CITY OF WASHINGTON, ILLINOIS
Committee of the Whole Agenda Communication

Meeting Date: March 9, 2026

Prepared By: Dennis Carr – City Engineer

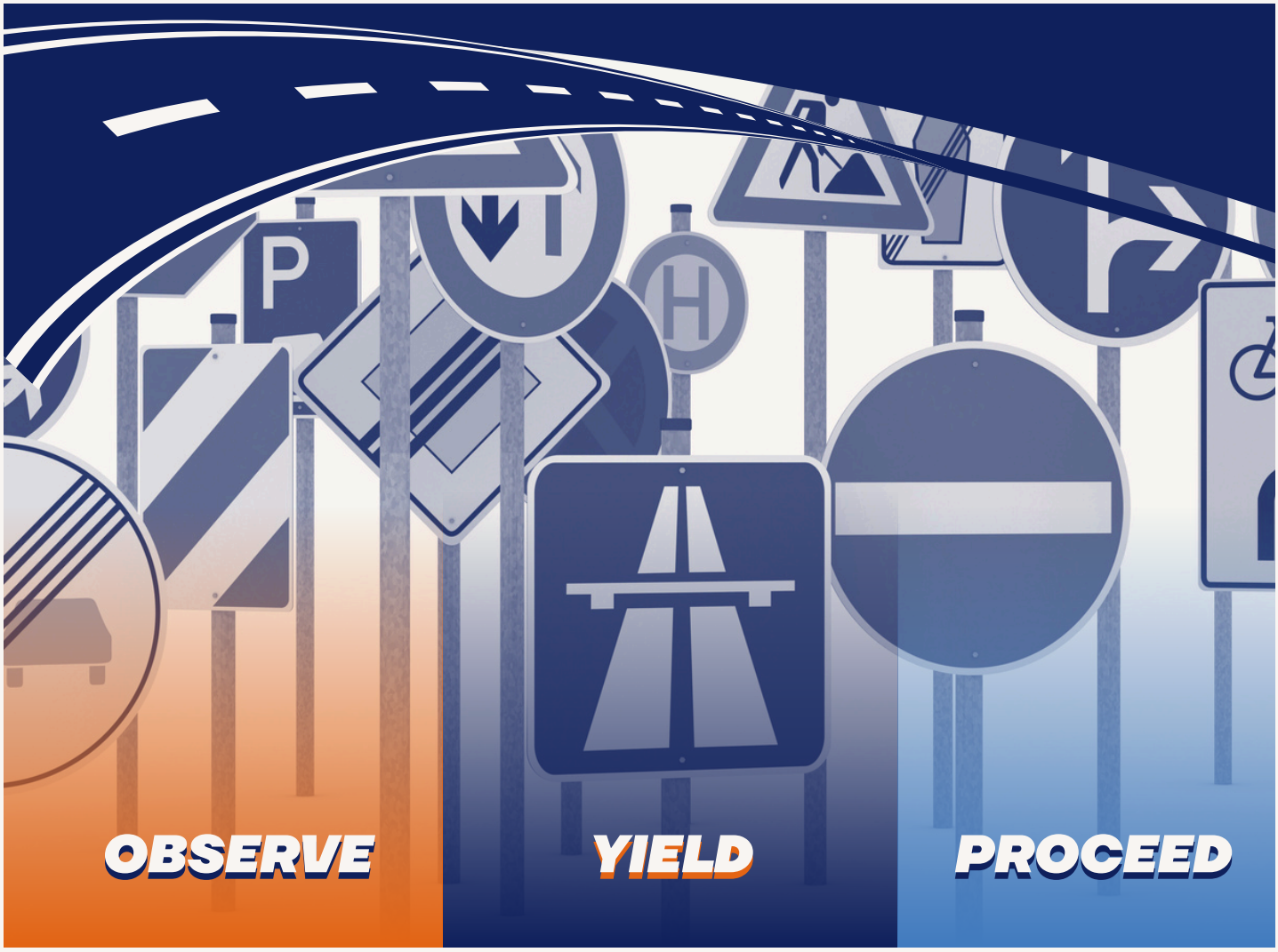
Agenda Item: Draft Traffic Calming Policy

Background: Over the past few years, City staff has received a steady number of concerns from residents about speeding, pedestrian safety, and other neighborhood traffic issues. This reflects a broader desire within the community to preserve neighborhood character while improving safety for drivers and pedestrians.

Currently, staff addresses traffic-related concerns on a case-by-case basis. While this approach has allowed flexibility, it lacks a standardized framework to ensure consistency of requests.

To create a clearer and more structured approach, staff has developed a comprehensive Traffic Calming Policy for Council's consideration.

Action Requested: Staff seeks discussion on the draft version of a Traffic Calming Policy.



City of Washington
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CITY OF WASHINGTON

Traffic Calming Policy

Traffic Calming Policy

City of Washington, Illinois

Prepared by:

City of Washington

Engineering Department

Public Works Department

Washington Police Department

Endorsed by City Council:

[Date]

Effective Date:

[Date]

Last Updated:

[Date]

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INTRODUCTION

The City of Washington maintains a network of local, collector, and arterial streets that provide access to residential neighborhoods, schools, parks, businesses, and regional transportation corridors. Concerns related to neighborhood speeding and cut-through traffic represent some of the most frequent issues brought forward by residents.

This Traffic Calming Policy establishes a clear and consistent framework for how the City evaluates, prioritizes, and responds to traffic-related concerns within the community. The policy outlines:

- The purpose and guiding principles of traffic management and traffic calming;
- The conditions under which traffic calming tools may be considered;
- The range of measures available to address identified issues; and
- A structured, step-by-step process for submitting, reviewing, and acting on requests.

This document is intended to assist residents in understanding traffic control options, support staff in the effective use of limited resources, and provide City leadership with a transparent and objective basis for decision-making.

TRAFFIC CALMING

What is Traffic Calming?

For the City of Washington, traffic calming refers to the use of physical design features and operational strategies intended to reduce the adverse effects of motor vehicle traffic in residential areas, encourage safer and more courteous driver behavior, and improve conditions for all who use the street. Traffic calming incorporates behavioral approaches as well as engineering approaches. These efforts are directed toward enhancing safety and promoting respectful interaction among people walking, bicycling and other modes of transportation.

Goal of Traffic Calming

The goal of traffic calming in Washington is to increase safety and comfort for all road users; reduce speeding and inappropriate cut-through traffic on neighborhood streets; support safe access to schools, parks, and community destinations; and achieve these outcomes through a process that is fair, data-driven, and consistent across the community. When thoughtfully applied, traffic calming measures can reduce vehicle speeds, lower crash risk and severity, and contribute to an improved neighborhood quality of life.

Traffic Calming Partners

Traffic calming only works if multiple partners play their roles:

- Neighborhoods- Residents, property owners, and neighborhood groups identify recurring issues, participate in petitions, share education materials, and model safe driving.
- Police Department – The Washington Police Department collects and analyzes traffic data, enforces traffic laws, deploys enforcement details and speed monitoring devices, and coordinates with Engineering and Public Works on problem areas.
- Engineering Department – Evaluates requests and recommends traffic calming tools
- Public Works Department – Implements and maintains approved measures.
- Other Agencies – The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Washington Township, and Tazewell County Highway Department own and operate certain major routes. On those streets, Washington may coordinate with those agencies but cannot act alone

TRAFFIC CALMING STRATEGIES - THE 5 E'S APPROACH

EDUCATION

Education and Awareness - Inform residents and drivers about the issue and how individual behavior impacts neighborhood safety. Use e-blast, social media, meetings, and other tools to share information.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Encouragement – Encourage residents and drivers to model the behavior they want to see. Support neighborhood initiatives that promote safe speeds and respectful driving.

ENFORCEMENT

Enforcement - Use targeted police presence, citations when warranted, and speed monitoring to reinforce lawful behavior, especially in documented problem locations.

ENGINEERING

Engineering – Design and install context-appropriate traffic calming measures using accepted engineering standards and best practices.

EVALUATION

Evaluation – Collect data before and after implementation to verify that measures are working and adjust if necessary.

Traffic Calming Eligibility

Streets are eligible for the City of Washington's traffic calming program if:

- The street in question is a City-owned street.
- The average violation rate of the statutory or posted speed limit is greater than 25 percent.
- The 85th percentile speed for the study segment is greater than 5 MPH over the posted or statutory speed limit. (85th percentile speed is defined as the speed at or below which 85 percent of the drivers travel on a road segment)
- The street segment (length of street) is greater than ¼ mile in length.
- The street segment (length of street) is not interrupted by at least one traffic control device (for example, stop sign or stop light).

Streets are NOT ELIGIBLE for the City's traffic calming program if:

- The streets are owned by IDOT, Tazewell County, or Townships.
- The average violation rate of the statutory or posted speed limit is less than or equal to 25 percent. (This assumes that the speed limit was determined by an engineering speed study.)

- The 85th percentile speed for the study segment is less than 5 MPH over the posted or statutory speed limit. (85th percentile speed is defined as the speed at or below which 85 percent of the drivers travel on a road segment).
- The Street segment (length of street) is less than ¼ mile in length.
- The Street segment (length of street) is interrupted by at least one traffic control device (for example, stop sign or stop light).

For traffic calming on roadways that are not eligible, traffic calming concepts may still be considered as part of larger capital projects or corridor designs, subject to the City's budget and project planning process.

Traffic Calming Levels

Washington has four levels of traffic calming. City staff will determine the best options for your street.

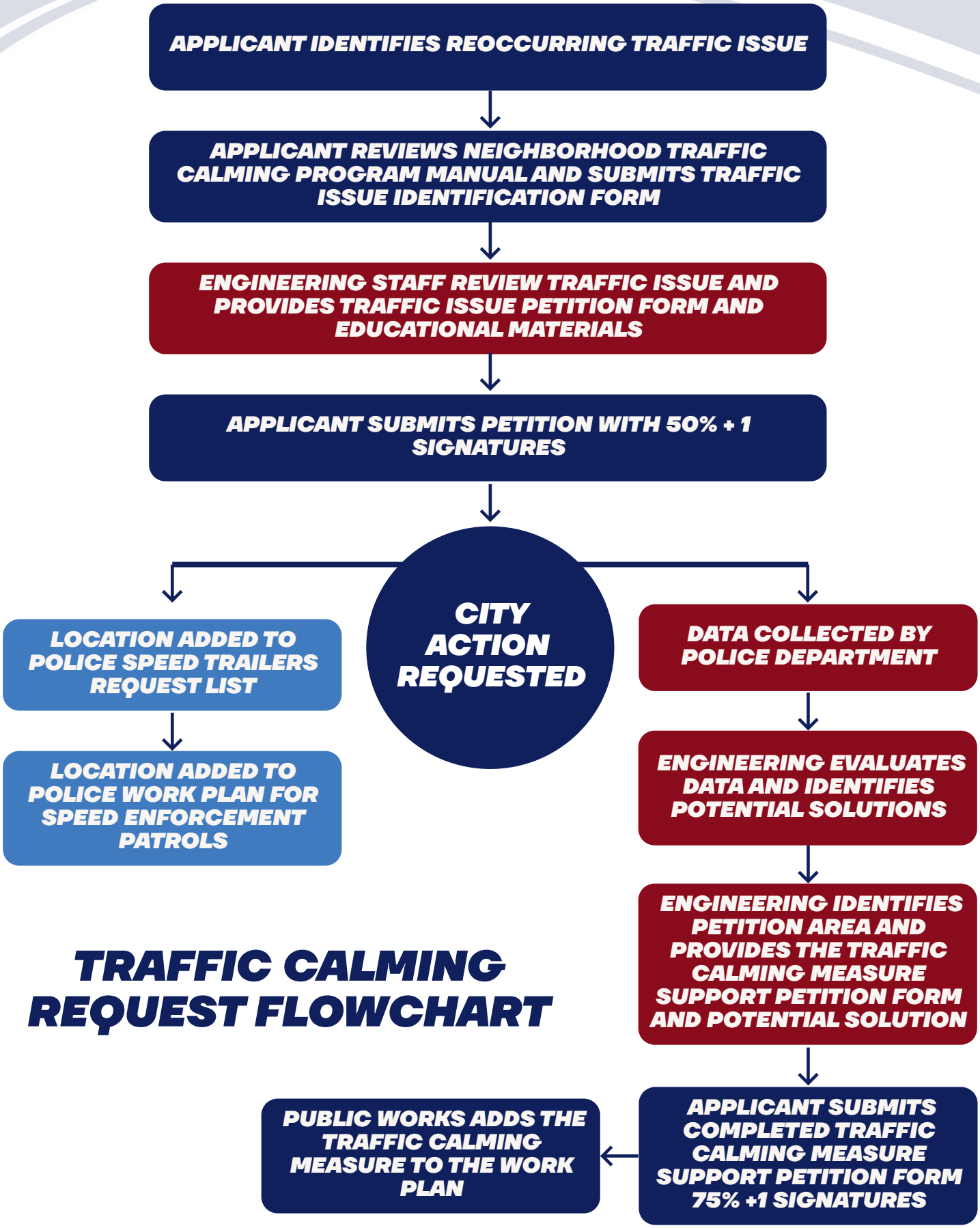
Level 1: Education, Enforcement and Encouragement can be used on most City-owned streets and have small costs.

Level 2: Striping Modifications can be used on many City-owned streets and have small costs.

Level 3: Retrofit can be used on many City-owned streets and have higher costs. Some of these measures may not be appropriate for your street.

Level 4: Engineering Design can be used on many City-owned streets and typically is used with full engineering design, traffic studies, and public involvement as part of a planned City project. Level 4 projects have significant costs.

TRAFFIC CALMING REQUEST FLOWCHART



TRAFFIC CALMING PROGRAM REQUEST PROCESS

Step 1. Applicant Identifies a Reoccurring Traffic Problem

Applicants include community members, neighborhood associations, government officials, or other groups. Common traffic problems include complaints of reoccurring speeding, parking issues, signage, or other traffic-related problems.

Step 2. Applicant Reviews Traffic Calming Program Manual and Submits Traffic Issue Identification Form

The applicant will complete the form which describes the problem, the frequency, the location, and any additional information on the problem. The form (available at the City of Washington website* Engineering Department) should be submitted to the City Engineer at the email address or mailing address identified on the form.

Step 3. Engineering Staff Reviews Traffic Issue and Provides the Traffic Issue Petition Form and Educational Materials

The City Engineer reviews the Traffic Issue Identification form and the problem identified. The City Engineer will create the petition area based on the issue identified and send the petition, along with educational materials, to the applicant. The results of the petition will determine if this is a collective issue and what city involvement is requested by the residents. City staff will contact the applicant within approximately 30 days.

Step 4. Applicant submits Signed Traffic Issue Identification Petition

Since education is a key component to making the neighbors aware of the traffic issue and their role in improving the situation The applicant will distribute educational materials in the petition area at the time of collecting signatures for the petition. The petition requires 50% + 1 of properties identified by the City for the process to begin. Once the appropriate number of signatures have been collected, the applicant will send the petition to the City Engineer.

Step 5. City Action Requested

The City Engineer will send the completed petition and information to the Police Department. If applicable, police will review the request and assess the location to determine which data collection device will be used. The Police Department may use speed trailers or a traffic and speed counting device. The device will remain in the requested area for a minimum of one week, to collect necessary data.

* https://www.ci.washington.il.us

TRAFFIC CALMING PROGRAM REQUEST PROCESS CONT.

Step 6A. Enforcement - Location Added for Police Enforcement Patrols

The data collected by the Police Department from the speed devices will help identify when enforcement details should be conducted and take enforcement action if necessary.

Step 6B. Engineering - Engineering Staff Evaluates the Data and Identifies Potential Solutions

The following criteria are used in the initial staff review of traffic calming requests and validation of "significant issues." The roadway in question must meet at least one of the following:

- A documentable collision pattern (bike, pedestrian, motor vehicle).
- The 85th percentile speed profile is greater than 5 mph over the posted or statutory speed limit. (85th percentile speed is defined as the speed at or below which 85 percent of the drivers travel on a road segment)
- Average violation rate of the statutory or posted speed limit is greater than 25 percent.

If the data identifies a traffic problem, Engineering staff will identify possible traffic solutions. See section Traffic Calming Measures for potential solutions.

Step 7. Engineering Staff Identifies the Petition Area and Provides the Traffic Calming Support Petition and Potential Solution

City Engineer will identify the petition area for signatures to be collected by the applicant. The petition will include the recommended traffic calming measure and the location it will be placed. The petition will be forwarded to the contact person listed on the application along with the potential solutions.

Step 8. Applicant Submits Completed Traffic Calming Support Petition

The applicant will collect signatures from the study area that show support from at least 75 percent of the properties (one signature per property) within the defined petition area. This lets the residents of the area know what traffic calming measure is recommended and the proposed location. If 75 percent of the residents support the measure, the project will move to Step 9. Requests that do not have a minimum of 75 percent support will not be eligible for Traffic Calming. However, it may be possible for City staff to identify other potential traffic calming measures.

Step 9. Public Works Staff adds the Traffic Calming Measures to the Public Works Work Plan Engineering staff will finalize the design and add the project to the Work Plan. The Work Plan is a list of traffic calming projects. Construction of traffic calming improvements will typically be done in the order in which they are approved, however, staff recommendations may change the order based on capital planning, funds available, and/or urgency. The City budgets approximately $10,000 per year for traffic calming measures. Once that budget is spent, the project stays on the list until funding is available in the future. Typical wait time for the traffic calming measures to be installed depends on the list or projects ahead of your request.

TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES

There are ranges of tools available to control traffic speed and reduce volume, each with its associated costs, benefits, and rules for proper application. The following is a list of measures that may be considered in the development of a traffic calming solution.

Level 1: Education and Enforcement Measures

Education

Educational materials about traffic concerns can be provided and distributed by Public Works through a variety of means, including flyers, banners, doorhangers, electronic message boards, social media, and neighborhood meetings. Engineering will also create transportation-related educational materials on social media and the city's website: https://www.ci.washington.il.us/. The Communications Department will relay to staff all pertinent information.

Police Enforcement

Police enforcement consists of the presence of police to monitor speeds and other inappropriate driving behavior and it is used as an initial attempt to increase driver awareness and compliance on streets. Police can also issue citations, when necessary. Police enforcement is most applicable on streets with documented speeding problems or notable stop sign/red light violations that need quick mitigation. It can also be used during the learning period when new devices or restrictions are first implemented.

Electronic Speed Monitoring Devices

The Washington Police Department utilizes various tools to promote road safety and monitor traffic. Mobile radar display trailers inform drivers of their speeds in real-time and can be placed on any city street where there is adequate roadside capacity. To assist with long-term planning, the department also uses traffic data collectors—unobtrusive electronic boxes that discreetly gather speed data to help determine the most effective times for directed enforcement. While we are currently budgeting for new radar trailers to refresh our fleet, residents may still report traffic concerns or request future trailer placement by completing the Issue Identification Form.

Applicability of Level 1 Measures

Level 1 measures can be used on most streets within the city. City staff will determine the best options for your street.

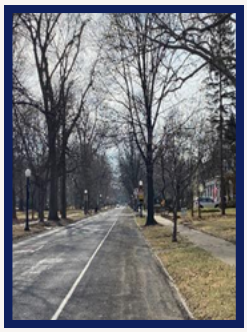
LEVEL 2: STRIPING MODIFICATIONS

Bicycle Facilities
The addition of bicycle facilities, such as bike lanes and sharrows help utilize the right-of-way space and create narrower travel lanes. This gives the impression of a narrower street, which may help reduce traffic speeds.

Marked Crosswalks
Marked crosswalks show the pedestrian where to identify a legal crosswalk. Proper signage may also be installed at these locations. Marked crosswalks are most appropriate and often used at controlled (stop sign or traffic signal) intersections, near schools, and other large pedestrian generators.

Edge-line Striping
Edge-line striping is used to create narrow travel lanes which give the impression of a narrower street. This visual cue may help reduce overall speeds. Striping can be at curb end or midblock to create a median. Edge-line striping is most applicable on long, wide residential streets with speeding traffic. Edge-line striping may include defining the parking lane of a street.

Parking Modifications
Adding or removing parking from roadways may sometimes be a solution to traffic concerns. The addition of parking on one or both sides reduces the width of travel lanes and may cause traffic speeds to slow down. Defined parking areas may also shorten pedestrian crossing lengths at intersections. The removal of parking is sometimes necessary for emergency access or for sight distance at intersections. Sight distance at an intersection is defined as the distance a driver can see cars approaching vehicles before their line of sight is blocked by an obstruction near the intersection.



Applicability of Level 2 Measures
Level 2 measures can be used on many city-owned streets. City staff will determine the best options for your street.

LEVEL 3: RETROFIT MEASURES

Speed Feedback Signs (Radar Speed Display Signs)
Radar speed display signs, like the radar speed trailer, inform drivers of their speeds in relation to the posted speed limit. These signs, intended for longer term use, are generally intended for multi-lane streets with higher speed limits and moderate volumes. These signs can lose effectiveness after a while, so the City may install them for a period of time then move them to another location.

Flashing Beacons and Pedestrian Activated Rapid Flashing Beacons (RFB)
Flashing beacons can be placed at entrances to school zones (on streets with posted speed limit at or above 25 mph) or at uncontrolled (no stop signs or no traffic signals) crosswalks to enhance the visibility of the school zone or crosswalk.
Flashing beacons for school zones are activated during the school's pick-up and drop-off times. Flashing beacons at uncontrolled locations with high vehicle and pedestrian volumes are generally activated by pedestrian push buttons.

Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB)
Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons are pedestrian-actuated (activated) lights that, used along with warning signs, can improve safety at an uncontrolled (no stop signs or no traffic signals) marked crosswalk. These are most often used at locations with high pedestrian crossings but no traffic controls, often at mid-block and not at the intersection.

Speed Humps
Speed humps are areas of pavement raised three (3) inches in height over a minimum of 12 feet in length, designed to lower travel speeds through a roadway corridor. Speed humps have pavement markings, advisory signs, and advanced warning signs. Speed humps can be used on residential 2-lane local neighborhood roadways, with a maximum posted speed limit of 25 mph to address speed problems. They also may be used to deter cut-through traffic.

Raised Crosswalks/Speed Table
Raised crosswalks are speed humps placed at a crosswalk. They function as an extension of the sidewalk and allow the pedestrian to cross the street at a raised grade increasing their visibility and slowing vehicles.

Speed Hump/Raised Crosswalk/Speed Table Applicability
Speed humps/raised crosswalks/speed tables create a vertical deflection in the roadway surface., There are certain locations where speed bumps/humps will not be considered based upon extensive national experience and best practices. For speed hump consideration, the road must meet all the traffic calming eligibility criteria defined in the Traffic Calming Eligibility section and the criteria listed below.

Speed Humps Allowed

Residential Streets

Minor Neighborhood collector

Maximum speed limit 25 mph

Speed Humps NOT Allowed

Arterial Streets

Collector Streets

Truck Routes

Snow Routes

Dead-End Streets

Alleys

Roads Within ¼ mile of Fire Stations

Medians
Medians are the area between opposing lanes of traffic used to separate traffic directions. Medians can be pavement markings or raised islands. Medians can be used on wide streets to narrow the travel lanes and ease pedestrian crossings.

Pedestrian Refuge Island
A pedestrian refuge island is a median with a refuge area in the middle of the crossing to help protect pedestrians who are crossing a wider road. Pedestrian refuge islands are often used on mid-block crossings on multi-lane roads and may also be used with rapid flashing beacons, marked cross walks, and other measures.

Applicability of Level 3 Measures
Level 3 measures can be used as a retrofit treatment or with full engineering design. Some of these traffic calming measures may not be appropriate for your street. City engineering staff will determine the best options for your street.

LEVEL 4: ENGINEERING DESIGN MEASURES

Bump Outs
Bump outs extend the sidewalk or plaza space into the road, which narrows street width at intersections and creates better visibility between the pedestrian and the vehicle. Bump outs shorten the crossing distance for the pedestrian or cyclist, thus creating safer crossings while encouraging drivers to slow down.

Raised Intersection
Raised intersections, like speed humps and raised cross walks, include a vertical deflection in the road surface. The entire intersection is raised, not just at the cross walks. Pedestrians cross the street at a raised grade, thus increasing their visibility. Due to the cost and complex design, raised intersections are only applicable at some locations and require full engineering design.

Roundabouts
The US Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration says, “The modern roundabout is an intersection with a circular configuration that safely and efficiently moves traffic. Roundabouts feature channelized, curved approaches that reduce vehicle speed, entry yield control that gives right-of-way to circulating traffic, and counterclockwise flow around a central island that minimizes conflict points. The net result of lower speeds and reduced conflicts at roundabouts is an environment where crashes that cause injury or fatality are substantially reduced.” Due to the cost and complex design, roundabout intersections are applicable on some City reconstruction projects. These designs would include public involvement to get input and support.

Road Closure
A full road closure of the street blocks both lanes of travel, resulting in the street becoming a dead end. Closures are infrequently used because of the disruption to the transportation network that forces traffic onto adjacent streets.

Applicability of Level 4 Measures
Level 4 measures typically require full engineering design, traffic studies, and/or as part of a planned city road reconstruction project. These measures are often very expensive, require public input, and take more time than other measures.

TRAFFIC CALMING DEVICE REMOVAL PROCESS

Traffic calming improvements may be removed from a street segment by petition, a process requiring the approval of at least 90 percent of property owners within the original petition area. For permanent installations, the removal process may not begin until the improvements have been in place for at least five years, unless this requirement is waived by the City Engineer. This five-year waiting period and formal petition process do not apply to temporary or seasonal measures, which may be adjusted, relocated, or removed at any time for maintenance purposes or at the City Engineer's discretion.

TRAFFIC CONTROL AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT MEASURES

Traffic Signals

Traffic signals are used to provide an orderly movement of vehicles and pedestrians at an intersection. Traffic signals are placed at locations that meet warrants per the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUCTD).

Stop signs

Stop signs are intended to assign the right-of-way among motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists at an intersection. Although many citizens believe that stop signs help reduce speeds on their street, numerous studies have shown that speeds are as high or higher at mid-block than those locations without stop signs. Placing unnecessary signs can have the unintended effect of causing drivers to ignore all traffic regulation signs creating unsafe conditions.

The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (2B.04 -5) states that stop signs should not be used for speed control. Stop signs should be placed at locations that meet criteria per the MUCTD. This criteria includes crash history, conflicting vehicular traffic at the intersection, and proximity to schools or parks and any unusual conditions, such as the layout of the intersection. Stop signs are typically used on non-arterial streets and intersections.

If there is a problem with vehicles running a stop sign, Public Works will perform a visual inspection to see if there are obstructions like trees or vegetation that are blocking the sign that need to be removed. Public Works will also determine if providing other visibility enhancement measures such as spinners or flashing beacons could be effective. If visibility isn't an issue, then enforcement is needed to ensure that vehicles are stopping at the stop signs.

Reduced Speed Limits

Speed limits are set based on regulatory requirements or engineering studies. City Code sets the speed on residential roads at 25 mph and 15 mph in an alley unless otherwise posted. School zones are posted at 20 mph. Drivers tend to drive the speed limit that they are comfortable with based on the conditions of the road, regardless of the posted speed limit. Signs with a reduced speed limit to attempt to prevent speeding are often ignored by the driver, which then creates a condition where drivers ignore all speed limit signs. Arbitrarily reducing speed limits typically does not impact drivers' behavior and can cause drivers to ignore all regulatory signs. The City of Washington does not recommend adjusting speed limits without an engineering study to justify the speed limit change.

Slow Children Playing Signs

Slow Children Playing signs are not approved as part of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and are not recommended by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). These signs are often ignored by drivers creating a false sense of security for families. This creates more dangerous conditions for the neighborhood. Drivers should assume there are children in all residential areas. The City of Washington does not install these signs.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Traffic Calming: State of the Practice Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE)/Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/saferjourney1/library/pdf/toolsintro.pdf
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Proven Safety Countermeasures
https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Traffic Calming Resources https://www.ite.org/technical-resources/traffic-calming/
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Traffic Calming ePrimer
https://highways.dot.gov/safety/speed-management/traffic-calming-eprimer Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/
2009 Edition: Stop sign information: 2B.04 Guidance 05
Safe Transportation for Every Pedestrian US FHWA
https://highways.dot.gov/safety/pedestrian-bicyclist/step FHWA PEDSAFE
http://www.pedbikesafe.org/PEDSAFE/