

Council Policy 10-5 NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC CALMING PROCEDURES

DISTRIBUTION: Mayor and City Council
Public Works Department

SUBJECT: Neighborhood Traffic Calming Procedures

PURPOSE: Implement procedures to request and install traffic calming devices in neighborhoods

BACKGROUND: In August of 2020, a Neighborhood Traffic Calming Policy was adopted by resolution 2020-71 to standardize the procedures for traffic calming devices being installed across the city.

One of the most persistent and emotional complaints that the City of Lawton receives is speeding on residential streets. Each year, there are numerous requests received by City council members and other City administration and staff to “do something” on certain streets where residents have concerns about excessive traffic speeds and/or traffic volumes. Proper street design is essential in encouraging lower speeds, minimizing cut-through traffic, and maintaining the integrity of residential neighborhoods. Through the platting and development process, new subdivisions are now being designed to avoid long straight stretches of streets which encourage higher speeds. It is on the long stretches of existing streets that most of the speeding complaints are being generated. This policy presents a program aimed at making existing residential streets safer and more livable. Historically, issues of speeding and cut-through traffic could only be addressed through educational efforts, beefed-up police enforcement, and the unwarranted use of regulatory signs; now, however, physical calming devices have been developed for use when education and enforcement endeavors have failed.

Traffic calming techniques were developed to reduce speeding problems and heavy flow on residential streets. By making some residential streets more “calm,” it makes the neighborhood more livable. Although “livable” in terms of a neighborhood does not have a precise definition, feeling safe and secure, interacting with neighbors, and experiencing a sense of home and community identification are certainly some of the characteristics. In essence, when citizens call to request a STOP sign to slow traffic on their street, they are requesting the City to make their street more livable.

Since each city street has an intended purpose related to moving traffic and serving the adjacent land use, it must be ensured that traffic management measures are compatible with those purposes. Because the installation of calming devices can result, directly or indirectly, in drivers shifting to use an adjacent street as their new route, this is appropriate only if that adjacent street is suitably classified and able to accommodate this traffic. Accordingly, while the majority of traffic management measures in the

calming toolbox are appropriate for use on local streets and collectors, most measures, such as speed tables, are not appropriate on arterials.

The overall objectives for the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Policy are:

- To implement measures, either physical or psychological, that will safely reduce speeding and affect driver behavior to improve the livability and quality of life in residential neighborhoods;
- To preserve and enhance pedestrian and bicycle access to neighborhood destinations;
- To encourage citizen involvement in neighborhood calming and, in the process, provide an opportunity for neighbors to interact and create a positive community atmosphere; and
- To make fair and efficient use of City resources in prioritizing projects to balance the needs of the neighborhood with that of the entire community.

Traffic calming techniques work best when incorporated into a neighborhood traffic management program. Successful programs include good traffic data collection, a thorough planning process, community participation, and local authority support. Because residents are the main initiators of traffic calming requests, they need to be part of the process as much as possible.

POLICY/PROCEDURES:

1. The Pavement Management Program helps to ensure that pavements around the city are kept to a reasonable condition. This involves numerous methods to include preventative maintenance, routine maintenance, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. Traffic calming devices can impact this program and associated plans and shall be addressed during the review of any newly requested device.

Speed tables will be permanent in nature when approved by one of the two request methods except for the following circumstances:

- The pavement has a condition of 55 PCI or less
- A pavement plan shows that the requested location is scheduled for either rehabilitation or reconstruction in the next 5-years.

In these cases, traffic calming devices shall always be modular in nature. After the rehabilitation or reconstruction is completed and no criteria in this section applies, a resolution will be made to council for approval of a permanent speed table in place of the modular device.

2. There are two methods available for a resident to request traffic calming measures in a neighborhood. The first method is a citizen driven process whereas the second method uses a Ward Council member driven process.

- Citizen Driven Method:

- i. Step 1 – Reporting: Upon initial contact made by a resident, property owner, or homeowners association, inquiring about traffic calming in a neighborhood, City staff will mail and/or email the requester (at their discretion) an information packet, including a copy of the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Application Form. After reading the information, if residents are still interested in the program, they must complete the application form and return it to the City Public Works Department. The purpose of this form is to initiate the process and to formally request a traffic study be conducted to see if the neighborhood meets the criteria; it is not a petition for traffic calming measures (that comes later in the process). The application form requires a written description of the residents’ concerns and requires signatures from residents of at least four (4) different households in the impacted area (within 300 feet of the location) that share the same traffic concerns to warrant such a traffic study.
- ii. Step 2 – Traffic Study - Upon receipt of a completed Neighborhood Traffic Calming Application Form, the City Public Works Department will schedule a traffic study in the neighborhood. Traffic studies are usually conducted during the school year unless unique circumstances, as determined by the City Public Works staff, exist. To be eligible, certain speed and traffic volume criteria must be met. (see qualifying criteria topic, below).
- iii. Step 3 – Pre-Calming Measures If the trouble location meets the speed and volume criteria, City staff will first suggest possible solutions that do not involve the use of physical controls or impediments on the street. These include:
 - Traffic Signing and Pavement Markers – Public Works staff will review all of the traffic signing and pavement markers in the area. If necessary, staff will install additional signing and striping.

- Traffic Enforcement Actions - The traffic data study will include raw counts of traffic volumes obtained by the traffic engineer and vehicle speeds over a 72-hour period and will categorize these numbers into the time of day that they occurred. This data will be forwarded to the Lawton Police Department for their increased patrol visibility and more strategic enforcement efforts.
 - Radar Speed Sign Deployment - This is a temporary device that is primarily used to educate motorists regarding the fact that they may be significantly exceeding the posted speed limit.
- iv. Step 4 - Follow-up Data Collection - If one or more of the Pre-Calming Measures is implemented, the City Public Works Department and the LPD will wait approximately three months, pending unique circumstances, and then collect additional speed/volume data. The new data will be analyzed to determine if the Pre-Calming Measure was successful. If the measure was successful in terms of bringing the numbers below the criteria thresholds, then the process will end at this point. If the measure was not successful, e.g. the location continues to exceed speed/volume thresholds, City staff will move on to explore the installation of physical traffic calming measures such as speed tables.
 - v. Step 5 - Petition Process – City Public Works Department staff will provide a petition form to be signed by residents and business owners adjacent to the street being “calmed.” A map showing the location of the traffic calming device and the petition boundary area will also be included. This petition must document that at least 75% of all households and businesses adjacent to or fronting the street support the installation. All properties within 300’ of the proposed location must be accounted for (either with signature in support of plan, or without signature in opposition to plan) or by written statement why a specific property was not represented. Only one signature per household is allowed. Petition shall indicate if signer is property owner or owner’s agent/representative. Petitions must be completed and returned to the City within six (6) months from the date they were provided to the neighborhood coordinator or they will expire.

- Petition Eligibility - Residences within 300' that are either fronting or otherwise directly adjacent to the street containing the proposed traffic calming measure will be eligible to sign the support petition for the calming project. Signers can be either the property owner or his/her agent. The signature of any official representative of a business, church, school, homeowner's association clubhouse, etc. will be accepted for non-residential petitioners.
- vi. Step 6 - Implementation and Funding - Having verified the signatures on the petition, City staff will finalize traffic calming plans, prepare cost estimates, and enter into an agreement with a contractor or utilize City forces to perform the work subject to available funding. Traffic calming projects are funded primarily from public funding; however, when public funds are not available, private funding is a possibility. Any private funding must be collected on a volunteer only basis and presented to the Lawton City Council for acceptance prior to construction.
 - vii. Step 7 - Follow-up Evaluation - When construction of a traffic calming project is finished, City Public Works staff will conduct a final traffic study to evaluate the effectiveness of the calming device(s). Additionally, City staff will send out a Feedback Survey to neighborhood residents as part of the evaluation process.
- To qualify for actions relating to the *Neighborhood Traffic Calming Policy* via the citizen-driven method, a neighborhood residential street must meet the following minimum criteria:
 - Must be classified as a local street or a collector with a speed limit of 25 mph or less
 - 85th Percentile Speed of vehicles on roadway \geq 133 percent of speed limit (e.g., 34 mph in a 25 mph)
 - Average Daily Traffic (ADT) $>$ 600 vehicles/day (vpd)
 - 85th Percentile Speed is that speed below which 85% of all traffic units' travel. It is an accepted principle that the majority of drivers on a roadway select safe and proper speeds based on roadway and traffic conditions. For determining a speeding problem on a specific roadway, the 85th percentile speed is often used

because it is on the high end of a “normal” bell curve distribution. Typically, recorded speeds above the 85th percentile occur much less frequently than the speeds below it because the highest speeds are often erroneous readings or the result of a few drivers who are either unperceptive of roadway conditions or irresponsible. The generally accepted traffic engineering practice is to set speed limits at the nearest increment to the 85th percentile speed unless other considerations such as accidents and real dangers not perceivable by drivers may indicate the need for a lower speed limit. Since speed limits are generally set using the 85th percentile, it is expected that 15% of the vehicles will exceed the speed limit on a regular basis.

- Ward Council Member Method: As with any concern, citizens are always encouraged to reach out to their representative council member for discussion and resolutions of those concerns. As voted in February of 2022, Council members are authorized funding for up to two traffic calming devices in their wards each fiscal year as provided by the City Manager and as funding is available.
 - i. Council member requests will include:
 - 1. a detailed, pinpointed location for these devices to the Public Works department
 - ii. The Public Works Department will then perform the following actions:
 - 1. Review the request
 - 2. Check the Transportation Network Activity plans for conflicts
 - 3. Notify affected residents within 300 feet of the expected device of the request and date of council meeting
 - 4. Create a draft resolution
 - 5. Include the request and city staff recommendations on an upcoming council meeting agenda for discussion and/or approval. Included on this request will be an estimated cost for installation, administrative fees (to include the notification of affected residents), and overhead

costs associated with the request (to include time/contract costs for staff/contracted review).

iii. Any additional requests after the two funded traffic calming devices, shall be processed through the Citizen Driven Method process, as outlined above.

3. For the purpose of prioritizing projects competing for traffic calming dollars, points are assigned based on the following point system:
 - No. of mph that the qualifying 85th Percentile Speed is over posted speed limit:
 - > 7 mph = 5 points
 - > 12 mph = 7 points
 - > 15 mph = 9 points
 - No. of mph that the qualifying 95th Percentile Speed is over posted speed limit:
 - > 14 mph = 5 points
 - Average Daily Traffic (ADT):
 - > 600 to 700 vpd = 2 points
 - > 700 to 900 vpd = 3 points
 - > 900 to 1,100 vpd = 4 points
 - > 1,100 vpd = 5 points
 - No. of reported speed-related accidents: (last 12 month period)
 - 2 – 3 = 2 points
 - 4 – 5 = 3 points
 - 6 – 10 = 5 points
 - >10 = 7 points
 - Competing projects are ranked according to their sums of the above assigned points.
4. Devices installed for the purpose of calming traffic in residential areas may be removed or significantly modified only when all the following criteria have been met:
 - At least 75% of the residents and/or property owners (one signature per residence) living within 300' of the device in question must agree, by petition, to remove it.
 - The calming device must have been in place twelve months or longer before being considered for removal (unless in cases of emergency)
 - The City Public Works Director agrees that its removal will not affect the overall effectiveness of the calming efforts in the neighborhood.

- Funding, either from City or private residential sources, must be available to restore or modify the device.

REFERENCES: None

EFFECTIVE DATE/

REVISION: This policy becomes effective 1 October 2024.

RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT: Public Works

Stanley Booker, Mayor