



Roads and Drainage Division

Residential Traffic Calming Policy

Introduction

Traffic calming is a traffic management strategy involving physical traffic control measures that reduce negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behavior, and improve conditions for non-motorized road users.

The Roads & Drainage Division is committed to reducing negative impacts of traffic while ensuring the overall safety and livability of residential neighborhoods. This traffic calming policy provides a structured process for involving the community in implementing solutions for residential traffic problems that can be mitigated by traffic calming measures. The following policies and guidelines form the basis of the process citizens should use to initiate traffic calming investigations. These guidelines have been reviewed by the County Manager's Office and the Transportation Planning Organization.

Requests for traffic calming may be submitted in person to 3000 Sheffield Road, Winter Haven, FL 33880, via telephone call to 863-535-2200, or via e-mail to amygregory@polk-county.net.

Step 1 – Traffic Calming Study

Upon receipt of a traffic calming request form from the neighborhood liaison, the Roads & Drainage Division will schedule a traffic study to determine if the street(s) meet the criteria for traffic calming.

The following data shall be used along with the justification criteria to determine if traffic calming is warranted:

- Traffic volumes (24-hour weekday traffic volumes along the project street).
- Traffic speeds (85th percentile vehicular speeds along the project street).
- Physical roadway data and geometry (number of lanes, width, grade and alignment).
- Crash data for the most recent five-year period along the project street.
- Inventory of community facilities and schools.
- Alternate routes traffic may take if traffic calming devices are installed.

Justification Criteria

The following are specific criteria, all of which must be met for a street to be eligible for traffic calming:

- Street must have a functional classification of Local Residential. Major or Minor Collectors, or Local Commercial roads are ineligible for traffic calming. Street must be paved. Dirt, clay, or stabilized (Open Grade Mix) roads will not be considered for traffic calming.
- The posted speed limit of the street must be 30 MPH or less.

In addition to the criteria above, both of the following criteria must also be met:

- Street must have a documented speeding problem with an 85th percentile speed greater than 7 MPH over the posted speed.
- Street must have an average daily traffic of at least 10 times the number of residences along the street being considered for traffic calming, unless that street serves as a primary ingress/egress for a specific community, in which case the average daily traffic must be at least 10 times the number of residences in that community.

Additional Considerations

- Priority shall be given to streets that do not provide direct access to schools or other community facilities.
- The traffic calming plan shall not adversely affect pedestrian or bicycle safety.
- The traffic calming plan shall not adversely affect street drainage.
- Certain traffic calming devices may not be used if curves or obstacles would create an unsafe condition for motorists driving at normal speed under average driving conditions.
- All traffic calming devices shall be consistent with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), the Manual of Uniform Minimum Standards for Design, Construction and Maintenance for Streets and Highways, and the FDOT Roadway and Traffic Design Standards.

Step 2 – Petition Procedures

A minimum of 66 percent of the households facing the street segment on which the traffic calming is proposed must support the request (one signature per household). A segment shall consist of every developed property having frontage along the project street between successive intersecting roadways.

If the proposed street lies within a subdivision having an active homeowners association, the president of that association, on behalf of and with the support of the association, may submit a letter in support of traffic calming devices in lieu of a petition.

Step 3 – Plan Development Process

Upon receipt of the petition/letter and verification of the legitimacy of its signatures, the Roads & Drainage Division will notify the originator of the request of the evaluation results. If the necessary criteria are met, the homeowners association or neighborhood liaison will be requested to schedule an informational meeting with the community. If the justification criteria are not met, the process ends.

If the street under consideration for traffic calming is a primary Fire Rescue emergency response routes and/or transit routes, the Roads & Drainage Division will inform Fire Rescue and solicit their comments. Any comments shall be provided to the homeowners association or neighborhood liaison for their consideration and dissemination to all interested parties **before** the meeting. Any street classified as a primary emergency response route or which is a transit route will be limited to 22' long "flat-top" type traffic calming.

The Roads & Drainage Division will develop a traffic calming location plan for the homeowners association or neighborhood liaison to distribute during the meeting, and post signs on the streets being considered for traffic calming announcing the location, date, and time of the public meeting. The Division will provide a representative at the meeting to answer questions.

During or following the meeting, affected citizens should submit specific input regarding portions of the street and/or specific locations that should be considered by the Division in developing the final traffic calming location plan. It is imperative that traffic calming be placed in accordance with

County standards regarding type, location, height, and spacing. For example, speed humps are typically spaced a minimum of 500 feet apart (although spacing of up to 750 feet can be satisfactory), are generally not installed within 200 feet of a controlled intersection, at driveway entrances, or on sharp curves or hillcrests where visibility may be obstructed.

Once outlined, the Roads & Drainage Division will develop the final traffic calming location plan taking into consideration the citizens' input on acceptable traffic control type and placement, and standard engineering practices.

Step 4 – Resident Concurrence Process

After developing the final plan, Roads & Drainage will mail, along with a self-addressed stamped envelope, the official Owner Concurrence Form, a letter explaining the issues, and a map illustrating the proposed location of the traffic calming devices. The signed form must be returned to the Roads & Drainage Division within 30 days after being issued. Failure to meet this schedule may result in the postponement of the traffic calming installation to the following construction year. If the specified resident concurrence requirements are not met, the process ends.

Residence owners will be required to indicate on the official form that they have reviewed these documents prior to their concurrence. Only the official county Owner Concurrence Form will be accepted. Traffic calming requires the concurrence of at least 80% of the property owners (one signature per household), whose livability is directly affected by the traffic conditions along the street or street section being considered for traffic calming devices. This typically means direct road frontage of a residence but can also include side and rear yard frontages depending on the specific circumstance. Traffic calming also requires the concurrence of at least 50% of the residence owners (one signature per household) on side streets in the neighborhood whose only access to their homes is via the street being considered for traffic calming. **A non-vote will be considered a vote *in favor* of traffic calming.**

Speed humps will have appropriate pavement markings, as well as a minimum of two warning signs per hump – one in each direction – placed on the right-hand side of the street just before the hump.

Step 5 – Board Approval

If the Owner Concurrence Forms and non-votes indicate at least 80% concurrence of the street's property owners and 50% concurrence of the side street property owners, the traffic calming proposal will be placed on Polk County Board of County Commissioners' agenda for approval. Public notification of the Board meeting date will be made in advance to ensure all parties are given an opportunity for full participation.

If the Board of County Commissioners approves the traffic calming proposal, the Roads & Drainage Division will schedule the approved traffic calming measures for installation and notify the initiating citizen or homeowners association president in writing of the Board's decision and proposed installation schedule.

Priority will be assigned to requests for traffic calming on streets that are parallel to a street where traffic calming measures have been implemented and the residents believe traffic volumes and speeds have increased as a result. If it is determined that those streets meet all the criteria and resident concurrence requirements, a priority will be assigned to installing traffic calming or other traffic controlling devices on those streets over other eligible streets on the candidate list.

Project Evaluation, Modification, and Removal

Roads & Drainage Division staff may evaluate the traffic-calming project from a safety standpoint after installation, including a review of traffic volumes, speeds, and crashes. Upon a finding of a hazardous situation or condition created by the traffic calming project, such situation or condition

shall be immediately corrected through the modification or removal of the traffic calming device or devices. Staff may review other local residential streets thought to be affected by the installation, after an initial six-month period.

Residence owners may request removal of traffic calming devices upon submission of a petition signed by at least 66 percent of the households facing the street on the block on which the traffic calming device(s) are located.