

City of New Braunfels

Neighborhood Traffic Calming Policy

2025

Executive Summary

The intent of this policy is to outline the criteria used in an engineering evaluation to determine if installation of traffic calming is appropriate for local streets in the city. Speeding is a large concern for residents in the city and speed limit changes and traffic calming are the most common traffic requests received by city staff. Studies demonstrate that changing the posted speed does little to circumvent speeding, but research has shown that traffic calming measures which alter the geometric characteristics of a roadway and/or the road user's perception induce slower speeds. In order for traffic calming to be effective, their use should be in accordance with established transportation and traffic engineering criteria, documented facts, and engineering judgement. As is the case with all traffic control devices, proper use will encourage compliance and safe driving practices while maintaining responsible allocation of city resources.

This policy details the initiation of a traffic calming request, the engineering evaluation and recommendation, the traffic calming design process, public outreach strategies, and the procedure for approval and installation of the final traffic calming plan. The policy also includes a prioritization process for funding approved projects as well as an appeals procedure.

Traffic calming should not be used as an all-inclusive solution, as every street has a unique combination of roadway geometry, context, and traffic dynamics. Speed management is often a complex issue that requires a multifaceted approach, using engineering methods along with education and enforcement. Engineering staff is to work closely with the Police Department and planning and community engagement staff to incorporate enforcement of speed limits and public education strategies as well as identify critical changes to neighborhood design standards and processes. However, a city's speed management program does not override or diminish driver responsibility to obey traffic laws and conduct vehicles in a safe manner.

Table of Contents

Background	4
Authority	4
Design Guidelines	4
Request Process	5-6
Evaluation	6-7
Design	7
Public Meeting	8
Final Design	8
Funding	8-10
Installation	10
Appeals	10
Removal	10

Background

The primary purpose of traffic calming is to support the livability and vitality of residential and commercial areas through improvements in non-motorist safety, mobility, and comfort. Traffic calming consist of horizontal, vertical, lane narrowing, roadside, and other features that use self-enforcing physical or psycho-perception means to produce the desired effects of reducing vehicle speeds and/or volumes on a single street or street network. Psycho-perception refers to how individuals consciously and unconsciously interpret their environment, and how these interpretations influence thoughts and behaviors.

Authority

Section 126-61(b) of the City of New Braunfels Code of Ordinances gives the City Engineer or their designee the authority to install certain traffic control devices in the public right-of-way within city limits. Traffic calming is typically not a standard traffic control device, and the authority to install traffic calming measures is based on this policy.

Design Guidelines

Traffic calming elements are designed in accordance with state and federal guidelines. These include but are not limited to:

- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)
- Texas Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (TMUTCD)
- Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)
- National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)
- Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE)

Request Process

Initiation

When a resident becomes concerned about traffic and speeding issues on a city street, they may decide to request city staff complete a traffic calming investigation. This initial request may be submitted via phone call, email, online form, mailed letter, or in-person inquiry at city offices.

Eligibility Evaluation

City staff will first perform a preliminary eligibility evaluation of the street before proceeding with the request process. Factors such as location, street classification, ownership (city, TxDOT, private, etc.), and impacts to emergency services routes or access may disqualify a street from traffic calming eligibility.

Application

The next step of the request process is the application and petition. The applicant will fill and submit the Traffic Calming Investigation Form. The following information is required:

- The street segment that traffic calming is being requested for, identified by the street name and the limits (eg. Walnut Avenue from Landa Street to San Antonio Street). The street segment must encompass one or more complete blocks. A block is a unit of land bounded by streets or other transportation or utility rights-of-way, parks, streams, waterways, or any other barrier to the continuity of development. This is the study area of the traffic calming investigation. Note that traffic calming has little impact when implemented on single, short street segments. Applicants are encouraged to expand the request area to multiple blocks when block lengths are short (less than 600 feet).
- A contact person must be designated for the request, with their name, address, phone number, and email address provided. The contact person is responsible for the completeness and validity of both the application and petition, as well as correspondence with city staff and the community concerning the request.
- If the street is within a subdivision with a Homeowners or Property Owners Association (HOA or POA), a signed statement of support for traffic calming from a representative of the HOA or POA leadership is required.

Petition

Attached to the Traffic Calming Investigation Form is the Evidence of Neighborhood Support. The contact person is responsible for turning in this petition with signatures from at least two-thirds of the properties adjacent to the street segment that traffic calming is being requested for. An adjacent property is any property that borders the identified street segment. Each signer must provide their name, address, phone number, and email address and whether or not they are the property owner. Only one signature per property will be accepted for the petition. The contact person is responsible for verifying the legibility of the information provided by each signer. Although signatures are acceptable from the occupant or the property owner, some traffic calming measures cannot be installed in front of a property if the owner objects to it.

The contact person will fill and sign the petition verification statement attached to the petition asserting the validity of the petition as well as confirming the traffic calming request was discussed and explained with each signer before signatures were provided.

Submission

The application and petition package are submitted to staff via email, mail, or drop-off at City Hall. Once received, staff will review the package for completeness, including the number of signatures received on the petition against the number of signatures required to meet the two-thirds requirement. Staff will communicate with the contact person to either confirm the advancement of their traffic calming request to the evaluation stage or to request revisions to the application or additional signatures on the petition.

Department Contact Information

City of New Braunfels
Transportation and Capital Improvements
Address: 550 Landa Street
New Braunfels, Texas 78130
Website: [Submit a Request](#)
Phone: (830) 221-4275
Email: TCI@newbraunfels.gov

Evaluation

Staff evaluates the study area and makes a determination on the target speed and target volume for the roadway. The target speed and volume represent the appropriate values for the roadway based on engineering judgement and geometric characteristics such as pavement width, right-of-way width, number of lanes, block length, and presence of horizontal or vertical curves. Additional factors considered include adjacent land uses, existing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, connectivity, frequency of homes fronting the roadway, and driveway spacing.

Based on the considerations above, staff may determine that the street segment is ineligible for traffic calming. The contact person is then notified, and the request does not move forward.

Data Collection

Speed and volume data is collected on the street within the study area for a minimum of 24 hours using non-intrusive collection means. Data is collected on a typical weekday during the school year when speeds and volumes are highest for most roadways. The collection time period may be adjusted on a case-by-case basis for areas with higher traffic volumes or speeds in the summer months or on weekends. Traffic data is collected during clear weather and average roadway conditions. Data is not collected if counts will be impacted by construction activity or special event closures.

Crash data in the study area for the past 3 years is obtained from TxDOT's Crash Records Information System. Staff will investigate to determine if speeding was a contributing factor to any reported crashes or if other safety issues are evident in the study area.

Analysis

The volume and speed from the collected traffic data is compared to the target speed and target volume from the staff evaluation of the study area. In order for traffic calming to be warranted on a street, the following criteria must be met:

- Engineering judgement determines that traffic calming on the street would be of significant benefit to the safety of road users; and
- Volume: the Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volume recorded in the study area must exceed the target volume; or
- Daily Speed: 15% of vehicles are traveling at least 5 mph over the target speed.

Meeting volume or speed criteria is not conclusive justification to install or not install traffic calming. The engineering study is ultimately the basis for the decision and will determine the type and location of traffic calming for the proposed street.

Results

Staff determines if traffic calming is warranted based on the engineering study. If traffic calming is warranted, the request moves forward to the design stage. If traffic calming is not warranted, the contact person is notified of the results of the warrant, and the request is closed.

Design

When staff determines that traffic calming is warranted on a street, a draft traffic calming plan is designed based on roadway characteristics, target volume and speed, and collected traffic data. Potential traffic calming devices proposed in the draft calming plan may include but are not limited to:

- Pavement markings (lane delineation, bulb-outs)
- Speed humps
- Enhanced crosswalks
- Radar feedback signs
- Neck downs
- Mini roundabouts
- Curb extensions

The following devices are not approved for traffic calming, and will not be considered as part of a traffic calming plan:

- Stop signs
- Traffic signals
- “Children at Play” signs

Once completed, the draft traffic calming plan is provided to the contact person to distribute for review and feedback to the community in the study area. A public meeting date is scheduled in coordination with the contact person. Anyone unable to attend the public meeting must provide any feedback to staff by close of business the day of the meeting. Feedback may be submitted to staff via call, email, or letter.

Public Meeting

Transportation and Traffic Advisory Board

Draft traffic calming plans are presented to the Transportation and Traffic Advisory Board for approval. The Board typically meets monthly at 6:00 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month in the Tejas Room at City Hall. Meeting dates and details are posted on the city's website and on the bulletin board outside of City Hall. These meetings are open to the public. Staff coordinates with the contact person to schedule an appearance before the Board for the traffic calming request to be heard.

At the meeting, staff presents the request for traffic calming, including the background, evaluation, and draft traffic calming plan design. Any public feedback received up until the end of business the day of the meeting is reviewed with the Board. All meeting attendees will have the opportunity to speak during the public comment period of the meeting and provide feedback on the draft design.

The Board will consider the staff recommendation and public feedback before taking action. If the Board votes to approve the staff recommended traffic calming plan or an alternative plan supported by staff, the draft plan will move to the final design stage. If the plan is denied, or an alternative plan is recommended that is not supported by staff, the case will be presented to City Council for final decision.

City Council

In the event that the Transportation and Traffic Advisory Board does not approve the staff recommended traffic calming plan, staff will coordinate with the contact person to schedule an appearance before City Council for a final decision on the traffic calming plan design. If a traffic calming plan is approved, the case moves to final design. If City Council does not approve a traffic calming plan, the contact person is notified, and the request closed.

Final Design

Adjustments to the draft design are made based on the outcome of the public meeting process, and the traffic calming plan is finalized. The approved traffic calming plan is added to the list of plans awaiting funding. Staff is authorized to move plans forward to installation once funding is identified and available.

Funding

Implementation of approved traffic calming plans is funded through an annual dedicated traffic calming budget. Approved plans are funded on a first-come, first-served basis. In the event that the need for funding exceeds the budget, the plans awaiting funding will be prioritized, and the next year of funding will be dispersed in priority order at the start of the fiscal year. Staff will seek additional funding sources where available should a backlog of projects develop in order to implement approved traffic calming plans in a timely manner.

Approved plans will be prioritized using a scoring system that sums point values from key safety, speed, and volume criteria. In addition, approved plans that have been awaiting funding for longer than 6 months after approval date will receive additional points. The plan with the highest score is considered to have the highest priority for the next available funding. Scoring criteria and point values are outlined in the tables below.

- Crashes- number of reported speeding related crashes in a 3-year period

Number of Crashes	Points Assigned
0	0
1-2	1
3-4	2
5-6	3
7-9	4
10 or more	5

- Speed- difference between the target speed and the 85th percentile speed recorded for the street segment

85 th Percentile Speed – Target Speed	Points Assigned
Less than 5	0
5-7	4
8-9	6
Greater than 10	8

- Peak hour volume- the two-way peak hour volume recorded for the street segment

Hourly Volume (veh/hr)	Points Assigned
Less than 50	0
50-99	1
100-249	2
250-500	3
More than 500	4

- Daily volume- percentage comparison between the target volume and average daily traffic volume recorded for the street segment

ADT/Target Volume	Points Assigned
Less than 100 %	0
100-124 %	2
125-149 %	4
150-200 %	6
Greater than 200 %	8

- Neighborhood criteria

Other Considerations	Points Assigned
School within ½ mile radius	1
Special pedestrian generators within 1,000-foot radius	1
Absence of sidewalks on the project street	1

- Longevity- amount of time that has passed since the traffic calming plan was approved

Months Since Plan Approval	Points Assigned
0-5	0
6 or more	1 point for every 6 months

Installation

Elements of approved traffic calming plans are to be installed in accordance with approved construction standards and specifications. The timing of installation is dependent on the workload and availability of the Public Works Department and, if necessary, a third-party contractor.

Appeals

In the event that traffic calming is not warranted and is not recommended by staff, the contact person can pursue an appeal through the Transportation and Traffic Advisory Board. If the Board rejects the appeal, the contact person is notified, and the request is closed. If the Board recommends approval of the appeal, the case will be heard by City Council where the final decision to override the staff determination on the need for traffic calming will be made. The decision to approve or deny an appeal by City Council is final.

Removal

Removal of traffic calming requires a petition with signatures from at least two-thirds of the properties adjacent to the street segment that traffic calming removal is being requested for. Cost for removal of the traffic calming is the responsibility of the requester. There will be no city participation in the cost incurred.