



**CITY OF GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA  
REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL**

**AGENDA ITEM**

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Report: Status of the Slow Streets Program and Future Direction of the Program

1. Motion directing staff on future actions of the Slow Streets Program including whether to terminate the program, leave the program in place as is without future sign replacement or repair, or identify solutions and criteria for a permanent program.

**COUNCIL ACTION**

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**Item Type:** Action Item

**Approved for** March 2, 2021 **calendar**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION**

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**Submitted by:**

Philip S. Lanzafame, Director of Community Development  
Yazdan T. Emrani, P.E., Director of Public Works

**Prepared by:**

Bradley Calvert, Assistant Director of Community Development

**Reviewed by:**

Michele Flynn, Director of Finance  
Michael J. Garcia, City Attorney

**Approved by:**

Roubik R. Golanian, P.E., Interim City Manager

## **RECOMMENDATION**

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Staff respectfully recommends that the City Council provide direction regarding the next steps for the Slow Streets program. The program has been well received by the general public but has been challenged by the low durability of the program in its current form. Staff recommends that if the Council wishes to continue or advance the program that it be modified to be more resilient and serve as a long-term strategy.

## **BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS**

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In May of 2020, Council provided direction to staff to implement the Slow Streets program. The program utilizes signage (Exhibit 1) that reminds motorists that the street is a shared space and may be used by pedestrians and cyclists within the defined street segment. This also recognized that during the COVID-19 pandemic there were more pedestrians and cyclists on the streets in order to practice social distancing where sidewalks were not wide enough or were absent. The signage also provided a contact email address that could be used to report performance, issues, or to request a Slow Street designation. Signs were mounted to barricades and typically placed at the end of a block or at street intersections. Signs were most commonly placed at the center of the street to necessitate that automobiles slow down and maneuver the signage in order to encourage slower driving speeds. The program was modeled on similar initiatives in cities such as Pasadena, Oakland, San Francisco, and Seattle. Several cities in the immediate area have created similar programs, including Los Angeles. The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) has adopted Slow Streets strategies as an official approach to traffic calming and has developed a tool kit on various means to implement a program including design standards, placement, and creative strategies.

To request a sign, a resident on a particular segment utilized the city's website to download an application. This application would designate the individual as the sponsor for the Slow Street, and provided opportunities to gather supporting signatures. Supporting signatures were not required to avoid encouraging contact amongst individuals, but was accepted as a means to demonstrate community-wide support for designating the Slow Street. Upon completing the application, the sponsor would send to staff for review to determine if the street was eligible to serve as a Slow Street and to evaluate the location of the signs. Slow Streets designations were not allowed on major thoroughfares or arterial roads such as Brand Boulevard, Central Avenue, Mountain Street or Glenoaks Boulevard.

Signs and barricades were funded by Transportation Demand Act Article 3 (TDA) funds and required no allocation from the General Fund. A total of \$30,000 was appropriated for the Slow Street signage during the course of the program. This funding has been

exhausted based upon the total number of applications, installations, and replacement of damaged signage.

A total of 191 street segments were approved for signage deployment. This represented a total of 300 individual signs. The 300 signs were deployed citywide based on requests with 250 signs north and 50 signs south of SR 134. If the program were to advance to a future phase, additional work would be needed to ensure that a more equitable distribution of signage would be completed, particularly in South Glendale.

Currently the webpage and application process has been paused and informs the public that the program is currently suspended for new applications.

### **Performance**

Staff included an email address as part of the signage so that residents could provide feedback. Reception from the public was overwhelmingly positive with only a handful of negative reaction. Most messages received expressed support and gratitude for the signage, and it also led to a high number of requests from residents that would see the signs deployed around the community.

Challenges of the program included the durability of the signage. The signs, mounted on wooden or plastic sawhorse barricades, were easily susceptible to being moved, hit, or damaged. In some instances, signs had been relocated to other streets that had not been approved, removing them from streets that had been formally approved. This required the deployment of additional signs to replace those that were missing.

Damaged signs were a result of different factors. In some instances, they had been hit by motorists causing them to collapse. Typically, this would lead to the signs being damaged beyond repair. There were also instances of high wind days where signs were damaged after being knocked over by the wind. This was typically a result of the sand bag anchors being cut open at previous times and barricades no longer being sufficiently weighed down. City staff would replace these signs with existing inventory, but this also led to applications being unfulfilled as the funding for the program began to dwindle. Both instances led to a significant number of calls and emails that proved challenging to manage with existing staff.

Despite the challenges, several cities have contacted Glendale to learn more about the program and to model their approach after the city's.

## Potential Next Steps

Community Development and Public Works staff have developed alternatives for next steps of the program. Staff has analyzed the challenge of staffing, funding, and durability to provide the following alternatives to Council for the Slow Streets Program:

### Termination of the Program

Council could choose to terminate the program. This would entail removal of the existing signs. The signs would be removed from each designated street and both the signs and barricades would be placed in storage. The webpage would also be taken down. Staff would provide an advance notice to those that applied, were approved, and had signs installed on their streets that the program is terminating within a prescribed time frame.

### Leave the Program In Place As It Is

Council could choose to leave the existing signs in place but no longer provide replacement or repair to the signs; currently there is no additional funding to fix or repair the existing signs, so when a sign is damaged it would be cleaned up and no longer replaced. Staff would provide an advance notice to those that applied, were approved, and had signs installed on their streets reminding them that the City will not be replacing or repairing existing signs. The webpage would be updated to provide this information and no new applications would be accepted.

### Slow Streets 2.0

An updated version of Slow Streets could be implemented in an effort to create a more resilient program. This would entail creating a new approach to signage that would be more permanently fixed to the pavement. Permanent placement would be made by securing the signage to the ground. Narrower signs, or blade signs would replace the existing format and be mounted to the post and secured to the pavement by epoxy. This would ensure that the signs could not be removed and relocated to another street. The sign would include a spring installation that would allow the signs to “bounce back” if they are hit by an automobile. A redesign of the signage would also be conducted to ensure that it would be compatible with a proposed mounting apparatus. These types of signs have been employed in many urban locations and are also used to indicated speed limits (Exhibit 2).

The unit cost for the spring anchored type candlestick with a base that would be affixed to the pavement using epoxy, is around \$100 per unit not including the cost of the sign and installation time.

The advantage of this system lies in its semi-permanent base which will ensure that it is not easily removable and a bit more durable than the current signs. The disadvantages are that similar to the current signs, and once mounted in the centerline of a road, chances are that these signs will also be hit and eventually shear off, which would require their repair and or replacement. Removal of the spring anchored type candlestick base will also result in damage to the asphalt and create a pothole.

Staff has also learned of an alternative to epoxy implemented by the City of Miami Beach. This involves a permanent installation of signs using a similar sign/delineator system, but employ bolts to secure the signs to the pavement (Exhibit 3). According to staff in Miami Beach, this has resulted in a lower cost of approximately \$24.50 per unit, not including the cost of the sign or installation. Miami Beach studied the impacts and found that the two bolts used to hold the delineators in place were relatively small and would not cause long-term damage to the street.

Miami Beach has also created an alternative for wider streets using planters as a long-term solution (Exhibit 3). These planters can be filled with soil and vegetation with a sign placed within the planter. These installations are costlier, at approximately \$250 to \$350 per installation, but are also more resilient to damage from motorists.

Locations would be evaluated with an updated criterion by Community Development and Public Works. Recognizing that these installations would be semi-permanent to permanent, more evaluation would be conducted to determine if a street would be eligible. This criterion could include:

- Street type,
- Street speed limit,
- Street width,
- History of incidents and speeding and;
- Efforts to ensure an equitable distribution of resources across the city.

Staff would also recommend that the petition process be established to earn majority support on the nominated segment. The webpage would be updated to reflect the new criteria and the application process.

The City of Los Angeles and the City of Pasadena have also used pole mounted signs (Exhibit 4) for streets that are too narrow for signage and installations in the middle of the street. These signs are similar to those that were placed in the streets, but are mounted to existing infrastructure such as street and parking signs. This represents a lower cost alternative, at approximately \$30 per unit, and can accommodate streets that are too narrow for in-street installation.

If Council wishes staff to pursue either in-street permanent option, staff would develop design specifications and bid out this installation, as well as the on-going repair and replacement. Existing signage would remain in place until this process is completed. Staff has identified funding through Measure M and TDA funds, and the cost would depend on the number and type of installations that are ultimately recommended and approved. Staff would return at a future date to appropriate funds.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

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The cost for each installation would be determined as part of the bidding process if Council chooses to pursue a permanent program. Staff has identified potential funding through Measure M and Transportation Demand Act Article 3 (TDA) funding. Staff time would be allocated to the installation and maintenance of the installations.

No funds would be needed to terminate the program or to maintain the existing program with no new additional signs. Staff time would be required to remove the signage if Council chose to terminate the program, or to clean up damaged signage if the program continued with no new additional signs.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

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Alternative 1: Terminate the Slow Streets program and remove all deployed signage.

Alternative 2: Continue to allow the Slow Streets signage to remain in approved locations, but not offer maintenance or repair. Signs that are damaged or destroyed would be removed and not replaced.

Alternative 3: Move forward with developing design specifications and going out to bid to identify permanent solutions while developing new criterion for a permanent Slow Streets program.

Alternative 4: Council may consider any other alternative not proposed by staff.

## **CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE**

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Not Applicable

## **EXHIBITS**

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1. Existing Slow Streets Signage
2. Example of Slow Street Permanent Signage
3. Miami Beach Slow Street Examples
4. Los Angeles Slow Street Example