NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC CALMING PROGRAM GUIDE

July 2025

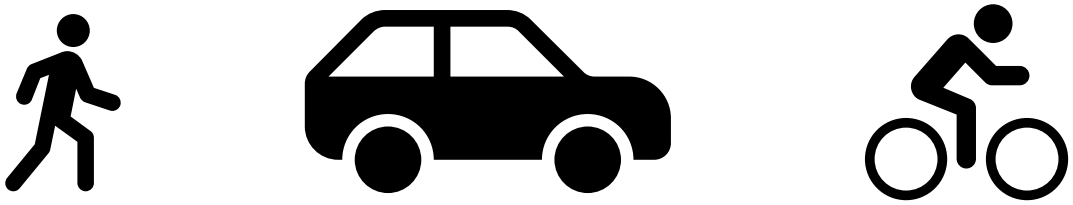
Introduction

Vehicle speeding in residential areas is a persistent concern among City residents because of its detrimental impacts to our streets and neighborhoods. The Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program (NTCP) was created by Harrisonburg City Council in 2001 to more effectively work with residential neighborhoods in developing appropriate traffic solutions and was last updated in 2012. In response to both resident and staff concern, Harrisonburg Public Works, in cooperation with the Harrisonburg Police Department, and Harrisonburg Transportation Safety and Advisory Commission (TSAC), have updated the NTCP to better align with the City's goals and objectives of fostering safe and thriving communities.

Traffic calming is a process involving community members and City staff to address safety needs on neighborhood streets. The City of Harrisonburg defines safe streets as streets that facilitate all types of mobility and ensure appropriate vehicle speeds. The intended result of safe streets is a reduction of the risk of crashes, injuries, and fatalities involving drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists.

While roadways functionally classified as local residential streets are the primary focus of neighborhood traffic calming efforts, on a case-by-case basis, certain collector streets that have the characteristics of local residential streets may also qualify. Roadways functionally classified as minor arterials, or principal arterials are not eligible for traffic calming. When safety concerns arise on streets that are not eligible for traffic calming, a capital project would likely be required to address the challenges.

The updated NTCP covers how traffic calming requests are made, evaluated, selected, and implemented in a transparent and efficient manner with thorough community engagement.



Program Realities

The neighborhood traffic calming program will be dictated by the following realities:

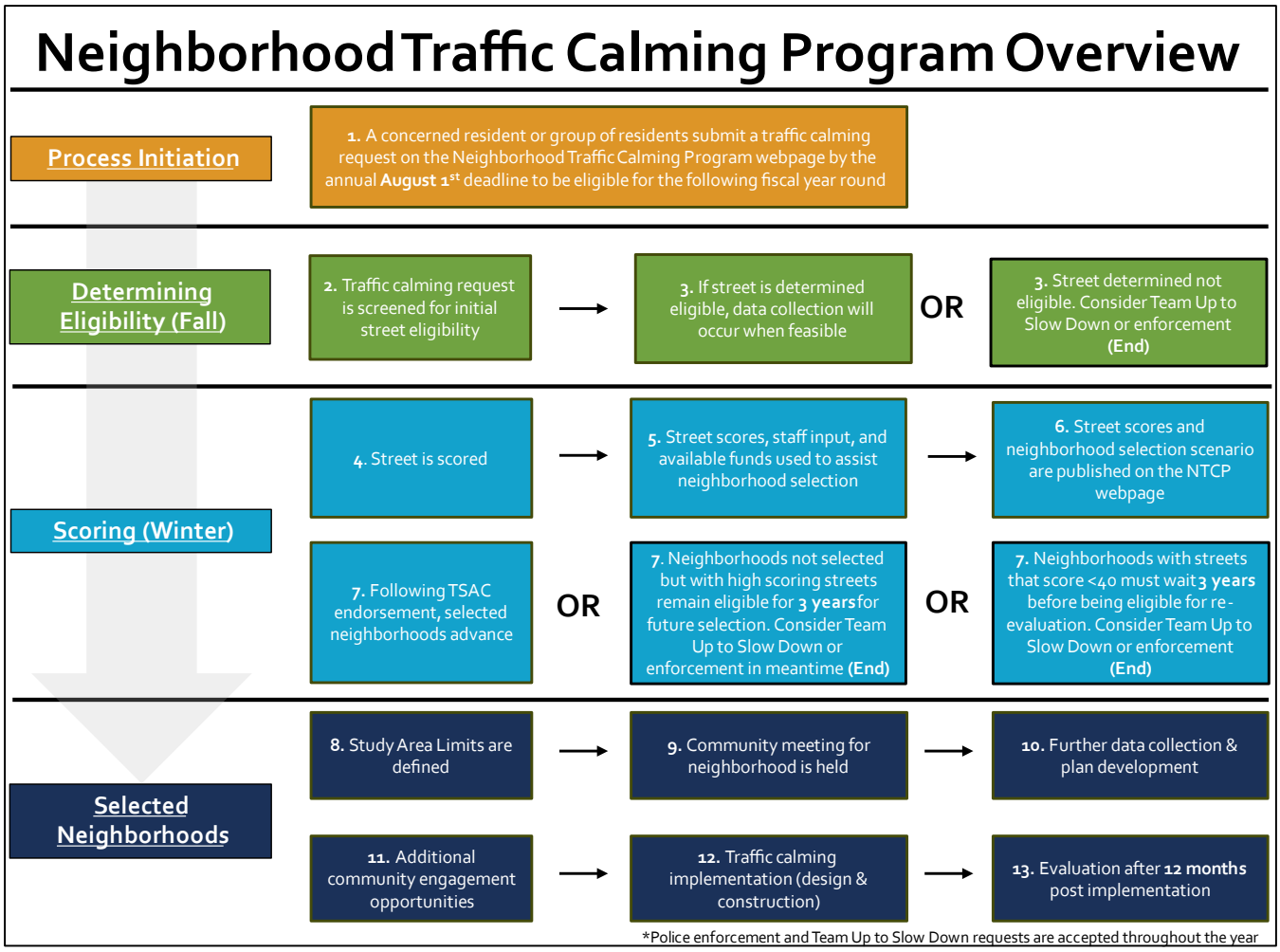
1. As a municipal organization the City must abide by regulations set forth by our state and federal government. The City cannot and will not install any traffic device that is in conflict with these regulations as it can potentially violate the law, safety and liability.

2. The NTCP is only administered on public streets. If you live in a neighborhood with private streets, you should contact your property management association or homeowners' association.

3. Since the NTCP is only applicable to public streets, residents and neighbors need to realize just that – these streets are open to the general public. Like other communities, the City's public street system receives maintenance funding from the Commonwealth of Virginia paid for by all citizens.

4. The City receives a significant number of traffic calming requests every year and does not have the resources to immediately address every request. Therefore, residents should anticipate that the NTCP will prioritize the most significant needs and transparently demonstrate how these needs measure relative to others utilizing relevant metrics.

5. While speed humps are by far the most preferred traffic calming measure among City residents, they are not always appropriate for every street. On minor and major collectors in particular, alternative traffic calming measures, such as those described in Appendix C, are more likely to be considered. It is ultimately the decision of Public Works staff, through technical evaluation, that determines the type of traffic calming measure implemented.



Process Initiation

To begin the traffic calming process, the online traffic calming request form accessible from the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program webpage on the Harrisonburg City website should be completed. Residents, Property Owners, and Community Groups are all eligible to make a traffic calming request. While Public Works staff can meet with either individuals or groups regarding concerns, concerned parties will be asked first to complete a traffic calming request form. Individuals who are considering making a traffic calming request are encouraged to discuss their concerns with their neighbors before submitting. The submission deadline for a traffic calming request form to be scored and considered for the next fiscal year-round is **August 1st**. In the fall, Public Works staff will process all requests, determine initial eligibility, and gather the required data necessary for scoring.

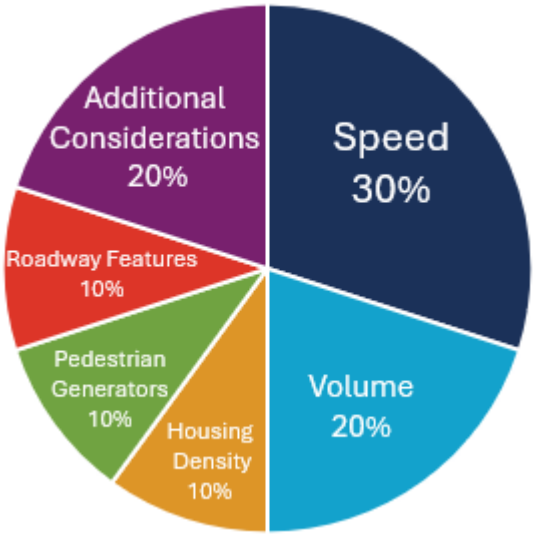
Street Eligibility

Only streets that are residential in nature and classified as local streets, with some exceptions for minor and major collectors, are eligible for traffic calming. A map showing the functional classification of roadways within the City of Harrisonburg can be found in the of the **Transportation Chapter** of the Comprehensive Plan.

Speed and volume data collected on a street will be considered current and ineligible for re-collection for a period of **3 years,** given the number of streets in the city. This speed and volume data is collected by Public Works staff using the best available technology. For neighborhood streets that are dead ends or have low connectivity, education (community awareness) through the City's Team Up to Slow Down program will be the primary measure used to address vehicle behavior concerns. More information about Team Up to Slow Down can be found in **Appendix C**. If concerns persist, residents are encouraged to request increased police enforcement by calling the Harrisonburg Police Department non-emergency number at (540) 434-4436. Traffic calming on dead end or low connectivity streets is generally not warranted due to low traffic volumes and poor vehicle behavior often being committed by residents of the street. Requestors for traffic calming on streets that are not eligible will be notified by Public Works staff in a timely manner early in the process.

Selection Process

During the winter, once data for an eligible street or street segment is collected, each street will be assigned points through a scoring system. The scoring system assigns points using six criteria: Speed, Volume, Pedestrian Generators, Roadway Features, Housing Density, and Additional Considerations. The details pertaining to each of the six criteria can be found in **Appendix B**.



Street scores, neighborhood size, staff input, and available funds, will then be used to select one or more neighborhoods to move forward in the traffic calming process each fiscal year. A single high scoring street does not guarantee traffic calming selection, rather these scores help to advise both Public Works staff and residents about holistic neighborhood need in effort to ensure transparency and efficiency in the NTCP. Additional input in the selection process will come from the Harrisonburg Police Department, Fire Department, Safe Routes to School Coordinator, and others. The street scores and neighborhood selection scenario are then published on the City's traffic calming webpage early the following year. Inquiries regarding specific street scores and the neighborhood selection can be explained by Public Works staff upon request. In the spring, the street scores and neighborhood selection scenario will be presented to the Transportation Safety and Advisory Commission (TSAC) for endorsement. Streets that score over the minimum threshold but are not part of the selected neighborhood for traffic calming in the first year will be automatically reconsidered for a second and third year. After the third year, the traffic calming application will need to be resubmitted and rescored with updated speed and volume data.

Implementation

After a neighborhood has been selected, requestors for traffic calming on streets within a selected neighborhood will be notified as the community engagement process begins. Public Works staff will then lead efforts to define the study area limits, hold one or more community meetings, collect any further needed data, develop a plan, provide opportunity for any further public engagement needed, and implement the traffic calming measures determined to best provide the intended impact. Public Works staff will rely on neighborhood participation during community meetings and engagement opportunities to gather input related to the program, possible measures, and streets. As part of the planning process, one or more traffic calming alternatives may be developed. While the entire process between a neighborhood being selected for traffic calming and reaching implementation is a case-by-case basis due to varying scopes, Public Works staff will work to ensure that the improvements are completed in a timely and appropriate manner. The purpose of a scoring system approach is to communicate to the public the various traffic calming needs across the City of Harrisonburg and allow Public Works staff to efficiently address selected neighborhood traffic calming needs as funding becomes available.

Street scores that have gone through the scoring system will be updated and made publicly available annually early each year on the City's Neighborhood Traffic Calming webpage where the public can view how scored streets in the city compare to each other. Upon request, individual street scoring calculations are available.

A holistic neighborhood level approach to traffic calming allows for streets that may not initially score high on their own merit but are determined by Public Works staff to be susceptible to future speeding or higher vehicle volumes due to implementation on other streets to be considered for traffic calming themselves.

Post Implementation Evaluation

Following the implementation of traffic calming measures in a selected neighborhood, Public Works staff will collect updated speed and volume data on affected streets after a period of approximately **12 months**. If safety conditions are determined to not have improved, Public Works staff will determine which streets within the selected neighborhood should be scored or rescored in the next fiscal year scoring cycle. It is important to emphasize that a street warranting being rescored does not guarantee the reselection of a neighborhood or further traffic calming measures.

For more information on the NTCP please visit the City's **Neighborhood Traffic Calming** webpage.

CITY OF HARRISONBURG
PUBLIC WORKS

Appendix A

Traffic Calming Definitions

- **85th Percentile Speed** – The speed at or below which 85% of vehicles travel.
- **ADT** – Average Daily Traffic.
- **Traffic Study** – A study using equipment to measure, collect and statistically analyze the speeds and volume of vehicles. [1]
- **Traffic Control** – signs, signals and markings designed to regulate and warn (ex. Stop signs, speed limits signs, traffic signals). Traffic control is not part of traffic calming. [1]
- **Speed Limit** -The maximum lawful vehicle speed for a specific location. There are two types of speed limits, posted and statutory speed. [2]
- **Statutory Speed** - Statutory speed limits are established by State legislatures for specific types of roads (e.g., Interstates, rural highways, urban streets) and can vary from State to State. They are enforceable by law and are applicable even if the speed limit sign is not posted. Examples of statutory speed limits include:
  - 25 mph in residential or school districts,
  - 55 mph on rural highways, and
  - 70 mph on rural Interstate highways [2]
- **Posted Speed** - Posted speed limits (sometimes called regulatory speed limits) are those that are sign-posted along the road and are enforceable by law. [2]

[1] City of Charlottesville Traffic Calming Handbook. July 2008. https://www.charlottesville.gov/DocumentCenter/View/4419/Traffic-Calming-Handbook-and-Request-for-Study-PDF?bidId=

[2] US Department of Transportation - Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). "Speed Limit Basics". 2017. https://highways.dot.gov/safety/speed-management/speed-limit-basics

Appendix B

Criteria System

Criteria	Max Points/Weight	Details
Speed	30 Points	**3 points** for every 1mph the 85th percentile exceeds the speed limit
Volume	20 Points	**1 point** assigned for every 50 vehicles up to 500 AADT **1 point** assigned for every 100 vehicles over 500 AADT
Pedestrian Generators	10 Points	**1 point** assigned for each activity center (private schools, Lucy F. Simms Center, Cecil F. Gilkerson Community Activities Center, parks, central business district) within ¼ of a mile from the street (GIS buffer) **3 points** assigned if within ¼ of a mile of a HCPS school **3 points** assigned if within ¼ of a mile of a university campus **1 point** assigned if within ¼ of a mile of a greenway or shared use path **1 point** assigned for each HDPT bus stop on street
Roadway Features	10 Points (Streets can only receive one set of points for red points regarding sidewalk presence)	**5 points** assigned if there are no sidewalks for entirety of segment **3 points** assigned if sidewalks are discontinuous or on only one side of segment **0 points** assigned if sidewalks on both sides of street for entirety of segment **3 points** assigned for street not being VDOT standards (28' width for parking on both sides) **1 point** assigned for each roadway pedestrian crossing/crosswalk (mid-block or intersection, not counting end points)
Housing Density	10 Points	**1 point** assigned for every housing unit per acre that has an entrance or fronts street
Additional Considerations	20 Points	**5 points** assigned if neighborhood is considered disadvantaged (LMI or EJ Tool) **5 points** assigned if the street contains a hill (Greater than 5% over 250 ft)

		5 points assigned if the street has no existing traffic calming (physical measures) **2 points** assigned for 1000 feet between or without existing traffic calming measures, stop control devices, or speed impeding curve **1 point** assigned for every additional 500 feet over 1000 between or without existing physical traffic calming measures, stop control devices, or speed impeding curve
Total	100 Points	

Criteria Discussion

The points allocated to each criteria represent the maximum number of points a street can receive for a single criterion, even if they would theoretically earn higher. The raw numbers for the speed, volume, and housing density criteria are rounded up to the nearest whole number. If the scores for two or more streets result in a tie, then the raw numbers may be re-examined to determine a tiebreaker.

The minimum scoring threshold for a street is **40 points**. Streets that do not meet this threshold will be considered ineligible for traffic calming and can be re-evaluated after 3 years. Education (community awareness) through the City's Team Up to Slow Down program will be the primary measure used to address vehicle behavior concerns on streets scoring less than 40 points. If concerns persist, residents are encouraged to request increased police enforcement by calling the Harrisonburg Police Department at their non-emergency number.

Crash data is not included as a scoring criterion primarily because crashes rarely occur on neighborhood streets. When crashes do occur, they are oftentimes minor fender-benders that go unreported making verification difficult. If reported data indicates that a high number of recorded crashes did occur on a street within a 5-year timeframe, then Public Works staff will work to identify changes that could be made to address safety issues. In such cases, a larger capital improvement project may be more appropriate to address the issue rather than traffic calming.

Speed

Assigning 3 points for each mile per hour the 85th percentile speed is over the speed limit ensures that speed is still a critical criterion in determining a need for traffic calming while also allowing the consideration of other context related factors.

Volume

The difference in points from 1 point for every 50 ADT up to 500 and 1 point for every 100 ADT 500 and over in the volume category is designed to accommodate lower volume residential streets when compared to higher volume collectors.

Pedestrian Generators

The activity centers in proximity to the street are measured in all directions from the street to consider off street paths, cut-thru, and overall allow for more coverage. Activity centers within ¼ of a mile from a street will not be counted if they are considered inaccessible such as being separated by Interstate 81, a principle arterial with no nearby traffic signals, or other geographic barriers. Private schools, day care centers, Lucy F. Simms Continuing Education Center, Ceil F. Gilkerson Community Activities Center, parks, and the Harrisonburg central business district (CBD) are considered relevant activity centers. Proximity to Harrisonburg City Public Schools is counted separately and streets are assigned 3 points if they are located within ¼ of a mile from a HCPS school. Proximity to a university's core campus, JMU or EMU, will also be counted separately and streets will be assigned 3 points if they are within ¼ of a mile given the high likelihood of students walking or biking through the area. Lastly, if the street is located on a HDPT bus route, 1 point will be assigned for each bus stop in consideration of rider first/last mile trips.

Roadway Features

Streets can only receive one set of points for red points regarding sidewalk presence. Because of the limitations in being able to obtain an accurate count of individuals walking or biking along a street, the presence of parallel sidewalks is used as a proxy in determining the likelihood that a walker or biker would be in the street. If the street segment with sidewalk has at any point no sidewalk or sidewalk on only one side, then it will be counted as discontinuous and assigned 3 points. Streets are assigned 3 points if they do not meet VDOT width standards (28'). Streets are assigned 1 point for each roadway pedestrian crossing (mid-block or crossing) within the select street segment. Crosswalks at the end of the street segment that are at a stop-controlled intersection are not counted.

Housing Density

For the housing density criteria, the affected area in square acres is calculated by encompassing all unique properties that either front or have entrances onto the street. The number of unique addresses is then divided by the

area to determine the density. The number of points assigned is ultimately equal to the nearest whole calculated density up to 10.

Additional Considerations

The Lower-to-Moderate Income (LMI) and Climate and Economic Justice Screening (EJ) Tools are used as a proxy for equity by indicating whether a street falls within census tract considered to be disadvantaged. A street needs to only be considered disadvantaged by at least one of the indicators to be assigned 5 points. Public Works staff defines a hill as a street with a grade between 5% and 10% over a distance greater than or equal to 250 feet. A maximum of one hill per street will be assigned 5 points. A street that has not received any physical traffic calming measures will automatically be assigned 5 points. However, streets with existing physical traffic calming measures can still be assigned points if there are significant gaps between these measures. A street will be assigned 2 points starting every 1000 feet between or without existing physical traffic calming measures, stop control devices, or speed impeding curves. For every additional 500 feet over 1000 without existing physical traffic calming measures, stop control devices, or speed impeding curves, streets will be assigned 1 point.

Appendix C

Potential Traffic Calming Measures

- Chicane

Chicanes are curb extensions that alternate from one side of the street to the other forming S-shaped curves. Chicanes must be well designed to prevent speeding drivers from cutting straight paths across the center line.

- Curb extensions or Curb Bump-Outs

Curb extensions reduce the roadway width from curb to curb and can be at intersections or midblock. At intersections they “pedestrianize” intersections by shortening the crossing distances for pedestrians and drawing attention to pedestrians via raised peninsulas. They also tighten the curb radii at the corners, reducing the speeds of turning vehicles. If marked at midblock crosswalks, they can make safer crossing for pedestrians.

- Raised Intersection

Raised intersections are flat raised areas covering an entire intersection, with ramps on all approaches. Raised intersections are good for intersections with substantial pedestrian activity, and areas where other traffic calming measures would be unacceptable because they take away scarce parking spaces.

- Speed Hump

Speed humps are rounded raised areas placed across the roadway. They are generally 12-ft long (in the direction of travel) and are 3- to 4-inches high.

- Raised Crosswalk

Speed tables, also known as raised crosswalks, are flat-topped speed bumps often used at mid-block crosswalk locations.

- Team up to slow down program

Team Up to Slow Down is a multi-faceted program that focuses on education and encouragement. It is available to any City neighborhood regardless of traffic calming status. Yard signage and speed radar trailers are the primary tools available to help educate drivers about street safety and encourage them to drive appropriately. Yard signs can be more effective if multiple homes along a street display them. It is important to note that the yard signs and speed radar trailers provided are temporary and will ultimately need to be returned to Public Works. Team Up to Slow Down requests are available throughout the year and can be made by contacting Public Works staff.

- Mini-Roundabout

Mini-Roundabouts are raised islands, placed in intersections, around which traffic circulates. They are good for calming intersections, especially within neighborhoods, where large vehicle traffic is not a major concern, but speeds, volumes, and safety are problems.

- Traffic Island

A traffic island, or center-island narrowing, is a raised island located along the centerline of a street that narrows the travel lanes at that location. Traffic islands are good for entrances to residential areas and wide streets where pedestrians need to cross.

- Permanent Speed Radar Signs

Roadside signs that use radar to measure a vehicle's speed and display it to the driver. Also known as 'speed display' or 'your speed signs'.

Appendix D

Traffic Calming Request Form

To make a traffic calming request, please provide the following information. This information will give Public Works staff a general understanding of the concern and is independent of the data-driven street scoring or neighborhood selection process.

REQUESTOR INFORMATION

First Name:

Last Name:

Email:

Phone:

Street Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

LOCATION

Where is your traffic calming concern located?

-At an intersection

-Between intersections

-Both

` -Other (Please specify)

Street or Intersection:

REASON FOR REQUEST

What issues would you like to address through traffic calming?

-Vehicle speeds

-Traffic volumes or cut-through traffic

-Crashes

-Safety for people walking

- Safety for people biking

-Other:

If you are requesting traffic calming on a street other than where you live, please provide additional details:

Are there any additional details or supporting information that you think should be considered?