

 <p>COUNCIL DIRECTIVE</p>	Adopted: 7-13-03 Revised: 10-26-11	Number: CD-ENGPW-4.7
	Mayor: 	City Administrator: 
	For: Engineering, Public Works and Public Safety	
	Subject: Neighborhood Traffic Calming Policy	

PURPOSE

The City of Woodbury’s Neighborhood Traffic Calming Policy was developed to provide the City with a procedure to ensure a consistent, objective response to requests for traffic calming. It can also be used to educate citizens about the processes and procedures for implementing traffic calming on residential streets. It identifies responsibility and lists a variety of methods for dealing with traffic problems. It is consistent with the Minnesota Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MN MUTCD) and the traffic calming Tool Box developed in January 1994 by the North Central Section Institute of Transportation Engineers (NCITE) Neighborhood Traffic Control Committee. The Tool Box is a summary of neighborhood traffic control techniques implemented in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota to deal with traffic calming requests. Under this policy, the City’s Engineering Division and Traffic Control Committee will work with residents to evaluate traffic issues in their neighborhoods and seek the appropriate course of action. The Traffic Control Committee was established by the Council and is comprised of the Public Safety Director, Engineering and Public Works Director, and the Streets Supervisor.

POLICY

Introduction

Traffic calming refers to any modification made to a street or its boulevard to encourage motorists to decrease their speed. Because drivers cutting through a neighborhood typically do so to save time, traffic calming may also result in a decrease in the volume of cut-through traffic. Traffic calming methods shall only be allowed on local residential streets. Traffic calming shall not be considered on collector or arterial streets. Definitions and descriptions of each roadway classification are as follows:

Local residential streets are two lane streets with a primary purpose of providing direct access to abutting residential properties. They are typically less than one mile in length and are not intended to carry significant volumes of traffic.

Collector and arterial roads - Collector streets provide access from local residential streets to other collectors and arterials. Collector streets are typically more than one mile in length and carry a significant proportion of through traffic. Arterials typically carry still higher traffic volumes at higher speeds.

Street classifications are shown on the City of Woodbury Functional Classification Street Map, which is part of the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

Methods of traffic calming fall into three categories - Education, Enforcement, and Engineering:

Education is the process of working with the residents of the neighborhood to correct driver behavior using information and peer pressure. Radar speed limit signs can also be used to educate drivers how fast they are traveling in relation to the limit.

Enforcement refers to an increased level of police presence and speed monitoring to change driver behavior.

Engineering refers to structural changes in the right-of-way to change the driving experience so drivers no longer feel comfortable traveling at higher speeds or would rather change their route to a street better able to accommodate the driving trip. Examples of these structural changes that might be considered include raised crosswalks, raised intersections, curvilinear streets, street narrowing, medians, chicanes, landscaping, striping, pavement markings, traffic circles, speed message signs, and roundabouts. Due to the negative impacts of speed humps (acceleration between humps, negative driver perception, increased noise, snow removal difficulties, etc.) and the high rate of neighborhoods asking for them to be removed, the Council concluded speed humps will not be a viable method for traffic calming in Woodbury.

Items not being considered in this policy are traffic control devices intended to regulate the safe circulation of traffic. The most common traffic control request received by the City is for the installation of stop signs. The City's stop sign policy, Policy for Placement of Stop Signs, does not allow them to be installed as a method of traffic speed reduction. Numerous studies have shown the installation of unwarranted stop signs may actually decrease the safety of pedestrians and motorists at intersections. Also, there is a potential for an increase of speeds between the stop signs. Studies have indicated drivers tend to increase their speed before and after stop signs to make up lost time. This traffic calming policy is not intended to supersede the stop sign policy. All stop sign requests will be addressed using the current stop sign policy. In addition, City policy only allows for "Watch for Children" signs to be installed at major entrances of residential areas, and "Speed Limit" signs to be installed where it is not apparent a driver is entering a residential area. This is to help identify that vehicles are entering a residential area and should adjust their speeds accordingly. They are not installed on internal residential streets as they are typically not effective at reducing traffic speeds and add to sign clutter and increase capital maintenance costs.

Before selecting a method of traffic calming for a particular location, it must first be determined whether there is an actual or perceived traffic problem, if traffic calming is warranted at that location, and if the benefits of traffic calming outweigh the costs and other potential implications. These include financial costs of installing and maintaining traffic calming devices, slowing emergency-response vehicles, and shifting the traffic problem to an adjacent street.

Often, the people who are driving quickly within a neighborhood are residents of the neighborhood. Therefore, issues can sometimes be resolved through public information programs for the neighborhood without any further action.

Procedure

The procedure for receiving, investigating, evaluating, and responding to requests for neighborhood traffic calming is outlined below:

- 1) *Identify areas to be considered for traffic calming*
- 2) *Receive traffic calming project application*
- 3) *Determine if location meets minimum criteria for consideration of a traffic calming project*
- 4) *Perform traffic engineering study*
- 5) *Review traffic engineering study results to determine if location qualifies for traffic calming response*
- 6) *Conduct "project kick-off" neighborhood meeting*
- 7) *Develop conceptual plan and final report*
- 8) *Present conceptual plan and final report to neighborhood*
- 9) *Launch final petition and approval process*
- 10) *Appeals procedure*
- 11) *Construct project*
- 12) *Evaluate project*
- 13) *Removal*

Each step of this procedure is discussed in detail below:

1) *Identify areas to be considered for traffic calming*

There are several ways an area to be considered for traffic calming can come to the attention of the City. They may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) A resident, group of residents, or homeowners association contacts the City.
- b) The City Council requests the consideration of traffic calming on a particular street. This request may originate from a resident or group of residents or the concern may surface during the regular business of these public bodies.
- c) The Public Safety Department recommends consideration of traffic calming on a particular street based on their enforcement efforts and/or citizen concerns.
- d) The Engineering Division itself may initiate the consideration of traffic calming based on studies or field observations.

2) *Receive traffic calming project application*

If the requesting party is a private citizen, group of citizens, or homeowners association, the Engineering Division will provide the initiating party the following two items:

- a) City of Woodbury Neighborhood Traffic Calming Council Directive
- b) City of Woodbury Neighborhood Traffic Calming Project Application Form

A cover letter accompanying these items will acknowledge the initial request made by the citizen and will refer the citizen to the enclosed Traffic Calming Policy. The citizen must then complete and return the enclosed Neighborhood Traffic Calming Project Application Form to the City's Engineering Division.

The Neighborhood Traffic Calming Project Application Form is important for documenting requests to consider traffic calming in the words of the requestor. The form is designed to solicit as much detail about the perceived problem as possible. In the event a member of the City Council or other City Department makes the initial request, a representative from the Engineering Division will complete and submit the project application form.

3) *Determine if location meets minimum criteria for consideration of a traffic calming project*

Upon receiving a completed Traffic Calming Project Application Form, the Traffic Control Committee will determine if the street indicated on the form is a local public street and, therefore, eligible to be considered for traffic calming.

Listed below are several additional locations where the installation of traffic calming devices will not normally be considered:

- a) Streets that function as the primary routes to hospitals or to fire, ambulance, or police stations.
- b) Major bus transit routes.
- c) Areas of streets with considerable horizontal or vertical curves.
- d) Areas of streets with restricted sight distances.

If the requested location meets the above criteria to be considered for traffic calming, the process continues to Step 4. If the location does not, the Traffic Control Committee will inform the requestor why it is ineligible and consideration will not continue.

4) *Perform traffic engineering study*

Once the Traffic Control Committee has confirmed the requested location meets minimum criteria for traffic calming, a traffic engineering study will be performed. The Engineering Division will visually inspect the street and collect basic traffic volume and speed data. Studies will be performed as weather allows, typically not in winter months. As applicable, the following data will typically be collected:

- a) Speed data will be collected to determine the 85th percentile speed as well as the median and average speeds.
- b) Average traffic volumes.
- c) A review of the accident history for the prior three years to determine the total number of incidents and identify any significant trends.
- d) An evaluation of the roadway geometry to identify sight distance problems and any other conditions pertinent to traffic safety.
- e) Density of housing and presence of sidewalks and pedestrian generators such as schools, parks, recreation areas, bus routes, or other unique features and qualities.

5) *Review traffic engineering study results to determine if location qualifies for traffic calming response*

The Traffic Control Committee will review the results of the traffic engineering study to determine what type of action is to be taken. In order to assist in determining the magnitude of a problem, the attached Traffic Calming Response Chart will be used to analyze the data. If the results of the engineering study indicate there is a perceived problem and a traffic calming response is not warranted, the requestor will be informed why it is not appropriate and no additional action will be taken. If education is the recommended response, the Traffic Control Committee will work with the requestor to develop educational approaches the requestor and/or City can pursue. If enforcement is part of the recommended response, Public Safety will develop an implementation plan to correct driver behavior in the neighborhood.

If the results of the traffic engineering study show there is a perceived speeding problem compared to an actual problem, or the traffic speeds are slightly greater than the posted speed limit, but consistent with other City streets, the most common solution is public education and awareness.

If the Traffic Control Committee determines the location is appropriate for a structural traffic calming project, the Traffic Control Committee will inform the requestor the process will proceed to the next step.

6) *Conduct "project kick-off" neighborhood meeting*

After the Traffic Control Committee determines the location is appropriate for a traffic calming project, the Engineering Division will conduct a project kick-off meeting for residents within the affected area. The affected area will be determined by the Engineering Division, subject to concurrence of the Traffic Control Committee. Because all streets are unique, the affected area will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

At the meeting, Engineering Division staff will present general information to residents about various types of traffic calming measures and their potential benefits and costs. The various types of traffic calming measures are grouped into the following two categories:

- a) Visual Traffic Calming Devices: Striping, pavement markings, driver feedback signs, and signage.
- b) Structural Traffic Calming Devices: Raised crosswalks, raised intersections, chicanes, street narrowing, medians, traffic circles, roundabouts, landscaping, and sidewalks.

Residents will be invited to contribute insights about the problem and the suggestions for solutions.

All costs for any traffic calming improvements implemented will be borne by property owners in the affected area. If petitioned by the affected owners, the City Council may consider using assessments as a method of payment.

7) *Develop conceptual plan and final report*

Following the project kick-off meeting, the Traffic Control Committee will select a traffic calming measure appropriate to the location and develop a conceptual plan. Staff will work with the Public Safety Department to ensure the proposed measure will not significantly degrade emergency vehicle response times. Similarly, staff will work with the Streets Division to ensure the traffic calming measures will not unreasonably impede street maintenance operations, including snow and ice control.

Traffic calming devices and any related pavement markings and signage will be in accordance with City practice and with the MN MUTCD.

The conceptual plan for the neighborhood will take into account the recommendations made by residents at the project kick-off meeting. Any necessary field measurements or observations will be made to ensure the proposed treatments will fit within the context of the street. The proposed solutions will be evaluated for their appropriateness to the project area, and refinements or changes will be made as necessary. The plan development will include an analysis of whether the proposed measures will negatively affect nearby residential streets.

The plan will be submitted to the Departments of Public Safety and Engineering and Public Works for review. A final report and conceptual plan will be prepared that incorporates responses to any concerns raised during these reviews.

8) *Present conceptual plan and final report to neighborhood*

Engineering Division staff will present the final report along with the conceptual plan at an open house where all residents who were invited to the kick-off meeting are again invited to participate. A map of the project area and other visual aids will be used to summarize the proposal. Approximate project costs, funding information, and a tentative installation timeline will be presented as well. Meeting participants will be invited to comment and to help refine the recommended design. Engineering Division staff will refine the design as necessary to address the concerns and comments from this meeting.

In the event the traffic calming measures are very costly to install, or if the potential effectiveness is uncertain, the City may elect to install temporary traffic calming measures to determine their effectiveness.

9) *Launch final petition and approval process*

Traffic calming devices should be broadly supported by the neighborhood where they are being requested. Project supporters will circulate a petition to residents in the affected area. The petition will ask for signatures of those in support of the traffic calming measures proposed in the final report. Any changes made since the final report was presented at the open house will be noted on the petition form. The petition will explain how these measures, if approved, will be funded. If assessments are deemed an acceptable financing method, the property owners within the affected area must agree to being assessed and waive their rights to appeal at the assessment hearing. If signatures of at least one member of 60 percent of the households in the affected area of the traffic

calming project are achieved, the final plans will be performed. It will be the requestor's responsibility to carry the petition to his or her neighbors for collection of signatures. The Engineering Division will provide petition forms to the requestor.

Should the City Council order the project and determine assessments are an acceptable funding method, the property owners in the affected area will be assessed for 100 percent of the project costs in accordance with Minnesota State Statute Chapter 429. Assessments will be allocated on a residential unit basis, unless alternate methods are approved by the City Council.

If the petition is not signed by at least one member of 60 percent of all households in the affected area, the project will not be implemented. Also, if there is not significant neighborhood acceptance at either the Public Improvement Hearing or the Assessment Hearing, the City Council may choose to terminate the project.

10) Appeals procedure

If, during any of the stages described above, the City Council, Traffic Control Committee, or Engineering Division determines the traffic calming project is not in the best interest of the neighborhood or of the City as a whole, they may elect to deny the request. For example, a traffic calming request may be denied if it is believed the traffic calming measures would significantly degrade emergency vehicle response times, introduce a safety hazard, or unreasonably hinder street maintenance operations. These are merely examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list of all reasons why a request may be denied.

If a request is denied, a letter will be sent to residents of the petition area explaining the reason for denial.

Residents may appeal a denial to the Engineering Division within 60 calendar days of being notified of the denial. The appeal must be accompanied by a petition signed by at least one member of 75 percent of all households in the affected area as determined by the Engineering Division. The Engineering Division will then place the petition on a City Council agenda for a final determination.

11) Construct project

Once the project is approved and funded, the traffic calming devices will be installed by City forces or by a contractor.

12) Evaluate project

Approximately one year after the traffic calming project is installed; the Engineering Division will complete an evaluation of the effects of the project. Comments will be solicited from residents in the project area by formal survey or press release. Traffic speed and volume data will be collected, and any change in traffic volumes and speeds on the treated streets will be documented. In addition, traffic diversion and impact on nearby residential local service streets will be measured. If any unacceptable impacts are identified, corrective measures may be taken. In some cases, traffic

calming measures may be removed. If temporary traffic calming measures were used initially, the City may choose to install permanent measures at this time.

13) Removal

The traffic calming measures can be removed if authorized by the City Council or upon receipt of a petition from at least 75 percent of all households within the affected area and approval by the Council. In the event the neighborhood requests the removal, the total cost of removal will be borne upon the residents. If the City requests the removal, the total cost of removal will be borne upon the City.

Adopted by the Woodbury City Council on October 26, 2011 – Resolution No. 11-141