





Memorandum

TO: Kevin J. Jackson, Village Manager 

FROM: John Wielebnicki, Director of Public works
Bill McKenna, Village Engineer 

FOR: Village President and Board of Trustees

DATE: May 11, 2022

SUBJECT: Traffic Calming Petition Process Update

The purpose of this memo is to update the Village Board on the status of traffic calming petitions submitted by residents for review by the Transportation Commission (TC) and to respond to questions surrounding the traffic calming petition submitted by the 900 block of North Humphrey Avenue which were read into public comment at the May 2, 2022 Village Board meeting.

Traffic Calming Petition Process Background

At the November 6, 2017 Village Board meeting, the Village Board approved the TC's use of a traffic calming toolbox to address traffic problems on residential streets in the Village. The toolbox includes a scoring table used to evaluate petitions and a table which includes various traffic calming measures which the TC can consider when reviewing petitions. The table of traffic calming measures also includes how the various traffic calming devices would be funded, either by the Village for most calming measures or by the residents via a special service area (SSA) tax. A copy of the table of traffic calming devices is attached to this memo for reference and is posted on the Village's website.

The approved traffic calming toolbox does not include cul de sacs or traffic diverters as tools the TC can consider when reviewing traffic calming petitions submitted by residents. These two traffic calming measures were not included in the TC's recommended list of calming measures since they have significant impacts to the overall traffic patterns for neighborhoods and typically shift traffic from one residential street to adjacent residential streets which can negatively impact adjacent blocks who have not been involved in the process and can potentially create safety concerns due to redistributing traffic. The TC approved not including these two calming measures in the toolbox for these reasons. Generally cul de sacs or diverters are tools used in association with larger planned developments that go through public hearing process which helps notify residents of the project and requires robust traffic studies that would show potential impacts to these road closures or partial closures.

The approved traffic calming toolbox does include speed tables and speed humps as approved traffic calming devices but limits their use by the Transportation Commission to the 1150 south blocks along Roosevelt Road and the 1200 north blocks along North Avenue. The decision to allow these two treatments with these restrictions was made by the Village Board at the time due to staff concerns regarding impacts from speed bumps or tables to emergency operations and public works maintenance activities. The TC recommended these two treatments be funded by the residents on the blocks requesting them through a SSA in order to make the use of these treatments a little more onerous thereby limiting their use to address staff's concerns surrounding their impacts. Establishing a SSA is a lengthy process which requires large amounts of staff time and multiple Board meetings as well as ongoing staff time to administer the tax areas with Cook County.

Currently the TC is reviewing the traffic calming petition process and staff will be recommending revising the traffic calming table to have the Village fund the installation of any future speed tables or speed humps since the cost of these improvements is very low at around \$5,000-\$10,000 as compared to the costs and time to establish and administer the special service area tax. The TC and staff will present a future board item for modifying the traffic calming process later this year.

Traffic Calming Petition Backlog and Consultant Support

Traffic calming petitions typically take around two to three months from receipt of a petition to the item being in front of the TC for review to allow for time for staff to validate the petition, schedule traffic data collection, review the traffic and crash data, determine any recommendations for calming measures, and prepare agenda items for the TC. Petitions will often take longer than this two month timeframe to allow for traffic data collection to occur at the appropriate time of year for a given petition either due to winter weather delays or wanting to collect traffic data when schools are in session or parks are in use depending on the location and concerns of the residents.

At the start of the COVID pandemic the Village had 6 traffic calming petitions which were submitted and being processed for future review by the TC. During the pandemic the Village received another 15 petitions for the current backlog of 21 petitions. Petitions were not able to be processed during the pandemic since staff could not collect traffic data due to reduced traffic volumes associated with the pandemic and altered local traffic patterns when schools were not in-person; a lack of commission meetings early in the pandemic; reduced budgets associated with the pandemic for data collection; and lack of engineering staff.

The FY22 Budget includes \$225,000 for consultant support for administering these traffic calming petitions including data collection. Staff is currently drafting the request for proposals (RFP) for these services and anticipates presenting an agreement to the Village Board for consideration at the July 18th Board meeting. Even with consultant support, staff anticipates that it will take about 2-years to work through the existing backlog of petitions due to the TC's other work plan items.

Traffic Calming Petition from 900 block of North Humphrey

At the May 2, 2022 Village Board meeting public comment was read into record from a resident on the 900 block of North Humphrey (Division St. to Berkshire St.) regarding traffic concerns and concerns regarding the traffic calming petition submitted by the resident. A copy of the submitted public comment is attached for reference.

The Village received a traffic calming petition from the 900 block of North Humphrey in October of 2020. Since that time Engineering Division staff has communicated with the petitioner several times regarding the status of the petition as well as reading their public comment into the record at the April TC meeting.

The petition from this block is currently in the middle of the backlog list with 10 other petitions in front of it. Staff anticipates being able to present this petition to the TC sometime in the summer of 2023 based on the current backlog. Since the traffic calming petition will not be reviewed by the TC until sometime next year, staff has reviewed the existing traffic data for this block from 2018 along with the readily available crash data from IDOT from 2016-2020 to determine if there are any existing safety concerns based on the available data. Traffic volumes on this block were 744 vehicles per day which is well within the typical volumes for similar residential streets. The 5-years of crash data only showed one sideswipe crash with a parked car in 2017. The Village does not have recent reliable speed data for this block to determine if there are any concerns regarding vehicle speeds. Based on the available data, there is not an immediate safety concern that staff believes would warrant any immediate mitigation or acceleration of the petition on this block. Unless otherwise directed, staff will proceed with the normal traffic calming petition process and timeline based on the backlog of petitions.

Next Steps

Staff will be issuing the RFP for consultant services to assist with moving forward with these traffic calming petitions and presenting an agreement for these services to the Village Board for consideration this summer. The Transportation Commission and staff will also be presenting an item for consideration to modify the traffic calming petition scoring table and funding mechanism for speed humps and speed bumps.

Due to the existing backlog of petitions, staff is evaluating an option to recommend the Village Board approve a moratorium on accepting future traffic calming petitions while the Transportation Commission works through the current backlog.

If you have any questions, please contact Bill McKenna, Village Engineer at 708.358.5722.

Attachments

cc: Lisa Shelly, Deputy Village Manager
Ahmad Zayyad, Deputy Village Manager
Rob Sproule, Assistant Public Works Director
Jill Juliano, Civil Engineer II and Transportation Commission Staff Liaison
All Department Heads
Christina M. Waters, Village Clerk

Traffic Calming Measures that can be used by the Transportation Commission to address
resident generated petitions for traffic calming / controls
as approved by the Oak Park Village Board of Trustees on November 6, 2017

Available Traffic Calming Measures Levels 1 through 4 are sorted from least severe to most severe	Not Bicycle Friendly (NBF)	Who should pay for traffic calming device (SSA = Special Service Area = 100% funded by petitioners)	Remarks
Level 1 - No Traffic Flow Changes			
Targeted Speed Enforcement		Village	
Speed Radar Trailer		Village	
Speed Feedback Sign		Village	
Centerline / Edgeline Lane Striping		Village	
Optical Speed Bars / Speed Reduction Markings		Village	
Signage		Village	
Speed Limit Signage		Village	
STOP / YIELD Signage		Village	<u>Should not</u> be used for speed control according to federal Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices
Flashing Stop Signs		Village	
Speed Legend		Village	
Speed Limit Pavement Markings		Village	
High Visibility Crosswalks		Village	
Educational Community Involvement		Village	
Level 2 - Some Traffic Flow Changes			
Sign Turn Restrictions/Turn Movement Restrictions		Village	
Angled Parking		Village	
Parking Strategies		Village	
Textured Pavement		SSA	brick paver street for example
Rumble Strip		Village	
Level 3 - Significant Traffic Flow Changes			
Neckdown / Bulbout	NBF	Village	to be designed and built as bicycle friendly
Center Island Narrowing / Pedestrian Refuge		Village	
One-Lane and Two-Lane Chokers	NBF	Village	to be designed and built as bicycle friendly
Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacons		Village	
Chicane		Village	
Lateral Shift		Village	
Realigned Intersection		Village	
Medians & Partial Medians		Village	
Speed Hump		SSA	only on the 1200 North and 1150 South blocks
Speed Table		SSA	only on the 1200 North and 1150 South blocks
Level 4 - Street Closures			
Median Barrier		SSA	
Forced Turn Island		SSA	
One-Way and Two-Way Street Conversion		Village	
One-Way Couplet Conversions		Village	

April 26, 2022

Dear Village Board Trustee:

My name is Kimberly O'Donnell. I'm a resident at 947 N Humphrey Ave in Oak Park. I reside with my husband and 3 children, ages 8, 6 and 3. I'm submitting this letter because the 900 N Humphrey block submitted a traffic calming petition in August of 2020 to Jill Juliano. To this date, no action has been taken regarding our petition. There are 20 similar petitions waiting to be addressed.

We submitted this petition for the following reasons:

- Cars speed around the corner from Division onto our street. There have been multiple occasions where cars ride over that corner, leaving tire marks in that yard. We have a basketball hoop, three houses down.
- Cars do not stop at the stop signs on N Humphrey at Berkshire, even when children are playing in plain sight.
- Cars use N Humphrey to bypass traffic on Austin Ave. They ride down N Humphrey Ave, from Division – and even Augusta, all the way down to North Ave at alarmingly fast speeds and do not stop at the stop signs. The 1000 N block of Humphrey also has submitted a petition for traffic calming. They also see speeding down our streets as a problem.
- On multiple occasions I have seen cars racing each other, side by side, and passing one another down our street.
- I have seen children almost be hit by cars while riding their bikes at the intersection at Berkshire.
- Churchgoers at Judson Baptist Church (On Austin and Berkshire) use our street for parking, and they should be able to park and walk to church safely.
- Children that live on Austin Ave use our street to ride their bikes and play. They also need a safe street for this, in addition to our neighbors living on N Humphrey.
- Cars do not obey the forced right turn on the 800 N Humphrey block, and instead speed through to our block.
- I have witnessed pedestrians on walks almost be hit by cars who fail to stop and who are driving distracted on more than one occasion.
- During school hours this driving is the exact same, with little regard for stop signs or children.

I have followed up multiple times with Jill Juliano, who has done little to respond to my concerns. It was not until after I submitted a comment for the public meeting at the Transportation Commission meeting on April 12, that she finally returned a call to me. Jill let me know that the Village will be hiring a consultation crew to address the backlog of petitions. There are over 20 at the moment and we are number 10 or 11. I have no answers as to when this will be specifically happening, how fast this process will move, and how communication will work with residents. I'm left wondering if we are willing to let a child get struck by a car before action will be taken. We have already waited years. We cannot let another summer pass without action.

On April 12 at the Traffic Commission meeting, the Traffic Commission let us know that...

- There is pretty much nothing they can do. Other commissions decided that no more streets can have speed bumps, dead ends or forced turns. This leads me to wonder what traffic calming

measures do exist to address these issues? Why do we have a traffic calming petition if there are no longer traffic calming measures that we can implement?

- There is no set date for the consultation crew to be hired or take action.
- Only streets that are on the border of Oak Park can have traffic calming measures. I consider Humphrey Ave on the border of Oak Park.
- They are short staffed. They only have one paid position and they are overwhelmed with work.

Since this meeting the Village put a speed tracker on our block and had a police officer watch the intersection at Berkshire and N Humphrey on April 15 – a non- school day. These might help temporarily, but these are not long-term solutions.

When investigating other streets in Oak Park I noticed that every single street that borders North Ave has a traffic calming measure except for one street. There are also many streets that are not border streets around Madison and Washington Ave that have dead ends. Why are these streets allowed to have safe streets, but we are not? Is it because they have larger homes, more expensive homes? We all pay taxes and our children should all be given safe streets. Just because we may live in houses that are smaller and less expensive than others in Oak Park, it doesn't mean our children deserve less safety.

It has been brought up before that cul-de-sacs cut off Oak Park from Austin. We are not asking to cut Oak Park off from the Austin community. We actually welcome children who live in the apartments and houses on Austin Ave to come and play on our block and to our block parties. We are asking for a safe space for them to play on as well. We're asking for the Village for a long-term solution to the speeding and unsafe driving on our block.

The transportation commission let us know that there was nothing they could do to address our issue. We are not satisfied with that response. We need safe streets for our children to play near and to walk and bike along. There are 20 other petitions that I'm guessing are asking for similar measures. If we have this many streets with concerns, I consider this a major issue for Oak Park. Can you please address our concerns?

Thank you,

Kimberly O'Donnell

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