



TRAFFIC CALMING POLICY

^{5/1/2024}
[Adopted ~~4/24/2024~~ by the Chapel Hill
Town Council]
[Supersedes 2002 Traffic Calming Policy]

What is Traffic Calming?

Traffic calming is the combination of mainly physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behavior and improve conditions for non-motorized street users, according to the [Institute of Transportation Engineers](https://www.ite.org/technical-resources/traffic-calming/)¹.

What Can This Policy Help Me Do?

This policy is in place to help people request traffic calming measures in Chapel Hill. This policy aims to:

- Make it simple to request help from the Town
- Set clear thresholds for when the Town will put measures in place to reduce speeding
- Outline the types of solutions that the Town will put in place to reduce speeding

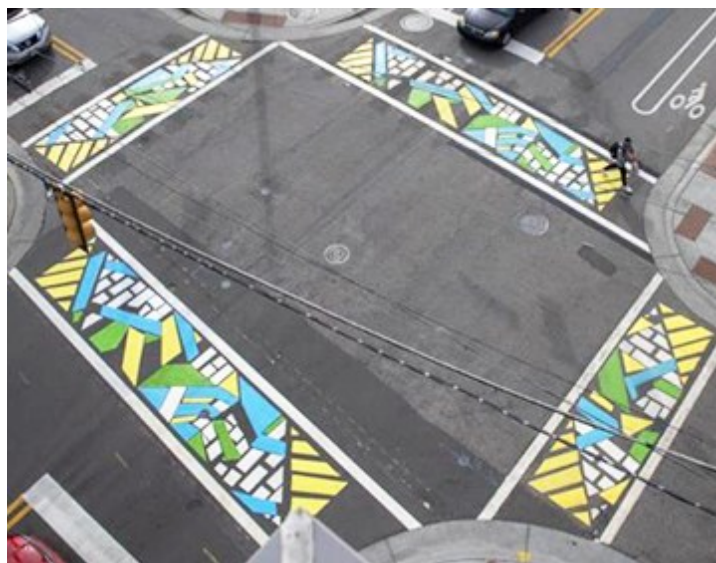
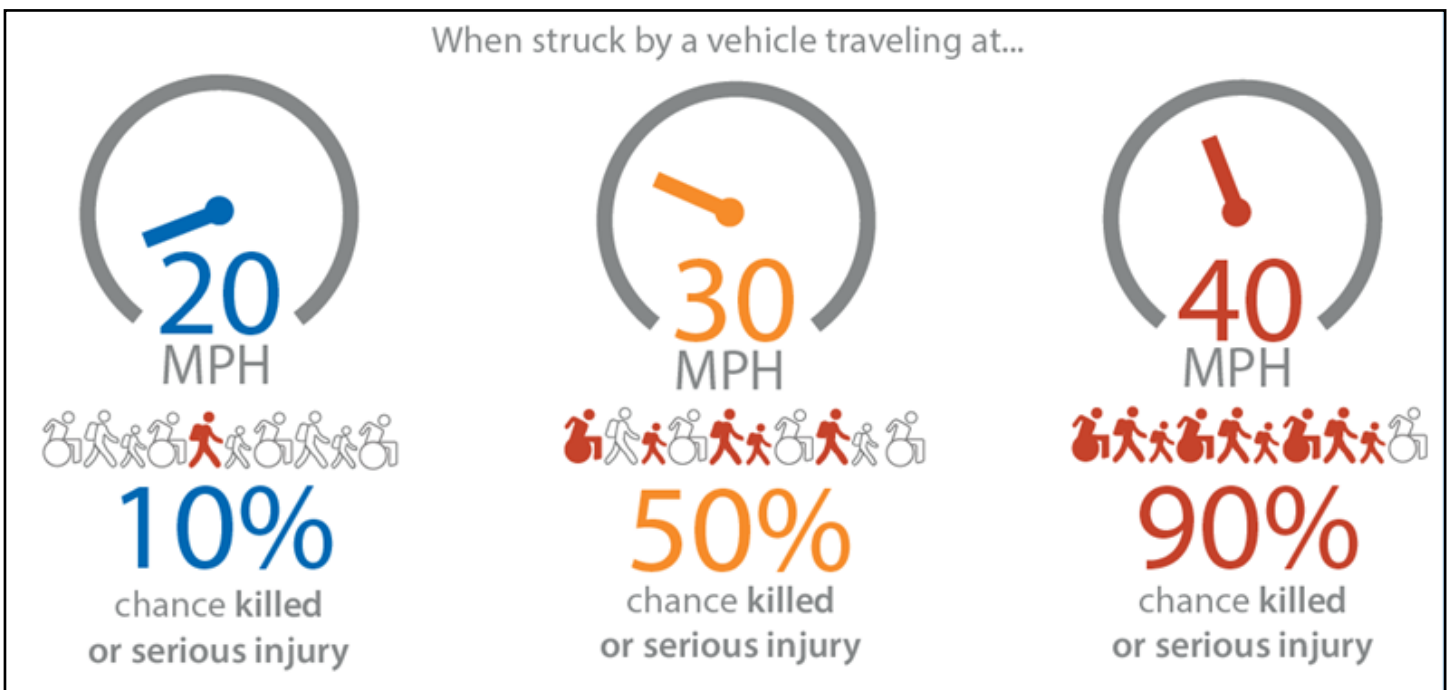


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Why is Traffic Calming Important?

Safety is a key reason for traffic calming. The Chapel Hill Town Council adopted its Vision Zero Resolution in October 2021, which affirmed the Town's commitment to eliminating traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2031. To achieve this goal, the resolution commits the Town to prioritizing the safety of road users over vehicle speeds. The Town maintains close to 170 miles of road, and aims to make them safe for all road users.



1. Apply

Can I Apply For Traffic Calming?



Yes! The Town welcomes requests from people who live, work, study, or visit Chapel Hill. Town staff will also look for locations to proactively examine traffic calming solutions.



What Streets Will Town Staff Evaluate?


- Not all streets in Chapel Hill fall under the Town's control - requests must be on streets maintained by the Town of Chapel Hill. Please check the [Town's online map of Town-maintained streets](#) to see if your request is eligible.



This policy excludes streets maintained by:

- The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT)
- UNC
- Private roads

What is Not Included in This Policy?

 - New speed bumps, stop signs, and traffic signals **cannot** be requested by the public under this policy. For allowed traffic calming measures, see Appendix A.



2. Assess

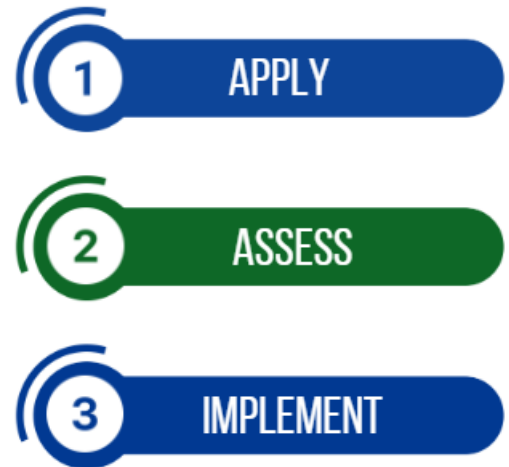
After an application on a Town street is received, the request will enter the Town's list of requested Traffic Calming Assessments. Assessments will be conducted by collecting vehicle speed data close to the area highlighted as a concern.

Similar requests may be combined into one assessment. The Town will provide status updates through the online Traffic Calming Portal so residents can stay up-to-date on the assessment's progress.

In order to be considered for traffic calming treatments, assessments must show that:

- Between 500 and 6,000 cars use the road each day.
- At least 15 percent of drivers are going at least 7 miles per hour over the speed limit. Streets with lower speeds would fall lower on the priority list.

If a street meets the thresholds required for traffic calming, staff will determine feasible options for traffic calming, considering characteristics such as road width, sight distance, curves, hills, presence of bikes/pedestrians, and crash history. While staff will aim to find the right type of traffic calming, some streets may not have an easily feasible traffic calming solution – staff will share with the applicant if this determination is made.



TO QUALIFY FOR TRAFFIC CALMING, THE FOLLOWING
MUST BE TRUE



3. Implement



If a street meets the thresholds for traffic calming, staff will develop an appropriate design based on the approved interventions listed in Appendix A. An interdepartmental staff group, including emergency services and Chapel Hill Transit, will test the design and approve. The Town Manager, or a representative, will give final approval.



Project Prioritization

Approved projects will be prioritized for installation based on the findings from the engineering study, speed study, crash history, cost estimate and the length of time from the initial request. The highest-priority projects will be selected quarterly for implementation. The number of traffic calming installations per year will depend on the amount of funding available by the Town. Prior to installation, Town staff will communicate to the applicant, nearby residents, community organizations, and other stakeholders on the traffic calming design and the timeline for the installation.



Traffic Calming Implementation

The traffic calming devices will be installed with temporary materials that can be modified or removed if they are found to be ineffective at reducing traffic speeds or other unintended results. Final projects are subject to change based on constructability, final cost, or engineering judgement.

Traffic Calming Feedback

At the site of the project, staff will provide information to nearby residents and on the project itself to inform road users why the traffic calming installation was selected and how it is expected to reduce vehicle speeds. It will also direct users to the Town's traffic calming [feedback](#) form to provide additional feedback.

Traffic Calming Results

Following installation, staff will conduct an after-speed study to evaluate countermeasure effectiveness, and staff may adjust as necessary. The results of the after-speed study and community feedback will be presented to the Town's interdepartmental staff team and added to the Traffic Calming Portal. Town staff will present the results of traffic calming projects as part of the annual Vision Zero report.

Appendix A: Normal Range of Traffic Calming Interventions

Table 1: Mid-Block Traffic Calming Countermeasures

Mid-Block Calming Measure	Description
Lowering Speed Limits	Lower posted speed limit if the speed study shows it would be appropriate.
Radar Speed Sign	Displays the speed of passing vehicles, reinforces the speed limit.
Chicanes	Designed curved street alignment that slows traffic with horizontal shifts
Parking Adjustments	Adding, removing or converting parking to encourage traffic calming
Diagonal Parking	A parking design that aligns parking spaces in 45 or 60 degree angle to ensure drivers can back-in easily and pull out safely.
Lane Striping	Create bike lanes to provide a dedicated cycling area and reduce the width of travel lanes
On Street Walking Path	Create vertical separation between active users and vehicles on streets without sidewalks
Roadway narrowing	Reduce lane width to slow traffic and create room for sidewalks, bike lanes, roadside parking, and landscapes.
Raised Medians or Pedestrian Refuge Areas	A roadway design that uses a raised island to separate traffic directions. It helps to narrow the street as well as protect pedestrians from vehicles.
Flashing Variable Signage	Traffic safety warning devices such as Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) that use LED lights to alert drivers to yield at pedestrians.
Neighborhood Greenway / Bike Boulevard	Prioritizing bicycle access and connections along low-speed, low-volume streets

Table 2: Intersection Traffic Calming Countermeasures

Intersection Calming Measure	Description
Neighborhood Traffic Circle	Change stop control intersection to yield control with a center island to circulate traffic
Parking Adjustments	Adding, removing or converting parking to encourage traffic calming
Curb Extensions (e.g. bulb-outs, neckdowns, chokers)	Create vertical separation between active users and vehicles on streets without sidewalks
Diverters	A roadway design used to prohibit traffic from entering or exiting a street. A typical cul-de-sac type diverter cuts traffic from both lanes by placing it across the street while allowing pedestrians and bicyclists to go through.
Painted Crosswalks	Add high visibility treatments to crosswalks to improve pedestrian crossing safety
Neighborhood Gateways	Creating placemaking at the entrance to neighborhoods to emphasize residential safety