
SALT LAKE CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: August 8, 2003

SUBJECT: Traffic Management Program Performance Audit

AFFECTED COUNCIL DISTRICTS: Citywide

STAFF REPORT BY: Michael Sears, Budget & Policy Analyst

ADMINISTRATIVE DEPT.

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KEY ELEMENTS

The Administration has provided responses to the Traffic Management Program performance audit and program modifications in response to the City Council request for a program review prior to expenditure of funds on the program this fiscal year.

At the August 7, 2003 Council Meeting, City Council Members indicated that they will likely want to hold a public hearing on traffic calming at the September 9, 2003 meeting.

KEY CONCEPTS

The following are comments by Council Members about the traffic calming program that they would like to discuss during the briefing on August 12 and have available for public comment for the hearing on September 9, 2003.

- Should the City allow privately funded traffic control measures in the public way?
- How might the Council encourage the Transportation Division to continue working with neighborhoods to create their own traffic calming solutions? Currently, the process begins with a neighborhood meeting where the residents are invited to participate in a neighborhood traffic calming committee (NTCC). The NTCC works closely with the Transportation Division to design a traffic calming plan for a particular street. A survey is sent to street residents and property owners to establish whether there is sufficient support for the plan. If so, the Transportation Division initiates a trial or test during which residents and property owners are surveyed again to verify their support of permanent measures.
- Should impacts on surrounding streets be factored into the criteria system?
- Is an expanded notification process beyond the current practice (notification is made to residents living on the street) necessary?

- Would it be helpful to include as part of the program a presentation before the local community council on the proposed traffic calming devices before the City begins installation?
- Should the City consider the use of increased traffic enforcement to augment the traffic calming measures employed by the City? The City could increase the use of traffic patrol officers in heavily traveled areas or neighborhood areas that have a demonstrated traffic speed problem.
- Should the Council enhance speeding fines? The Council could, by ordinance, establish stricter fines for speeding on neighborhood streets. Signage and a public campaign could be incorporated into the ordinance revision to allow for greater visibility of the differing fines on neighborhood streets.
- Should the City pursue the use of devices such as PhotoCop (by State statute requires the presence of a peace officer)?
- Should the City increase the amount of speed boards that City owns? (The Council would need to provide additional resources to enable the Administration to deploy them with greater frequency in areas requesting traffic relief.)
- Could neighborhood design guidelines be implemented to encourage modifications that increase pedestrian activity and enhance features that create a neighborhood scale? These approaches sometimes have a traffic calming effect.
- The Fire Department has indicated that, due to the enhanced safety provided by speed bumps, they do not oppose their installation and they have confirmed that speed bumps do not create an unmanageable response time problem. Because this comes up so frequently, the City Council may wish to clarify whether speed bumps influence emergency response times and impact passengers in need of medical assistance. The Council may also wish to clarify whether speed bumps implemented on street slopes impact snow removal efficiency and are speed bumps subject to ice build up during the winter months.
- Should the Administration be encouraged to pursue a system to track the effectiveness of a traffic calming device after it has been implemented for a specified period?
- Should the Administration be asked to clarify how data is analyzed in relation to neighborhood traffic? The Council receives questions about whether traffic speed and volume are based upon the overall percentage of increased traffic on the street or based upon data comparisons from other areas of the City.

➤ **AUDIT ANALYSIS**

The City Council contracted with Deloitte & Touche to conduct performance audits on several operating programs and functions within Salt Lake City municipal government. The audit of the Traffic Management Program was conducted with direction received from the City Council.

The scope of the audit included:

- Comparing the City's traffic calming measures to best practices

- Evaluation of policies, procedures and service performance of the program
- Evaluation of the street selection process
- Determination of construction timing once the street is selected
- Assessment of the City's use of creative traffic calming solutions
- Evaluation of the notification procedures
- Determination of program funding

According to the auditors the program appeared to be innovative and no significant deficiencies were noted. It appeared to the auditors that the desired results for the program were generally being achieved and that the program was consistent with the comparison cities. The City Council has received comment about the number of cities used as comparison. Data on three comparison cities was included in the audit. **The Council may want to specify the minimum number of comparison cities as further audits are contracted for and audits are performed. While including more comparison city information may increase the cost of the audits, it will very likely enhance the value of the information provided.**

The Administration has provided management responses to each of the observations in the audit. They are included in the final version that was printed on April 11, 2003. The Administration has also supplied additional responses in the transmittal dated July 23, 2003.

The observations and recommendations from the auditors are summarized below.

1. Compare the City's traffic calming measure to industry best practices.

The traffic calming measures employed by Salt Lake City were predominantly the same as those employed in comparable cities and best practices. The one possible consideration for the City was the possible adoption of colored bike lanes in the Traffic Management Program toolkit.

The Transportation Division notes that it is monitoring the use of special dyes in the road surfaces and also the different bicycle lane paints. Both options are expensive, but when the material price reduces and the products prove to be durable the Division is willing to add this feature to the Traffic Management Program toolkit.

2. Evaluate policies, procedures and service performance of the Traffic Management Program.

The Traffic Management Program appears to be effective. The process involves the community and the service provided to the stakeholders in the program is also effective. The resources allocated to the program are fully managed and the project completion time is faster than the comparison cities. It was noted that Salt Lake City does not allow private funding for traffic calming measures. The auditors recommended that the City enable private funding for projects.

The Transportation Division noted that it is following the direction of the City Council and not including privately funded projects. Concern about staff allocation and prioritizing private and publicly funded projects is expressed.

3. Evaluate the process of how streets are selected and prioritized for inclusion in the Traffic Calming Program.

The auditors reported that minor variations existed between Salt Lake City's Eligibility Point and Ranking System Formula and the ranking systems of Portland, Seattle and Vancouver. The auditors recommended increasing the number of available points in the eligibility point and ranking system formula by expanding the pedestrian generator category, including points for vehicles traveling at a high rate of speed, and incorporating accident information.

Information regarding program effectiveness and neighborhood satisfaction was not gathered by the Salt Lake City Traffic Management Program. The auditors recommended implementing a feedback process.

The Administration has responded that the impact to pedestrians have been reasonable addressed but that they will review the benefits of additional emphasis of pedestrian generators. They also note that data in the other categories is not readily available. **The Council might want to review the data collection and reporting capabilities of the Police Department to see if additional resources are needed.**

4. Determine how long it takes for traffic calming measures to be put in place once a street is selected.

The auditors summarized the data on construction and testing that was provided by the Administration. The auditors did not make any recommendations for this item.

The Administration points out in its response that traffic calming plans are now being completed in a significantly shorter time frame than those done during the audit period.

5. Assess the City's use of creative solutions in addition to the traditional speed bumps and humps (e.g., what types of traffic calming measures are utilized or could be by the City).

The Traffic Management Program appears to focus on speed bumps. The auditors recommended that the City consider utilizing more traffic circles.

The Administration notes that the residents in the traffic calming program favor the traffic humps and tables over other program measures. The Administration indicates that the humps and tables are the most effective traffic calming solutions, but also the most "punitive" to drivers.

6. Evaluate the procedures used to identify and notify residents of proposed traffic calming measures.

Notification policies and procedures were not clearly stated. The auditors recommended developing a policy and procedure to identify and notify residents, property owners and other stakeholders of future traffic calming projects.

The Administration agrees that the notification portion of the process needs to be more detailed. They proposed several additional enhancements after speaking with City Council Members and amongst themselves.

7. Determine the adequacy of funding of the Traffic Management Program.

The audit concluded that the program has sufficient funding for current operating methods. If the scope of the project were to change the funding would have to change accordingly. The

Council will need to allocate funding in future fiscal years for the continued operation of the program.

The Administration agrees that the funding is adequate but that any changes to the program will require changes to the budget appropriation.

➤ **PROGRAM ANALYSIS REQUESTED BY THE COUNCIL**

On June 24, 2003 the City Council approved the fiscal year 2003-2004 budget with the condition that a full report on the traffic calming measures is provided to the Council before further funds were spent on that program. In effect this created what has been referred to as a “moratorium” on the traffic calming program. The motion included specific program criteria that the Administration was to respond to during the briefing on the performance audit. The briefing was to address the following criteria:

1. A notification plan for the proposed traffic calming measures

The Administration details its notification plan and points out in the response that it is making changes to the program documentation and traffic calming signage.

2. Impacts on surrounding streets

The Administration has responded that the notification process improvements will insure that potential impacts are identified and data collection will help determine how large the project area should be.

3. Implementation of a “toolbox” of traffic calming measures

The Administration is in agreement with this recommendation. The transportation office may require certain measures to be included in a traffic calming plan to make it successful.

4. Review to assure ADA ramp and sidewalk assess and coordination among City departments

All traffic calming projects are currently reviewed by the Engineering Division of the City. The initial review of the program involved all City departments and focused on ensuring that the proposed measures do not affect ADA ramp and sidewalk access and that additional unexpected expenses are not incurred as a result of the placement of the traffic calming measures.

5. Traffic impact determination with regard to community destinations such as universities and hospitals

The Administration is working to insure that the proposed plan does not affect the larger traffic concerns of the area. It is the intent of the traffic calming program to slow down traffic, not to divert it to other streets or neighborhoods.

➤ **BUDGET RELATED FACTS**

The City Council funds the operation of the Traffic Calming program in the Capital Improvement Program. Staff support for the program is budgeted for and supervised by the Community and Economic Development Department, Transportation Division. Funding for the

construction and installation of traffic control devices has been dependent on the amount of remaining funds in the traffic calming cost centers. There is currently about \$300,000 in remaining appropriation.

During the fiscal year 2003-2004 budget process the Administration did not recommend funding for the program. If the moratorium on the program is lifted and construction is allowed to proceed the program will need additional funds in future fiscal years. The remaining appropriation should be sufficient to complete projects planned for fiscal year 2003-2004.

If concerns still exist in the future, the Council may wish to make any appropriations to this program contingent on use of a variety of traffic calming measures and demonstrated consideration of traffic impacts on surrounding streets and on surrounding neighbor's receiving notification of the proposed traffic calming implementation.

Should the Council elect to support the allowance of private funding for traffic calming, there would be a significant workload increase in the Transportation Division. This would need to be looked at from a budget standpoint, to ensure that all costs are covered by the programs that are requested with private funding and it would need to be looked at from a policy point of view to determine whether the projects funded with the general fund and the private parties receive equal or differing priority status.

➤ **BACKGROUND**

The following is information on the Traffic Management Program. This information is contained in the performance audit that was prepared by Deloitte & Touche and was provided to the Council for the Capital Improvement Program briefings in May and June of 2003. This information was taken directly from the audit findings booklet and the figures and dollar amounts are for the later calendar year 2002 period. The figures and dollar amounts have not been updated to reflect the current state of the program.

"To date, the program has received \$1,500,000 in CIP funds from the City Council. To date, \$562,000 has been spent on construction; approximately \$238,000 has been spent for such items as testing equipment, speed boards, neighborhood mailings, supplies, temporary employees, Traffic Calming seminars and the Pace Car Program. An amount of \$52,300 is owed for the installation of the testing equipment. This currently leaves \$647,700 in the program. Salary expenses are allocated in the Division of Transportation budget. Currently, the program is staffed with one Traffic Calming Coordinator. A graduate student intern is assisting the Traffic Management Program on a part-time basis. Part-time or other assistance is utilized on an as needed basis."

"There have been approximately 285 requests for traffic calming made to the Division of Transportation. To date, the program has completed 32 traffic calming projects and 3 others are in varying stages of the plan design and implementation process. Of the 32 completed projects, 24 resulted in the construction of traffic calming devices and 8 resulted in the closure of the project without the installation of any traffic calming devices. The causes of project completion without device construction are generally the result of neighborhoods deciding that they no longer want the devices, and/or

neighborhoods unable to reach a consensus on proposed measures. There are approximately 105 eligible streets in the project queue awaiting traffic calming measures. Over 145 streets have been evaluated and deemed ineligible because they did not meet the threshold necessary to implement traffic calming measures. Twenty-one streets are scheduled for an initial traffic calming eligibility study. The Traffic Management Program receives approximately 20 telephone and/or email inquiries per week. Personnel respond to a variety of inquiries, ranging from general public information inquiries to information requests from other traffic calming departments. TMP receives 1-2 formal petitions each month from neighborhoods wishing to enter the Program.”

Contained below is a list of streets that the Traffic Management Program is currently working with.

- 600 South between 900 East and 1300 East – being done in conjunction with an Engineering reconstruction project.
- 1300 South, Glendale to Montgomery Street – being done in conjunction with an Engineering reconstruction project.
- 11th Ave B Street to I Street – cost is estimated to be approximately \$40,000
- 1500 East, 1700 South to 2100 South – cost is estimated to be approximately \$70,000.
- 600 West, North Temple to 600 North – cost is estimated to be approximately \$80,000.
- 1700 East, 1700 South to 2100 South – Plan is not yet developed.
- 1900 East, 1700 South to 2100 South – Plan is not yet developed.
- Imperial Street, 2700 South to 3000 South – Plan is not yet developed.
- Bonneville Drive, between St. Mary’s and Oak Hills – under review for construction.

Of the four existing Traffic Calming cost centers, three contain unencumbered cash and appropriations.

Traffic Calming Cost Centers with Cash and Appropriation Remaining			
	Cost Center	Remaining Appropriation	Remaining Cash
Traffic Calming	83-99014	\$2,073	\$2,073
Traffic Calming	83-00014	\$45,461	\$45,550
Traffic Calming	83-03014	\$249,912	\$249,912
Total Remaining		\$297,446	\$297,535

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