



CITY OF PROVIDENCE
MAYOR BRETT P. SMILEY

GREEN AND COMPLETE STREETS ADVISORY COUNCIL

October 24, 2023

Natale D. Urso, PE, PTOE
Traffic Engineer, Public Works
700 Allens Ave. Providence, RI 02905

CC: Patricia Coyne-Fague, Director of Public Works
Courtney Hawkins, Chief Operating Officer

RE: Traffic calming policies

Dear Mr. Urso,

Thank you for discussing the proposed traffic calming procedure with the Green and Complete Streets Advisory Council over several meetings this summer and fall. After you shared the text of the proposed procedure with the Advisory Council in late August, we were able to discuss our recommendations in detail:

- The petition requirement should be completely removed from the policy. There is no feasible way to receive representative input from all residents and users of a section of street without biasing the process toward locations with the most time-privileged advocates. Resident requests should still be considered but should not serve as the sole factor in determining where traffic calming interventions are required.
- Proactive identification of high-speed and high-crash locations should be completed as the starting point of the traffic calming selection process, through citywide modeling of traffic conditions in coordination with the Department of Planning and Development. With this foundation of traffic data, following the procedures and thresholds identified in City Ordinance should be achievable.
- A reevaluation of speed reduction and traffic volume reduction techniques should be undertaken, drawing from what works in other cities with urban conditions and average speeds under 40 mph, and designs should be based on what techniques are effective in those contexts. Cost of different design solutions and public acceptance of necessary traffic calming measures should be secondary to the location and countermeasure selection process. We believe the cost-benefit analyses used by the City to this point may be based on data that is outdated and collected in locations fundamentally different from most Providence streets.

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

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- For temporary installations to test effectiveness, the temporary measures installed should be temporary versions of the speed reduction technique planned for permanent installation, not always speed lumps.
- Traffic studies of the temporary conditions should be completed after at least one month of installation to ensure drivers have adjusted to the new design and should not impede the City's ability to meet the deadlines identified in the Ordinance. Conducting baseline counts on the surrounding streets with which to compare the studies during the trial installation of temporary traffic calming measures is also recommended.
- Measures to ensure safe speeds should not be delayed without a robust reason, and we are concerned that the proposed requirement for "public support" judged based on neighborhood meetings will not be clear or representative enough to provide such a reason. Therefore, we recommend the neighborhood meeting requirement be removed from the policy.
- If a public meeting is desired by the City for the public to be able to comment on the proposed designs, that public meeting should be held as an agenda item during a meeting of the Green and Complete Streets Advisory Council, with clear criteria for what level of support at such a meeting is sufficient to move forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this procedure, and we look forward to discussing more with you at future meetings of the Advisory Council,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rosie Jaswal".

Rosie Jaswal

Chair, Green and Complete Streets Advisory Council

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