Approval and Funding

- **Formal hearing of the traffic measure before the Public Safety and Transportation Commission for approval and its recommendation. A funding source is needed to implement this measure, such as a Capital Improvement Program.**

STEPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

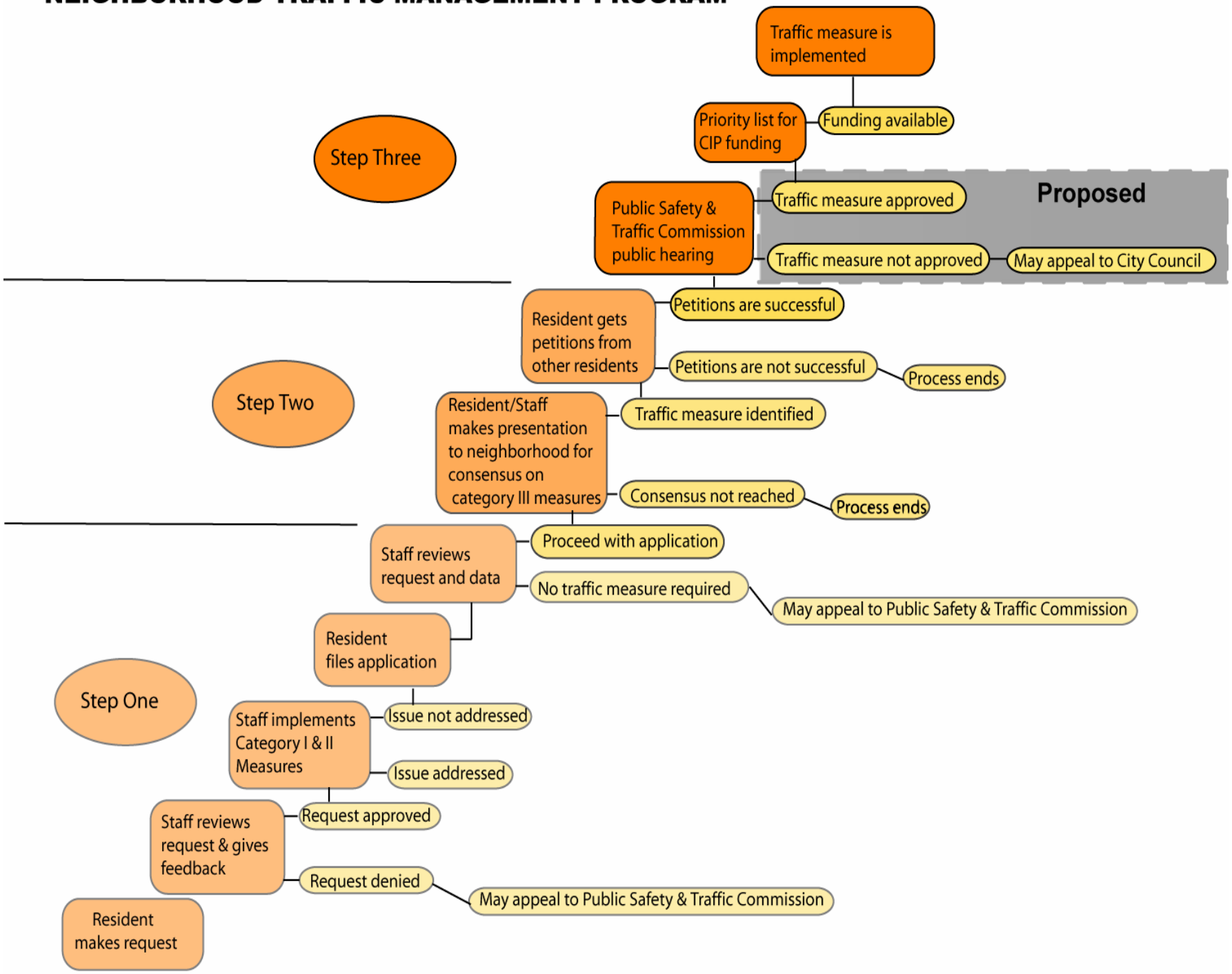

Figure 1

CATEGORIES OF TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT TOOLS

CATEGORY ONE – EDUCATION, NEIGHBORHOOD AWARENESS, AND ENFORCEMENT.

These measures are the first steps to the success of any Neighborhood Traffic Management Program. To expedite the process, these measures are handled through City staff without a petition. These measures should include police enforcement of traffic laws, educating the residents with informational brochures, Speed Display Trailer, and neighborhood yard signs such as "Drive 25". However these yard signs must be put within the resident's yards outside of the public right-of-way. These measures allow residents to take immediate actions to address neighborhood concerns and educate themselves and their neighbors about driving behaviors and its impact on the neighborhood.

CATEGORY TWO –
SIGNING AND STRIPING

These measures are utilized to send a specific message to the motorist regarding traffic regulations or warning signs. This includes speed limit signs, pavement markings, pavement striping, and in some cases of warranted stop signs. The installation of tools within this category is subject to the review of the Public Works and Engineering Department to make sure that all applicable state and federal regulations and laws have been complied with. Certain tools such as stop signs, however, do require that they meet warrants.

CATEGORY THREE-
TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT DEVICES

These measures involve the installation of physical features on the roadway that restrict or guide the movement of vehicles, bicyclists or pedestrians. These devices alter the configuration and character of the neighborhood street. As these features have a dramatic impact, they require detailed engineering, funding, and require substantial community input. This process involves the follow steps that must be followed:

a) **Education – A neighborhood forum should be conducted by a consultant or additional staff to provide factual information necessary for residents to make informed decisions regarding traffic management in their neighborhood.**
b) **Public Notification – Affected residents within the neighborhood will be notified of all neighborhood meetings.**
c) **Engineering – Traffic management measures will be designed and located in a manner consistent with sound engineering principles. Some measures are not appropriate within certain neighborhoods.**
d) **Neighborhood Petition – Any installation of a traffic management measure requires substantial support from the neighborhood. Therefore, a petition is required.**

- **A neighborhood petition, which describes and identifies the location of the proposed traffic management measure must be circulated by the proponents to the affected neighborhood residents for signature.**
- **The petition must be signed by seventy percent (70%) of residents along the primary street, and fifty percent (50%) of residents along adjacent streets or cul-de-sacs, within the neighborhood. Each residential address is entitled to one signature. The petition boundary will be identified by the Public**

Works and Engineering Department. The boundaries are determined based on a number of factors, including the physical layout of the neighborhood, travel patterns, and access points to the neighborhood.

e) Fire Department Review – The Fire Department will be consulted through out this process to ensure that the traffic management measure does not restrict the response time of emergency vehicles.

f) Police Department Review – The Police Department will be consulted through out this process to ensure that the traffic management measure does not restrict their response time.

g) Public Safety and Traffic Commission - The Commission will review the traffic management measure and provide a public forum to discuss the issues. The Commission will make a recommendation to be forwarded to the City Council. *An alternative is to modify the City Ordinance to give authority to the Commission to approve or disapprove NTMP measures. If approved they may direct the City Manager to implement the measure with funding from the NTMP Capital Improvement Program (CIP). If the measure is disapproved, the residents may file a formal appeal to the City Council.*

h) **City Council – All category three traffic management measures are subject to the review and approval of the City Council.** ***If additional authority is not granted to the Commission.***

Often, there are high demands for the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program. The projects often have to be prioritized because of funding constraints and or design issues.

Refer to page 19 thru 21 for the minimum criteria for traffic measures and page 22 for the funding priority.

APPLICATION

Neighborhood Traffic Management Program

Neighborhood Information

Name of Neighborhood or Area_____

Applicable Street(s) _____

_____

_____

Contact Information

Applicant Name _____

Applicant Address _____

_____

Contact Phone _____ E-Mail_____

Reason for Request (Check all that apply)

□ Cut through traffic □ Speeding

□ Parking issues □ Pedestrian safety

□ School related □ Other _____

To Initiate the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program –

Is there a Homeowners Association (HOA) in this neighborhood? □ Yes □ No

If **Yes,** then a letter of support is required from the HOA Board to be submitted with this application.

If **No**, then a letter of support is required to initiate the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program. A minimum of 25% of the affected neighborhood is required to sign the letter. The letter shall address the street(s) involved and identify the specific traffic or parking issue.

Applicant Signature_____ Date_____

TRAFFIC RELATED ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS FOR RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

ISSUE	SOLUTIONS		
	INITIAL MEASURES	**MODERATE MEASURES**	**RESTRICTIVE MEASURES**
SPEEDING	• Signs • Striping • Enforcement • Education • Speed Display Trailer	• Center Islands • Mid-block Choker	• Traffic Circles* • Chicanes* • Bulb Outs* • Raised Intersection* • Raised Crosswalks*
CUT THROUGH TRAFFIC	• Turn Restrictions (With Signs)	• Median Barriers (Temporary) • Half-Closure	• Full Closure • Diagonal Diverters • Extended Medians
PARKING	• Education • Enforcement • Increased signage	• Increased parking restrictions based on existing laws	• Increased level of restriction by ordinance

*These traffic measures are more appropriate for new development due to design and construction constraints

MINIMUM CRITERIA FOR TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT MEASURES

SPEEDING

HORIZONAL	**ALL Conditions Must Be Met**

• Center Islands
• Mid-block Chokers
• Traffic Circles
	• Classified as a local street (Note 1)
	• 85th percentile greater than 34MPH
	• Volumes – traffic will not be diverted to another local street
	• Grade cannot exceed 5%
	• Must have a defined curb
	• Minimum sight/stopping distance required at the placement location for the traffic measure
	• Petition required
	  ○ 70% signature approval from property owners on the subject street
	  ○ 100% signature approval from property owners adjacent to the traffic measure
	  ○ 50% signature approval from property owners from adjacent streets that may be impacted by the traffic measure. The impacted area will be determined by City staff.
	• School District approval
	• Fire Department approval
	• Police Department approval

Note 1 –California Vehicle Code Section 40802 " a local street is defined as a street or road that primarily provides access to abutting residential property and meets the following three conditions. 1) Roadway width of not more than 40 feet. 2) Not more than one-half mile of uninterrupted length. Interruptions shall include official traffic control signals as defined in Section 445 of the California Vehicle Code. 3) Not more than one traffic lane in each direction".

MINIMUM CRITERIA FOR TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT MEASURES

SHORT CUTTING

MEASURE	CRITERIA

Turn Restrictions
 	
Initial Measure With Signs and Not Physical Barriers
	<u>ALL</u> Conditions Must Be Met
	• Classified as a local street (Note 1)
	• 35% of the traffic on the street must be non-neighborhood or cut-through traffic as determined by the ITE Trip Generations Manual or a license plate origin and destination study
	• Volumes – traffic will not be diverted to another local street
	• Petition required
	  o 70% signature approval from property owners on the subject street
	  o 100% signature approval from property owners adjacent to the traffic measure
	  o 50% signature approval from property owners from adjacent streets that may be impacted by the traffic measure. The impacted area will be determined by City staff.
	• School District approval
	• Fire Department approval
	• Police Department approval

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MINIMUM CRITERIA FOR TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT MEASURES

SHORT CUTTING

MEASURE	CRITERIA

• Median Barriers
• Half-Closure
• Full-Closure
• Diagonal Diverter
• Extended Median
	<u>ALL</u> Conditions Must Be Met
	• Classified as a local street (Note 1)
	• 85th percentile greater than 34MPH
	• 35% of the traffic on the street must be non-neighborhood or cut-through traffic as determined by the ITE Trip Generations Manual or a license plate origin and destination study
	• Volumes – traffic will not be diverted to another local street
	• Must have a defined curb
	• Minimum sight/stopping distance required at the placement location for the traffic measure
	• Petition required
	  o 70% signature approval from property owners on the subject street
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Neighborhood Traffic Management Program

Capital Improvement Program
Prioritization Table

Maximum of 20 Points

SPEED -

85th Percentile Speed	POINTS
35 mph	2
36 mph	4
37 mph	6
38 mph	8
39 mph or more	10 maximum

ACCIDENT HISTORY

One point per correctable accident over a three year period. The accidents must be correctable by a traffic calming device.	5 maximum

PEDESTRIAN GENERATORS (Parks, schools, public facilities, not including homes)*

Number of pedestrian generators within the neighborhood project boundary	POINTS
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5 or more	5 maximum

* Elementary, middle school and high schools will be weighted double points in this category

Neighborhood Traffic Management

Police Enforcement

The presence of a police to monitor speeds and issue formal or courtesy citations. Used as an initial attempt to reduce speeds on street with documented speeding problems.

Advantages

- Available on short notice
- Targets motorist violators without affecting traffic
- Encourages compliance for speed regulations

Disadvantages

- Effective temporarily
- Enforcement may be limited by police availability
- Demand for enforcement is greater than available resources

Neighborhood Traffic Management

Education

The prime purpose of education is to raise awareness on issues related to traffic safety. The goal of education is to educate drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians on issues related to traffic survey.

Advantages

- May reduce vehicle speeds
- May heighten driver, bicyclist, and pedestrian awareness

Disadvantages

- Not enforceable by citation
- Requires time to implement and distribute education materials
- Requires volunteers' willingness to participate

Neighborhood Traffic Management

Speed Display Trailers

A device that consists of a changeable speed display, a radar speed detector and a regulatory speed limit sign. The speed control device encourages speed limit compliance.

Advantages

- Reduces the speed of vehicles traveling through a work zone
- Increase safety in construction and maintenance work zones
- Easy to read and attract drivers attention
- Cost-Effective
- Mobile

Disadvantages

- Not intended as an enforcement tool
- Effectiveness decreases over time
- Speed reductions attained are usually less than desired
- Temporary calming measure
- May require temporary lane closure

Neighborhood Traffic Management

Signing and Striping

Signing and striping are used to help reduce speeds in residential areas. Striping creates narrow lanes that give the illusion of a narrow street. Signing enforces speed reduction with the use of speed limit signs and/or neighborhood signs.

Advantages

- Require little to no maintenance
- Alert drivers of environment
- Reduces speeds significantly

Disadvantages

- May increase air and noise pollution
- May not be self-enforcing
- Pedestrian safety compromised if motorists do not comply

Neighborhood Traffic Management

Center Island Narrowings/Crossing Islands

A raised island located along the centerline of a street that narrows the travel lanes and potentially provides a pedestrian refuge mid-block or at intersections. They are often landscaped to provide a visual amenity, and, at the entrance to a neighborhood, can function as a gateway feature.

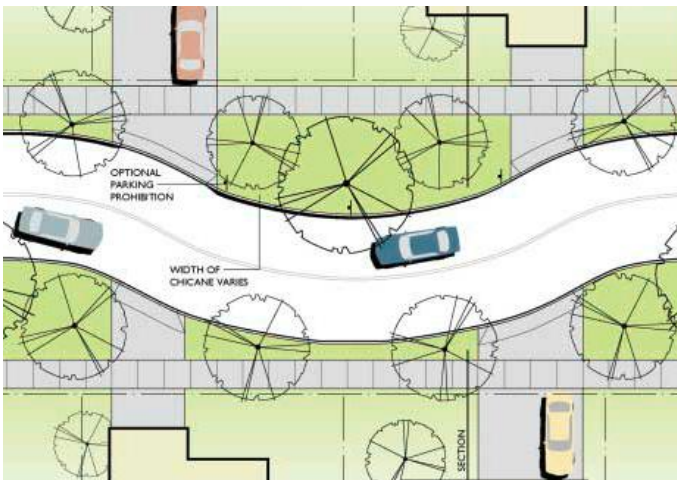
Advantages

- Provides refugee for pedestrians crossing the street, allowing them to focus on only one direction of traffic at a time
- Increases motorist awareness of pedestrians
- Reduces vehicle speed due to narrowed roadway width
- Provides landscaping opportunity and can create neighborhood identity

Disadvantages

- Requires proper signage to alert motorists to pedestrian crossing
- Can restrict turning movements and access to driveways
- Could eliminate parking or reduce bikeway width
- Speed reduction effectiveness is limited without other traffic calming measures
- Landscaping requires maintenance

Neighborhood Traffic Management



Chicanes

A curved street alignment that requires driver maneuvering on an otherwise straight stretch of roadway. It is achieved through a series of narrowing or curb extensions that alternate from one site of the street to the other. Alternating on-street parking on each side of street can also be used to create chicane.

Advantages

- Reduces vehicle speeds
- Makes street more aesthetically pleasing
- Minimal effect on emergency response
- Provides landscaping opportunity
- Good for locations where speed humps and related measures would cause noise impacts

Disadvantages

- Requires extensive design
- May eliminate some on-street parking
- May not affect cut-through traffic
- Drivers could still speed by cutting across center line if no raised island is constructed
- Landscaping requires maintenance
- Could be costly for curb realignment and to satisfy drainage issues

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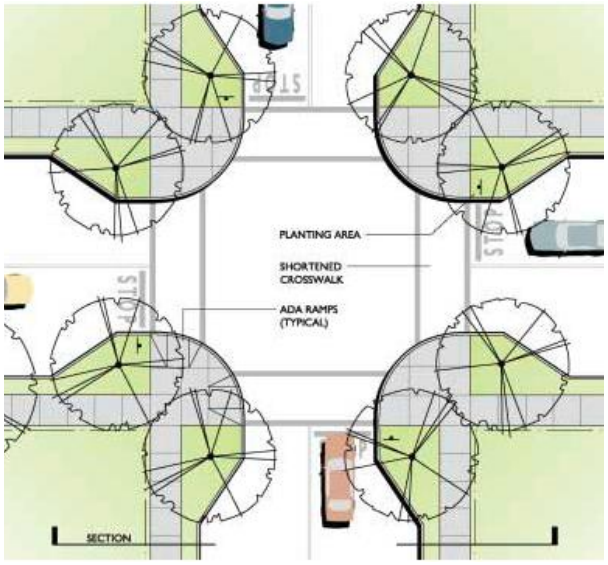
Neighborhood Traffic Management



Curb Extensions/Bulbouts

Extensions of the sidewalk or curb line into the parking lane near an intersection, which reduces the street width. They shorten pedestrian crossing distance, making them good measures at intersections with high pedestrian activity.

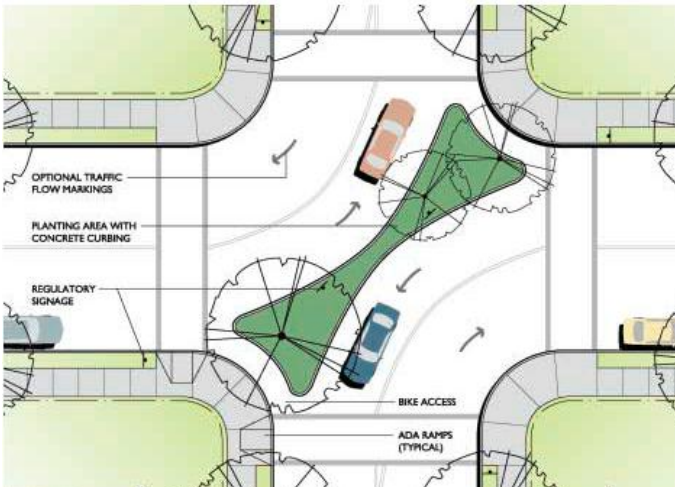
Advantages

- Creates a safer pedestrian crossing by making the crossing distance shorter and pedestrians more visible
- Reduces vehicle speeds due to narrowed roadway section and reduced turning radii
- Provides visual breaks in the streetscape
- Provides landscaping opportunity
- Can improve sight distance if it eliminates on-street parking close to intersection and low vegetation is used

Disadvantages

- Can reduce on-street parking supply
- Can reduce visbility and lane widths for bicycles
- Can create turning difficulties for large trucks
- Can only be used where there is on-street parking
- Landscaping requires maintenance
- Little impact on mid-block speeding
- May affect drainage

Neighborhood Traffic Management



Diagonal Diverters

The placement of a raised barrier diagonally across an intersection of two residential streets, restricting certain movements at the intersection. This turns the intersection into two L-shaped intersections, restricting all through movements. Pedestrian and bike movements are usually maintained.

Advantages

- Reduces cut-through traffic
- Eliminates most or all conflicts at the intersection
- Can be designed to maintain access for emergency vehicles
- Creates opportunity for landscaping
- Usually maintains bicycle and pedestrian movements

Disadvantages

- Will result in redirection of traffic to neighboring streets
- Increases trip length for local drivers
- No effect on vehicle speeds beyond eliminating higher-speed through movements
- Could increase emergency response time
- High installation costs

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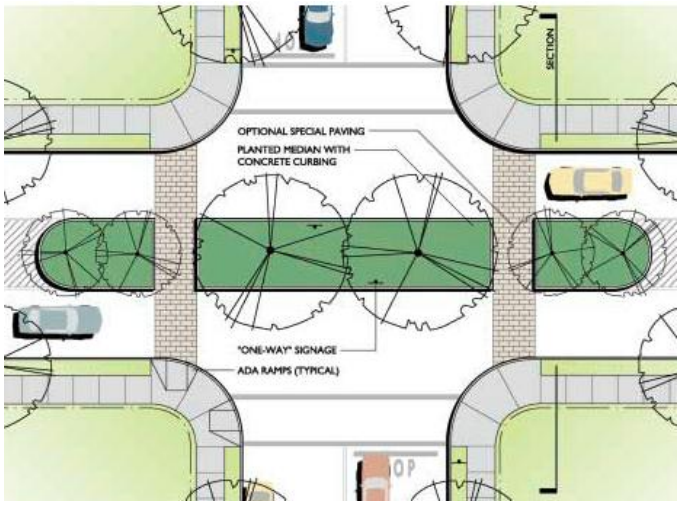
Neighborhood Traffic Management



Extended median

Raised barriers located in the center of a roadway that continue through an intersection, blocking movements across the main roadway. This is desirable at locations where vehicles from the main street cut through residential areas on local streets. Medians can also be used to narrow lanes and ease pedestrian crossings.

Advantages

- Reduces cut-through traffic by limiting access to the minor streets
- Narrow travel lanes reduces vehicle speeds
- Allows for safe refuge at pedestrian crossing locations
- Creates opportunity for landscaping

Disadvantages

- Can limit emergency vehicle access and increase response time
- Can redirect traffic to other local streets
- Increases trip length for local drivers
- Limits driveway access and results in u-turn movements at median breaks
- Requires available right-of-way width on main street

Neighborhood Traffic Management

Full Closure

The placement of a barrier across a street to completely close it to through traffic, creating a cul-de-sac. This limits vehicle access to local residents and is usually considered a last resort. With a moveable barrier, the street closure can be limited to certain hours.

Advantages

- Restricts all cut-through traffic
- Improves the aesthetic quality of the street and provides landscape opportunity
- Maintains bicycle and pedestrian movements
- Reduces conflicts at intersection

Disadvantages

- Will result in redirection of traffic to neighboring streets
- Increases trip length for local drivers
- Could eliminate some on-street parking
- Cannot be used on emergency vehicle response routes
- Causes turn-around difficulty at new cul-de-sac
- Can be very expensive

Neighborhood Traffic Management

Half Closure

The placement of a barrier across half of a street to close the inbound direction to through traffic. Two-way movement is maintained for the rest of the street and outbound movements are allowed. A less common scenario is to allow inbound but not outbound movements. This allows more movements than a full closure.

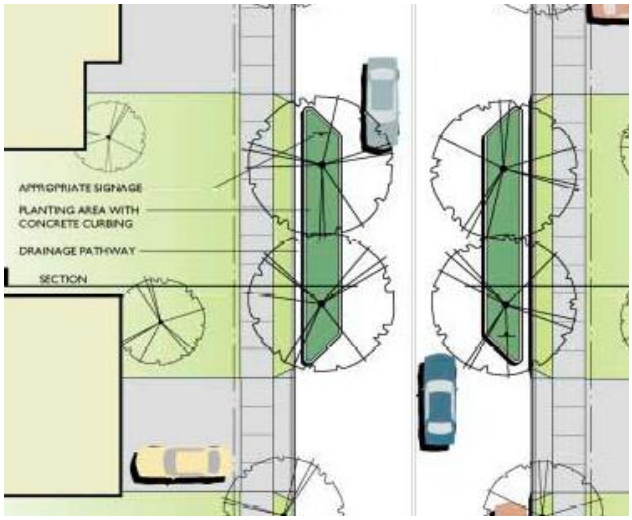
Advantages

- Restricts cut-through traffic while allowing some movement for local residents
- Improves the aesthetic quality of the street and provides landscape opportunity
- Maintains bicycle and pedestrian movements
- Reduces conflicts at intersection
- Closure island reduces pedestrian crossing distance at intersection
- Allows for emergency vehicle access

Disadvantages

- Will result in redirection of traffic to neighboring streets
- Increases trip length for local drivers
- Could eliminate some on-street parking
- Could increase emergency response time
- Creates potential for wrong-way travel from drivers circumventing barrier

Neighborhood Traffic Management



Mid-Block Chokers

A raised island next to the curb or a widened sidewalk or planting strip that reduces roadway width. It can be used on both sides of the street or on one side. In certain cases they can be used to reduce a two-lane road to one-lane, requiring motorists to yield.

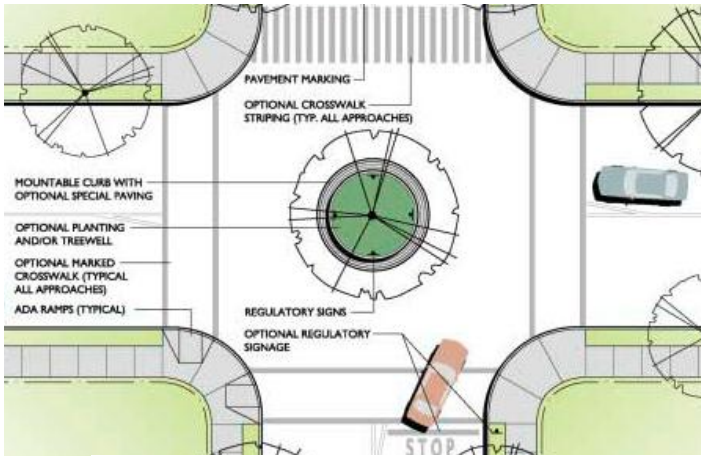
Advantages

- Reduces vehicle speed due to narrowed roadway width
- Two-lane chokers have minimal impact on local traffic and emergency vehicles
- One-lane chokers can reduce cut-through traffic
- If at a crosswalk, reduces crossing distance
- Provides landscaping opportunity
- Works well with other traffic calming measures

Disadvantages

- Must resolve drainage issues
- Could impact bikeways and bike mobility
- Could eliminate on-street parking
- Speed reduction is not as signficant as other traffic calming measures
- Landscaping requires maintenance
- One-lane chokers result in significant re-distribution of traffic

Neighborhood Traffic Management



Traffic Circles

Raised circular medians greater than 10 feet in diameter. They are placed in intersections of residential streets and circulate traffic in a counter-clockwise direction in order to address speeds, volumes, and safety concerns. Entry to the circle is controlled by "Yield on Entry" on all approaches. The circle may contain landscaping.

Advantages

- Reduces vehicle speeds by about 10% on intersecting streets
- Has been shown to cause a significant reduction in accidents
- Provides landscaping opportunities
- Improves the appearance of the street by breaking up sight-lines

Disadvantages

- Could result in removal of on-street parking
- Learning curve for drivers to adapt to new control
- Could intrude on bike and pedestrian paths
- May increase emergency response time
- May restrict access for large trucks and longer busses

Speed Zoning

The purpose of speed zoning is to protect and provide a safe environment for the public. Speed zoning should be reserved for roads with considerable volumes of traffic where such zoning proves to facilitate a smooth traffic flow. Police agencies rely on reasonable and well recognized speed laws to control motorist that drive at dangerous and destructive speeds.

Prima Facie Speed

With accordance to California Vehicle Code (CVC) 22352, “prima facie” limits are reasonable speeds set by local authorities under normal conditions. These limits are often set at less than the absolute limit based on the results of an engineering and traffic survey. Motorists may exceed any prima facie limit if it is safe to do so, however, if a driver is cited exceeding the speed limit, it is the drivers responsibility to prove the higher speed was reasonable and prudent under the existing conditions.

Certain blanket prima facie limits are established by law. Residential areas are limited to 25 miles per hour (mph). There is also a part-time 25 mph limit in school zones when children are traveling to or from school.

Speed Limits

Speed regulations are based on traffic conditions and natural driver behavior. Local agencies must follow the basic speed law when setting speed limits on public streets. The basic speed law states:

“No person shall drive a vehicle upon a highway at a speed greater than is reasonable or prudent.”

These speed regulations take into consideration weather conditions, visibility, traffic flow, and the surface and width of the street. This law enforces that no person shall drive at a speed which endangers the safety of persons or property.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

SPEED LIMITS

A question usually arises regarding speed limits. The most common is the lowering of speed limits. A common belief is that posting a speed limit will influence drivers to drive at that speed. The facts indicate otherwise. Research conducted nationwide over a span of many years has shown that drivers are influenced more by the appearance of the roadway and the prevailing traffic conditions rather than the posted speed limit itself.

California's Basic Speed Law requires that:

> No person shall drive a vehicle upon a highway at a speed greater than is responsible or prudent having due regard for weather, visibility, traffic, surface of the roadway, and the width of the roadway. In no event traveling at a speed which endangers the safety of persons or property.

Speed limits are called prima facie limits, which "on the face of it" are safe and prudent under normal conditions. Certain prima facie limits are established by law and include the 25 MPH limit in business districts and residential neighborhoods, the 15 MPH limit in alleys and at blind intersections. A part time 25 MPH limit is also used in school zones when children are going to and coming from school. These speed limits are not always posted, but all California motorists are required to know these basic speed laws.

Local authorities on the basis of traffic engineering surveys may establish speed limits. These surveys include an analysis of roadway conditions, accident records, and the prevailing speed of prudent drivers. If speed limit signs are posted for a lower limit than is needed to safely meet these conditions, many drivers will simply ignore the signs. At the same time, other drivers will stay within the posted limit. This creates a conflict between faster and slower drivers and reduces the gap between traffic. Studies have shown that where uniformity of speed is not maintained, accidents generally increase.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CHILDREN AT PLAY SIGNS

An often-heard neighborhood request concerns the posting of warning signs with "SLOW – CHILDRED AT PLAY". These requests are based on a widespread belief in that traffic signs will provide protection for the safety of children in the street near their home.

There has been no factual evidence to document the success of these signs in reducing pedestrian accidents, travel speeds, or legal liability. Studies have shown that many types of signs attempting to warn of normal conditions in residential areas have failed to achieve the desired safety benefit.

Because of these serious considerations, California law does not recognize the use of "Children at Play" signs. Also, Federal standards and guidelines do not recognize these signs and discourage there use. Specific warnings for schools, playgrounds, parks, and other recreational facilities are available for use where clearly justified.

Children should not be encouraged to play within the street. This sign has been rejected since it is a direct and open suggestion that children should play in the street.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

STOP SIGNS

A stop sign in one of the most valuable and effective traffic control devices when used at the right place and under the right conditions. It is intended to help drivers and pedestrians at an intersection decide who has the right-of-way.

A common misuse of stop signs is to disrupt through traffic either by causing it to stop or by causing such an inconvenience as to force the traffic to use other routes. Where stop signs are installed as "speed breakers," there is a high incidence of intentional violation. In those locations where vehicles do stop, the speed reduction is effective only in the immediate vicinity of the stop sign, and frequently speeds are actually higher between intersections. For these reasons, a stop sign should not be used as a speed control device.

Most drivers have no intention of intentionally violating traffic regulations. Most stop sign violations occur when an unreasonable restriction is imposed. In such cases, the stop sign can create a false sense of security in a pedestrian and an attitude of contempt in a motorist. These two attitudes can and often do conflict with tragic results.

Well-developed, nationally recognized guidelines or warrant help to indicate when such traffic controls become necessary. These guidelines consider the probability of vehicles arriving at an intersection at the same time, the length of time traffic must wait to enter, and the availability of safe crossing opportunities. Since stop signs address vehicle right-or-way, many motorists do not recognize pedestrians' rights at these installations. Therefore, stop signs should only be installed at intersections that meet the established criteria.

Glossary of Terms

Term	*Definition*
ADT	Average Daily Traffic
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
Choker	Narrowing of the street at intersections or at mid-blocks to reduce the width of the roadway
Cul-de-sac	Complete closure of the street, either at intersections or at mid-block, to completely block access from one end of a street while allowing adequate turnaround
Curb extension	Also called "choker." A form of narrowing a street
Diagonal diverter	Barrier placed diagonally across an intersection to convert the intersection into two unconnected streets to break up through routes
Horizontal deflection device	General term for any measure that alters the horizontal alignment of the roadway
Channelization	Used to limit directional traffic movements
mph	Miles per hour
MUTCD	Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices
NTMP	Neighborhood Traffic Management Program
Pavement Undulation	Raised pavement areas across a roadway that generally has a height of 3 to 4 inches with a travel length of 12 feet. There are a number of variations with common names, including "speed humps," "speed lumps," "and "speed cushions"
Raised Medians	Also called "intersection channelizations." Used to limit directional traffic movements
Roundabout	Similar to traffic circles but have splitter islands that prevent vehicles from turning in front of the circle
Rumble strip	Patterned sections of raised or grooved pavement, used as a means of attracting the driver's attention
Semi-Diverters	Partial street closures which limit access to a street from one direction by blocking half the street
Speed bump	A raised pavement area across a roadway that generally has a height of 3 to 6 inches with a travel length of 1 to 3 feet
Speed cushion	A variation of a speed hump, constructed of rubber composite modules, and arranged to accommodate the wheel base of emergency response vehicles
Speed hump	Also called "pavement undulations." They are raised pavement areas across a roadway and generally has a height of 3 to 4 inches with a travel length of 12 feet
Speed lump	A variation of a speed hump, constructed of asphalt, which incorporates grooved channels to accommodate the wheel base of emergency response vehicles
Traffic circle	Typically round raised islands placed at the center of an intersection. They are typically effective tools as intersection calming devices
Vertical deflection device	General term for any measure that alters the vertical profile of the roadway over a short distance such as speed humps, speed lumps, speed cushions, raised crosswalks, etc.
vpd	Vehicles per day