

**COUNCIL POLICY
TOWN OF LOS GATOS**

Subject: Neighborhood Traffic Calming
Policy

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Enabling
Action: Town Council Action
3/18/2002

Approved:

 Effective
Date: 3/18/2002

Revised
Date:

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the neighborhoods and the town staff to work together in addressing various types of traffic conditions, such as speeding, cut-through traffic, truck intrusion and commercial parking spill-over, which would improve the quality of life for the neighborhoods.

GOALS

The General Plan identifies the goals of traffic calming:

- Improve neighborhood safety for vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Reduce the number and severity of vehicle related accidents.
- Maintain the speed of motor vehicles to the posted speed limits.
- Decrease the volume of extraneous/cut-through traffic.
- Limit the impact on adjacent local streets.
- Preserve emergency vehicles' response times.
- Maximize the community participation and support in the program.

SCOPE

The applicable streets are local streets, neighborhood or hillside collectors as classified in the General Plan.

POLICY

The neighborhood Traffic Calming Policy will serve to improve the quality of life in affected areas of the Town, given that the staff will need to work within budgetary parameters in providing the implementation of traffic calming solutions.

Process:

1. **Traffic Issue Request:** Neighborhoods request traffic calming by contacting the Parks and Public Works Department at (408) 399-5770 or traffic@town.los-gatos.ca.us. The request will be assigned to the engineering staff to evaluate the concerns and determine 1) if the concern can be mitigated through normal staff work or separate engineering programs or 2) if a neighborhood petition is required to begin a traffic calming process. Some traffic concerns may be addressed through separate programs, e.g. the safe routes to school plans and the sidewalk programs for improving pedestrian and bicycle accessibility. Many traffic concerns may be solved with measures that will not have impacts on other streets, such as signing and markings. Staff needs to determine the effect the solution will have on adjacent streets. Staff will make every effort to mitigate the concerns without having to embark on an actual traffic calming.
2. **Petition:** A Neighborhood Petition is required to begin a traffic calming process. The petition signature gathering is the responsibility of the neighborhood and is required to identify neighborhood support (over 50% of the households) and reflect the neighborhood's understanding of the time frame of the traffic calming process. *The petition will need to state what problem exists and acknowledge the process will take numerous months to solve while staff gather data, convene neighborhood meetings and report information to the Town Council.*
3. **Data Collection:** Upon receipt of the petition, staff will collect appropriate data to determine if the minimum criteria have been met (see Criteria section below). If the data concludes the minimum criteria are not met and if police enforcement, education or other means are appropriate, staff will implement internal work actions.
4. **Informational Neighborhood Meeting:** If the data indicates the minimum criteria are met or exceeded, staff will define the neighborhood and impacted streets to consider any other potential traffic unintended impacts that these solutions may create, identify possible traffic calming solutions and convene a neighborhood meeting. The first neighborhood meeting will be an information and feedback session: staff will present traffic data and proven strategies for specific traffic issues and their cost constraint, and the neighborhood will provide input to the solution process. The neighbors will learn the process and a reasonable expectation of the project.
5. **Additional Solution Meetings & Development of Trial Project:** If the consensus at the neighborhood meeting is to proceed with the development of a traffic calming plan, staff will collaborate with public safety agencies to prepare alternative traffic calming plans. Once the alternatives have been developed, staff will convene additional neighborhood meetings, to present the pros and cons for each alternative, determine neighborhood preference and public support. The outcomes of the meetings will refine the development of a trial traffic calming project.

This trial project will need the support of 67% of the affected neighborhood, to be confirmed by a post card vote, conducted by staff. If the neighborhood does not meet the 67% support necessary, staff will identify concerns, report results to the neighborhood and determine the next steps.

6. Support and Implementation of Trial Traffic Calming Project: As indicated by 67% support, staff will recommend the trial project to the Town Council (or its designee) for approval. The duties of the designee could include the review of a proposal with respect to the General Plan and any other relevant considerations. If the project is approved, staff will prepare final plans and specifications for implementation. The trial project must stay in place for a minimum of three months to determine its effectiveness, unless substantial unacceptable impacts are identified. At the end of the trial period, a follow-up neighborhood meeting will be convened to determine support for permanency.
7. Permanent Traffic Calming Implementation: To permanently install/maintain the traffic calming project, a final postcard vote will be conducted by staff. Again, a 67% majority vote by post card will be needed to recommend the project to Town Council for final approval to install the permanent devices. The project will be completed with its permanent installation understanding that staff will need to clarify budgeting considerations which could impact the implementation of approved traffic calming solutions.


Criteria

For any local or collector street to qualify for a traffic calming project review, the request must meet or pass at least one of the following criteria:

- 85th percentile speeds exceeding the posted speed limit by 5 mph
- Volumes exceeding 1,500 vehicles per day (vpd) for local streets and 3,000 vpd for collector streets
- Volume of trucks, over 30 feet in length, exceeding one-half of one percent of the total traffic volume
- Curb parking occupancy exceeding 70% from 8AM to 7PM

Requests that meet the minimum criteria are placed on a project list. Staff will work on the projects in the order of first-come-first-serve

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Orry Korb, Town Attorney

Q&As:

Q. How do I know if my streets qualify for traffic calming?

A. There are three main considerations: type of street, minimum criteria, and neighborhood support. Your street will qualify for traffic calming consideration if it is a local street, neighborhood or hillside collector (the traffic engineer can help identify your street's definition). Additionally, the street must meet one or more of the minimum criteria concerning speeds, volumes and/or parking occupancy and there is an evidence of neighborhood support verified by petition.

Q. Who is responsible to collect the neighborhood petition?

A. The original petition identifying concerns and support for traffic calming project is the responsibility of the neighborhood.

Q. Will traffic calming improve traffic conditions to below the thresholds listed in Criteria?

A. Not necessarily. The purpose of criteria is to evaluate the requests and initiate the neighborhood process. It does not define the traffic conditions for any streets nor ensure implementation of any traffic calming plan. Realistically, some streets carry more traffic than others, depending upon location, housing density, adjacent to schools and businesses, etc.

Q. How is the neighborhood "area" defined?

A. Staff will determine the area that will be impacted based on a review of the streets and traffic patterns. Traffic calming and turn restrictions for one neighborhood "block" will impact adjacent streets. Often the impacts extend beyond the original street that requests traffic calming.



NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC CALMING

POLICY



Council Policy

Adopted March 18, 2002

Department of Parks and Public Works
(408) 399-5771 traffic@losgatosca.gov

March 22, 2006

Town of Los Gatos
Parks and Public Works Department
41 Miles Avenue
Los Gatos, CA 95031

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