

Traffic Calming Program (TCP)

Working Together to Find a Solution

The City of Virginia Beach, Department of Public Works/Traffic Engineering Division has a Traffic Calming Program (TCP) designed to improve the quality of life on our neighborhood streets. The program is intended to address speeding in residential neighborhoods on streets classified as local or residential streets.

TCP Goals

- Improve the quality of life on neighborhood streets
- Achieve slower motor vehicle speeds
- Improve perception of safety for non-motorists

What is 'Traffic Calming'?

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

Program Qualification Criteria–

The TCP is restricted to two-lane local residential streets with posted speed limits of **25 mph**, and a minimum of 12 dwellings fronting the street per 1,000 feet of roadway. The street must have daily traffic of at least 600 vehicles per day but no more than 5,000 vpd. Traffic Engineering will determine if the street is eligible.

Traffic Calming Phases

Neighborhoods could complete up to four phases of the program, depending on traffic volume and speed. The following **four phases** of the program must be completed sequentially.

(I) Community Contact and Education -

Traffic Engineering discusses the program with civic league leaders or similar representatives. The neighborhood or civic league selects one street and location for evaluation. Due to limited funding, only one affected street per neighborhood.



(II) Selective Police Enforcement -

Traffic Engineering performs a 48 hour speed study on the selected street to see if it qualifies. Traffic Engineering and the Police Department schedule enforcement on the designated street during the highest violation periods. Enforcement is conducted weekly for twelve or more weeks, after which a traffic study is performed to determine if program compliance has been achieved.



(III) Additional \$200 Fine (by petition) –

If a street remains in non-compliance after one year of selective enforcement, 75% of the directly affected property owners must sign a petition agreeing to an additional \$200 fine for speeding. Once the petition has been submitted and verified, Traffic Engineering will conduct studies to select the streets that will be covered. Signs will be posted to indicate the street to be included in Phase III. Police enforcement will be scheduled, after which another a traffic study will be performed to determine if program compliance has been achieved.



(IV) Physical Devices and Traffic Control Restrictions (by petition) -

In order to move to Phase IV, Phase III MUST be in place for at least 1 year with continued non-compliance. If a street remains in non-compliance after Phase III, Traffic Engineering requires 75% of the directly affected property owners to sign a petition supporting physical devices installed on the designated street. Once the petition has been submitted and verified, Traffic Engineering designs



and schedules installation of the device(s). Installation occurs only if the Police Dept., Fire Dept., EMS and property owners within 100' approve the installation.

How to Participate

Request - the neighborhood association, civic league, or appointed representative writes a request to Traffic Engineering. The City will then contact you to set up a meeting.



Documented Speeding Problem - To qualify for the Traffic Calming Program, the **average speed must be at least 29 mph, or the 85th Percentile speed at least 33 mph.**



Program Evaluation - each phase of the program is evaluated for effectiveness. Evaluation consists of several traffic studies of the selected street. An initial evaluation is performed prior to implementation of the traffic calming program. This initial study is used to document the speeding problem, establish the controls, and determine benchmarks to measure program effectiveness. Subsequent traffic studies will be performed to determine compliance with the program objectives.



The portable speed trailer is used as part of the Traffic Calming Program and can be used as part of other safety education programs. It displays drivers' real-time speed; therefore, it may increase drivers' awareness of the speed limit.

You Can Help!

Obey the Speed Limit

Drive 25 mph or less to give yourself more time to react to the unexpected, such as pedestrians, children darting out from behind parked cars, pets or obstacles in the road. Unless you make a conscious effort, you may drive faster than you should on residential streets.



Remind neighbors and anyone using your vehicle to obey the speed limit, and practice good driving habits.

Studies show that driving at a responsible speed on residential streets has very little effect on the time it takes to complete your journey.

Avoid Using Neighborhood Streets as Shortcuts

Using neighborhood streets as shortcuts disrupts the quality of life in neighborhoods. The TCP seeks to improve the quality of life on neighborhood streets.



Observe the Rules of the Road

Don't take chances, even on short trips. Statistics show that most accidents occur close to home. In particular, make sure you and all of your passengers buckle up.



Be Aware of Your Perception

To a person standing in their front yard, cars traveling 25-30 mph may appear to be going more than 40 mph. Also, when vehicles accelerate, it may seem like they are going faster.

One way to determine if a street has a legitimate speeding problem is to do a study.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Where will you do the speed study?

A: Usually, the neighborhood selects the location for the speed study since they are the most familiar with their neighborhood. However, if they wish, Traffic Engineering will select a location based on observation of the most likely site for speeders. Only one location is selected; therefore, it is advisable that the neighborhood choose the site that experiences the highest perceived number of speeders.

Q: Can you install speed tables on our street?

A: Physical devices are among the options considered in Phase IV. Physical devices are installed only after all other attempts have been unsuccessful. There are strict criteria that must be met, and all devices must be approved by Fire, Police, EMS, & Schools.

Q: Can you install STOP signs to slow speeders?

A: STOP signs are installed to indicate right-of-way. Installing STOP signs for speed control goes directly against federal guidelines. The guidelines are based on engineering practices and studies, and have determined that STOP signs used for speed control can exacerbate problems. First, people tend to speed in between STOP signs, to "make up" for their perceived lost time. Second, when drivers must constantly stop, but do not see good reason to, they may develop contempt for STOP signs.

Q: Can you install "Children At Play" signs?

A: "Children At Play" signs and similar caution signs do not slow down vehicles. Many municipalities no longer install "Children At Play" signs because these signs give parents a false sense of security that the City cannot provide. The City does not condone children playing in the street, and this is further reinforced by City Code.

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Speed Trailer used in Traffic Calming Program



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