



Legislation Text

File #: 18-1804, **Version:** 2

Resolution to Adopt an Updated Traffic Calming Program

The City of Ann Arbor Traffic Calming Program began in December 1999 and has been updated over the past twenty years. Traffic calming is intended to reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behavior, and improve conditions for non-motorized street users. The City's resident request-based Traffic Calming Program allows City staff to partner with the community to create a safer environment for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities on local streets.

The updated Traffic Calming Program (the "Program") outlined in the attached resolution will replace the existing Traffic Calming Program for local streets. The intent of the Program update is to incorporate feedback from residents, City Council, the Transportation Commission and staff to bring it in line with contemporary best practices in traffic calming and public engagement.

The updated Program includes four focus areas: an updated process overview (Attachment A); updated public engagement process and program objectives (Attachment B); updated qualification criteria (Attachment C); and updated toolbox of devices (Attachment D).

The updated Program was developed after careful consideration of several factors, including: industry best practices, staff observations, past project area feedback, and peer community review. Additionally, consideration was given to the 2016 Report to City Council on Traffic Calming as well as the 2018 Speed Reduction Committee Recommendations. Community input was also sought online through an [A2 Open City Hall survey <https://www.opentownhall.com/portals/116/Issue_6453>](https://www.opentownhall.com/portals/116/Issue_6453) as well as an open house held on June 20, 2018 at City Hall.

The public comments from the open house and A2 Open City Hall topic are available on the Traffic Calming website (<https://www.a2gov.org/trafficalming>).

Staff worked closely with the Transportation Commission's Traffic Calming Task Force over four meetings in July and August to finalize the Traffic Calming Program revisions and work through details and next steps (Attachment E). The final draft of the updated Program was presented to the Transportation Commission on August 15, 2018; the Commission unanimously recommended approval to City Council.

Highlights of community concerns that are addressed in the program update include:

- Simplify the 10-step process: Fewer defined steps in the updated Traffic Calming Program simplify the community-facing Program by removing staff action items and maintaining the level of public engagement opportunities.
- Lower the thresholds for projects to qualify; reduce the qualifying speed criteria: The qualification scoring matrix greatly improves the opportunity for project areas to qualify by providing various non-speed based qualifying parameters and eliminating a minimum speed

threshold.

- Expand the toolbox of devices considered: Devices not previously included in the Traffic Calming Program have been added.
- Simplify and lower the thresholds for project approval: Changing the final polling thresholds to 50% support from responses received achieves a simpler criterion compared to the previous two-part evaluation criteria. In recent cases where community support was not achieved with the existing Program, support would have been met if a 50% support criteria had been in place.
- Maintain a high level of public involvement: The existing and proposed Program include an initial questionnaire, two meetings, and a final polling process for each project area. The recommendation to hold meeting #1 as an orientation/workshop is intended to achieve improved community understanding of traffic calming concepts, and allow a more comfortable format for discussion and neighborhood collaboration.

Highlights of public participation in the Program update are provided below:

- Transportation Commission Speed Reduction Committee - 8 meetings and recommendations to amend the existing Traffic Calming Program
- 20 participants at June 20 Open House
- 252 responses were registered for the A2 Open City Hall topic
- 42.5% “solutions driven by community preference rather than data or engineering expertise” is a concern about the Traffic Calming Program
- 63.2% proposed thresholds for community participation seem reasonable
- 54.5% proposed community engagement format and strategy seem effective
- 66.4% proposed program objectives capture what they think is important
- Transportation Commission Traffic Calming Task Force - 4 meetings and 9 recommendations
- Unanimous support from the Transportation Commission accepting the Traffic Calming Task Force recommendations and recommending that City Council approve the revised Traffic Calming Program.

City Council considered a prior version of the updated Traffic Calming Program at the October 1, 2018 City Council meeting. City Council denied approval for the updated Traffic Calming Program at this meeting. Comments related to the Traffic Calming Program included the following:

- Impression that the updated process would reduce the level of public involvement in the Traffic Calming Program.
- Concern that addressing safety concerns outside of the Traffic Calming Program would not include a separate community engagement effort.
- Concern that removing City Council approval of individual traffic calming project implementation would remove the voice of City Council.

Comments un-related to the Traffic Calming Program included the following:

- Concern that the staff response to R-18-275 does not adequately address what was requested in the resolution.
- Examples of recent street resurfacing or safety improvement projects cited as examples of insufficient community engagement.

In response to the concerns raised about the Traffic Calming Program, the Program materials are now updated to better clarify the rationale and process for addressing demonstrated safety concerns. The process emphasizes that community engagement will be a critical component of addressing safety improvements. Additional language has been modified to emphasize that the Traffic Calming Program applies only to local streets and to emphasize the resident driven nature of the process.

The revised final draft of the updated Program incorporating feedback from the October 1, 2018 City Council meeting was presented to the Transportation Commission on October 17, 2018; the Commission unanimously recommended approval to City Council.

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Reviewed by: Craig Hupy, Public Service Area Administrator

Approved by: Howard S. Lazarus, City Administrator

Whereas, The City's Traffic Calming Program began in 1999, but has not been substantially updated since 2006;

Whereas, 46 project areas have never qualified for traffic calming under the City's Traffic Calming Program;

Whereas, There is a community desire for greater flexibility in the qualification criteria for the City's Traffic Calming Program;

Whereas, The Transportation Commission formed a Traffic Calming Task Force, which worked with staff to update the Traffic Calming Program;

Whereas, The updated Traffic Calming Program has been developed based on industry best practices, staff observations, past project area feedback, peer community review, the 2016 Traffic Calming Report to City Council, the 2018 Speed Reduction Committee Recommendations, and additional community input;

Whereas, The Transportation Commission recommended approval of the updated Traffic Calming Program at its August 15, 2018 meeting, reviewed the subsequent modifications and recommended approval of the revised, updated Traffic Calming Program at its October 17, 2018 meeting;

Whereas, It is City Council's role and authority to provide policy direction; and

Whereas, It is the City Administrator's role to implement policy.

RESOLVED, That City Council approves the updated Traffic Calming Program, as described in Attachments A-D;

RESOLVED, That the updated Traffic Calming Program supersedes and replaces any prior Traffic Calming Program, City Council rescinds all previous resolutions and voids all administrative actions giving rise to the superseded and replaced Traffic Calming Program;

RESOLVED, That City Council maintains authority over Traffic Calming Program updates and approval, and approval of individual project plans before construction;

RESOLVED, that the City Administrator has authority to manage and maintain the program including implementation of individual traffic calming projects, after City Council approval; and

RESOLVED, That the City Administrator be authorized to take the necessary administrative actions to implement this resolution.

As Amended and Approved by Ann Arbor City Council on November 19, 2018.