



NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC CALMING POLICY

Traffic Calming is the combination of physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behavior and improve conditions for both motorized and non-motorized street users.

Traffic calming objectives include:

- Achieving speeds for motor vehicles that are reasonable for a neighborhood setting
- Increasing the safety and the perception of safety for non-motorized users of the street(s)
- Reducing collision frequency and severity
- Reducing the need for police enforcement

The Town of Huntersville continually strives to strengthen and protect its neighborhoods by improving the quality of life in residential areas. Traffic conditions on residential streets can greatly affect neighborhood livability. Speeding traffic in neighborhoods can create safety hazards on residential streets. When traffic problems become a daily occurrence, our sense of community and personal well-being are threatened.

The Town of Huntersville's *Neighborhood Traffic Calming Policy* was developed to guide Town Engineering Staff and inform residents about the processes and procedures for implementing traffic calming on residential streets. Under this policy, the Town Engineering and Public Works Department will work with a Neighborhood Representative at their initiation, to identify traffic problems in their neighborhood and engineer appropriate solutions. A neighborhood representative must be a Home Owners Association (HOA) member and endorsed by the HOA by official letter; or in neighborhoods without an HOA, have the support of 3 other households (must provide names, address, and signatures of supporting household representatives).

This *Neighborhood Traffic Calming Policy* incorporates **Education, Enforcement, and Engineering** into resolving traffic issues in neighborhoods. Residents can actively participate through neighborhood committees providing education and awareness of the issues and solutions available. Increased education, enforcement through spot speed checks, and increased police visibility effectively cause self-enforcement of speed regulations. Finally, where increased education and law enforcement have not reduced speeds, engineering measures (speed reduction through physical means) may be explored.

What Streets will be addressed under this Policy?

Two types of streets are addressed under this policy, Residential Local and Residential Collector.

- Residential Local service streets make up the majority of Huntersville's street system. These streets serve local circulation needs for motor vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic and primarily provide access to residences and on occasion, businesses.
- Residential Collector streets are more difficult to define. Collector streets provide access between local service streets or from local service streets to thoroughfares. To be considered under this Policy, a collector street must have direct access to residences (i.e. driveways).

Neighborhood Awareness Campaign

Many people exceed the posted speed limit in their own neighborhoods. "Speeders" are not always nonresidents – most are neighbors and friends who are committed to safe, peaceful neighborhoods. Nevertheless speeding in residential areas is a bad habit, and it takes a unified effort to help break it. That's why neighborhood activity is so important. Neighbors should remind neighbors to pay attention to their driving habits and of their mutual responsibility to the residents living in the community. HOA's and residents can take it upon themselves to use several creative methods of reducing traffic problems in neighborhoods:

- Hold discussions at scheduled neighborhood meetings
- Write letters to local newspapers or neighborhood/community newsletters letting drivers know the threat posed by speeding on our sense of community and well-being
- Hold a "slow down" block party to get people to think about their driving habits.
- Groups of residents can walk the neighborhood with door hangers and talk to neighbors about neighborhood traffic safety
- Leave the cars at home. Encourage family and friends to ride bicycles, walk or take the bus to destinations. This will reduce the traffic volume and speeding in the neighborhood. In addition, the presence of people (not just people in cars) along the street reminds drivers that they are in a neighborhood, not on an interstate highway.

These are just a few examples of ideas to assist residents in the education and enforcement of neighborhood traffic problems. It is the responsibility of the neighborhood representative to begin this process and to keep the Town Engineering Staff apprised of the methods that are being employed.

Procedure for initiating a neighborhood traffic study:

1. A Neighborhood Representative (as defined above) should contact the Town of Huntersville Engineering and Public Works Department at (704) 766-2220 or submit a request form to request Traffic Calming. The form for such a request is attached or can be downloaded and submitted electronically from the Town of Huntersville website: [CLICK HERE](#). Each request will be electronically filed and the status can be tracked on the Town webpage.
2. Staff will meet with the Neighborhood Representative to discuss the process that will be followed.
3. Staff collects and analyzes data related to the traffic issues identified and presents the findings to the representative. This process is typically completed within 60 days, depending on the traffic calming request backlog. During the data collection and analysis period, it will be the responsibility of the representative to initiate a minimum of three tasks from the Neighborhood Awareness Campaign. This campaign is entirely the responsibility of the HOA or neighborhood; no Town funds will be used.
4. If warrants for traffic calming measures are not met, traffic calming devices will not be considered under this policy. The street will not be eligible for re-evaluation for a period of 1 year. If the criteria for traffic calming measures are met, then *Type 1* options will be initiated. These are as follows:

Type 1 Options

- Request increased police presence
 - Evaluate traffic control signage and regulatory signage to ensure minimum requirements are met
 - Installation of temporary driver feedback signage (Radar)
5. A follow-up data collection survey and analysis will be conducted within 90 days after *Type 1* options are implemented. If *Type 1* options are ineffective at controlling the undesired traffic conditions, then *Type 2* options will be examined. A description of device types can be found in Appendix A.

Type 2 Options

- Center Island Narrowing
- Chicane
- Choker
- Speed Cushion
- Speed Hump/Table
- Traffic Circle
- Pavement Striping for lane narrowing purposes (Center line, Edge line, etc.)
- Multiway STOP (If Warranted)
- Other methods approved by Staff

6. If applicable, Town Staff will engineer a recommended traffic calming plan using ***Type 2*** options. The staff recommended plan will be presented to the Town Board and a public hearing will be advertised and scheduled on the first Town Board meeting of the month to take citizen input. At a subsequent Town Board meeting, the Town Board will vote to approve, deny, or modify the plan.

Traffic Calming Warrants

To qualify for traffic calming in the Town of Huntersville, the following warrants must be met:

- The street must be classified as a Town maintained two-lane Residential Local or Residential Collector street
- The street cannot be designated as a primary emergency response route, transit route, or classified as a Thoroughfare (See Appendix B)
- The street cannot be more than two travel lanes wide and must be less than or equal to 40 feet
- 15 % of the traffic on the street exceeds the posted speed limit by more than 5 mph, as determined by the field analysis
- The street's speed limit must be posted at 25 mph or less
- The Neighborhood Representative must provide proof of participation in the Neighborhood Awareness Campaign (Minimum of three tasks)

Implementation, Evaluation, and Funding

The Town of Huntersville will be solely responsible for engineering and implementing traffic calming devices that are deemed warranted by the field study. Town Staff will present findings to the Town Board and the Neighborhood Representative. All ***Type 1*** non-physical traffic calming recommendations will be implemented by Town Staff. ***Type 2*** option plans will be implemented as funds are made available and require Town Board review and approval. Traffic calming measures are funded through an appropriation determined by the Town Board.

Re-evaluation and Monitoring

Town Staff will review the effectiveness of each measure after implementation. If the measures prove to be ineffective or should traffic conditions change, Town Staff can recommend removal of the devices. The Town Board must approve any recommendation to remove installed devices.

Appendix A: Description of Traffic Calming Devices

(Appendix A information courtesy of Institute of Transportation Engineers)

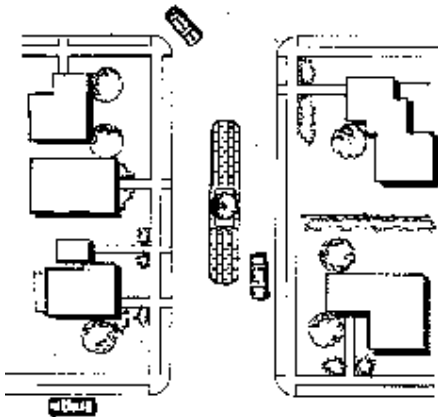
Center Island Narrowing

Description:

- raised islands located along the centerline of a street that narrow the travel lanes at that location
- sometimes called midblock medians, median slow points, or median chokers

Applications:

- are often nicely landscaped to provide visual amenity and neighborhood identity
- can help pedestrianize streets by providing a mid-point refuge for pedestrians crossings
- sometimes used on wide streets to narrow travel lanes
- work well when combined with crosswalks



Potential Impacts:

- may reduce parking and driveway access
- reduces pedestrian crossing width
- may visually enhance the street through landscaping but may also limit visibility of pedestrian crossings
- bicyclists prefer not to have the travel way narrowed into path of motor vehicles
- collision, speed and volume data are not available

Emergency Response Issues:

- preferred by fire department/emergency response agencies to most other traffic calming measures

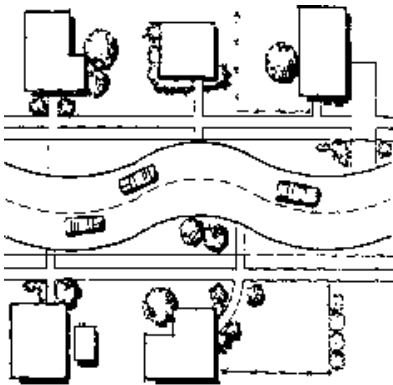
Chicanes

Description:

- a series of narrowings or curb extensions that alternate from one side of the street to the other forming S-shaped curves
- also called deviations, serpentines, reversing curves, twists, and staggerings

Applications:

- appropriate for midblock locations only
- most effective with equivalent volumes on both approaches
- typically, is a series of at least three curb extensions
- can use on-street parking to create chicane



Design/Installation Issues:

- unless well-designed, chicanes may still permit speeding by drivers cutting straight paths across the center line
- European manuals recommend shifts in alignment of at least one lane width, deflection angles of at least 45 degrees, and center islands to prevent drivers from taking a straight "racing line" through the feature

Potential Impacts:

- no effect on access
- limited data available on their effect on speed, volume, and collisions
- street sweeping may need to be done manually
- can impact parking and driveway access
- provides opportunity for landscaping

Emergency Response Issues:

- limited data available on their effect on delay to emergency response
- emergency response typically prefer two-lane chicanes to speed humps

Chokers

Description:

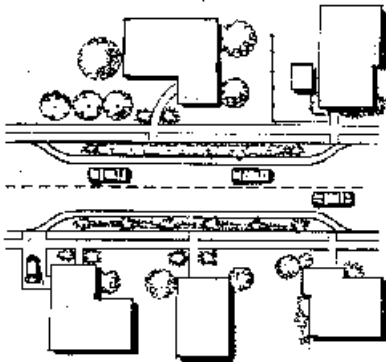
- curb extensions at midblock or intersection corners that narrow a street by extending the sidewalk or widening the planting strip
- can leave the cross section with two narrow lanes or with a single lane
- at midblock, sometimes called parallel chokers, angled chokers, twisted chokers, angle points, pinch points, or midblock narrowings
- at intersections, sometimes called neckdowns, bulbouts, knuckles, or corner bulges
- if marked as a crosswalk, they are also called safe crosses

Applications:

- local and collector streets
- pedestrian crossings
- main roads through small communities
- work well with speed humps, speed tables, raised intersections, textured crosswalks, curb radius reductions, and raised median islands



Design/Installation Issues:



- some applications use an island which allows drainage and bicyclists to continue between the choker and the original curb line
- typically designed to narrow road to 20 feet for two-way traffic; typically avoid the use of widths between 13 and 17 feet
- adequate drainage is a key consideration
- provides opportunity for landscaping
- vertical delineators, bollards or object markers are often used to make visible to snowplow operators

Potential Impacts:

- can impact parking and driveway access
- reduces pedestrian crossing width and increases visibility of pedestrian
- speeds have typically been reduced on average by 4 percent for two-lane chokers and 14 percent for one lane chokers
- minor decrease in traffic for two-lane and 20 percent reduction for one-lane chokers
- collision data not available
- bicyclists prefer not to have the travel way narrowed into path of motor vehicles

Emergency Response Issues:

- preferred by many fire department/emergency response agencies to most other traffic calming measures

Other/Special Considerations:

- one-lane chokers rely on regulatory signs and driver courtesy to work

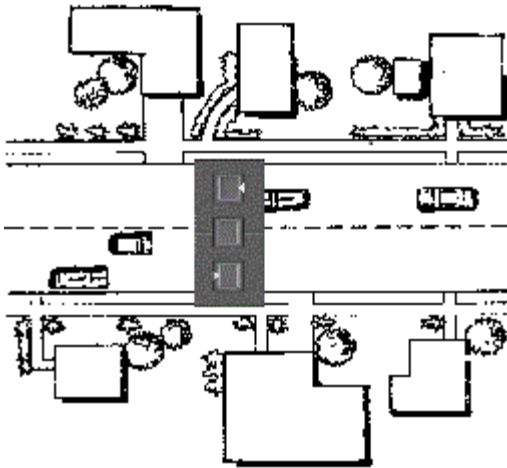
Speed Cushion

Description:

- modular units; either pre-manufactured or constructed with asphalt
- sometimes called speed pods

Applications:

- local and collector streets
- designed to allow wider wheel-based vehicles (emergency vehicles) to straddle and pass with minimal delay



Design/Installation Issues:

- typically 6.5 feet X 6.5 feet in size
- most common height is 3 inches
- pre-manufactured unit shall be installed on roads with adequate pavement structure to allow for anchoring
- number of pods determined by street width

Potential Impacts:

- no effect on access
- traffic volumes have been reduced on average by 15-25 percent depending on alternative routes
- pods require the driver to slow below posted speed to have comfortable ride
- cyclist travel is unimpeded

Emergency Response Issues:

- generally less than 2 seconds of delay per hump for fire trucks

Speed Hump (Tables)

Description:

- long raised speed humps with a flat section in the middle and ramps on the ends; sometimes constructed with brick or other textured materials on the flat section
- sometimes called flat top speed humps, trapezoidal humps, speed platforms, raised crosswalks, or raised crossings

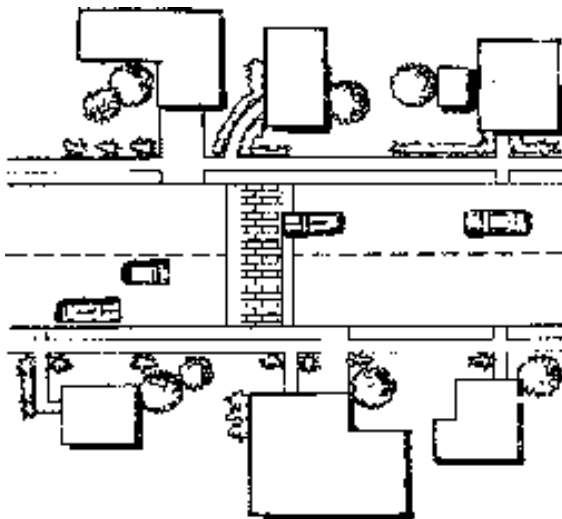
Applications:

- local and collector streets
- main roads through small communities
- typically long enough for the entire wheelbase of a passenger car to rest on top
- work well in combination with textured crosswalks, curb extensions, and curb radius reductions
- can include a crosswalk



Design/Installation Issues:

- typically 22 feet in the direction of travel with 6 foot ramps on each end and a 10 foot flat section in the middle; other lengths (32 and 48 feet) reported in U.S. practice
- most common height is between 3 and 4 inches (and reported as high as 6 inches)
- ramps are typically 6 feet long (reported up to 10 feet long) and are either parabolic or linear
- careful design is needed for drainage



Potential Impacts:

- no effect on access
- speeds are reduced, but usually to a higher crossing speed than at speed bumps (typically between 25 and 27 miles per hour)
- traffic volumes have been reduced on average by 12 percent depending on alternative routes available
- collisions have been reduced on average by 45 percent on treated streets (not adjusted for traffic diversion)
- reported to increase pedestrian visibility and likelihood that driver yields to pedestrian
- adverse impact on transit/service vehicles and cyclists

Emergency Response Issues:

- typically preferred by fire departments over 12 to 14-foot speed humps
- generally less than 3 seconds of delay per hump for fire trucks

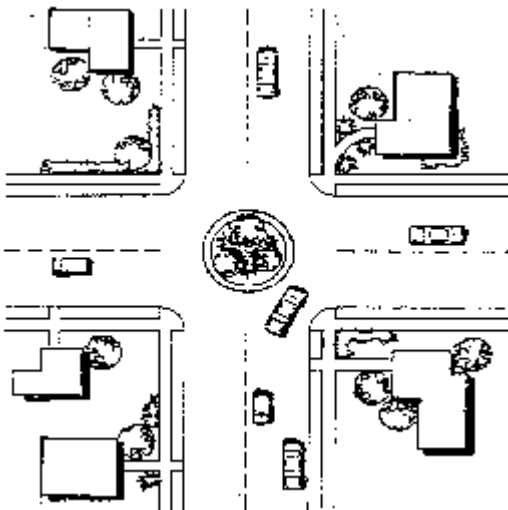
Traffic Circles

Description:

- raised islands, placed in intersections, around which traffic circulates
- motorists yield to motorists already in the intersection
- require drivers to slow to a speed that allows them to comfortably maneuver around them
- sometimes called intersection islands
- different from roundabouts

Applications:

- intersections of local or collector streets
- one lane each direction entering intersection
- not typically used at intersections with high volume of large trucks and buses turning left



Design/Installation Issues:

- typically circular in shape, though not always
- usually landscaped in their center slands
- often controlled by YIELD signs on all approaches
- key design features are the offset distance (distance between projection of street curb and center island), lane width for circling the circle, the circle diameter, and height of mountable outer ring for large vehicles such as school buses and trash trucks

Potential Impacts:

- no effect on access
- reduction in midblock speed of about 10 percent; area of influence tends to be a couple hundred feet upstream and downstream of intersection
- only minimal diversion of traffic

- intersection collisions have been reduced on average by 70 percent and overall collisions by 28 percent
- can result in bicycle/auto conflicts at intersections because of narrowed travel lane

Emergency Response Issues:

- emergency vehicles typically slow to approximately 13 mph; approximate delay of between 5 and 8 seconds per circle for fire trucks
- fire trucks can maneuver around traffic circles at slow speeds provided vehicles are not parked near the circle

Other/Special Considerations:

- large vehicles may need to turn left in front of the circle (which could be unsafe at higher volumes); legislation may be required to legally permit this movement
- quality of landscaping and its maintenance are key issues
- landscaping needs to be designed to allow adequate sight distance
- care must be taken to avoid routing vehicles through unmarked crosswalks on side-street approach

Appendix B:

Area Thoroughfare Plan

