



Staff Reports

File #: 171-2020, **Version:** 1

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council

From: Julie Lucido, Public Works Director

Prepared By: Tim Wood, Senior Civil Engineer

TITLE:

Slow Streets Program: A Proposal from the Napa County Bicycle Coalition

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Receive a report from staff regarding the infeasibility of implementing the proposed Slow Streets Program due the City's fiscal emergency and the resources that would be necessary to further evaluate, develop and implement the program.

DISCUSSION:

The City received a memorandum from the Napa County Bicycle Coalition titled "Adoption of a Slow Streets Program during COVID-19." The memorandum requested the City of Napa and other jurisdictions adopt a Slow Streets Program to close selected public streets to through traffic to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists in the street during the COVID-19 Shelter at Home and social distancing requirements.

The memorandum is attached and specifically proposes the City close 11 segments of streets throughout the City. These include closures of the following streets to through traffic: Vine Hill, Sierra, Young, West Pueblo, Central/Yajome, Brown, East, Kilburn, Franklin, Kent/Pickwick, and Shetler. The concept proposed is to close these streets to through traffic to accommodate the use of the street by pedestrians and bicyclists. Traffic with a destination within the closure would be allowed to drive around barricades to enter the area. The proposal references the reduction in traffic experienced during the early stages of the COVID-19 Shelter at Home Order and requests the implementation of the Slow Streets Program as the County and State move through the Phase 2 re-opening stage.

In addition to the request from the Napa County Bicycle Coalition to initiate this new program, the City has received multiple inquiries and public comments during City Council meetings pertaining to the proposed Slow Streets Program. At the May 19th City Council meeting, the Mayor directed the Public Works Director to agendize a discussion of the proposal.

The State is now entering Phase 3 of the re-opening process from the COVID-19 Shelter at Home requirements and traffic within the City has continued to increase as more businesses and facilities re-open to employees and the public. The timing for the temporary closures of the streets during the initial stage of re-opening has passed and a program of this nature would require significant staff resources to evaluate, develop and implement. Some of the considerations that would require

analysis to determine viability of the program include developing criteria for appropriate streets/locations; impacts to traffic circulation, maintaining emergency and transit routes; community concerns regarding detours and increased traffic on surrounding streets; communication and outreach; and defining a limited duration of the program to ensure compliance with the California Vehicle Code Section 21101 which imposes substantial limits on the City authority to “close” a City street.

Discussing a new program would not be prudent without considering the current state of the City’s budget. Due to the impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, the City declared a fiscal emergency and is facing the worst financial position in memory. The resources to support a new program affecting neighborhoods throughout the City are not available. Currently, 15% of the positions in the Public Works Department are vacant and are planned to remain unfilled for the fiscal year. Existing staffing is focused on core programs and priority projects such as street paving, sidewalk repair, engineering for the signal synchronization project, and private development project processing. Developing the Slow Streets Program for Napa cannot be accommodated with the current workload and available resources.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS:

The financial impacts of implementing a “Slow Streets Program” as proposed are unknown. Depending on the scale of the project, there will be an initial cost of labor to develop the program; prepare and conduct community outreach; and produce and install. There will also be a continuous cost for staff to monitor the signs, determine their effectiveness and enforcement.

CEQA:

The Public Works Director has determined that the Recommended Action described in this Agenda Report is not subject to CEQA, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c).

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:

ATCH 1 - Napa County Bicycle Coalition memo (May 14, 2020)

NOTIFICATION:

None.