



Legislation Text

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RESOLUTION R-1819-44: A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORMAN, OKLAHOMA, APPROPRIATING \$20,000 FROM THE CAPITAL FUND BALANCE TO BE USED FOR A TRAFFIC CALMING PROJECT ON HAMDEN AVENUE.

BACKGROUND: In 2002, in response to a multitude of citizen requests to “do something” about speeders in their neighborhoods, the City Council decided to develop and fund a Traffic Calming Program. Staff researched the available literature and looked at the traffic calming practices of many communities nationwide.

In 2003, the City published its own *Neighborhood Traffic Management and Calming Program* document and did a pilot calming project in the Cambridge Subdivision. Since then, engineered traffic calming devices have been constructed in 51 neighborhoods city wide where streets have qualified with minimum speeds and traffic volumes, and neighborhoods have passed support petitions.

Since its inception, the program has constructed 217 speed tables and 15 traffic circles. The program has been very popular and requests from neighborhoods have continued to pour in. In FYE 2008, there were 22 neighborhoods that had fully gone through the process and were vying for part of that year’s budget of \$160,000. Since only 10 of the 22 calming projects could be funded, the City Council decided to appropriate funding to allow all 22 of them, which included 100 speed tables and 2 traffic circles, to be built.

This proliferation of calming devices, coupled with negative feedback of drivers from peripheral areas who used those streets, emergency responders who expressed concerns about the devices, and public transit officials concerned about accelerated wear to their vehicles, prompted the City Council Oversight Committee to examine the Traffic Calming Program and to recommend changes to improve it. The Oversight Committee looked at all aspects of the program: its effectiveness, its qualifying criteria, its cost, the neighborhood meeting process, the petition process, the routes eligible, and the devices themselves. The FYE 2009 projects were put on “hold” while several meetings of the Oversight Committee, staff, and other interested parties were held to discuss these issues. The Oversight Committee and staff met on three different occasions in late 2008, with briefings made to the City Council Transportation Committee on December 4, 2008 and the entire City Council in a study session on January 20, 2009.

The Oversight Committee ultimately settled on an approach to traffic calming that called for more emphasis on temporary measures being incorporated as primary initiatives in responding to neighborhood requests for help against speeders. These measures included enhanced police enforcement efforts and the use of speed feedback trailers in a neighborhood before assessing the need for more permanent calming devices. If it were still determined that the more permanent calming devices were needed and desired by a neighborhood, then the public meeting, street eligibility, and petition process could take place.

The Oversight Committee also decided to limit the placement of certain types of calming devices on routes that are necessary to allow emergency responders to make their target response times to neighborhoods. Speed hump type devices, except those that could be driven around, were excluded from these streets. Similarly, certain calming devices (again the speed hump type) are not allowed on designated C.A.R.T. public transit corridors. In addition to these restrictions, the qualifying speed criterion for a street increased from an 85th Percentile Speed of 32 mph to 33 mph, and the Average Daily Traffic requirement increased from 500 to 600 vehicles per day. To address the roughness issue of the speed tables, staff was directed to develop tighter construction tolerances to assure drivers a gentler ride over the device.

As it became apparent in the discussions that the raising of the project eligibility criteria would cause a few projects previously qualified to drop off the list, the Oversight Committee thought that it was important to recognize that special circumstances in some neighborhoods justify lower qualifying thresholds. Conditions such as lack of sidewalks and proximity to schools or parks are important factors that should be considered in the evaluation process for neighborhood requests of this kind. For these neighborhood requests, the decision was made to keep the previous 32 mph 85th

Percentile Speed and 500 vehicles per day criteria.

To give residents not living directly on a potentially calmed street the opportunity to voice their opinions about a proposed traffic calming project, the Oversight Committee felt that it would be appropriate to invite citizens living within a reasonable area to the neighborhood meeting in which the project is proposed. Although these citizens would not vote on the project in the support petition, their input in the discussion of the project might be helpful to the residents along the street that are considering signing the support petition. While recognizing that every neighborhood is configured differently and that the impact of the project is more direct for those residents along the corridor itself, staff looks for opportunities, such as including residents on intersecting cul-de-sacs, to expand the voting area allowed on the support petition. In regards to the petition itself, 60% continues to be the necessary level of support to enable a project to be constructed. Renters signing petitions are counted only after reasonable efforts to contact property owners have failed.

On February 24, 2009, City Council amended and approved the latest Neighborhood Traffic Management and Calming Program Policy with the adoption of Resolution R-0809-115 with the following changes:

1. Enhanced pre-calming efforts using police enforcement and speed feedback trailers.
2. Exclusion of speed hump-type devices on public transit routes and on corridors that would compromise target response times by emergency responders.
3. Increased qualifying criteria from an 85th Percentile Speed of 32 mph to 33 mph, and the Average Daily Traffic volume from 500 to 600 vehicles per day.
4. Allowance for neighborhoods that lack sidewalks, or are close to schools and parks, to be considered for calming projects as long as they meet 32 mph 85th Percentile Speed and 500 vehicles per day thresholds.
5. Invitations to residents not living on project streets, within a reasonable area, to neighborhood meetings discussing traffic calming projects.
6. Development of tighter construction tolerances for speed hump-type calming devices.

In subsequent years, Council has also opted to de-fund the Neighborhood Traffic Calming program during the preparation of the Capital Improvement Budget. The last eligible Traffic Calming Project was authorized by City Council in September of 2010 and included the installation of devices on Garver Street, Brookhaven Boulevard, Melrose Drive, Morren Drive, Pheasant Run Road and Willoway Drive. Staff is currently working with a handful of neighborhoods that have also expressed a desire to pursue similar type projects.

DISCUSSION: Earlier this year, some residents of Hawthorne Place Addition requested that Hamden Avenue, between Rock Creek Road and Greens Parkway, be evaluated for eligibility under the City's Traffic Calming Program. Staff initiated the study and verified that Hamden Avenue qualifies for the program. Even though the neighborhood residents knew that the Traffic Calming Program was presently unfunded, they wanted to pursue a project, hoping that the City Council would consider funding it if they followed all of the terms of the program.

Staff and Ward 6 Council Member Breea Clark met with the neighborhood on September 24, 2018 to provide detailed information on the City's Traffic Calming Program and to present the results of the traffic study on Hamden Avenue. Participants were enthusiastic about a potential project and agreed to circulate the support petition required by the program. The eligible petitioners overwhelmingly supported the traffic calming plan developed by the neighborhood, which consists of four speed tables. 90.8% of eligible petitioners were in favor of the project. The estimate, based on prices from previous projects, for constructing four speed tables on Hamden Avenue, is \$20,000.

In order to move forward with the Hamden Avenue Traffic Calming Project, City Council will need to approve a budget appropriation to fund its implementation. If approved, staff will secure a contractor to do the work, which is anticipated to be completed during the first quarter of calendar year 2019.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that the City Council approve a budget appropriation of \$20,000 from the FYE 2019 Capital Fund Balance (050-0000-253.20-00) to Project TC0230, Traffic Calming, Construction (050-9073-431.61-01) to fund the installation of four speed tables on Hamden Avenue, between Rock Creek Road and Greens Parkway.