



MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 4, 2013

TO: Bicycle and Transportation Commissions

FROM: Bianca Walser, Chair, Transportation Commission

RE: **Item B1: Discussion of Potential Revisions to the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP)(Joint Item with the Bicycle Commission)**

In anticipation of the upcoming joint meeting of the Bicycle and Transportation Commissions to discuss potential revisions to the Neighborhood Transportation Management Program ("NTMP") I would like to set out the process to date as background for the attached draft document.

The review of the NTMP for potential revisions is being carried out by a subcommittee as part of the Transportation Commission's two-year work plan, approved by City Council on November 15, 2011. The Transportation Commission has received feedback from residents that the current process is cumbersome. Since the current NTMP was approved by City Council in 2004, a total of three projects have been implemented, out of 23 inquiries from residents. Furthermore, since the current NTMP was approved by Council in 2004, the State of California has enacted legislation such as the Global Warming Solutions Act (AB 32), the Complete Streets Act (AB 1358), and the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act (SB 375) that render the existing NTMP out of step with state law.

The subcommittee reached out to the Bicycle Commission, the Environmental Quality Commission and the Planning Commission for input. We held a workshop on January 9, 2013, to collect public comment, both feedback from people who have first hand experience with the process, as well as to hear what the community thinks the goals and objectives of a neighborhood traffic management program should look like.

At that first meeting, the public expressed a wide range of views. We heard a strong desire for better communication between the City and the community to develop a consensus on desired outcomes for a project. A number of residents requested a desire to have a more timely process with a reasonable chance of action. Some attendees suggested that City staff should have greater latitude in addressing safety issues. We also heard concern that the process have positive impacts for an entire neighborhood, not just a smaller area, and that it be mindful of changes to traffic flow as a result of any action undertaken.

To further the discussion, the NTMP Subcommittee has created draft revisions to the Program Philosophy, Program Goals, and Program Objectives, both to incorporate the comments heard at the first public meeting and to reflect the current legal landscape in California. Attached is the first version of that draft, to be discussed at the upcoming joint meeting of the Bicycle and Transportation Commissions on February 13, 2013.

We plan to hold two more public workshops: the first to discuss the specifics of the process, and the second to collect public input on the draft revisions as a whole. The first of these meetings will be on February 20, 2013 at 7:00pm in the Oak Room at Arrillaga Recreation Center. We will hold the other public meeting sometime in March, and we will be taking public input through the month of March. Comments and input from City staff will be welcome at any time during this process as well.

After collecting and reviewing the public input from these meetings, as well as the feedback from staff, we aim to present potential revisions to the Transportation Commission for Commission action in April and then we hope to submit a document to City Council in May.

Thank you.

Enclosure

INTRODUCTION

An increasing number of Menlo Park residents are interested in a healthy and sustainable environment where public facilities are designed to be energy efficient, to minimize greenhouse gases emission and to promote walking and bicycling. As such they are concerned about how their neighborhood streets can safely accommodate biking, walking and vehicular traffic. Safety conditions are of concern especially in the vicinity of schools and routes to schools. In the past, the City has responded to community concerns by installing traffic control devices, roadway features, enforcement of traffic and parking regulations, as well as educating the communities about traffic safety.

- The current Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP) was adopted by the City Council on October 24, 2004. It is designed to provide consistent and equitable citywide policies to assist neighborhoods to deal with safety and traffic issues. It represents the City of Menlo Park's commitment to enhance the safety and sustainability in its neighborhoods.
- The NTMP is being reviewed in 2013 to address changes in State law, to incorporate the experience gained from the implementation of the program and to facilitate the Complete Streets concept in established neighborhoods to provide a seamless transportation system in the City.
- In 2006, California passed the Global Warming Solutions Act (AB 32). The Act sets a mandate for the reduction of greenhouse gases emission in California. To implement AB 32, in the land use and transportation area, California also passed the Complete Streets Act (AB 1358) and the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act (SB 375) in 2008.
- AB 1358 requires cities and counties, when they revise their general plans, to provide for the mobility needs of all users of the streets. The term "all users" includes cyclists, pedestrians, other non-motorized vehicle users, motor vehicle users and transit riders. The City Council adopted a Complete Streets Policy on January 22, 2013 as an interim measure to implement AB 1358 while going through the General Plan Update process.
- SB 375 requires emission reduction through coordinated regional planning that integrates transportation, housing, land use policies and public investments. To achieve the goals of SB 375 will require significant increase in travel by transit, cycling and walking and the corresponding increase in public investments to meet the needs of this sector of the public.
- The NTMP will assist Menlo Park's residents to identify neighborhood traffic issues and offer opportunities to extend the Complete Streets concept in their neighborhoods, in order to create a seamless network of Complete Streets.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The management of traffic is a social and civic issue. A successful NTMP should be a forum for all users of the facilities to share their experiences and concerns; as well as provide an outline for community-wide problem solving and an avenue to build consensus. It should not be an “all or nothing” approach.

- Open and frequent communication and a robust outreach program are essential to a successful NTMP. Every NTMP project should include a communication plan designed to receive input from at least 50% of the residents in the project area.
- Community engagement is a process and through the process of reaching a good solution, some solutions may not be acceptable. Reaching acceptable solutions is a test driven process, so rather than unacceptable solutions being deemed a failure, the program may reiterate the process until the desired outcome or goal is achieved.
- Stable residential neighborhood traffic requires efficient arterial and major collector traffic flow to minimize incentives to cut through residential neighborhoods. It is the responsibility of the Transportation Division to constantly monitor traffic flow and to adjust traffic signal timing to efficiently and safely move traffic on City's arterial and major collector system.
- Streets are a community resource. Streets are for the safe use of their residents and are shared by walkers, cyclists as well as occupants of motor vehicles. Features for safe bicycling and walking are part of the design of streets in Menlo Park.
- Residents of residential streets have a right to a safe and peaceful environment; right to a fair share of law enforcement resources; and protection from disproportionate increases in undesirable traffic conditions. It is therefore important that any environmental impact analysis, either initiated by the City or by neighboring public agencies, should include an analysis of the project's impact to neighborhood streets and how the project will impact the City's ability to implement the Complete Streets concept in addition to just reviewing vehicular traffic impacts to intersections and arterial and collector streets.
- Every NTMP project should have neighborhood consensus on a list of critical success factors and methods to evaluate the effectiveness of the measures to be employed. The evaluation should include, among other factors, the amount of traffic diverted to other residential streets, impact to emergency response and whether the overall transportation goals of the City is being achieved.
- All users have an equal right to use public streets in a safe and lawful manner commensurate with the type of streets. Installation of traffic management features should respect this right.

PROGRAM GOALS

The City of Menlo Park's Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP) seeks to reach several complementary goals:

- To identify demonstrably unsafe (dangerous) conditions to motor vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians and to make corrective measures to ensure public safety. Use of the NTMP process to develop consensus on corrective measures is encouraged with the understanding that timely implementation of corrective actions is important.
- To provide residents of residential streets with protection and relief from disproportionate traffic increases caused by external factors, such as a change in land use.
- To provide a process which is inclusive of all neighborhoods in the City of Menlo Park, recognizing that housing density and land use patterns may have a specific impact on an individual street or neighborhood.
- To improve residents' sense of well-being about their neighborhood streets and enhance motor vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian safety in residential areas.
- To incorporate the preferences and requirements of community members into the design, regulation and operation of streets within their neighborhoods.
- To provide objective data to City residents to help residents determine whether their neighborhoods would benefit from a traffic management project.
- To provide objective criteria to help City staff to prioritize projects. The City Council will always have the prerogative to introduce traffic management measures at their discretion.
- To use City resources in a cost-effective manner by developing solutions that encourage safe use of neighborhood streets over the long term, recognizing that the Police Department has many demands on its resources. A successfully implemented NTMP process may well bring savings to the City over time, by preventing accidents and/or freeing police from repeated requests for enforcement arising from the same general concern.
- To encourage high standards of acceptance by requiring multiple opportunities for public outreach and public and Staff participation before trials are started.
- To clearly state procedures to create neighborhood support.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Provide a process that provides clear opportunities for residents to investigate the feasibility of and to initiate the NTMP process without undue procedural barriers and in a timely manner.
- Provide a process that includes clear opportunities for members of the affected community to either support or change any recommended plan, as well as temporary and permanent implementation of any plan.
- Provide a format for citizen involvement in identifying traffic concerns and objectives, as well as the traffic management measures that best suit their neighborhood needs.
- Develop a goals-driven testing approach which saves money by testing solutions before making them permanent.
- Integrate residential neighborhoods into the City's Complete Streets plan by providing for and encouraging safe use of public right-of-ways by motorized and non-motorized traffic wherever possible.
- Integrate engineering, enforcement and education initiatives to encourage positive driver, cyclist, and pedestrian behavior in residential neighborhoods.
- Improve neighborhood livability by encouraging compliance with designated speed limits, and if appropriate, reducing posted speed limits.
- Discourage cut-through traffic within residential neighborhoods.
- Maintain capacity and facilitate traffic flow on the City's arterial and collector roadways network.
- Effectively balance public safety interests including traffic mitigations and emergency response.