Public Request Regarding Traffic Safety Concerns

There is a variety of traffic safety concerns, particularly in residential neighborhoods that stem from increased traffic volume and higher speeds. The best solutions for resolving traffic safety concerns often come from effective partnership among residents, law enforcement, school officials, traffic engineers, and City representatives. The process involves:

- **Request/Petition** - A written request/petition for residents or community groups.
- **Evaluation** - Traffic studies including field reviews, data analysis, preliminary recommendations, and design.
- **Response** - A response from the City to the resident or community group explaining the results and to discuss solutions.
- **Implementation** - Installation and implementation.
- **Review** - Follow-up performance review.

The following is additional information for the above process:

Request/Petition

The City is committed to working together with the community to identify traffic safety concerns and implement appropriate and effective traffic control devices. A resident or community group can submit a request/petition to the City to evaluate a traffic safety concern through the City's website www.beaumontca.gov in three different ways:

  - Under the "How do I…" heading, then select the "Public Service Request" option. Once completed, the request is sent directly to Public Works.
  - Through the "Report a Concern" icon on the City's home page.
  - Through the Beaumont Police Department page under "Traffic & Parking Concerns."

The request must be in writing, however, Public Works is available to discuss the concern and answer questions at (951) 769-8522. The request is processed in order of receipt. City staff is continually processing requests and collecting field data. Based on staff level, equipment, and request volume, the request should be evaluated within 2 months or less.

Evaluation

The request will receive an initial evaluation to determine the significance of the request and potential measures. Some of the measures may include:

- Enforcement,
- Traffic signs and markings,
- Stop signs,
- Traffic signals, and
- Traffic signal modifications (e.g., timing, protected movements, etc.)

The consistent application of traffic control devices or measures is essential in maintaining traffic safety. Any given measure for the control of traffic should have the same meaning and require the same action on the part of motorist regardless of where it is encountered. The California Penal Code (CPC), the California Vehicle Code (CVC), and the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA MUTCD) govern how the City implements traffic control devices and measures. Subsequently, each traffic control device has specific requirements, warrants, and guidelines that must be met for the respective device to be considered.

The following is a brief explanation of the criteria for the listed measures and how they are evaluated:

Enforcement

Speeding laws and other vehicle operation laws are enforced by the Beaumont Police Department (BPD). Public Works may assist BPD by collecting field data including: 85th percentile speed, traffic speed statistics, and times where peak violations occur.

All enforcement related measures are resolved exclusively by BPD.

Traffic Signs and Markings

Speed limit signs remind the motorist to drive within the established speed limit. Unnecessary signs often confuse and annoy drivers and tend to foster lack of adherence for other appropriate traffic signs. Well-placed signs in accordance with CA MUTCD criteria can be highly effective in reducing speeds and increasing traffic safety.

The CVC sets the following speed limits:

- 15 mph in alleys, at blind intersections, and blind railroad crossings; and
- 25 mph in residential and business districts, school zones, playground areas when children are present, and at senior citizen facilitiesThese speed limits may be posted or unposted.

Speed limits may also be established by an engineering and traffic survey. This survey determines an appropriate speed limit considering factors such as the type of adjacent development, pedestrian and bicycle activity, roadside conditions, reported collision history, and the prevailing speed of traffic. The prevailing speed is that speed which 85 percent of the motorists are traveling at or below. The prevailing speed is utilized as a reference to establish speed limits based on the concept that most motorists can be relied upon to drive at a reasonable speed. Studies have shown that setting arbitrarily low speed limits results in wholesale violations and does not necessarily result in lower driving speeds.

City staff performs the engineering and traffic survey by installing radar at the location of concern and collecting a minimum of 24-hours of traffic data. The data is analyzed by a registered civil engineer to determine the 85th percentile.

Stop Signs

Stop signs are not intended to reduce speeding. Generally, stop signs are installed at intersections where conflicting traffic volumes are high enough to require control, or where there is a high incidence of collisions correctable by a stop.

Stop signs help drivers and pedestrians establish right-of-way at intersections. The justification for stop sign installation is determined by the CA MUTCD "warrants," or guidelines. These warrants consider:

- The number of vehicles and pedestrians entering the intersection during a substantial part of the day,
- The prevailing speed of traffic,
- The amount of time traffic must wait to enter the intersection, including the availability of safe crossing opportunities, and
- Collision patterns susceptible of correction by stop control.

Stop signs installed at locations that do not satisfy the above warrants may produce negative consequences such as:

- Unnecessary traffic congestion and delay,
- Motorist frustration and the temptation to not completely stop or disobey the stop signs,
- An increase in the potential for rear-end collisions,
- Added noise and pollution for nearby residents as vehicles stop and accelerate, and
- An intersection that previously appeared "not busy," may now look like a major intersection.

Public works staff evaluates the warrants by installing radar at multiple locations around the primary location of concern and collects a minimum of 24-hours of traffic data at each location. Since the warrants require multiple locations, the field data collection occurs over a five-to-ten-day duration. The data is analyzed by a registered civil engineer against the warrants to determine if the primary location “meets warrants” or “does not meet warrants”.

Traffic Signals

Traffic signals are not intended to reduce speeding. Generally, traffic signals are installed at intersections where conflicting traffic volumes are high enough to require control, or where there is a high incidence of collisions correctable by signalization. Traffic signals provide for the orderly movement of vehicles and pedestrians by:

- Increasing the traffic handling capacity of the intersection,
- Reducing the frequency of certain types of accidents, especially the right angle type (broadside),
- Providing for the efficient and orderly movement of traffic, and
- Providing for minor street traffic to enter or cross the major street with less delay or risk of accidents.

The justification for installing traffic signals is based on CA MUTCD “warrants,” or guidelines, and considers factors such as:

- The number of vehicles and pedestrian entering the intersection during a substantial part of the day,

- The prevailing speed of traffic,
- Schools in the vicinity,
- The amount of time traffic must wait to enter the intersection, including the availability of safe crossing opportunities, and
- Any accident patterns susceptible of correction by traffic signals.

City staff evaluates the warrants by installing radar at multiple locations around the primary location in question and collects a minimum of 24-hours of traffic data at each location. Since the warrants require multiple locations, the field data collection occurs over a five-to-ten-day duration. The data is analyzed by a registered civil engineer against the warrants to determine if the primary location "meets warrants" or "does not meet warrants".

Traffic Signal Modification

Traffic signal modification uses the same warrants and evaluation as traffic signals.

Response

The City will contact the resident or community group by phone to discuss the request, initial evaluation, field data, final evaluation, and results. There are usually several options available to improve traffic and pedestrian safety when a significant traffic concern exists. However, in some cases, the results do not meet the warrants. It is important to understand that the City cannot arbitrarily implement a traffic control device or measure.

Implementation

If the traffic control device or measure is warranted, the City will start the process of implementation. Depending on the device or measure, funding availability, and staff availability, the process can take as little as a few days or as long as few years. The following is an approximate guideline for the duration:

- Enforcement –specified by BPD on a case-by-case basis,
- Traffic signs and markings – one to eight weeks,
- Stop sign – one to six months,
- Traffic signal – one to two years, and
- Traffic signal modification – six months to two years.

Review

The City will re-evaluate the implementation to verify the intended result was achieved. If the device is underperforming the City may make modifications or install an additional device or measure. The City will not contact the resident or community group with the results of the final evaluation unless specifically requested to do so.