

CITY OF HIGH POINT POLICY FOR TRAFFIC CALMING IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Adopted by the High Point City Council December 19, 2016

Effective January 1, 2017

I. Introduction

The City desires to promote a positive quality of life in High Point's neighborhoods. It is therefore in the City's best interests to maintain and improve neighborhoods in a manner that does not adversely affect the places where we live.

The management of traffic volumes and speeds on residential streets can be both complicated and nuanced. The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the application of traffic calming measures on city-maintained residential streets, with process guidance for both the public and City staff to follow in managing neighborhood traffic.

II. Objective

The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) characterizes traffic calming as "the combination of mainly physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicles, alter driver behavior, and improve conditions for non-motorized street users". Studies have shown that traffic calming, when properly applied, can reduce vehicular speeds, cut-through traffic volumes, and collision frequency and severity, and can benefit the street environment. Some of the drawbacks of traffic calming measures are a potential increase in emergency response time, noise, difficulties with snow removal, damage to vehicles by inappropriate driver behavior, and the need for additional signage.

The objective of the City's Traffic Calming Program is to enhance safety on streets in residential areas for motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists through the moderation of vehicle speeds by a combination of policy initiatives, enforcement, public outreach, traffic engineering strategies, and physical measures. Street design and operation is one of several elements that influence and contribute to this objective. Traffic engineering practice generally seeks to apply standards that are uniform for all roadway types, with the recognition that all streets possess differing characteristics and that some degree of contextual design is especially necessary for neighborhood streets.

III. Policy Administration

3.1 Program management. The City of High Point Transportation Department will manage the program and serve as the primary recipient of traffic complaints regarding neighborhood streets. Assistance and coordination will be provided by other departments of the City in addressing complaints received by Transportation.

3.2 Implementation of Traffic Control Devices. With concurrence from the City Manager or designee, the City Transportation Director is authorized to install, remove, or modify various traffic control and traffic calming measures as necessary to achieve the desired objectives of this policy, consistent with accepted engineering practices, standards and guidelines. This may include but is not limited to modifications to speed limits, turn prohibitions/restrictions, parking zones, STOP and YIELD conditions, vehicle type, size, and weight restrictions, guide and directional signing, and traffic signals. Consistent with these actions, the Director will submit for Council approval an annual listing of these actions as applicable to City traffic laws and ordinances.

3.3 City Initiated Projects. The use of traffic calming measures may be initiated by the City of High Point. When deemed appropriate, Transportation staff will conduct the studies necessary to determine where traffic calming may be beneficial. Residents living within a defined area of influence will be notified prior to the installation of any proposed devices. Citizens opposed to the installation may submit a petition, signed by at least 75% of the residents within the area of influence, to the Transportation Director within 60 days of the notice date. With resident support and the absence of other issues, staff will forward the proposal to City Council for approval and funding.

3.4 Effect of Planned Capital Projects. Staff may recommend against installing traffic calming treatments if other capital projects or improvements are planned that may influence traffic patterns through the study area.

IV. Program Components

The following components will be applied in administration of this program:

4.1 Scope. This program applies to city-system streets serving residential neighborhoods and, in certain cases, mixed-use areas with residential components. Thoroughfares, arterials, and collectors serving a broader purpose and range of uses, even when some limited residential use is present, are excluded from this policy. Federal and state-system roads (US routes and state primary and secondary routes) are also excluded unless approved by the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) Division Engineer and the State Traffic Engineer. Snow routes, transit routes, and primary emergency response routes are also excluded, but may be granted an exemption by the City Manager with concurring recommendations from the Directors of Transportation and Public Services, and the Fire Chief. Issues related to speeding and other traffic infractions on multi-lane arterial and collector roads and industrial streets will be addressed by the High Point Police Department (HPPD) or other initiatives.

4.2 Treatments and Countermeasures. In addition to the application of existing policies, the City may employ a variety of speed reduction strategies and techniques to achieve the program objective. These treatments, collectively part of the program "toolbox", are listed below and will be planned and designed in conformance with sound engineering and planning practices.

Types of Traffic Calming

The traffic calming treatments are divided into four categories: non-physical, vertical, horizontal and diversionary. Listed below are examples of the traffic calming measures in each category.

- 1) **Non-Physical:** Speed enforcement, radar trailers, lane striping, signage, pavement marking legends, high visibility crosswalks, on-street parking, raised pavement markers, streetscaping, turn prohibitions and other restrictions, gateways/entryways and colored pavements.
- 2) **Vertical:** Textured pavements, speed humps, speed tables, raised crosswalks, raised intersections and rumble strips.
- 3) **Horizontal:** Traffic circles, roundabouts, curb extensions, chicanes, lateral shifts, neckdowns, realigned intersections, bulbouts, two-lane chokers, one-lane chokers, center island narrowing and medians.
- 4) **Diversionary:** Street closures, diagonal diverters, semi-diverters.

Treatment strategies will be matched to the community context with respect to location, public infrastructure, operational conditions, natural features and existing landscaping, and construction materials. Enhancements may include upgrades to signing, pavement markings, and accommodations for pedestrians and cyclists. Each area will be evaluated on an individual basis to establish this context and determine the most appropriate measures.

The City may also consider alternate countermeasures in lieu of installing or in conjunction with traffic calming treatments, such as speed limit reductions or multi-way STOPS. Streets and intersections meeting the established criteria for these specific countermeasures may be advanced in accordance with existing policies through a petition process. Upon written request, Transportation staff will issue a petition for resident signatures along the street where a speed limit reduction or multi-way STOP condition is desired. Receipt of a valid petition of support from residents will initiate a work order for the implementation of the appropriate treatment.

4.3 Public Involvement. Any proposed treatment within a neighborhood will include opportunities for public participation and input. A clear demonstration of need and support from area residents will be documented prior to the implementation of any traffic management strategy.

4.4 Emergency Access and Response. Reasonable emergency vehicle access within and through neighborhoods will be carefully considered in the evaluation of any traffic calming application. The public will be informed of potential impacts to emergency responders that could be created with the implementation of certain types of traffic calming treatments. The Fire Department, Police Department and other emergency responders will be involved in the process and notified of all intended actions and implementations.

4.5 Street and Utility Maintenance. Impacts to routine street maintenance, including but not limited to pavements, subgrades, drainage, snow removal, and public utilities, will also be considered and evaluated prior to the implementation of any traffic calming

measure. The High Point Departments of Public Services and Electric Utilities will be involved in the design of any potential project and notified of actions and implementations. Private utility providers will be similarly advised when necessary.

4.6 Funding Equity and Neighborhood Participation. The strategies and applications for neighborhood traffic calming outlined in this Policy will be made available to all City residents on qualifying publicly-maintained residential streets. Notwithstanding assessments related to any applicable street or utility improvement, approved traffic calming devices will be provided at no cost within the affected area, based on project prioritization and funding availability. Residents and/or Home Owners Associations (HOA) may choose to advance prioritization by funding up to fifty (50) percent of a qualifying project's estimated cost, and may contribute additionally to the costs of upgraded treatments and features where feasible and consistent with the program and the existing street environment. However, residents will not be permitted to install their own treatments on public streets independently of the program.

V. Evaluation Criteria and the Petition Process

5.1 Traffic Calming Program Process and Criteria. When the use of traditional traffic control methods or countermeasures are neither applicable nor effective, other physical treatments may be considered for residential streets which are not Federal or State routes, and which are not classified as major or minor thoroughfares, arterials or collectors. The following stepped process will be followed:

5.1.1 Step One

Any citizen may initiate this process by submitting a written request to the Transportation Director. The City's Traffic Calming Policy and a request form will be sent to the applicant. This citizen will serve as the "point of contact" for staff and be responsible for forming a citizen's committee comprised of a minimum of three (3) residents along the affected street segment. Transportation staff will meet with the committee to clearly define the problem, establish boundaries for the affected area, and explain the policy and process.

5.1.2 Step Two

Transportation staff will evaluate the request to determine if the location meets all of the following minimum criteria:

- Streets must be a two-lane, local residential street or a neighborhood collector. Major and minor thoroughfares and non-residential collectors will not be considered for traffic calming measures. Streets designated as primary emergency response routes, snow routes, or transit routes will not be considered for vertical deflection treatments without recommendations from the Fire Chief, the Police Chief, the Directors of Public Services and Transportation, and a concurring exemption from the City Manager.
- Street segments considered for traffic calming applications must be less than one (1) mile in length, but at least two (2) block lengths (as established by existing intersecting streets), or 800 feet, whichever is greater. Streets less than two (2) blocks or 800 feet in length will not be considered for treatment

unless two or more of the Part (B) criteria in Step Three are met. Cul-de-sacs, alleyways, and street segments less than one (1) block or 500 feet in length are not eligible for traffic calming.

- Street grades must be less than or equal to 8%.
- The stopping sight distance must meet the minimum requirements for the posted speed.
- The current speed limit should be posted at 25 mph if it is a local street or 30 mph if it is a neighborhood collector. If the posted or statutory speed limit is 35 or greater, a petition to reduce the speed limit must be submitted by the residents of the street. After posting, a six (6) month trial period must elapse before additional traffic calming measures will be considered.

If the basic minimum criteria above are not met, a letter will be sent to the “point of contact” explaining why the location will not be considered for further evaluation.

5.1.3 Step Three

If all of the above criteria are satisfied, Transportation staff will collect additional data to validate the problem, establish prioritization, and develop recommendations for design and implementation, as appropriate. This information may include: traffic counts recording volume and speed, crash reports, pedestrian counts, an evaluation of existing traffic control conditions (e.g., street geometry, traffic signs and pavement markings), and a review of emergency access and response time by service providers (Police, Fire and Rescue). The elements to be scored for prioritization and funding eligibility are:

Part (A) – required

- volumes exceeding 300 vehicles per day, with 85th percentile speeds exceeding the posted or statutory speed limit;

and any one or more of the following

Part (B) – supplemental to Part (A)

- two (2) or more speed-related crashes within a three (3) year period; or
- the presence of pedestrian generators and facilities, sidewalks and/or greenways, crosswalks, bicycle routes, transit routes, etc.; or
- the presence of other roadside factors and area conditions that could be mitigated by a traffic calming device.

Staff will evaluate and score the technical data using the system described in the next section on “Scoring and Prioritization”. Projects that do not meet the minimum threshold for further consideration (40 points) will be ranked accordingly for annual monitoring. The citizen contact person will be advised, and may request a meeting to review and discuss the prioritization results with staff. Projects that do not achieve priority status after five (5) years will be removed from the program list.

5.1.4 Step Four

For projects meeting the eligibility requirements through the technical scoring and prioritization process, Transportation staff will prepare 1) a map showing the “area of influence” surrounding the proposed traffic calming site(s); 2) a concept plan for the

proposed devices; and 3) a preliminary cost estimate for the proposed traffic calming measures and associated improvements. This information will be shared and reviewed with the lead contact person and/or the citizen's committee. It is then the responsibility of the citizen's committee to plan and conduct a neighborhood meeting to review the concept plan for the proposed enhancements, inform other residents about the use of traffic calming devices, and document additional input. Transportation staff will attend the meeting to address questions about this policy and the process.

5.1.5 Step Five

After the neighborhood meeting, staff will review comments from the residents and work to incorporate such comments (if any) into the concept plan. After the revisions are made and the cost estimate is updated, a second neighborhood meeting will be scheduled by the citizen's committee that will show the location(s) of proposed traffic calming devices, geometric enhancements, and appropriate signage. After this stage a signed petition, collected by the citizen's committee, is required to indicate and document the resident's support and approval of the proposed concept plan. This petition must be submitted to the Transportation Department within 60 days of the second meeting date, and must be signed by at least 75% of residents within the affected area. Only one signature per address will be valid for purposes of determining the level of neighborhood support. Petition-eligible addresses only include occupied residential properties; vacant lots will be excluded from the calculation.

5.1.6 Step Six

Once the petition is returned to Transportation, signatures will be validated, and if all applicable criteria are satisfied, an approval letter will be sent to the citizen committee contact. Final design and construction contract preparation will be authorized, with construction pending all necessary acquisitions, permits, and funding approval.

5.1.7 Step Seven

For projects that advance through the construction phase, a six (6) month follow-up study will be performed to assess the impact of the completed traffic calming improvements, to determine whether the applied measure has met its desired objective. Staff will conduct field observations, perform traffic counts, speed studies, and collect and analyze other data as needed. This information will be duly shared with the neighborhood citizen's committee.

VI. Scoring and Prioritization

6.1 Scoring Factors. Locations meeting the minimum program criteria will be prioritized based on an evaluation of the technical criteria and the cumulative scoring of these factors: travel speeds, daily volume, pedestrian activity and proximity to pedestrian generators, crash histories, and area conditions.

6.2 Prioritization Requirements. A minimum of 40 points are necessary to qualify for funding prioritization. Points must be secured by speed and at least one (1) other criteria.

Financial Participation points only apply to projects that have reached prioritization status (40 or more points for Criteria Elements 1 - 5).

CRITERIA ELEMENT	BASIS FOR POINT ASSIGNMENT
1) Speed	0 to 35 points: 5 points assigned for every 1 mph of the 85th percentile speed that exceeds the posted speed limit (example: SL = 25 mph, 85 th PS = 28 mph, 3 mph x 5 = 15 points)
2) Volume	0 to 20 points: 1 point for every 100 vehicles per day (example: daily volume of 1,400 = 14 points)
3) Pedestrian Activity	0 to 10 points: 5 points assigned for each school, church, bus route, bike lanes or a signed bike route, public park, sidewalk, greenway, community center, senior center, senior living facility or commercial/retail center located within or adjacent to the study area that may generate a significant number of pedestrians along or crossing the street
4) Crash History	0 to 10 points: 5 points for every reported crash deemed correctible by traffic calming measures occurring on the project segment during the last 3 years
5) Other Factors	0 to 5 points: 5 points assigned for a road conditions (such as a sight distance problem) that can be improved with traffic calming measures.
6) Financial Participation	0 to 20 points: 4 points assigned for each 10% of project cost financed by the Petitioner, up to 50%
TOTAL POINTS	100 Points Maximum Score

6.3 Ranking. Projects meeting or exceeding the required minimum will be ranked by total score and shall be eligible for “bonus” points based on community participation (Criteria Element 6) in the cost of the project. All other projects (those scoring below 40) will be ranked accordingly for annual monitoring. Projects that do not achieve priority status after five (5) years will be removed from the program list, and may not be re-initiated for a period of one (1) year.

VII. Project Funding and Construction

7.1 Funding. The High Point City Council may at its discretion allocate funding for the Traffic Calming Program, the amount of which may vary on an annual basis. City Council may, also at its discretion, choose to modify the program, periodically amend this policy, or suspend or discontinue its use.

Projects will be prioritized and approved for funding based on the rating system described in the previous section. A minimum of 40 points derived from the sum of Criteria Elements 1 through 5 is necessary to achieve “priority status” to be considered for funding.

7.2 Advancement. Projects exceeding the required point total from the sum of Criteria Elements 1 through 5 (and Criteria Element 6, as applicable) will be advanced to the design phase and shall be eligible for construction based on the availability of programmed funds.

7.3 Construction of Approved Projects. Construction will be performed by City forces or by parties contracted for the work by the City. Contract construction by private associations or citizens will not be permitted. Right-of-way and/or easements necessary to construct an approved project will be dedicated to the City by the affected residents and/or Home Owners Association without cost to the City.

VIII. Maintenance

8.1 Project Maintenance. The Public Services and Transportation Departments will be responsible for the maintenance of all paved surfaces, curbs, and signage associated with these treatments, without assessments or additional costs to the residents or HOA.

8.2 Landscaping Maintenance. For any community landscaping that may be disturbed by the installation of a traffic calming treatment, an established HOA may 1) request an encroachment agreement for the HOA’s care of the landscaping, subject to other applicable permissions; or 2) request a maintenance agreement with the City for the ongoing maintenance of the landscaping. Such maintenance by the City will be at the HOA’s expense. In the absence of HOA maintenance, Parks & Recreation Department staff will be responsible for landscaping maintenance, and may, at its discretion, alter or remove the landscaping without notice.

IX. Removal

9.1 Duration and Effectiveness Evaluation. Approved and constructed projects must remain in place for a minimum of three (3) years from the date of completion. Staff will evaluate the effectiveness of the project after six (6) months and annually for a period of three (3) years. The removal of ineffective projects, as substantiated by a compilation and comparison of “before” and “after” data (speeds, volumes, crash histories, etc.) may be recommended by staff for City Council approval. Projects recommended and approved for removal will be funded entirely by the City.

9.2 Removal by Petition. A “removal petition” process may also be initiated by the residents after a period of three (3) years. This process will generally follow the same path as that used for the installation process, and will require signatures from 75% of affected residents to be valid. The cost of removals by petition and substantiated by data will be funded by the program’s annual budget as may be available without impacting other qualifying projects. The cost of removals that are not substantiated by data and

therefore not supported by staff will be borne entirely by the residents. Right-of-way and/or easements secured for project construction will be abandoned after the removal of traffic calming measures and restoration of affected areas.

Once removed, the location/impact area will not be eligible for reconsideration under this Policy for a minimum period of three (3) years.

X. Documentation and Reporting

10.1 Annual Report. Records of requests, correspondence, data sets, petitions, and activities will be kept in a database maintained by the Transportation Department. An Annual Program Report will be prepared by the Department and submitted to the City Manager and the City Council. This report will address the following:

- The number of requests received and evaluations conducted.
- The current ranking of projects.
- The number of projects completed, including costs.
- “Before and After” performance data for each completed project.

The document will be posted for public review by October 1 each year, reporting for the previous fiscal year (July – June).

10.2 Ordinance Updates. The Transportation Department will also periodically prepare ordinance revisions, as necessitated by the application of this Policy, for City Council adoption.

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