



CITY OF GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM

Report: Slow Streets Pilot Program Evaluation

- 1) Motion authorizing the discontinuation of the Slow Streets Program and affirming the City's commitment to addressing traffic safety needs in the community.

COUNCIL ACTION

Item Type: Action

Approved for September 26, 2023 **calendar**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The collected data and analysis for the Slow Streets Pilot Program indicate that the program's impact on speed reduction and traffic volume has been minimal. These findings highlight the need to reconsider the continued implementation of this program and explore alternative strategies that can better address the community's concerns regarding traffic safety and mobility.

COUNCIL PRIORITIES

Mobility/Traffic and Pedestrian Safety: This program has not been as effective in achieving its goals of reducing speed and enhancing safety for all modes of transportation.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the motion to discontinue this program citywide. This decision allows for continuing focus on implementation of adopted plans and programs, such as the Citywide Pedestrian Plan, Bicycle Transportation Plan, and Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program.

BACKGROUND

Staff conducted pre and post-speed surveys on four segments: Columbus Avenue, Isabel Street, Allen Avenue, and Orange Grove Avenue. These segments were specifically chosen due to higher 85th percentile speeds in dense residential neighborhoods, making them areas with a significant volume of pedestrians. For the 36-foot-wide Columbus Avenue, Type B (Exhibit B) slow street signs were installed, featuring double-sided signs with a single post. On Isabel Street and Allen Avenue, also 36 feet wide, Type C (Exhibit C) slow street signs were utilized, consisting of double-sided signs accompanied by two K-71 flexible traffic posts positioned at the front and back. Lastly, for the 40-foot-wide Orange Grove Avenue, Type D (Exhibit D) assemblies were implemented, incorporating double-sided slow street signs along with four K-71 flexible traffic posts placed all around, complemented by double yellow 4-inch striping.

The evaluation process encompassed conducting traffic count and speed surveys before and after the installation of the slow street sign assemblies for all three types of street segment. The traffic surveys were conducted at 1-month and 2-month intervals after installation of the slow street signs and included five consecutive days of traffic data. This enabled an assessment of the program's impact on vehicular speeds within the selected segments. The results of these evaluations served as the basis for determining the effectiveness of the different assembly types in reducing vehicular speeds and enhancing safety. Staff has utilized these findings to prepare a comprehensive analysis that includes recommendations for further actions and improvements.

In addition to the data analysis, valuable feedback has been received from community stakeholders and the Glendale Fire Department (GFD), which have been integrated into the analysis, findings, and recommendations. This ensures a comprehensive evaluation of the program's impact, considering the perspectives and insights of key stakeholders.

ANALYSIS

Upon evaluation of the comprehensive traffic data, staff found that the current program has been ineffective in its goal of substantially reducing speeds. The average reduction of approximately 2 MPH indicates that there have been minimal changes in vehicular speeds across the evaluated segments. Despite conducting a 5-day post-installation

speed survey at 1-month and 2-month intervals, the desired reductions in speeds have not been realized. Therefore, based on these findings, staff believes that alternative strategies need to be explored and implemented to effectively address the issue of speeding.

Challenges and Considerations in the Implementation of the Slow Streets Program

The implementation of the Glendale Slow Streets Program has encountered certain challenges that have been brought to the attention of staff by various stakeholders. These challenges primarily revolve around the difficulties faced by emergency services and residents.

The Glendale Fire Department has expressed concerns regarding the impact of the slow street assemblies on their operations. They have reported that fire trucks encounter difficulties maneuvering through the slow street assemblies, making it challenging to turn and navigate around them. In some cases, the fire truck must come to a complete stop and a firefighter needs to temporarily leave the truck to guide it when passing by the slow street sign. When responding to emergencies in areas with slow street signs, fire trucks are required to slow down like other vehicles, causing delays in their response times.

Some residents have voiced concerns regarding the impact of the slow street assemblies on their daily routines. Specifically, there have been reports of incidents where parked vehicles' side mirrors have been damaged or broken. This can occur when drivers overcorrect their vehicles towards parked cars when driving by the median of the slow street assemblies. Such occurrences present a notable inconvenience and expense to the public and affected residents parking in the area.

Concerns have been raised by residents who have experienced difficulties entering or exiting their driveways due to the presence of the slow street assemblies. The design and placement of the assemblies have occasionally posed challenges for residents when maneuvering their vehicles in and out of their driveways, causing frustration and inconvenience.

Furthermore, the program has encountered another challenge with graffiti on the assemblies, which poses an additional problem for the effectiveness of the slow streets program. The defacement of the assemblies not only diminishes their visual appeal but also undermines the intended purpose of creating a safe and aesthetically pleasing environment for pedestrians and cyclists and raises significant concerns of long-term maintenance.

Damage to the slow street assemblies is common. Approximately 54 percent of the project, which amounts to 13 out of the 24 locations, has experienced instances where the slow street signs were partially hit and damaged by vehicles. This poses a challenge as it necessitates frequent replacements, high maintenance costs, and regularly leaves critical locations void of a proper sign.

Given these circumstances, staff respectfully recommends the discontinuation of the program. The program's limitations and the concerns raised by stakeholders indicate that it does not adequately address the multifaceted requirements of traffic calming and safety. Further evaluation and exploration of alternative approaches are warranted to better address these concerns and ensure effective traffic calming measures.

In conclusion, considering the challenges highlighted, including those related to delays to emergency services, residential driveway access, graffiti, sign assembly damage, and the need to find a balance between competing interests, staff recommends discontinuing the current program and instead focus on implementation of adopted citywide plans and programs. This approach will ensure a more comprehensive and aligned approach to address traffic calming and safety while taking into account the broader goals and priorities of the community.

STAKEHOLDERS/OUTREACH

Staff has maintained close communication with the residents directly impacted by the installations. This ongoing dialogue has allowed understanding of their experiences, concerns, and feedback regarding the program. Additionally, staff has actively engaged with the GFD to assess the program's impact on emergency response services and evaluate its compatibility with their operational needs.

FISCAL IMPACT

The anticipated cost of the removal of existing pilot assemblies is within the scope of work on an existing contract with Superior Pavement Markings, Inc. that is funded by the existing Slow Streets Project, which was approved as a part of the FY 2023-24 budget. Therefore, no new appropriation is being requested at this time. The City Council approved funding is outlined below:

Existing Appropriation		
Amount	Account String	Funding Source
250,656	GL: 43110-2220-PWD-0020-P0000 PL: PWD00594AN	Measure M Local Return Fund

There will be no further expenses associated with its implementation, maintenance, or any ongoing costs.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CEQA/NEPA)

The Project is categorically exempt from environmental review because of CEQA Guidelines §§ 15301 as a minor change to existing facilities with no or negligible expansion in use. Additionally, as the discontinuing of a program based on a lack of significant effect, it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that this will have a significant effect on the environment and is therefore not subject to CEQA (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3)).

CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE

Not Applicable

ALTERNATIVES

- Alternative 1: Approve the motion to discontinue the program and authorize the Public Works Department to remove the existing assemblies and delineation striping. This decision allows the department to reallocate resources, time, and expertise towards implementation of adopted citywide plans and programs.
- Alternative 2: Do not approve the motion and continue with the program, despite its minimal impacts on speed and traffic volume reduction, as well as other challenges it has presented.
- Alternative 3: The City Council may consider any other alternative not proposed by staff.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

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Approved by:

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

EXHIBITS/ATTACHMENTS

- Exhibit A: Slow Streets Program Map
- Exhibit B: Tuff Post and Solar Powered LED Road Markers Installations
- Exhibit C: Tuff Post, K71 Posts, and Solar Powered LED Road Markers Installations for 36 feet wide Street
- Exhibit D: Tuff Post, K71 Posts, and Solar Powered LED Road Markers Installations for 40 feet wide Street
- Exhibit E: Slow Streets Installation-Pilot Program Table