

Residential Traffic Calming Program Guide



Town of Ashland, Virginia

August 1, 2006

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A. INTRODUCTION

The Town of Ashland's Residential Traffic Calming Program (RTCP) incorporates education, enforcement and engineered street design into protecting the quality of life in Town neighborhoods. The Town has developed the RTCP to provide residents with the opportunity to raise neighborhood traffic concerns and to participate in the selection of strategies that promote safe and pleasant conditions for residents, pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists in Town neighborhoods.

Traffic calming is defined by the Institute for Transportation Engineers as "the combination of mainly physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behavior and improve conditions for non-motorized street users." With this Guide as a framework, staff will work with neighborhoods to develop a plan to calm traffic in order to meet the goals listed below.

B. GOALS

The goals of the RTCP are:

- Provide protection to residential neighborhoods from traffic operating at excessive speeds.
- Increase access, safety, comfort and convenience for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Foster a collaborative working relationship between Town staff and residents to the develop traffic calming measures.

C. CRITERIA

Local residential streets and certain collector streets are eligible for inclusion in the RTCP. The posted speed limit should not exceed 25 mph. Local residential streets provide access to abutting land uses and serve only to provide mobility within the neighborhood. Traffic on these streets is expected to be entering or exiting from the residences. Certain roads, although classified as collector roads, function as local residential streets. Residential collector streets that meet the following conditions may be included in the RTCP:

- a. a posted speed limit of 25 mph or less
- b. traffic volumes of less than 4,000 vehicles per day
- c. a two-lane roadway
- d. a minimum of 12 dwellings fronting on the street per 1000 ft of roadway including both sides.

The Director of Public Works shall confirm the appropriate residential area for consideration.

In addition, for a neighborhood to qualify for RTCP assistance, one or more of the following criteria must be met:

- Speeding: 15% of motorists travel at 5 mph or more above the posted speed limit.
- Safety: Significant pedestrian and bicycle activity, such as proximity to schools, playgrounds, shopping areas.
- History of motor vehicle accidents in area.

These criteria are consistent with successful traffic calming programs in other localities. The Town will conduct traffic surveys to determine whether the criteria are met.

D. IDENTIFYING NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC CONCERNS

The Town will assist a neighborhood in defining traffic problems. A neighborhood consensus on that definition should be reached. Typically, the broad problems are speeding and traffic volume, but there may be additional issues that need addressing as well.

Defining the problem occurs on two levels. The first level is clearly understanding what the residents' concerns are; determining if there is, in fact, a basis for those concerns and then expressing those concerns. The second level of the problem definition is the accumulation of data to support the identified problem(s).

E. PROCESS STEPS

1. Traffic Calming Request

Citizens wanting to participate in this program must make a request to the Town Manger. They should express their most serious traffic concerns. There is no deadline for making the request.

This request should include:

- Street segment where the problem(s) exists (e.g., X Street between Y Place and Z Avenue);
- Time of day when the problem(s) occurs;
- Possible causes of the problem; and
- Perceived dangers to pedestrians, bicyclists, residents and property as a result of the problem.

2. Data Collection and Analysis

Town staff will collect and analyze necessary traffic data to determine whether 1) the data supports the problem(s) identified by the residents and 2) the street segment meets the criteria for traffic calming. Data collection will be generally conducted on weekdays, September through May, when public school is in session.

a. Data Does Not Support Implementation of RTCP

If the data collected indicates that the situation does not meet the criteria, staff will report back to the residents that the problem did not warrant any specific action. The situation may be eligible in the future.

b. Data Supports Implementation of RTCP

If the objective data confirms the existence of a problem, staff will recommend the area for the RTCP to the Town Manager for approval.

3. Project Initiation

Once approval has been received, staff will work with members of the community where a problem was confirmed to begin drafting a traffic calming plan. The focus will be on the scope and nature of the traffic problems, the traffic calming measures that can most realistically address the traffic concerns, and working with Town staff to develop preliminary design options and cost estimates for review by the neighborhood at a public meeting.

The designs will be approached in two phases. Phase I designs will consist of non-physical measures, and will be implemented first. If Phase I measures are not effective enough, Phase II designs may be implemented. Phase II includes physical measures (see Section F.3 Traffic Calming Toolbox).

Input from the Fire Department/Emergency Medical Services will be requested to determine any specific emergency requirements.

Once the preliminary designs have been developed, community support must be gained by a petitioning.

4. Assess Community Support For Traffic Calming

The next step in the implementation process is to obtain the required level of community support to be eligible for final design and funding. To assess support, members of the community will be responsible for collecting signatures from the affected homes on the street segment(s) with a petition (see Appendices A and B). Only one resident (homeowner or renter) of each affected home may vote. The petition will indicate that by signing they accept the possibility that traffic calming may be built in front of their home. To assist the community, staff will prepare a map and/or brochure explaining what the proposed measures will look like and where each traffic calming measure will be located.

For condominiums or apartments with 25 or more units, approval from all residents will not be required. Instead, written support of the traffic calming plan will be obtained from the condominium association or property management company. The building/complex may either approve or disapprove of the traffic calming plan.

a. Plan Receives Sufficient Support

Sufficient support for the traffic calming plan will involve receiving concurrence from 60% of affected households. Town staff will begin gathering resources, assessing funding sources and developing a schedule for the implementation of the plan.

b. Plan Does Not Receive Sufficient Support

If the traffic calming plan does not receive sufficient support, the plan will not be implemented until it does receive sufficient neighbor support.

5. Project Implementation

The RTCP will be implemented using a two phase approach. During Phase I, only non-physical measures will be implemented. If the Phase I measures are not successful, physical measures will be implemented as Phase II. Physical and non-physical measures are discussed in the next section.

As part of implementation of either phase, staff performs the following actions:

- Determines funding requirements;
- Secures funding if available;
- Develops construction drawings based on the preliminary design;
- Acquires right-of-way and/or easements, if required;
- Schedules construction either by Town workers or private contractor;
- Notifies affected residents of construction schedule;
- Coordinates and oversees construction or notice to private contractor to proceed;
and
- Monitors all work for compliance to design specifications.

6. Evaluation

After Phase I measures have been implemented for 6 months, staff will evaluate whether they are effective. Evaluation methods may include one or more of the following: placing radar trailer, additional police surveillance, other means of traffic monitoring, resident response.

If Phase I is determined to be unsuccessful, a preliminary design will be prepared and implemented for Phase II. Phase II measure will be evaluated on the same schedule and by the same means as Phase I measures.

If the other problems arise from the implementation of a traffic calming measures (e.g., difficulties for emergency vehicles, drainage or maintenance issues, etc.) staff will examine the causes and potential fixes. Additionally, citizens who feel that the RTCP process needs refinement may bring their issues to staff for discussion and consideration.

F. TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES

1. Selections of Traffic Calming Measures

When selecting the appropriate traffic calming measure(s), several principles need to be taken into consideration. In general, the traffic calming measure(s) selected should have all or most of the following attributes:

- Is consistent with Virginia law and meets the standards set out in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials guidelines,
- Addresses the problem in the most efficient and cost effective way possible,
- Accommodates the geometrics of the street (e.g., a traffic circle can only be built in an intersection that is large enough for it),
- Is compatible with the needs of the Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services, and
- Addresses the needs of nearby schools.

2. Types of Traffic Calming Measures

Two types of traffic calming measures are considered in the RTCP: (1) Non-physical Measures and (2) Physical Measures. The table below contains a list of the non-physical and physical measures to be considered.

Only non-physical measures will be considered during Phase I of implementation. Non-physical devices are defined as low cost measures that do not physically restrict driver maneuvers. Examples of non-physical traffic calming measures include public education, additional police enforcement, signing, and pavement markings to narrow travel lanes.

Physical measures will be considered only if non-physical measures have been implemented, evaluated and found to be unsuccessful. Physical measures are treatments that reduce speed by creating a vertical, or horizontal shift in the roadway or travel lanes or that create a safer vehicle-pedestrian design.

3. Traffic Calming Toolbox Guidelines

Issue	Measure	Description	Criteria	Minimum Community Support Needed	Expense
Phase I Traffic Control Measures					
Bicyclist Safety	Bike Lanes, Signage and Street Symbols	Improve safety of bicyclists and visually narrow streets to slow traffic	American Association of State highway and Transportation Officials Bicycle Facility guide	No Minimum	Low
Speeding	Traffic Safety Education	Flyer or newsletter describing traffic concerns and traffic safety tips	Any citizen complaint	No Minimum	Low
	Signing: speed limit, 4-way stop, school, etc.	Reminds motorists of the speed limit	Any citizen complaint	No Minimum	Low
	Police Enforcement	Continued enforcement by Ashland Police Department	Any citizen complaint	No Minimum	Low
	Variable speed display board	Radar unit and board alert motorist to their travel speed	Speeding criterion is met	No Minimum	Medium
	Increased speeding fines	Fines up to \$200. Install warning signs.	Speeding criterion is met	75% of households	Low
	Street markings	Center yellow line(s), white lines on edge of lanes/bike lanes, arrows to slow traffic	Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices	60% of households	Low
Pedestrian Safety	Crosswalks	Crosswalks at intersections to highlight pedestrian crossing area.	Pedestrian activity	No Minimum	Low
	Mid-block crosswalk	Provide greater visibility To crossing pedestrians	Significant pedestrian traffic	No minimum	Low
	Brush Trimming	Homeowners or Town trim brush for better sight distance.	Any citizen complaint	No Minimum	Low
Phase II Traffic Control Measures					
Speeding	Street narrowing	Physically arrow street to slow traffic	Speeding criterion is met	60% of households	High
	Median	Narrows streets to prevent turns at intersections or slow traffic	Speeding criterion is met	60% of households	High
	Chicane	Winding street causes motorists to drive slower	Case by case basis	60% of households	High
	Speed hump/ Raised Crosswalks	Effective at slowing vehicles 5 - 10mph when crossing the bump	Speeding criterion is met	60% of households	Medium
	Traffic circle	Circular intersection appropriate for local streets	Case by case basis	60% of households	High

Issue	Measure	Description	Criteria	Minimum Community Support Needed	Expense
	Roundabout	Circular intersection appropriate for streets with higher volumes of traffic	Case by case basis	60% of households	High
Pedestrian Safety	Pedestrian refuge island	An island in the middle of the street to break the crossing into two sections	Speeding criterion is met	60% of households	High
	Bulb-outs	Shorten distance to cross the street and slow traffic	Speeding criterion is met	60% of households	High

G. LEARN MORE

To learn more about traffic calming and view images of a variety of measures, visit any of the following Websites:

- Alexandria Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program:
www.AlexTrafficCalming.org
- Arlington, VA, traffic calming Website:
www.co.arlington.va.us/dpw/planning/ntc
- Henrico County Traffic Calming Program:
<http://www.co.henrico.va.us/works/newdpwweb/trafficalming.htm>
- Portland, OR, traffic calming Website:
www.trans.ci.portland.or.us/trafficalming
- Pedestrian & Bicycle Information Center Image Library:
www.pedbikeimages.org and click on “Traffic Calming and Management”
- TrafficCalming.org: www.trafficalming.org
- Virginia Department of Transportation:
<http://www.virginiadot.org/programs/faq-traffic-calming.asp>

APPENDIX B- MULTIFAMILY BUILDING PETITION VALIDATION

***Note: This form is to be used instead of the Petition for condominiums and apartments with over 25 residences.**

Building Name: _____

Building Address: _____

Number of Residences: _____

Building or Complex Type (circle one): Condominium / Apartment

For Condominiums:

The president of the condominium board should sign below to show its Association's support for the traffic calming plan.

Approval Signature: _____

Name of Condominium Association president: _____

Street Address and Phone of
Condominium Association president: _____

For Apartment Buildings:

The property management company should sign below to show its support for the traffic calming plan.

Approval Signature: _____

Name of Property Manager: _____

Name of Property Management Company: _____

Street Address and Phone of
Property Management Company: _____

Note: If this petition has sufficient support, traffic calming measures will be considered. Traffic calming measures are to be implemented in two phases. Phase I, which includes non-physical measures (e.g., speed limit signs, line painting, etc.), is to be implemented first. If Phase I does not prove to be effective, Phase II, which includes physical measures, is to be implemented (e.g., speed humps, traffic circles, raised cross walks).