

Residential Speed Control Device Program

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Residential Speed Control Devices¹ Program is to provide a consistent, fair and cost-effective process to evaluate requests for speed control devices from citizens in the unincorporated areas of San Mateo County. The purpose of a speed control device is to encourage a reduction in traffic speeds on residential streets, commensurate with the prima facie speed limit as provided in the California Vehicle Code, while preserving the intended efficiency of the road network for emergency response and routine travel.

The California Highway Patrol (CHP) has primary responsibility for enforcing the provisions of the California Vehicle Code on streets in the unincorporated areas of the County. The Department of Public Works considers speed control devices as traffic law enforcement tools. Speed control device installations require the approval of the CHP.

The Department of Public Works (DPW) will not recommend that speed control devices be installed on roads where the posted speed limit is 30 miles per hour (mph) or more.

Speed humps and speed dips are the most common types of speed control devices constructed or permitted within public rights of way in San Mateo County. Speed humps are typically 12 to 18 feet in length and encourage speeds within the prima facie speed limit (i.e. 25 mph maximum) to traverse them comfortably. Speed humps are recommended where the 85th percentile² speed on a street is at least 32 mph. Speed dips are typically surface drainage “valley gutters,” which primarily serve to channel stormwater runoff. Speed dips can also slow the speed of vehicles traversing them. Speed dips may be installed in lieu of speed humps where the 85th percentile speed on a street is at least 36 mph.

RESOURCES

The Department of Public Works will make available on its website traffic survey reports from surveys conducted commencing July 2004. Speed data and/or reports more than two (2) years old shall not be used to determine whether a street qualifies for speed control devices (see Procedures below).

¹ Throughout this document, the term “speed control device” is used to signify “speed hump,” “speed dip,” “speed lump” and “speed table.” Speed lumps, also called speed cushions, are modified speed humps intended to allow wide wheel-based emergency vehicles (e.g. fire engines) to pass without substantially reducing their speed. Speed tables are typically longer, flat-topped speed humps often used to increase pedestrian crosswalk visibility.

² The 85th percentile speed is the speed at and below which 85 percent of all vehicles traveled during the survey. 85th percentile speeds are considered the standard for traffic engineering practice.

PROCEDURES

1. Request (Notice of Interest)

Any citizen who owns property or resides on a residential street in the unincorporated area may initiate a request for a Residential Speed Control Device by completing a Residential Speed Control Devices Interest Form. The form will indicate the street, applicable cross streets, description of the problem and contact information.

The Redwood City or San Francisco Area Commanders of the California Highway Patrol, or the San Mateo County Sheriff may also initiate requests for Residential Speed Control Devices. Requests received directly from the CHP or Sheriff will not be subject to the Petition Process in Part 2 below.

2. Petition Process

The Department of Public Works will provide a standard form of petition to the citizen initiating the request. The petition will include:

- a) A map of the proposed Project Area as defined by the Department of Public Works;
- b) The names of the owners of the property adjacent to the road within the proposed Project Area as listed on the Assessor's roll;
- c) Situs addresses of parcels adjacent to the road;
- d) A statement that the petitioners understand that the County makes no guarantee that the installation of said speed control devices will reduce the speed of all traffic on the road to within the prima facie speed limit or to a speed that is satisfactory to the property owners;
- e) A statement that the petitioners have voluntarily contributed any administrative fees or other costs associated with the installation of the speed control devices; and
- f) A statement that the petitioners acknowledge the potential impact of speed control devices on emergency services response times.

A Neighborhood Project Coordinator and one alternate shall be identified on the petition form.

The Department of Public Works will notify all property owners and residents in the Project area that a request was received and that a form of petition has been provided to the requestor. The notification will include contact information for the Neighborhood Project Coordinator and a copy of these Procedures.

The petition must be signed by Property owners or residents that represent at least 51% of the property on the street. Any resident of a parcel listed on the petition shall be deemed authorized to sign the petition on behalf of that residential parcel (one signature per parcel). The Neighborhood Project Coordinator will certify the petition and deliver it to the Department of Public Works, and the Department of Public Works will verify the number and percent of signatures obtained.

3. Initial Review

The petition will qualify for prioritization as a Project if the road grade, alignment, sight distances and storm drainage features are suitable, as determined by the Department of Public Works; minimum Qualifying Criteria 1 and 2 are met, and at least one of the Supplemental Qualifying Criteria 3, 4 or 5 are satisfied:

Minimum Qualifying Criteria

1. Minimum 85th percentile speed of 32 mph
2. Approval by California Highway Patrol

Supplemental Qualifying Criteria

3. Minimum volume of 500 vehicles per day
4. Location within 1,000 feet walking distance of a school, senior citizen facility, facility for the disabled, park, community center or other site with significant pedestrian activity;
5. Unusual accident history (as defined by six or more vehicle property damage incidents or one vehicle related fatality within the prior three consecutive years. Property damage incidents due to parking, vehicle equipment, drug/alcohol and certain other causes clearly not solvable by traffic calming will not be counted).

Petitions that meet the Minimum Qualifying Criteria (1 and 2), but none of these Supplemental Qualifying Criteria 3 through 5, and where the road grade, alignment, sight distance and storm drainage features are suitable for the installation of speed control devices, may be included in the Neighborhood Funded Speed Control Device option (below) if requested by the petitioners.

4. Neighborhood Meeting

The Department of Public Works will schedule a community meeting to discuss the proposed Project. Notification of the meeting date, time and location will be mailed to all property owners and residents within the Project area.

5. Board of Supervisors Approval

Proposed Projects must be approved by the Board of Supervisors prior to commencing design and construction.

6. Notifications

The Department of Public Works will notify all property owners and residents within the Project area and within three hundred feet (300') of the Project area of the date, time and location of the Board of Supervisors meeting where the installation of the speed control devices is scheduled for consideration. Fire and law enforcement agencies, public works agencies in adjoining cities/towns, and community councils and homeowners associations, where applicable, will also be notified.

The Department of Public Works will also notify the same group of property owners and residents of the schedule for construction of speed control devices approved by the Board of Supervisors.

7. Fees

The Board of Supervisors has established an administrative fee to be paid for speed control devices requested by petition. Payment must be submitted in the form of cash or a single check, payable to the County of San Mateo, prior to construction of the speed control devices.

The administrative fee is currently \$400 per device (established October 2003 by Resolution No. 66308).

8. Design

The Department of Public Works will prepare a map showing locations and types of speed control devices. Speed control devices will be designed in conformance with the San Mateo County Department of Public Works Standard Drawings and Guidelines for the Design and Installation of Speed Control Devices (March 2005).

The design will consider the impacts to drainage, utilities, driveways, pedestrian and bicycle routes, and road maintenance considerations. The final design including locations and types of speed control devices shall be at the sole discretion of the Director of Public Works.

9. Construction

The Department of Public Works will select and manage the work of a contractor, or may employ its own forces to construct speed control devices.

10. Maintenance

The Department of Public Works will maintain speed control devices including signs and legends.

11. Removal

Speed control devices will not be removed unless the Board of Supervisors approves a Resolution directing their removal.

12. Monitoring

The Department of Public Works will conduct follow-up traffic monitoring (i.e. speed and volume surveys) a minimum of six (6) months after construction of speed control devices.

NEIGHBORHOOD FUNDED SPEED CONTROL DEVICES

Proposals that qualify under the procedures, but for which there will not be sufficient funds in the Department of Public Works budget to complete construction within the neighborhood's desired timeframe, or that meet the Minimum Qualifying Criteria but do not meet at least one of the Supplemental Qualifying Criteria, may qualify for Neighborhood Funded Speed Control Devices option. Neighborhoods must finance 100% of the estimated cost of constructing speed control devices and must pay the administrative fee per device as stated in Section 7 above. The neighborhood must deposit funds sufficient to cover the estimated cost of construction and the administrative fees in the form of a single check made payable to the County of San Mateo before design work commences.

Proposals for Neighborhood Funded Speed Control Devices are subject to all of the procedures listed above, including approval by the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors. Projects that are not first approved by the Board of Supervisors will not be constructed or permitted.

This option is available to expedite the construction of speed control devices that would otherwise be delayed due to program funding limitations. Proposals for Neighborhood Funded Speed Control Devices will not be prioritized over projects planned for completion using public funds.

Neighborhood Funded Speed Control Devices are subject to removal by the Department of Public Works in accordance with Section 11 above.

Program Budget

The Department of Public Works will, each year, recommend to the Board of Supervisors funding for Residential Speed Control Devices.

Should the anticipated cost of completing all requested Projects exceed the funding available, the Department of Public Works shall take into consideration the 85th percentile speeds, accident histories and the recommendations of the CHP in order to prioritize the outstanding requests.