

# TOWAMENCIN TOWNSHIP TRAFFIC CALMING POLICY

The Towamencin Township Traffic Calming Policy identifies the process to determine if traffic calming measures should be considered for implementation. Traffic calming measures are used predominantly to address situations of excessive cut-through traffic volumes and vehicle speeding when appropriate for the subject roads within residential and village commercial mixed-use settings.

## **Traffic Calming Goals**

The Township's Traffic Calming Policy promotes safety and preservation of the residential neighborhoods and the village commercial character of the Township through the following goals:

- Create and maintain safe and attractive streets.
- Reduce the negative effects of motor vehicles on the environment.
- Enhance quality of life in residential neighborhoods.
- Promote safe conditions for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists.
- Maximize the efficiency of the local road network.
- Achieve safe and reasonable speeds for motor vehicles.
- Reduce cut-through traffic.
- Support police traffic enforcement.

## **Traffic Calming Principles**

Traffic calming initiatives must recognize the following principles and planning concepts:

- Evaluation and selection of traffic calming measures follows an objective process based on satisfaction of specific criteria with community support.
- Satisfaction of traffic calming criteria does not guarantee measures will be implemented, as it is also necessary to recognize issues related to feasibility, funding, maintenance, legal implications, police functions, Township ordinances, the *Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Code*, and other considerations, any of which may be cause to deny installation of traffic calming measures.
- Traffic solutions may be implemented at the discretion of the Township outside of this policy if determined appropriate in the best interest of public safety.
- Traffic calming must consider the need to ensure access by emergency services.
- Traffic calming must consider the need to effectively maintain public streets.
- Traffic calming considers the potential impacts to nearby streets and neighborhoods.
- Traffic calming considers the safety of the street for all roadway users, including pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Traffic calming considers the potential impact to schools, parks, and senior housing.

## **Definitions**

"85th Percentile Speed" shall mean that speed at which 85% of the free-flowing vehicles are traveling at or below.

"Level 1 Traffic Calming Measures" shall consist of easily implementable and low-cost traffic calming measures,

such as neighborhood traffic safety campaigns, radar speed display units, targeted police enforcement, sign installation, pavement marking changes, etc.

*"Level 2 Traffic Calming Measures"* shall consist of traffic calming measures that physically alter the configuration of neighborhood streets or restrict traffic movements. They often require engineering and are a higher-cost measure to implement.

*"Neighborhood Study Area"* shall consist of all properties that will be affected by the installation of traffic calming, and it includes the properties located directly along the roads with traffic calming, as well as the nearby neighborhood roads that may be impacted by the traffic calming because either those residents must drive through the traffic calmed area, or because the traffic calming measures may cause a diversion of traffic to other nearby neighborhood roads. The boundaries of the affected neighborhood area will be determined by the Township Traffic Calming Committee.

*"Primary Access Route for Emergency Services"* shall mean those roadways, determined by the Chief of Police in consultation with other emergency service personnel if appropriate, that serve as primary access into neighborhood areas requiring their services. "Primary Access Routes for Emergency Services" shall only be eligible for traffic calming features if approved by the Chief of Police.

*"Property Owner"* shall mean the person(s) or agency that possess title to a parcel of land, as determined by the Township. Renters or residents other than the property owner are not included in this definition.

*"Traffic Calming"* shall mean the combination of mainly physical features that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle traffic use, alter driver behavior, and/or improve conditions for non-motorized street users. Traffic calming features are not traffic control devices, but rather physical parts of a roadway's design characteristics. Specific traffic calming measures are described in *Pennsylvania's Traffic Calming Handbook*, *PennDOT Publication 383* and *PennDOT Publication 13, Design Manual*.

*"Cut-Through Traffic"* shall mean non-local vehicular traffic using neighborhood streets as a short-cut to other areas, or to by-pass an alternate route on a nearby high order street(s).

### **Towamencin Traffic Calming Committee**

The Towamencin Township Traffic Calming Committee will oversee for the implementation of the Township Traffic Calming Policy and provide recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. The Traffic Calming Committee will comprise of the following members:

- Board of Supervisor liaisons to the Township Public Works Committee
- Township Manager
- Chief of Police
- Public Works Director
- Township Engineer
- Township Traffic Engineer

The Board of Supervisors may appoint additional members to the Traffic Calming Committee at its discretion without updating the Traffic Calming Policy.

### **Traffic Calming Eligibility**

A street may be considered for installation of traffic calming measures if it meets all of the following criteria:

1. The street is located in an area zoned residential, the land uses along the street is mostly residential in nature and/or village commercial.
2. The street is classified as a collector, feeder or local access road according to the Township's Roadway Functional Classification.
3. The posted speed limit is 35 mph or less.
4. Where cut through traffic is a concern, the cut-through traffic on the subject street is 40% or more of the total one-hour, single direction volume. In addition, the cut-through traffic should be a minimum of 100 trips in one hour, in one direction.
5. Where speeding is a concern, the 85th percentile speed is more than 10 mph (11 mph or greater) over the posted speed limit.
6. The traffic calming measures cannot negatively impact a public transportation route, and therefore, public transportation stakeholder input and support is required.
7. The street is owned and maintained by the Township.
8. Traffic calming measures will not be considered on cul-de-sac streets.

This minimum criterion may need to be modified in some instances to better reflect locational traffic conditions. Modification of eligibility requirements may be recommended by the Traffic Calming Committee and approved by the Board of Supervisors.

### **Location Guidelines**

The minimum distance from an intersection to a physical traffic calming device shall range from 150 feet for unsignalized intersections to 250 feet for signalized intersections. Any traffic calming measure shall be visible to oncoming traffic for at least the minimum safe stopping sight distance based on the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed. Traffic calming measures shall take into account existing drainage features and bicycle facilities.

Although not required, but where feasible, the features shall be located near street lights for improved nighttime visibility of the feature, and required signage should be placed on property lines as opposed to directly in front of a residence. Also, where feasible, the traffic calming features shall be located to minimize impacts to on-street parking.

### **Emergency Services**

Studies show traffic calming features may cause delay in emergency response times to residences in neighborhood areas where traffic calming projects have been installed. Property owners participating in the process will be informed of the potential delay to emergency services due to traffic calming features. However, traffic calming features and reduced vehicular speeds may also reduce the number of incidents requiring emergency services, due to the increased safety on the roadways within a traffic calmed area.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act**

Traffic calming measures must be designed to accommodate all people in the community. To accomplish this goal, features that are implemented to improve pedestrian safety, or have an effect on pedestrian travel, must be designed to meet the requirements of the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act.

### **Traffic Calming Measures, Design Guidelines and Signage**

The Township adopts and incorporates herein by reference Chapters 5 and 6 of *Pennsylvania's Traffic Calming Handbook*, *PennDOT Publication 383* and *PennDOT Publication 13, Design Manual* in their entirety and any more recent applicable PennDOT publication pertaining to traffic calming, as if set forth fully herein.

### **Amendments to Traffic Calming Policy**

The Township Traffic Calming Committee may periodically make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors for amendments to the Traffic Calming Policy.

## **Implementation Process**

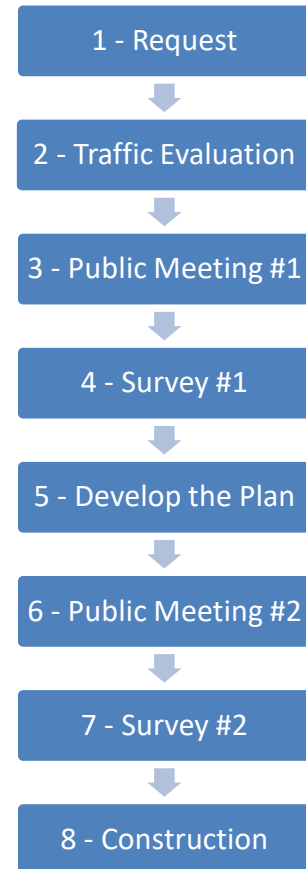
### **Towamencin Traffic Calming Implementation Process**

The following eight steps are followed throughout the traffic calming policy:

**Step 1 – Request:** In order to start the traffic calming process, affected property owners within must submit a formal request to the Township using the traffic calming request form. This form includes identification of a reasonably sized neighborhood committee and specific points of contact from this neighborhood committee for communication with the Township.

The Township’s Traffic Calming Committee will review the request. Depending on the nature of the situation, the Committee may initially deny the request in favor of other measures, such as education to the community and increased police enforcement over a defined period of time. The requesting individuals will be informed of the decision by the Township, as well as possible next steps and timeline.

If the request for traffic calming is accepted, then the Traffic Calming Committee will guide the traffic calming study process. The Traffic Calming Committee will also define the neighborhood study area.



**Step 2 – Traffic Evaluation:** Subject to available funding, which will influence the schedule for this effort, the Township Traffic Calming Committee will review the crash history along the affected area roadways, and collect vehicle travel speed, traffic volumes, and pedestrian volumes. If the vehicle travel speeds and/or cut-through traffic volumes do not meet the criteria outlined in the Traffic Calming Eligibility section, then the process may stop, and no further action will be taken at the discretion of the Township.

If the traffic data meets the criteria outlined in the Traffic Calming Eligibility section, then the Township Traffic Calming Committee will develop a draft short list of possible traffic calming measures to address cut-through or speeding issues as appropriate. For any traffic calming measures that are intended to directly change traffic patterns in the neighborhood, such as Level 2 traffic calming measures, one-way signs, turn restrictions, road closures, etc., then the Township will analyze possible impacts to other neighborhood study area roads that may be affected by the redirected traffic.

**Step 3 – Public Informational Meeting:** Township staff will schedule a public meeting to occur as part of a regularly scheduled Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors meeting or as a separate public meeting

which would occur during normal daytime office hours subject to Township discretion to present background information on traffic calming and explain the Township's traffic calming policy. Representatives of the neighborhood will be asked to play a role at this informational meeting. In addition, this public meeting will be used to gain information from the public regarding the traffic calming issues within the neighborhood study area.

This meeting will be open to the public, but a direct mail or email invitation will be sent to the properties within the neighborhood study area only. The public invitations will occur through the Township website. The property owners listed on the traffic calming request form are welcome to produce and distribute flyers or other advertising at their own cost with prior Township approval of the materials.

The Township Public Works Committee and Board of Supervisors may decide to move forward with Level 1 traffic calming options and tools (i.e., targeted police enforcement, radar display units, low-cost improvements such as signage, pavement markings, etc.) without the survey for additional community support discussed below in Step 4.

**Step 4 – Survey:** Following the informational public meeting, a mail or online survey, which includes a basic explanation of the traffic calming policy, a map of the neighborhood study area, statement regarding emergency response, and a representative sampling of traditional traffic calming measures will be sent to all property owners in the neighborhood study area. The survey will be open for approximately 30 days, and the Township is not obligated to follow up with the property owners to request a response to the survey.

To ensure there is interest in traffic calming by the community, more than 50% of the property owners within the neighborhood study area must respond and agree to move forward with the traffic evaluation phase of the traffic calming process. A no response to the survey will be counted as the property owner being in favor with advancing the traffic calming policy process. In the event there are multiple owners of a property, only one property owner will be counted for that property, and if conflicting responses are received for the same property, then it will be counted as one response in favor of moving forward with the process. Without more than 50% support, the process stops, and no further action will be taken on the request. At least 12 months must pass before the Township will entertain future requests for the same neighborhood study area.

**Step 5 – Develop the Plan:** If the results of the traffic evaluation meet the travel speed and/or cut-through criteria outlined in the Traffic Calming Eligibility section, a preliminary neighborhood traffic calming plan will be developed by the Township Traffic Calming Committee. At the sole discretion of the Township, the Township may exclude some traffic calming measures from consideration. Level 1 measures will always be considered and implemented prior to consideration of more restrictive and higher-cost Level 2 measures that physically alter the street. The Township may also choose to incorporate temporary traffic calming measures for a trial period as part of the plan.

The consideration and suitability of any traffic calming measures will be based on PennDOT criteria, as well as real world physical considerations of the subject streets. Other than signage and striping changes, but rather for any physical traffic calming measures, the Township will notify the property owner whose property is located along the frontage of the subject traffic calming measure. The Township reserves the right to make further changes, or not, to the traffic calming plan upon such property owner notification, if appropriate and if in the best interest of the overall neighborhood study area. If needed, the Township will also communicate

with PennDOT, Montgomery County and the adjacent municipality with regard to the preliminary traffic calming plan.

**Step 6 – Public Meeting:** A public information meeting will occur as part of a regularly scheduled Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors meeting or as a separate public meeting which would occur during normal daytime office hours subject to Township discretion. The meeting will be held with any interested residents and property owners within the neighborhood study area to review and discuss the preliminary traffic calming plan. This meeting will be open to the public, but a direct mail or email invitation will be sent to the property owners within the neighborhood study area only. The invitation will include the purpose of the meeting and a description of the proposed traffic calming plan for the neighborhood study area. The public invitations will occur through the Township website. The property owners listed on the initial traffic calming request form are welcome to produce and distribute flyers or other advertising at their own cost with prior Township approval of the materials.

Representatives of the neighborhood will be asked to play a role at this public meeting. Township staff present at the meeting will receive and record any concerns of the residents in the neighborhood study area. After the meeting, the Township Traffic Calming Committee will consider any concerns brought up at the meeting and investigate any issues necessary before the neighborhood traffic calming plan is finalized by the Township.

The Township Traffic Calming Committee and Board of Supervisors may decide to move forward with Level 1 traffic calming options and tools (i.e., targeted police enforcement, radar display units, low-cost improvements such as signage, pavement markings, etc.) without the survey for additional community support discussed below in Step 7.

**Step 7 – Confirm Community Support:** A mail or online survey will be sent to the property owners in the neighborhood study area, which includes the following information:

- A graphic description of the proposed traffic calming plan.
- A summary of data which supports implementation of traffic calming.
- A description of the boundaries of the neighborhood study area.
- An official ballot form for the specific properties within the neighborhood study area eligible to vote.
- A summary of the voting process and deadline.

The survey will be open for 30 days beginning on the date the survey opens or the date the paper ballots are placed in the mail. If paper ballots are used, the ballots must be dropped off at the Township building by the deadline date indicated with the ballot documents, and if returned via mail, then the ballot must be postmarked by the deadline date indicated with the ballot documents and must be received by the postal service at the Township within seven calendar days starting with day one as the first day after the postmark deadline. The Township is not obligated to follow up with the property owners to request a response to the survey. A property owner may request a replacement ballot if their original ballot is lost or damaged, but they must follow the same overall voting schedule. In the event there are multiple owners of a property, only one property owner vote will be counted for that property, and if conflicting responses are received for the same property, then it will be counted as one vote in favor of the traffic calming plan. In the case of a property

owner owning multiple properties, one vote for each property owned will be accepted. If an agency or group entity is the official property owner on record, then an official agent of the group may offer one vote on their behalf. The threshold guideline for the results of the neighborhood vote is:

The Township must receive responses from more than 50% of the property owners in the neighborhood study area, and 70% or more of the total received responses must be in favor of the traffic calming plan. Only completed and returned ballots will be counted in the results.

Without the required favorable votes, the process may stop, and no further action taken on this request, unless at the sole discretion of the Township. In this case, the voting results will assist in the decision-making process for the installation of the traffic calming plan, a variation on the traffic calming plan, or any other traffic solution, especially as needed in the best interest of public safety.

Without the required support in favor of the traffic calming plan and if agreed to by the Township, then at least 36 months must pass before the Township will entertain future requests for the same neighborhood study area. However, if the Township determines that a significant change in the area has occurred, such as but not limited to major changes in traffic patterns, area road improvements, or land uses changes, then traffic calming may be considered sooner. If after 36 months or a Township decision confirming a significant change in the area impacting traffic the representatives from the neighborhood study area wish to re-initiate the process, it will commence with Step 1 of this policy and follow all eight steps.

**Step 8 – Construction:** At the Board of Supervisors' discretion, the neighborhood traffic calming plan is placed on a schedule for installation of the traffic calming features. The traffic calming plan will be constructed as funding allows, subsequent to the Board passing a resolution in favor of implementing the plan.

### **Monitoring**

After the construction of each neighborhood traffic calming plan is complete, the Township may choose to conduct follow-up traffic studies to monitor the project for effectiveness and any remaining traffic problems, which efforts shall be documented.

### **Removal or Modification of Traffic Calming**

The Township, at its sole discretion, may modify or remove any traffic calming features in the interest of public safety. The property owners of an area in which traffic calming has been implemented may also request the removal of the traffic calming features. A petition to remove the traffic calming features may be considered by the Township Traffic Calming Committee, subject to the following conditions:

- The traffic calming features have been in place for at least 24 months.
- More than 50% of the of the property owners in the neighborhood study area are in favor of the removal.
- Removal of one or more traffic calming features may not make the remaining overall traffic calming plan less effective, unless the entire traffic calming project is being petitioned to be removed.