

Town of Waxhaw

Traffic Calming Program



Town of Waxhaw
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TRAFFIC CALMING MISSION

The Town of Waxhaw's goal is to provide safe and pedestrian friendly streets for all residents of the Town while balancing the need for an efficient transportation network. As part of that goal, the Town understands that traffic must be able to flow freely but do so as safely as possible. This policy is meant to provide an avenue for citizens to report unsafe conditions, establish a process for review, and develop solutions for unsafe areas on existing roads.

Program Tools

The Town of Waxhaw's Traffic Calming Program relies on the "Five E" process; Education, Enforcement, Evaluation, Economics, and Engineering to address problems of excessive traffic speed or volume. These strategies will be implemented using a phased approach, beginning with the least restrictive and least expensive methods (Phase I) and proceeding to more complex solutions (Phase II).

Where appropriate, Phase I approaches will be used first. These include targeted enforcement, education, and the use of signs. If these strategies are ineffective, Phase II solutions may be considered. In some cases, based on Town staff evaluation, Phase I may be bypassed in favor of the Phase II approach. In some instances, a Phase I approach may be implemented as a temporary mitigation while the Phase II planning process is underway. In either phase, different strategies may be used in combination.

What Roads are covered in this Program?

The control measures provided in this document are intended to be applied to local streets serving predominantly single-family residential neighborhoods. Collector streets that run through neighborhood areas may also be considered for less restrictive traffic calming measures. Streets that are designated as thoroughfares or which are classified as State or Private are not eligible for this program.

All new developments will be reviewed for potential location where excessive traffic and speed may be a concern. The Engineering Division in coordination with the developer will use these strategies in an effort to mitigate future traffic problems.

TRAFFIC CALMING PROCESS FOR EXISTING STREETS

The process consists of two phases. **Phase 1** includes the property owners' request and Town evaluation. **Phase 2** includes a property owner petition process and Town implementation of appropriate traffic calming measures.

Phase 1: Traffic Calming Process

Property Owner Request

A property owner along a street or residential area must submit a written request to the Town to perform a traffic evaluation on neighborhood/subdivision roadways when the property owner has a traffic concern of vehicle speed that affects pedestrian safety or excessive volumes of through traffic in a residential neighborhood/subdivision. If the neighborhood has a Home Owners' Association (HOA), the Town will coordinate the Traffic Calming Process through the HOA. The Town of Waxhaw Engineer will provide an official request form or the form can be found online at www.waxhaw.com. Additionally, any member on the Board of Commissioners, the Town Manager, The Chief of Police, or a Town Staff Engineer may initiate a traffic calming evaluation at any time.

Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to determine whether or not the street qualifies for one or more traffic calming measures. The traffic data collection will occur over a 72-hour period and the evaluation, in its entirety, may take approximately 4 to 6 weeks to complete from the time the completed official request is received. The Town of Waxhaw conducts the evaluation based upon the following criteria:

1. Street must be classified as a two-lane, local residential street.
2. Street must not be a Major or Minor thoroughfare or proposed to be a thoroughfare in the future.
3. Street must have an average annual daily traffic (AADT) volume that is less than 5,000 vehicles per day (VPD).
4. Speed of at least 15% of the traffic on the street exceeds the posted speed limit by at least 7 mph.
5. Street must not operate at a posted speed of 35 mph or greater to reduce speeds to 25 mph. (20 mph is the lowest speed limit that will be posted).
6. Application must not have been denied or become void within the last 12 months.

Phase I approaches include targeted enforcement, education, and the use of signs. Law enforcement is a factor for maintaining traffic safety and targeted times of enforcement can be a Phase I approach. Education includes a neighborhood outreach to raise awareness of the issue and request for drivers to modify their behavior. Advisory signs such as curve signs may be installed in accordance with the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

Once the evaluation is completed by the Town Engineer, the applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome. If the street does not qualify, the specific reasons will be included in the notification. If the Phase 1 measures are ineffective, Phase 2 of the Traffic Calming Process will begin.

Phase 2: Traffic Calming Process

Property Owner Petition

If a street meets the requirements for traffic calming, Phase 2 of the Traffic Calming Process will begin. The Town will provide the applicant or HOA an official petition form which will include the proposed traffic calming measures.

The petition will identify the type and location of the traffic calming device. It is the applicant's responsibility to complete the petition by obtaining all necessary signatures and returning it to the Town Engineer. A qualifying petition must be returned to the Town within 90 calendar days of the start of Phase 2 or the petition becomes void. The installation of traffic calming measures on local residential streets requires the submittal of a petition meeting the following criteria:

1. Traffic Calming Petition must be on forms provided by the Town of Waxhaw. The Town will only provide forms where the qualifying criteria under Phase 1 have been met.
2. The Town Engineer will define the area that must be petitioned. Generally, the entire length of the street must be petitioned. The only exception is when a street changes character or is bisected by a major or minor thoroughfare.
3. The Traffic Calming Petition must have a minimum of 70% of the properties, within the area defined in Step 2, signing in favor of the petition. These signatures are required in order to continue with the process.

Once a completed petition is received, the Town will review the petition and signatures for accuracy. If the petition is returned to the Town with insufficient signatures, then the Town will notify the applicant or HOA in writing to this fact.

Notice of Public Information Meeting

Based on the nature of the location of the study area, a Public Information Meeting may be warranted. Residents within the affected area of a proposed traffic control measure will be given notice of a Public Information Meeting and an opportunity to provide written comments so their views and opinions may be expressed regarding the traffic control measures being proposed. The notification method selected may include the following:

1. Letters sent to the residents/property owners
2. Notifications on the Town of Waxhaw website and other electronic outlets but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, etc.
3. Work with the local HOA or other groups of residents to communicate to the residents of the upcoming meeting and requesting participation
4. Flyer/notification placed in the Town Newsletter

Prior to the Phase 2 measures being installed, the measures will be placed on the Board of Commissioners' Agenda for the authorization of expenditures.

TYPES OF TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES

The Town of Waxhaw may utilize several types of traffic calming measures when a residential street qualifies for traffic calming: electronic radar notifying signage, chicanes, chokers, speed limit reduction, multi-way stops, speed cushions (humps), and/or mini-roundabout. **All traffic calming measures must be approved by Fire, Police, and EMS Departments.**

Chicanes, chokers, and mini roundabouts are horizontal traffic calming measures that are designed to limit or narrow the travel lanes. These horizontal measures diminish the linearity of traffic flow, forcing vehicles to slow as the travel lanes narrow and/or curve. **Temporary installation of these horizontal traffic calming measures may be implemented and tested before permanent action is taken. A public input period, which conforms to Phase 2's public information meeting parameters, will be held to determine if these horizontal measures will be permanently installed.**

Definitions:

- ❖ Chicane – Curb extensions that alternate from one side of the street to the other, forming S-shaped curves.
- ❖ Choker – Curb extensions at midblock locations that narrow a street by widening the sidewalk or planting strip.
- ❖ Mini-Roundabout – A circular junction requiring traffic to circulate counterclockwise around a center island typically used for large volumes of traffic.
- ❖ Speed Cushion – Raised area placed across the roadway.
- ❖ Neckdown – Curb extensions at intersections that reduce the roadway width from curb to curb. Work best for intersections with substantial pedestrian activity.

Other criteria, in addition to the standards previously listed in this policy, may be required for each measure to qualify for implementation. Additional criteria for certain measures are listed below:

Multi-way Stops

An economical traffic calming measure is the installation of the 3-way or 4-way stop signs. **Multi-way stops are limited in effectiveness and will be limited in application.**

Speed Cushions and Humps

Speed cushions are a speed control device generally constructed of asphalt and designed to cause a driver to slow to approximately 25 MPH. Greater speeds could cause the driver to feel discomfort as the car hits the cushion. Roads that have these devices typically see a 5% to 10% reduction in speeds. These devices are used on residential streets intended for use by local residents. They are not used on collector types of roads. **Speed Cushions/Humps have decided disadvantages. Horizontal control will be the preferred method of calming over vertical control.** The following criteria must be met for speed cushions to be considered:

1. Grade of the street shall not exceed 8% for vertical traffic calming measures.
2. Speed cushion location shall be located at least 300 ft. from a curve with a horizontal radius of less than 300 ft.
3. Speed limit must be posted at 25 mph or lower.

Electronic Radar Notifying Sign

Electronic radar notifying signage are designed to be installed in line with normal speed limit signs. These electronic radar signs are meant to notify the vehicle operator of their speed and adjust their speed as needed.

Paying for Traffic Calming Measures

The cost of the installation, maintenance, and signage/markings for the traffic calming devices will be the responsibility of the Town. If the subdivision has decorative sign supports, the HOA or homeowners will be responsible for the cost of installation and maintenance of the decorative sign supports.

Removal of a Traffic Calming Device

If an applicant desires to have a traffic calming device removed, they must follow the same procedures outlined above for the installation of a device. Traffic calming devices cannot be petitioned for removal until a minimum of one year after installation. There is no cost to the property owners for the removal of speed limit or multi-way stop signs. If horizontal or vertical measures are approved for removal, the property owners will be required to pay the Town the upfront cost of removal if the measures have been in place for less than 5 years. If any traffic calming device is petitioned and removed, another device may not be requested for five years from the date of the received removal petition.