

Traffic Safety Commission Process

The Traffic Safety Commission (TSC) investigates reviews and analyzes traffic safety issues raised by the Community members and Public Safety Agencies. Communication with the TSC provides a venue for the public to express concerns regarding traffic safety issues and allows for a dialog with City representatives. The TSC is an appointed advisory board and makes recommendations to the City regarding traffic safety. As an advisory board, the Commission is not authorized to set City policy but it does provide input and can help facilitate Council discussion. The Commission meets every other month to review traffic safety issues raised by residents, business operators, and other individuals.

The mission of the TSC is to support the City in its endeavor to provide safe travel for the citizens of Saratoga and to promote education in the Community regarding traffic, bicycle and pedestrian safety.

Since solutions to community issues can require substantial involvement by a resident and the affected neighborhood, we encourage you to read below about the process for submitting and following up on a safety-related transportation issue.

Submission of a Concern and Initial Evaluation

Response to a safety concern starts with submitting a request to Public Works. Please contact Kristin Borel, Public Works Analyst at 408-868-1258 or kborel@saratoga.ca.us . It is important for you to provide as detailed information as possible to help the TSC understand your concern. You will be asked to submit a letter or email to outline the issue, share your experience and provide background, which are essential for a qualitative review. An administrative decision will be made as to whether the matter can be resolved or requires review by the TSC. If the matter is to be reviewed by the TSC, it will be placed on the next available agenda, and you will be notified as to the date, time and place.

Before the TSC meeting, the Traffic Engineer and Commissioners will review the submitted documentation, visit the site, and perform studies as needed to evaluate your concern.

TSC Meeting

At the TSC meeting, you will have an opportunity hear a review from the Traffic Engineer and to state your concerns to the TSC members. If immediate action is required to address a safety issue, or a simple solution is recommended by the TSC, City staff will take action and the process will be concluded. If a solution is proposed that will affect a neighborhood, you may be asked to gather neighborhood support for continuation of the process.

Physical Remedies

If a safety issue exists, the proposed solution may include the installation of traffic control devices of various types. While these devices can improve safety, some residents may have concerns about their aesthetic quality and the visual effect on the neighborhood. These devices are recommended only after solutions with less impact are tried and proven to be unsuccessful, or if an immediate safety issue is identified.

Engage in Neighborhood Discussion and Community Solution

As noted above, some traffic calming solutions have a direct impact to the aesthetics of a neighborhood. They may also result in an actual or perceived impact to residents or others located adjacent to the proposed solution. This is why neighborhood participation and acceptance is essential for the process to move forward. The TSC may ask you to circulate a petition and educate neighbors about the traffic issue and proposed solution(s).

Follow Up Evaluation

To minimize the potential impact to neighborhoods, the TSC will typically recommend simple, but effective solutions to address safety issues. In most of these cases, no follow up evaluation is required. However, some issues require a follow up evaluation or public input may indicate that a recommended solution was ineffective. If needed, the Traffic Engineer will be asked to re-evaluate a solution after implementation and the issue will be scheduled for another TSC meeting. The TSC and the Traffic Engineer will determine if the situation requires additional action or if the first solution was successful. If a secondary traffic solution is recommended, the TSC may ask you to gather neighborhood support and participation. Neighborhood residents or other affected individuals must be involved and participate for certain solutions to be implemented.

Funding

Not all projects recommended by the TSC are implemented immediately following the meeting. Funding challenges are sometimes encountered on more costly remedies. Currently these projects are included in the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and are reviewed and prioritized once a year by the City Council.

Summary

Addressing a transportation safety issue is a process that takes time and commitment. Issues may take several months or more to resolve a difficult situation. Many issues require working with your neighbors to help effect change. The City does not have the resources to facilitate neighborhood meetings and must rely on you to gather support and educate your community. Commitment and patience are qualities that will assist you in working through this process with the City.