Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program FAQs

Why is the presence of children or children playing in the street not a scoring consideration?

The City does not view children or adults playing in the street as a legitimate basis for traffic calming. While the City understands that streets without pedestrian infrastructure can result in individuals walking or biking in the street, playing in the street should not be encouraged. An additional consideration is that the presence of children in proximity to a street can change frequently.

Why are crashes not a scoring consideration?

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, 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.

Does the City support installing more stop signs in my neighborhood?

*The City does not pursue the addition of stop signs as a traffic calming measure due to their relative ineffectiveness of slowing speeds and false perception of safety. However, stop signs at 2-way stop intersections can be switched if it is determined by Public Works staff that the existing stop-controlled approach does not meet **MUTCD guidelines**. Such changes would be made to improve safety at the intersection, not to influence or change traffic volumes or speeds on the intersecting streets.*

Does the City support lowering the speed limit on my street?

Under Virginia state law (HB 1071) a locality has the power to lower the speed limit to 15 mph on any roadway within a business or residential district in which the speed limit is already set at 25 mph. However, lowering the speed limit alone is not considered an effective traffic calming measure given that most drivers drive the speed the street was designed for. Therefore, lowering the speed limit to 15 mph would be most appropriate on a roadway with an existing geometric deficiency or special circumstance. While the City is not opposed to implementing 15 mph speed limits on some streets, this process is separate from the neighborhood traffic calming program.

Does the City allow neighborhood residents to fund traffic calming measures?

The City does not allow residents to privately fund traffic calming measures on their street. There are multiple reasons for this, particularly given the negative potential downstream effects of vehicles diverting to parallel streets whose residents may not be able to likewise fund deterrent measures.

What if I don't like a traffic calming measure proposed on a street I live on?

Public Works staff will work diligently with neighborhood residents to determine a traffic calming implementation plan that provides the greatest community benefit possible. If there is opposition to implementing components of the plan, the City may choose to explore other alternatives. Ultimately this is a Public Works staff decision, and the City can still choose to move forward if deemed necessary.

What streets are eligible for traffic calming?

The 2025 Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program has significantly increased the number of streets eligible for traffic calming due to the expanded criteria. In determining eligibility, Public Works staff consider the following:

- *Is the requested street something other than a local (neighborhood) street or a collector street with similar characteristics? Is the street residential?*
- *Has the street already been submitted and scored within the last three years? If the street scored under 40 points it will need to wait three years before being re-eligible for scoring. If the street scored over 40 points, it will automatically be reconsidered for the next three years.*
- *Is the street a cul de sac or does it have low enough connectivity where only a few residents living on the street may be the ones responsible for speeding?*

If a street is determined to be ineligible for one of the above reasons, the requestors will be notified by Public Works staff in a timely manner early in the process.

Will I be notified once my requested street is scored?

Traffic calming requestors whose streets were scored will be sent an automated email informing them once the street scores and neighborhood selection scenario are published on the City's traffic calming webpage early each calendar year. Inquiries regarding specific street scores and the neighborhood selection scenario 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. Requestors for traffic calming on streets within a selected neighborhood will receive additional communication as the community engagement process begins.

What is Team Up to Slow Down?

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.

How does Public Works staff collect speed and volume data on a street?

Public Works staff use pneumatic rubber tubes that are set across the road surface for vehicles to drive over. These tubes collect vehicle speed, volume, and directionality over an extended amount of time. These tubes are placed at mid-block locations as to collect data that is not influenced by breaking or acceleration associated with an intersection. Tubes are typically left in place for at least one week. Data is analyzed for both weekday and weekend data to determine if there are outlying circumstances on a road segment that needs to be evaluated for more than one week, however for the purposes of scoring, traffic volume and 85th percentile speed represent the entire 7-day period. Data is not collected during off-peak times of the year, such as summer, holidays, or during JMU Fall or Spring breaks.

What if there are major changes on my street within 3 years of data collection?

Public Works staff has the flexibility to re-evaluate and rescore a street if it is found that within 3 years, significant enough change occurred that would render the existing data inaccurate.