



Memorandum

TO: BUILDING BETTER
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

FROM: James R. Helmer

SUBJECT: ANNUAL TRAFFIC CALMING
REPORT

DATE: 05-26-05

Approved 

Date 5/30/05

BACKGROUND

This report provides an update on the City's Traffic Calming Program for FY04-05.

ANALYSIS

The City Council approved its most recent Traffic Calming Policy in June 2001. The revised policy was developed with a goal to improve traffic conditions and livability within San José neighborhoods, and to plan and build traffic calming improvements with new developments or projects.

Current Status of Program

The table below provides a summary of the traffic calming program activity for the first ten months of FY04-05.

Traffic Calming Program Activity			
	Basic	Level 1	Level 2
Outstanding (as of 6/30/04)	156	10	0
New Requests	1285	1	0
Completed	1278	1	0
Outstanding (as of 4/30/05)	163	10	0

Basic level service requests include projects that involve the installation of signs, markings or other basic device, and/or the provision of enforcement or education to address a particular concern. Overall, staff was able to keep up with the number of requests received. However, only 61% of projects were completed within the City Council approved timeline (five weeks to reach a decision and install appropriate devices). While this meets the 60% target for FY04-05, it is substantially lower than the 82% achieved in FY02-03. The primary reasons for the reduction in timeliness are the reduction in staffing in the Neighborhood Traffic Management

team and the focus on updating expired engineering and traffic speed surveys. It is anticipated that the level of projects completed within timelines will further decrease to 50% in FY05-06 for the following reasons:

- Proposed staffing reductions in Neighborhood Traffic Management
- Proposed staffing reductions in Infrastructure Maintenance impacting installations of basic traffic calming devices
- Maintaining current state-mandated engineering and traffic speed surveys

In addition to Basic requests, one Level 1 project was completed in FY04-05 on 6th and Reed Streets addressing one of the University Strong Neighborhood Initiative priority items. Level 1 projects generally involve the construction of physical features in the roadway, such as small median islands or chokers, to address traffic concerns. One additional project is scheduled for completion in FY04-05, with the installation of enhanced crosswalks along Lincoln Avenue.

During the FY05-06 budget sessions, staff was asked to consider revising the traffic calming policy to reflect the longer response times. The Traffic Calming Policy identifies general timelines for completion of all traffic calming projects. DOT strives to achieve all timeliness goals 90% of the time. In 2004-05 it is projected that about 61% of the projects will be completed within timelines, and that this figure may drop closer to 50% by the end of 2005-06. Rather than lowering the goal of 90% on-time service, or lengthening the response time to achieve 90%, DOT recommends making no adjustments in the timeliness goal at this time. Rather, DOT recommends continuing to strive to meet the original goal, and to report out to Council regularly in the CSA/Core Service Reports as to the gap between actual and desired service levels.

Radar Speed Surveys

There are approximately 500 roadway segments in San José that require engineering and traffic surveys. State law mandates these surveys be current in order for the Police Department to enforce speed limits using a radar device. At the end of FY03-04, there were 70 expired engineering and traffic surveys. By the end of December 2004, staff completed studies for all of these expired surveys, and the 16 additional surveys that required updating in the first half of FY04-05. As a result of updating these surveys, City Council approved a resolution to change the speed limit on 8 roadway segments (seven of which were reductions) in San Jose.

Strong Neighborhood Initiative (SNI) areas

In FY04-05, a traffic calming project identified as a Top 10 priority in the University SNI area was completed. Traffic calming projects (Top 10) in the KONA and Blackford SNI are also scheduled for completion by the end of the fiscal year. In FY05-06, traffic calming projects (Top 10) in the Edenvale-Great Oaks, Mayfair, Spartan-Keyes, Tully-Senter, and West Evergreen SNIs are scheduled for completion.

Street Smarts Public Education Program

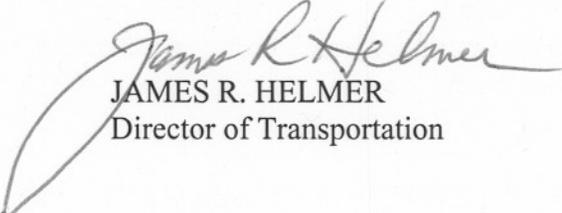
As the Street Smarts Program has evolved, perhaps the greatest benefit has been how education has helped to enhance coordination between all of the tools available – engineering, enforcement and education - to more effectively calm traffic. Education is now included as a “Basic” tool, and is often used as the first approach to resolving neighborhood traffic concerns, prior to employing more costly engineering solutions. To date, there are 170 schools and 18 neighborhoods participating in the program. Of the 18 neighborhoods that have adopted Street Smarts, 87 percent of residents responding from those neighborhoods rated the value of the overall program as “Good” or “Excellent.” Street Smarts has also been designed as a regional program and the cities of Cupertino, Danville, San Ramon, Napa and El Monte, along with Contra Costa County Health Department, have adopted Street Smarts.

A new component of Street Smarts - the School Safety Education Program - launched in mid-January 2005 with a \$230,000 grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety. This program teaches children in grades K-8, age-appropriate safety principles, such as how to cross the street safely and the proper way to wear a bike helmet and ride a bike. The program is expected to serve an estimated 50,000 students each year. As of mid-May 2005, the program reached 15,227 elementary and middle school students at 32 schools. It is anticipated to reach all elementary and middle school students in San José over the course of two years.

In order to gauge the effectiveness of this and other school safety programs, a new performance measure has been created to track accidents involving school children (ages 5 – 14) during school hours. The data from this measure will enable staff to target schools that may need focused education, enforcement or engineering measures. In FY04-05, it is expected that there will be approximately 50 accidents involving children during school hours, out of a total of 630 pedestrian or bicycle accidents Citywide. All pedestrian and bicycle-related accidents are reviewed by DOT engineers and planners in an effort to reduce these types of tragic incidents.

Red Curb Standards for School Crosswalks

The updated Guidelines for Installation and Removal of Marked Crosswalks was provided to the Building Better Transportation Committee at its April 2005 meeting. These guidelines include a new section that requires a review of each warranted school crosswalk location to determine the extent of parking restrictions needed. The guidelines also include a requirement to notify the appropriate Council Office and impacted school(s) if it is determined that parking restrictions are not required for school crosswalks at uncontrolled locations. If any subsequent changes are made to the Guidelines for Installation and Removal of Marked Crosswalks will be coordinated with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee.


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