



City of Traverse City

Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program

Introduction

The City of Traverse City is committed to the safety and livability of its neighborhoods. This Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program is designed to be a joint effort between the residents and the City to: identify traffic issues, create and implement a plan to address those issues, and evaluate the effectiveness of the various solutions.

Goals and Objectives

Our intent is to establish a consistent and comprehensive process to address traffic concerns in our neighborhoods. Prudent implementation of traffic calming measures can promote a high quality of life and active character within the City's neighborhoods. Furthermore, this program strives to make our streets safer and quieter.

Program Objectives:

- Improve neighborhood livability by mitigating the negative impact of motor vehicle traffic.
- Promote safe and pleasant conditions for residents, motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians and transit riders.
- Promote and support the use of transportation alternatives
- Encourage citizen participation in all phases of traffic calming program activities.
- Make efficient use of City resources by prioritizing program activities.

Program Guidelines:

- Through traffic will be encouraged to use higher classification streets.
- Traffic calming devices shall be planned and designed in keeping with sound engineering and planning practices.
- Emergency vehicles will be accommodated.
- Reasonable vehicle access will be maintained; it is not acceptable to divert traffic to other streets.
- Pedestrian, bicycle and transit access will be encouraged or enhanced wherever possible.
- We will work with MDOT on designs for State Highways (US31, M-37, M-72)

Street Categories

Traffic calming measure will be applied to a street based on its category: “framework” streets and “non-framework” streets. **See Attachment 1: Framework Street Map and Attachment 2: Examples of Traffic Calming Measures.**

Framework streets include community collector streets and arterial streets that serve as regular emergency vehicle routes. Framework streets, because they are the first emergency routes for the City, may require additional analysis including the role of the street, which may limit the types of traffic calming measures that can be installed.

Non-Framework streets include local streets and neighborhood collector streets, which are rarely used by emergency vehicles. Non-framework streets would may not require the same level of analysis or have the same limitations on traffic calming measures as framework streets as they have a different role within the street network.

Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program Process

Project Initiation:

The first step is for the residents to identify the traffic concerns in the neighborhood and inform the City through a written citizen request stating the problems or issues being experienced. This can be done by using the attached form, also available on the City website, or a letter addressed to the City. **See Attachment 3: Form.**

Project Review:

Once we receive the request, staff will arrange for a site visit and meet with the neighborhood to discuss their concerns and review current traffic control measures. For project areas within a Neighborhood Association, staff will work with the Association President and/or Board to implement this Program. For project areas not within a Neighborhood Association, staff will encourage interested residents to volunteer as representatives to work with staff to develop a neighborhood traffic calming plan. Residents not serving as representatives are welcome to attend all meetings and time will be allotted for public comments and questions.

Problem Identification/Needs Assessment:

Staff will meet with the neighborhood representatives to make sure the problem definition represents the issues identified by the residents. There is a variety of techniques to help define the problem including:

- Citizen input including needs, values, suggestions, etc.
- Traffic observations including volumes, speed, parking, safety, access, etc.
- Environmental concerns including noise and air pollution, safety, access for pedestrians and cyclists, visual quality, etc.
- Observation of resident activities including street activities, cycling, pedestrians, disabled, parking etc.
- Collect pertinent data, as necessary, such as historical traffic data, crash statistics, volume and speed counts, land use data, etc.

Once all the information has been collected and analyzed, it must be determined if the street meets the minimum volume (**1000 vehicles/day**) and speed criteria (**15% of the vehicles traveling over 5mph over the speed limit**) and if traffic calming will address the concerns. From this information, staff and representatives will compose a Neighborhood Traffic Calming Plan. In general, the lowest level, effective traffic calming measure would be tried first.

Once the Plan has been formulated, neighborhood representatives would host discussions with the residents and property owners of the entire neighborhood. After which staff will work with neighborhood representatives to initiate the recommended solutions.

Petitioning of Neighborhood

For Plans with physical devices, a survey will be circulated by staff to the affected property owners to determine support for the plan. Signatures representing greater than 50% of the property owners within the project area would be required for further consideration of the project. The survey will acknowledge that funding for plans with physical devices on streets not currently being reconstructed will be paid 75% by the City and 25% by the affected property owners through a Special Improvement District process.

Funding

The neighborhood and staff must agree that a plan is ready before it is considered for funding. Costs count. If the neighborhood and the City can agree on a low(er) cost solution, it is easier to fund and more projects may be implemented. Since resources are limited, it is possible there will be more projects than available funds. A project ranking will be used to come up with a priority list for funding. **See Attachment 4: Project Rating Criteria.**

Solutions including Neighborhood Speed Watch, Portable Speed Trailer, Brush Trimming, Pavement Markings, Signage, Target Enforcement, etc. will be funded entirely by the City. Solutions including physical devices will be paid 75% by the City and 25% by the affected property owners. Neighborhoods would be given the option, if they do not wish to wait until their project comes to the top of the list, to pay 100% of the costs.

The City is committed to ensuring a basic, effective level of mitigation on neighborhood streets. If a neighborhood decides that it wants significant additional amenities over and above what is believed to correct the situation, it will need to pay the extra cost of these amenities. If the plan requires significant City funding, capital and/or maintenance costs, then a funding proposal would also be developed by the neighborhood with assistance of City staff.

Evaluation

Each project will be evaluated for effectiveness, based on the same factors that measured the problem and design in the first place and realistic expectations about how close to correcting the issue we can get. Since much of what we will be doing may be experimental, it will be important to measure the actual change in speed, crashes, volumes, etc. so that neighborhoods can benefit from each other's experiences.

We will need to specifically articulate how to define success before the treatment is installed. If it fails to meet the minimum expectations, or the negatives outweigh the positives, removal will be considered.

Staff will keep an inventory of measures, routinely inspect, and review the measures for maintenance and safety issues. We will be learning from each project's successes and failures as we start working with traffic calming measures. If a project does not get the anticipated results, the City will continue to work with the neighborhood to try to effectively mitigate the problem.

Summary

This Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program is intended to achieve the City's goal of ensuring a high quality of life and active character within neighborhoods. Through the implementation of appropriate traffic calming measures as proposed in this program, the City of Traverse City will work towards lessening the negative impact of motor vehicles on the residents' and property owner's right to enjoy quiet and safe streets and sidewalks within our community. This program is intended to be an evolving document as the City gains experience in the use of traffic calming measures.

Measures proposed through this process must be consistent with accepted transportation engineering practice and reflect the needs and characteristics of all potential users of the City's street system.

For more information on the Traverse City Traffic Calming Program, please contact the City Planning Department at 922-4778.