



# City Council Report

**Date:** January 11, 2018  
**To:** City Council  
**Through:** Karolyn Kent, Assistant City Manager  
**From:** RJ Zeder, Transportation Director  
Sabine Ellis, City Traffic Engineer  
**Subject:** Revisions to the Speed Hump Policy

## Purpose and Recommendation

The purpose of this report is to document the current City of Mesa speed hump and cushion process, provide details on the speed hump policy (Policy), and detail the proposed recommendations of the Sustainability and Transportation Committee.

Based on the Sustainability and Transportation Committee's recommendations, staff recommends the following modifications to the Policy:

1. Increase survey area to include all properties within 300 feet of the subject street for speed humps and speed cushions
2. Provide an appeal process in the form of a second neighborhood survey including all properties located over 300 and within 600 feet of the subject street
3. Use the same process for speed humps and speed cushions

Refer to Appendix A for the current Policy with the proposed changes.

## Background

In December of 1997, Mesa formally adopted a Policy. At that time, the neighborhood survey, which is circulated by a neighborhood liaison, included properties adjacent to the subject street and required a 70% approval rate. In addition, staff's practice had been to include properties located along cul-de-sacs or looping streets intersecting that street with no other way out of the neighborhood. Over the years, the Policy was revised to also include properties within 300 feet on each side street, based on the input from residents, City Management, and the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB).

Initially, Mesa's Policy only included speed humps, which could not be used on streets that are dedicated as fire routes. Fire routes are typically located along collector streets which serve as a connection between the arterial and local neighborhood streets. Collector streets are still low-speed streets, but include more users such as neighborhood residents, other Mesa residents, school traffic, and the Fire Department.

Staff then developed speed cushions, which can be used on such collector streets and

allow fire trucks to traverse them without slowing down as much as for speed humps. Because collector streets affect road users within a larger area than local streets, the Policy requires a 2-week public comments phase and approval of the Transportation Advisory Board to install speed cushions. Under the current policy, speed humps do not require additional public outreach, since the majority of users of the subject street are included in the neighborhood survey.

## **Discussion**

Based on citizens' requests and at the direction of City Management, this report was brought to the Sustainability and Transportation Committee to discuss the survey process and public outreach that is currently involved with the approval of speed humps or cushions.

In preparation for the Sustainability and Transportation Committee meeting, staff reviewed Mesa's Policy against other municipalities in the valley: Phoenix, Tempe, Scottsdale, Chandler, Glendale, Gilbert, and Peoria. Refer to Appendix B for two tables comparing Mesa's requirements with those of the other agencies. Table 1 shows the engineering process, including which type of streets are eligible, what the maximum allowable speed limit is, and speed criteria to qualify for speed humps or cushions. Table 2 shows the public process and provides details such as the required support by the neighborhood, which properties are to be surveyed, and if a wider community support is sought.

Who is deemed affected by the installation of speed humps or cushions is the main point of contention when the current Policy is questioned. The neighborhood survey area is a divisive subject between those who live directly on the street and drivers who use the street but live nearby. Residents adjacent to the street where the speeding occurs experience it every day and are affected by drivers' behavior when it comes to theirs and their family's safety. Those who utilize the street to get to their home, work, school, etc., are affected by it due to concerns with perceived damage to their vehicles, increased emergency response times, and possible diversion of traffic to alternate routes within the neighborhood. Because of these two different mindsets, the farther someone lives from the subject street, the less the likelihood of them agreeing with speed humps or cushions. Historically more weight has been given to the desires of the residents of a street in implementing traffic calming while still leaving the street available to all drivers. What must be carefully considered when increasing the survey area is striking a balance between the desires of those that live on the subject street and those that use the street but live elsewhere. Adding more properties to the neighborhood survey not only means that the neighborhood liaison circulating the survey must spend more time and effort to collect the necessary signatures, but it also makes reaching the 70% approval rate more difficult.

Based on the information provided in this report, the Sustainability and Transportation Committee recommended the following changes to Mesa's Speed Hump Policy:

#### Increase survey area for the neighborhood acceptance survey

Currently, only the properties located on the subject street and those within 300 feet of a side street are included (as well as properties whose only access is via the subject street, but this will remain the same).

The proposal is to include all properties within 300 feet of the subject street. This modification generally increases the initial number of properties that need to be surveyed by the neighborhood liaison by 15% to 25%.

#### Provide an appeal process in form of a neighborhood denial survey

Currently no formal appeal process exists once the TAB has voted on a motion.

The secondarily affected properties include all properties located over 300 and within 600 feet of the subject street. The number of properties in this area is typically similar to the number of properties surveyed as part of the neighborhood acceptance survey, which means the total number of properties to be surveyed could increase by as much as 100%.

Refer to Appendix C for a diagram of the original survey area (Figure 1) and the proposed survey area (Figure 2).

#### Use the same process for speed humps and speed cushions

Speed humps on local streets have not been subject to a public comment phase or TAB approval because most users of the subject street are already included in the initial neighborhood survey.

For the sake of consistency and to provide an opportunity for others to voice their opinion, the 2-week public comment period and approval by the TAB have been added to the speed hump process.

### **Alternatives**

If the City Council chooses not to approve this policy, staff would recommend continuing the use of the current policy.

### **Coordination**

The Sustainability and Transportation Committee reviewed the proposed policy at their November 2, 2017 meeting, and provided the abovementioned recommendations.

### **Fiscal Impact**

Modifying the public process for speed humps and cushions would not have any direct fiscal impact. However, if it becomes too difficult for neighborhoods to meet the

warranting criteria, the City may have to use other, potentially more costly or less effective traffic calming measures to address speeding concerns.