

City of Gulf Breeze Traffic Calming Policy and Guidelines

1.0 Traffic Calming Approach Summary:

The primary purpose of the policy is to inform residents about the processes for implementing measures to improve traffic conditions on residential streets. When traffic problems such as speeding and unnecessary cut through traffic become a routine occurrence, public safety and the preservation of “hometown character” could be compromised. The City’s goal in the *City of Gulf Breeze Traffic Calming Policy* is to give residents and individuals who live in areas that experience traffic problems the opportunity to become involved in the planning and decision-making process. While traffic calming devices have been in use for many years, research on effective “traffic calming” methods is a relatively new practice. The City of Gulf Breeze uses the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) definition for 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.”

1.2 Objectives:

The overall objectives in City of Gulf Breeze Traffic Calming Policy and Guidelines include:

- A. Maintaining and/or improving neighborhood livability by mitigating the impact of vehicular traffic on residential neighborhoods;
- B. Promoting safe and attractive streets that maintain and/or improve the quality of life in neighborhoods;
- C. Promoting conditions that provide safe neighborhoods for motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians and residents of the neighborhood while maintaining access to the neighborhood;
- D. Minimizing “cut-through” traffic in neighborhoods;
- E. Encouraging citizen involvement in all phases of neighborhood traffic calming activities;
- F. Making efficient use of City resources by prioritizing traffic calming requests; and
- G. Supporting the elements identified and goals contained within the City of Gulf Breeze Master Plan.

1.3 Definitions:

- A. Arterial Street – A heavily traveled street of considerable continuity used primarily as a main traffic artery.
- B. Local Street – Any two lane street with a primary purpose of providing direct access to residential properties.
- C. Collector Street – Any street which links an arterial street with another collector or local street.
- D. Residential Cut-Through Traffic – traffic which uses local or collector streets to travel through a residential neighborhood without having an origin or destination within the neighborhood.
- E. Street Segment – An area of a street that lies between logical features such as major thoroughfares, changes in land use, major driveway entrances, or changes in geographical features.

- F. 85th Percentile Speed - The 85% percentile speed is the speed exceeded by the fastest 15% of vehicles.

This policy addresses residential local and collector streets. Residential local streets make up the majority of the city's street system. These streets serve local circulation needs for motor vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic and provide access to residences and some businesses. Local service streets are not intended to carry significant volumes of through traffic. Residential collector streets typically provide access from local service streets to arterial thoroughfares. Collector streets often carry some amounts of through traffic. A collector street must be primarily residential to be considered in this policy. Flexibility should be applied in defining "primarily residential," and determined on a case by case basis by the City of Gulf Breeze staff. Consideration of defining "primarily residential" collector streets should take into account land use factors such as the presence of parks and schools.

2.0 Request, Evaluation and Plan Development

2.1 Initiating a Request for Evaluation:

Evaluation of the perceived traffic problem streets will be focused to street segments. A street segment can be added to the list of streets to be studied for potential traffic calming in a number of ways:

- A. A resident or group of residents contacts the City directly to express their concerns. The City representative provides the resident or group with a *Traffic Calming Questionnaire* that will allow the resident to outline the perceived traffic problem. The residents should include in their submission an overview of how the perceived traffic problem relates to concerns such as vehicle safety, pedestrian safety, congestion, environmental impact, speeding or cut-through traffic;
- B. A recommendation to evaluate is made by a member of the City Council;
- C. The Gulf Breeze Police Department recommends the addition of a street segment to be considered based upon its enforcement efforts; or
- D. City staff initiates an evaluation based on field observations.

2.2 Problem Evaluation

After review of the initial request for evaluation, the City will inspect the street segment(s), review the city ordinances to determine the established speed limit and define impact area or street segment(s). Street segments impacted will be defined as:

- A. Every lot/parcel having frontage on the street segments within the project area, and
- B. Every lot/parcel on cross streets up to the next major intersecting street that must use the project street as primary access.

The City will submit a recommendation to the City Council for consideration. If the recommendation is approved, the City will proceed with collecting traffic volume and speed data using electronic traffic recorders over a period of days. Depending on the problem issue, the following data may be collected:

- A. Speed data to determine the 85th percentile speed as well as the median speed and average speed;

- B. The volume of street segment traffic per a typical day, including weekday and weekends if necessary; and
- C. Peak traffic data to determine the specific times of day when traffic speeds are higher.

2.3 Post Evaluation

Following the collection of data, City staff will make a recommendation to the City Council on whether the reported issue warrants developing a plan for traffic calming solutions. City staff may include recommendations for immediate or traditional responses and considerations for long term traffic calming solutions.

2.4 Plan Development

Citizen participation is essential in developing a plan for traffic calming. After approval to move forward to develop a plan for calming solutions, proposed solutions will be presented to the City Council for consideration within a published City Council meeting for public hearing. If it is determined that long term traffic calming solutions are the best response, and the solutions are approved by City Council, then a petition process will be requested from the resident originator or group of residents completing the **Traffic Calming Questionnaire**.

2.5 Immediate Response

Recommendations for immediate strategies should be considered when applicable and could offer further interpretation of the data derived in the evaluation period. The following could be acceptable immediate or interim responses:

- A. Police enforcement;
- B. Speed display signage;
- C. Awareness campaigns; and
- D. Low-cost traffic control device changes (temporary speed humps, rumble strips, striping, etc).

2.6 Long Term Traffic Calming Solutions

If a long-term traffic calming solution requiring construction is approved, the following criteria may be important in consideration of adopted measures:

- A. Impact on emergency response time;
- B. Impact on school transportation;
- C. Impact on business traffic circulation; and
- D. Street grades or alignment yielding inadequate stopping site distance.

School authorities should be consulted in any proposed process of traffic calming solutions if a school route is considered.

3.0 Petitions and Cost Share:

When a proposed solution is approved by the City Council, the resident or group of residents originating the request will be given a petition package to be dispersed to the defined street segment(s) residents. The petition package includes the name and address of each of the property owners or residents in the defined street segment(s) as well as the description of the proposed solution. The petition package can be picked up by the resident originator at City Hall.

Petitions must be delivered by the resident originator in a legally acceptable manner. A positive response must be obtained by eighty-five (85%) percent or more of the property owners or residents in the defined street segment(s). Only one signature per household will be accepted. Percentages will be calculated, based on individual lots/parcels where the owners sign positively, divided by the total number of lots/parcels in the street segment(s). The petition package must be returned within three months after the date of approval by the City Council by the resident originator.

Roadway changes that influence traffic calming can result in costly construction. The Gulf Breeze City Council establishes an annual budget which may include funding for traffic calming construction. Once the annual budget has been fully encumbered for a given budget year, the following alternatives are left as options for residents who desire traffic calming measures.

- A. Waiting list (for next budget year); or
- B. Cost share assessment of residents within the affected street segment.

For a resident originating request requiring a cost share, the City will fund 50% of the cost, and residents within the affected street segment will fund 50% of the cost necessary for construction of the device(s). During the petitioning phase, City staff will advise all residents within the defined street segment(s) of the requirements of the cost share assessment.

4.0 Implementation:

With approval of the plan by the affected residents in the defined street segment and the City Council, funding of 50% of the construction costs from resident originating plans, City staff will initiate the design and implementation process for the proposed traffic calming measures.

5.0 Measuring Effectiveness:

All installed solutions will be monitored by the City for desired effectiveness. Evaluation may include resident and motorist reaction, field observation, traffic counts, speed study, and other data collection as needed. If the solution has not met the intent, then a report will be submitted by staff to the City Manager for presentation to the City Council.

6.0 Removal of Traffic Calming Solutions:

Removal of any Traffic Calming solution will be considered 12 months after deployment or construction of the solution and after a new petition with eighty-five (85%) percent response for removal is approved by the City Council. If field conditions have changed, removal of the device can also occur, as recommended by the City and approval of the City Council. As in installation, the City will fund 50% of the cost, and residents within the affected street segment will fund 50% of the cost necessary for removal of the device(s).