

Legislation Text

File #: 23-1750, **Version:** 1

PRESENTER:

Carly Farmer, Engineer

SUBJECT:

Presentation and discussion on alternative traffic calming measures on Lazy Trail, E Zink Street, and Benelli Drive.

DEPARTMENT: Transportation and Capital Improvements

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: 2, 5, 6

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Over the past year, city staff has received several requests for speed humps and lowered speed limits due to safety concerns about speeding vehicles in residential areas. With each request, the volume and/or speed criteria were not met. Following meetings with both the Transportation and Traffic Advisory Board and City Council where each request was denied, staff has been tasked with evaluating each case for traffic calming alternatives such as pavement markings and signs. These alternatives are then to be presented to the Transportation and Traffic Advisory Board and City Council again for action. Below is a summary and timeline of each request, and each traffic calming layout is included in the agenda packet.

A request was submitted for the installation of speed humps on Lazy Trail between Sunrise and Hideaway Circle. Lazy Trail is a residential street with an assumed speed limit of 30 mph and is classified as a minor collector on the 2012 City of New Braunfels Thoroughfare Plan. The request was evaluated based on petition, operational and geometric requirements established in the City of New Braunfels Speed Hump Policy approved in 1999. A previous speed hump request with a completed petition was evaluated in 2019 and did not meet the criteria in the Speed Hump Policy. The submitted petition met the two-thirds requirement. Traffic data collected showed the volume and speed requirements were not met, with a volume of 747 vehicles per day (vpd) and an 85th percentile speed of 29 miles per hour (mph). Staff did not recommend approval of the speed humps but recognize that the street is a popular cut-through route between McQueeney Road and Walnut Avenue, and the roadway layout causes cut-through drivers to make several turning movements to get from one main street to the other. At their May 2023 meeting, the Transportation and Traffic Advisory Board recommended approval of the speed humps. City Council heard the request at their June 12, 2023, meeting, where the request died for lack of a motion. City Council directed staff to investigate traffic alternatives. City staff has drafted a pavement marking layout for Lazy Trail and for Sunshadow Drive approaching Lazy Trail which includes one travel lane in each direction with a buffer and on-street parking on both sides of the street.

A request was submitted for the installation of speed humps on E Zink Street from N Seguin Avenue to the eastern intersection with N Market Avenue. E Zink Street is a local street in a residential and commercial area with an assumed speed limit of 30 mph. Both sides of E Zink Street are within Parking by Permit Area H,

which is in effect year-round from 8 AM to 8 PM daily. The request was evaluated based on petition, operational and geometric requirements established in the City of New Braunfels Speed Hump Policy approved in 1999. The submitted petition met the two-thirds requirement. Traffic data collected showed the volume requirement was met, but the speed requirement was not with the 85th percentile speed being only 24 mph. Staff did not recommend approval of the speed humps, but the high volume of 1,384 vpd on E Zink Street surpasses the 1,000 vpd maximum design volume for a local residential street due to high tourist traffic in the summer. At their October 2023 meeting, the Transportation and Traffic Advisory Board recommended that staff investigate alternatives for traffic calming on E Zink Street. City Council will hear the speed hump request on January 8, 2024. City staff has drafted a pavement marking layout for E Zink Street should City Council deny the speed hump request and direct staff to evaluate alternative traffic calming measures. The pavement marking layout includes one travel lane in each direction with a buffer and on-street parking on both sides of the street.

A request was submitted to lower the speed limit within the White Wing subdivision from the existing posted 30 mph to 25 mph. White Wing is a subdivision located off the south side of Klein Road between S Walnut Avenue and FM 725. Speed limits on Texas roads, including city streets, are set by statute in Section 545.352 of the Texas Transportation Code. The current speed limit on most city residential streets is 30 mph. Site investigation and traffic data collection were conducted for Benelli Drive within the White Wing subdivision. The roadside environment includes single-family residences along each local road with on-street parking available. There is some pedestrian activity within the subdivision, with sidewalks located on both sides of each street. A community playground was recently constructed along Benelli Drive near the intersection with Ruger Path. Based on the site investigation and collected speed data, staff did not recommend lowering the speed limit because the 85th percentile speed (25 mph) is below the posted speed limit and the volume of 332 vpd is well within acceptable volumes for a residential street. Staff did support the installation of playground warning signs and a crosswalk across Benelli Drive at Citori Path to address the concerns about pedestrians crossing to and from the playground. At their November 2023 meeting, the Transportation and Traffic Advisory Board recommended staff include additional traffic calming measures such as an additional crosswalk at Ruger Path and center line and edge line pavement markings for Benelli Drive. City Council heard the request to lower the speed limit at their December 11, 2023 meeting, where the request was denied, and staff was directed to investigate the feasibility of the traffic calming recommendations made by the Transportation and Traffic Advisory Board. City staff has drafted layouts for both the staff-recommended alternatives and those recommended by the Transportation and Traffic Advisory Board.

The City of New Braunfels is in the process of creating its Street Safety Action Plan. This plan will make recommendations for new policies, programs, and projects to achieve the goal of ending severe and fatal roadway crashes on the City of New Braunfels Roads. Part of this initiative will be recommendations on updates to the speed hump policy, default speed limits in residential areas, and additional traffic calming measures with objective evaluation criteria that city staff can implement when investigating speeding and safety concerns on residential streets.

ISSUE:

City Council has directed staff to investigate traffic calming alternatives for traffic requests that do not meet speed hump policy criteria or warrant reduced speed limits.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Public Works Department has \$54,000 in the approved FY 2024 Budget for new speed hump and associated curb and sign installation. Other traffic calming measures, such as new pavement markings, signs, curb ramps, etc., may be funded; however, the budget is limited and does not include maintenance costs.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff does not recommend approval of alternative traffic calming measures for Lazy Trail, E Zink Street, or Benelli Drive, as the traffic data collected does not reflect safety issues due to speeding. Staff recommends deferring the decision to install alternative traffic calming measures on streets that do not meet current evaluation criteria until consistent traffic calming measure evaluation procedures and installation and ongoing maintenance funding are developed through the City of New Braunfels Street Safety Action Plan.