Agenda Report

September 8, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Municipal Services Committee (August 26, 2025)

FROM: Department of Transportation

SUBJECT: **PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CITY COUNCIL ADOPTED SPEED HUMP POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the proposed action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 (b)(3), the "Common Sense" exemption that CEQA only applies to projects that may have an effect on the environment; and

2. Amend the Speed Hump Policies and Procedures to the following:

    a) Lower the minimum daily traffic volume eligibility requirement to 500 car trips per day from 1,000 car trips per day.
    b) Revise the current 67% approval requirement for total households and remove the non-vote as equivalent to a no vote, to an approval requirement 67% of ballots returned and a minimum response rate of 50% of eligible ballots.
    c) Revise the eligible street classification requirement to add City designated Greenway bike facilities from the 2015 Bicycle Transportation Action Plan (BTAP) to the current eligible street classifications of Local Residential and Access Streets Residential Only.

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

The proposed amendments to the Speed Hump Policies and Procedures were presented to the Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC) on June 26, 2025. TAC supported staff's recommended amendments to the current Speed Hump Policies and Procedures to provide greater applicability of speed humps.

MUNICIPAL SERVICES COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The proposed amendments to the Speed Hump Policies and Procedures were presented to the Municipal Services Committee (MSC) on August 26, 2025. MSC supported staff's recommended amendments to the current Speed Hump Policies and Procedures with the suggested amendments of adding a minimum response rate of 50% for a valid vote and adding City designated Greenway bike facilities as identified in the 2015 Bicycle Transportation Action Plan (BTAP) as an eligible street classification.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

DOT staff is recommending modifications to the Speed Hump Policies and Procedures to minimize the requirements, creating an easier path to implement speed humps on streets that have a documented speeding issue on Local Residential Streets, Access Streets Residential, and City designated Greenways as identified in the 2015 BTAP that do not qualify under the current adopted policy.

The adopted Speed Hump Policies and Procedures have two criteria that often impede the implementation of speed humps on street segments with documented speeding issues. The two criteria are: street segments must meet the traffic volumes of at least 1,000 car trips per day, and the voting process requires a 67% approval of the total household.

DOT staff reviewed all speed hump requests between January 2023 – April 2025. During that time frame, eight street segments had an 85th percentile speed of at least 33 MPH but had less than the required minimum of 1,000 car trips per day. As a result, the street segments did not qualify to advance to the voting process, even though there was a documented speeding problem. By reducing the daily car trips per day to 500, as recommended, these street segments would qualify for advancement to the voting process.

Over the past few years, it has become increasingly challenging to obtain the 67% approval from all households required to install speed humps on streets that meet all physical and operational requirements. The primary factor is that a non-vote is equivalent to a 'no' vote since the current policy requires a yes vote from 67% of all households. DOT staff reviewed all speed hump balloting that failed to meet the required 67% approval of total households between January 2023 – April 2025. During this time period, three street segments were unable to receive the required minimum due to a lack of participation in the voting process. Staff recommends updating the policy to require an approval threshold of 67% of all votes received after a minimum response rate of 50% is achieved.

Based on interest in allowing speed humps to be considered on City designated Greenway bicycle facilities, DOT staff received and concurs with suggestions to add City designated Greenway bicycle facilities as defined in the 2015 BTAP to the list of speed hump eligible street classification types.

BACKGROUND:

Traffic calming measures aim primarily to reduce driving speeds in urban areas but can also be used to meet traffic reduction objectives. Benefits are apparent on multiple levels; speed control contributes to increased road safety and more pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods. Speed management is an essential tool in ensuring the improved safety of users of urban roads, particularly vulnerable users.

Speed humps are one appropriate mechanism for reducing speeds on certain streets in Pasadena when properly installed under the right circumstances. Speed humps are only considered for installation when the quality of life for residents is significantly diminished by the speed of traffic.

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

In 2024, DOT staff began a comprehensive review of current industry standards and practices for the installation of speed humps to determine if changes are needed to the existing policy. This effort also began as a result of community inquiries for an easier path to control documented speeding on Local Residential Streets and Access Streets Residential that currently cannot qualify for speed humps under the adopted policy because the street segments carry less than required 1,000 car trips per day.

As standard practice, DOT reviewed the guidelines and criteria for speed humps from the following government agencies and professional associations: Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), and National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO). These organizations provide guidelines for their design and application, and best practice guidelines, but recognize that local jurisdictions may develop their own criteria. Based on DOT staff's review, the Speed Hump Policies and Procedures is consistent with current guidelines and best practices. The research resulted that the City's policy has a conservative approach to the minimum car trips for day. FHWA, ITE, NACTO and Caltrans guidelines state that most local jurisdictions' minimum requirement of car trips per day ranges from 500 to 1,000 car trips per day.

Review of Speed Hump Requests between January 2023 – April 2025

DOT staff reviewed all speed hump requests between January 2023 – April 2025. During that time frame, eight street segments had an 85th percentile speed of at least 33 MPH but had less than the required minimum of 1,000 car trips per day. As a result, the street segments did not qualify to advance to the voting process, considering that there was a documented speeding problem. By reducing the daily car trips per day to 500, as recommended, these street segments would qualify for advancement to the voting process.

Analysis of Speed Humps Voting Results between January 2023 – April 2025

It has become increasingly challenging to obtain the 67% approval from all households required to install speed humps on streets that meet all physical and operational

requirements. The primary factor is that a non-vote is equivalent to a 'no' vote. On multiple occasions, staff have extended the voting deadline and sent reminders to residents to encourage participation. The lack of participation in the voting process is a primary issue that hinders the implementation of speed humps on neighborhood streets. DOT staff reviewed all speed hump balloting that failed to meet the required 67% approval of total households between January 2023 – April 2025. During this time period, three street segments were unable to receive the required minimum due to a lack of participation in the voting process. The percentage of ballots returned ranged from 46% - 78% of those mailed out. The approval rating of the ballots returned ranged from 75% - 94%. A change in the current approval requirement of 67% of total households to a more obtainable approval requirement of 67% approval of all ballots returned would help facilitate the implementation of traffic calming on local residential streets that have a documented speeding issue. This is especially true for streets that have a mix of both single-family residential and higher-density residential. This would remove the current non-vote as equivalent to a 'no' vote, and would encourage residents who oppose the project, but typically do not participate in the voting process, to express their opposition through the ballot process.

Comparative Analysis with Other Cities

DOT staff reviewed the current speed hump policies of neighboring cities, including the Cities of Glendale and Burbank. Both cities' speed hump policy requirements are similar to the City of Pasadena's, however the City of Burbank requires a minimum of 500 car trips per day and a minimum block length of 250 ft. The City of Glendale requires a minimum of 1,000 car trips per day and a minimum block length of 500 ft. As referenced in our internal review, aligning our speed hump policy with the City of Burbank's requirement of a minimum of 500 car trips per day would allow DOT staff to implement the speed humps effectively to deter excessive speeds on residential streets. A minimum of 500 car trips per day would also align the City of Pasadena with best practices and guidelines for installing speed humps as a traffic calming device.

Analysis of Greenway Bicycle Facilities and Speed Hump Eligibility

DOT staff reviewed historical traffic data and determined that a number of City designated Greenway bicycle facilities could potentially meet operational and physical criteria for speed hump eligibility with the exception of their current street classification. Several Greenways from the 2015 BTAP are designated as a street function of Connector-Neighborhood in the City's Adopted 2015 Mobility Element and as Minor Arterials or Major Collectors in the State Roadway System. An allowance of Greenways as an eligible street classification would allow the City of Pasadena to consider speed humps as a traffic calming tool for bicycle facility design, consistent with best practices and guidelines for bicycle facility design. The Greenway would still be required to meet the other physical and operational criteria as defined in the policy prior to moving to the voting process.

CURRENT CITY COUNCIL ADOPTED SPEED HUMP POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

In the early 1980s, the City of Pasadena initiated the process to develop policies and procedures for speed humps as traffic calming devices for residential streets. A

comprehensive study of speed humps determined that they were appropriate devices for reducing traffic speed on certain streets when properly installed. The City developed policies and procedures for installing speed humps based on accepted engineering designs, standard guidelines, and practice of communities in California. The policies and procedures were adopted by the City Council in 1984.

In 2004, the policies and procedures for the installation of speed humps were amended based on the speed hump policy criteria collected by staff from 15 jurisdictions throughout California and reviewed thoroughly by members of the Transportation Advisory Commission. The review also included an analysis of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) 1997 Guidelines for the Installation of Speed Humps. In both 2011 and 2020, the City Policies and Procedures were updated to allow for more accessibility to speed humps. The last update was adopted in 2020 to allow streets defined as "Access Streets - Residential" per the Pasadena Streets Types Plan to be included as a category where speed humps would be permitted. This revision allowed for the inclusion of seven additional street segments to be eligible for speed humps. In December 2022, ITE updated the Guidelines for the Installation of Speed Humps with a new Guide to Vertical Deflection Speed Reduction Techniques. The City of Pasadena Speed Hump Policies and Procedures continue to be consistent with the ITE guidelines.

The current City of Pasadena Speed Hump Policies and Procedures provides a list of 15 criteria that must be met for speed humps to be installed. For this document, we have separated the criteria into three categories, Physical Criteria, Operational Criteria, and Administrative Criteria.

Physical Criteria

1. Local Residential or Access Streets - Residential with one lane in each direction
2. 1,200 ft. of continuous distance between stop signs or a traffic signals. (600 ft. if segment closes a gap to make road continuous)
3. Less than 5% grade
4. On hilly/rolling streets, the eligible segment of the street shall meet the minimum distance requirements
5. Street must have adequate vertical and horizontal alignment and sight distances to accommodate speed humps.
6. Speed humps should not be installed on streets with horizontal curves with less than 300 feet centerline radius, and on streets with vertical curves with less than minimum safe stopping sight distance
7. Speed humps should generally be avoided where the drainage gutter or flow of water is in the center of the roadway

Operational Criteria

8. 25 MPH speed limit
9. Speeds of at least 33 MPH (85th Percentile - 8 miles over posted limit)
10. At least 1,000 vehicle trips per day and less than 4,000 vehicle trips per day
11. Street should not be a primary access route for emergency vehicles
12. Street should not be a truck route or a transit route
13. Should not be installed where a significant portion of traffic will be diverted to nearby residential or local streets

Administrative Criteria

14. If a neighborhood has gone thru a Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan (NTMP) process, the City shall not entertain any other NTMP measures including speed humps, until all of the recommendations from the NTMP process have been fully implemented, measured or evaluated
15. 67% approval of all households

The table below summarizes the historical changes over time which only a few changes have been made since the Speed Hump Policies and Procedures was first adopted by the City Council in 1984. Noteworthy changes occurred in 2004 when the City Council approved the elimination of Collector roads, increased the upper volume limit to 4,000 car trips per day, increased the minimum street length to 1,200 feet, and increased the resident approval to a true super majority of 67% of households.

	1984	2004	2011	2020
Car Trips per Day: Lower Limit	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Car Trips per Day: Upper Limit	3,000	***4,000***	4,000	4,000
Minimum Length	800 ft.	***1,200 ft.***	1,200 ft./***600 ft. if the segment closes a gap to make the road continuous***	1,200 ft./600 ft. if the segment closes a gap to make the road continuous
Classification	Local and Collector Residential	***Local Residential Only***	Local Residential Only	Local Residential ***and Access Streets Residential Only***
Vote	65% of total households	***67% of households***	67% of households	67% of households

Speed Humps vs Speed Tables

The current Speed Hump Policies and Procedures does not address speed tables. Speed tables and speed humps are both traffic calming devices, but they differ in their design and impact on vehicles. Speed tables are wider and flatter, with a flat top, while speed humps are narrower and rounded, with a curved profile. Vehicles typically need to slow down to 15-20 mph to cross comfortably. Speed tables are designed to allow vehicles to pass over them at a slightly higher speed of 20-30 mph.

During the summer of 2024, in an effort to expand DOT's current traffic calming toolbox, DOT began a pilot program using Speed Tables on N. Raymond Avenue between Washington Boulevard and the north city limit to study their effectiveness on controlling excessive speeds on a street that by its nature is not suitable for speed humps. DOT staff

will also pilot speed tables on Mountain Street to evaluate their effectiveness, expected to be installed in the fall of 2025. Should speed tables be determined to effective as a result of the pilot program, DOT staff would develop criteria specific to speed tables at that time.

NEXT STEPS

If approved by the City Council, the changes to the Speed Hump Policies and Procedures would be effective immediately.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The proposed action is consistent with the goals of the General Plan Mobility Element and also the goals of the Strategic Plan including:

- Enhance Livability
- Encourage walking, biking, and other alternatives to motor vehicles.

This project addresses the following two policies of the Mobility Element of the General Plan:

Policy 1.7 Design streets to achieve safe interaction for all modes of travel particularly for pedestrians and bicycle users.

Policy 1.11 Design Streets to reflect the mobility needs of the adjacent land use context to support healthy activities such as walking and bicycling

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in accordance with Title 14, Chapter 3, Article 19, Section 15061(b)(3), the Common Sense exemption, that CEQA only applies to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. The proposed action consists of a revision to the City's policies and procedures regarding the eligibility requirements for speed humps. The approval of such amended policies and procedures does not involve any physical changes and, therefore, there is no possibility that the action would have a significant effect on the environment. Any potential future project involving installation of speed humps would be subject to CEQA consideration at that time.

FISCAL IMPACT:

DOT staff incrementally funds the City's Capital Improvement Program under the Citywide Neighborhood Traffic Management Program for speed hump installation. Over time, this program has received funding from various sources, including the Gas Tax, General Fund, Traffic Reduction Fee, and grants. The department, on average, installs 8-10 speed humps per year, which is approximately two streets, at an estimated cost of $4,000 - $5,000 per speed hump. The recommended modifications to the Speed Hump Policies and Procedures would result in more streets being eligible based on traffic volumes and may result in more corridors being approved for speed humps due to the modification to the voting approval requirement. Once approved, speed humps would be installed as funding allows and the CIP budget for this program would be reviewed annually to determine the annual funding need.

Respectfully submitted,

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