



Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP) Audit A2021-02

Issued by the
Internal Audit Office
June 7, 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Internal Audit Office has concluded its audit of the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP). The NTMP is managed by the Traffic Division of the Streets and Maintenance Department. NTMP addresses concerns primarily related to safety as caused by vehicle traffic on neighborhood streets. The audit identified an NTMP that:

- Addresses neighborhood traffic concerns as proposed.
- Is an effective and efficient tool for citizen-initiated concerns regarding possible improvements in neighborhood traffic management and safety.
- Has controls in place that ensure traffic calming projects meet eligibility criteria, are prioritized, implemented and funded according to program guidelines.

Based on the results of the audit, one finding was identified. The finding is considered a “Regular Finding”.

Listed below is a summary of the finding identified in this report:

1. The Traffic Division of the Streets and Maintenance (SAM) Department should revise the documented NTMP Policies and Procedures with updates on a regular basis. Changes to procedures, documents and forms have occurred since the documented NTMP Policies and Procedures were last updated in 2018. These documents include:
 - *Exhibit “A” City of El Paso Neighborhood Traffic Management Program* dated September 17, 2018
 - *Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP) SOP 2018*

For a detailed explanation of the finding, please refer to the body of this report.

BACKGROUND

The City of El Paso’s Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP) addresses concerns primarily related to safety as caused by vehicle traffic on neighborhood streets.

The NTMP includes a formal application, a process for the implementation of traffic calming measures in El Paso neighborhoods and a toolbox of those traffic calming measures. Traffic calming can work on most local or collector level streets. The program is not appropriate for arterial streets designed for higher traffic volumes and/or speeds. The El Paso functional classification system defines the streets that traffic calming may be applied to.

Neighborhood street speeding concerns typically need immediate attention and require an efficient process. For this reason, a two-tiered approach to traffic calming measures is used.

The Tier-1 process will be utilized to address most traffic situations. This process can be implemented in less time and typically with in-house resources. The Tier 2 process is a more robust approach to solving traffic issues using more community-involved, time-intensive and capital-intensive solutions. The Tier 2 process also requires City Council approval and funding is not guaranteed, it may take years for funding to be made available.

| Tier 1 options include: | Tier 2 options include: |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speed Cushions | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Traffic circles |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speed feedback signage | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medians/Center islands |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Any related striping or signage | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bulb outs/curb extensions |

AUDIT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP) audit were to determine if:

- The NTMP is being utilized to address neighborhood traffic concerns as proposed.
- The NTMP is an effective and efficient tool for citizen-initiated concerns regarding possible improvements in neighborhood traffic management and safety.
- The NTMP has controls in place that ensure projects meet eligibility criteria, are prioritized, implemented and funded according to program guidelines.

AUDIT SCOPE

Fiscal Year 2020 and 2021. The administration of the Streets and Maintenance-Traffic Division’s Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP).

AUDIT METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the audit objectives, we:

- Determined if the NTMP has Policies and Procedures defining the prioritization of the various requests for traffic calming projects.
- Determined if the NTMP has a defined project approval and denial process.
- Determined if the NTMP has Policies and Procedures for dealing with neighborhood resident's objections to the location of the traffic calming devices.
- Determined if the NTMP has a follow-up procedure after a project has been completed.
- Determined if the NTMP has a documented procedure for the collection and analysis of data regarding the traffic problem and its environment.
- Determined if the NTMP has documented procedures regarding the maintenance of the traffic calming devices.
- Determined if NTMP Management is responding to neighborhood complaints in a timely manner.
- Determined if NTMP Management is working with neighborhood residents to help determine their project goals.
- Determined if NTMP Management is holding virtual public meetings to gain consensus on the proposed traffic calming device locations.
- Determined if NTMP Management keeps neighborhood residents informed of project status.
- Determined if the NTMP is conducting and documenting crash and average speed studies as part of the traffic calming qualification process.
- Determined if the NTMP is ensuring that proposed projects are meeting criteria required for approval and implementation.
- Determined if the NTMP is maintaining detailed documentation.
- Determined if the NTMP has a process for developing its annual budget.
- Determined if the NTMP completes projects within budget.
- Determined if NTMP conducts traffic studies after the traffic calming project is complete.
- Determined if traffic calming devices have been removed as a result of ineffectiveness or upon request from neighborhood residents.

We conducted this audit in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards and the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

***SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS,
AND MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSES***

The definition of a “Significant Finding” is one that has a material effect on the City of El Paso’s financial statements, identifies an internal control breakdown, is a violation of a City procedure, or a violation of a law and/or regulation, which the City is required to follow. Any finding not meeting these criteria will be classified as a “Regular Finding”.

Finding 1

City of El Paso Strategic Plan:

- Goal 6.3 *Implement programs to reduce organizational risk.*
- Goal 6.12 *Maintain systems integrity, compliance, and business continuity.*

A strong system of internal controls requires that Policies and Procedures be written by management to establish criteria for executing routine or repetitive activities followed by an organization. The development and use of Policies and Procedures are an integral part of a successful quality system as it provides employees with the information and guidance to perform a job properly.

The Traffic Division of the Streets and Maintenance (SAM) Department is not updating the documented NTMP Policies and Procedures on a regular basis. Changes to procedures, documents and forms have occurred since the documented NTMP Policies and Procedures were last updated. These documents include:

- *Exhibit “A” City of El Paso Neighborhood Traffic Management Program*
- *Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP) SOP 2018*

The *Exhibit “A” City of El Paso Neighborhood Traffic Management Program* document was last revised September 17, 2018:

- On the Acknowledgements page, it includes names of the past Mayor, City Council members, City Management members and Traffic Division and Maintenance members.
- During the pandemic, public meetings were cancelled and other innovative ways to communicate with the neighborhood residents regarding their traffic calming project were developed and will most likely continue. These new communication methods are not documented.

The *Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP) SOP 2018* document does not include a revision date:

- Newly developed documents and forms such as the Petition Verification document and Affidavit Notice form are not mentioned or described.
- Also, the new communication methods mentioned above are not documented.

**City of El Paso
Internal Audit Office
Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP) Audit A2021-02**

Recommendation

The Traffic Division of the Streets and Maintenance Department should regularly review and update the documented NTMP Policies and Procedures with the necessary revisions to keep them in line with current operations.

Management's Response

NTMP SOP's will be reviewed and updated annually.

Responsible Party

Olivia Montalvo, Sr. Planner, NTMP Coordinator, Department of Streets and Maintenance

Implementation Date

August 30, 2021 – Annually thereafter.

INHERENT LIMITATIONS

Because of the inherent limitations of internal controls, errors or irregularities may occur and not be detected. Also, projections of any evaluation of the internal control structure to future periods beyond the Audit Report date are subject to the risk that procedures may become inadequate due to changes in conditions, management override of internal controls, or that the degree of compliance with the procedures may deteriorate. This was a limited scope audit, which only reviewed the areas stated in the Audit Objectives during the Audit Scope period. No representations of assurance are made to other areas or periods not covered by this audit.

CONCLUSION

We have concluded our work on the objectives of the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP) Audit. The audit evidence used in the analysis is sufficient and appropriate for addressing the objectives and supporting the findings and conclusion. In accordance with *Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards*, we are required to conclude whether the Streets and Maintenance Department met the objectives of this audit. Based on our audit work, we have determined that:

1. The Streets and Maintenance Department did meet the objectives of the audit in the following areas:
 - The NTMP is being utilized to address neighborhood traffic concerns as proposed.
 - The NTMP is an effective and efficient tool for citizen-initiated concerns regarding possible improvements in neighborhood traffic management and safety.
 - The NTMP does have controls in place that ensure traffic calming projects meet eligibility criteria, are prioritized, implemented and funded according to program guidelines.

2. The Streets and Maintenance Department did not meet the objectives of the audit in the following areas:
 - The Traffic Division of the Streets and Maintenance (SAM) Department is not updating the documented NTMP Policies and Procedures on a regular basis. Changes to procedures, documents and forms have occurred since the documented NTMP Policies and Procedures were last updated on September 17, 2018.

We wish to thank the Traffic Division staff and the Streets and Maintenance Department Management staff for their assistance and numerous courtesies extended during the completion of this audit.

Signature on file.
Edmundo S. Calderon, CIA, CGAP, CRMA, MBA
Chief Internal Auditor

Signature on file.
Daryl Olson, CIA, CGAP
Auditor III

**City of El Paso
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Signature on file.

Miguel Montiel, CIA, CGAP
Auditor IV

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