



## Takoma Park City Council Meeting – April 26, 2017

### Agenda Item 6

#### **Work Session**

Discussion of City Traffic Calming Practices and Recent Projects

#### **Recommended Council Action**

Receive information

#### **Context with Key Issues**

The Safe Roadways Committee presented their Annual Report and Traffic Calming Recommendations on March 22, 2017. Following the presentation, City Council requested information from the Public Works staff regarding current traffic calming practices and recent projects.

Administrative Regulation 96-1 – Guidelines and Procedures for Traffic Calming Devices Installations was last updated April 15, 2003. The regulation defines traffic calming devices as “signs, pavement markings, speed humps, raised walkways, flattop speed humps or speed tables, and other physical devices placed or installed on a highway which limit access, restrict traffic flow, or channel or slow vehicle movement for the purpose of reducing traffic hazards and improving pedestrian safety.”

The process for requesting traffic calming in Takoma Park is a resident driven process, requiring circulation of a petition to the “affected neighborhood” and receipt of 2/3 of those residents to sign in support in order to move it to the Council for consideration. The affected neighborhood is currently defined as: the block of the street where the measure is to be placed and the adjacent blocks of the same street. Cross streets are not required to be petitioned, unless the street where the measure is being considered provides the only ingress/egress for that cross street. Currently the regulations do not require documentation of actual traffic volume or confirmation of traffic speed. The City Clerk’s office confirms the receipt of the required signatures and schedules a Public Hearing on the request. The process requires the submitters to have a community meeting prior to the Public Hearing to inform affected residents of the request. The Council may authorize the requested traffic calming measure by way of a Two Reading Ordinance.

Recent traffic calming requests have included Boston Avenue, Garland Avenue, Erskine Street and Ritchie Avenue. The measures installed on Boston Avenue included relocation of an existing speed hump, addition of a second speed hump and installation of a bump out and marked cross walk mid-block. For the 7700 block of Garland Avenue two bump outs were installed, both of which provide some stormwater treatment. The Erskine Street project was designed by the City’s on-call engineering firm and included installing a sidewalk on one side, road narrowing and a bump out at a stop sign controlled intersection, installation of an additional speed hump and relocation of an existing speed hump. The Ritchie Avenue traffic calming project was designed by our on-call engineering firm and included installation of four bump outs and a traffic circle. It also included installation of four speed humps and removal of two speed humps.

The Department is in agreement with the recommendation of the Safe Roadways Committee to revise the available speed hump options to allow only the Montgomery County standard. The County standard speed hump is easier to install consistently and has been widely studied for its impact on vehicle speeds. The design is a standard found all over the country.

Staff believes that the current process for responding to traffic calming requests allows for a varied approach that works with the immediately impacted community to design solutions. We do not support establishing a rigid list of options that must be gone through in a linear fashion, as each situation has unique aspects and having all options available is generally considered to provide a better outcome. We do support the additional requirement of completing traffic speed and volume analysis prior to designing a project. This may result in some requests not proceeding if the data does not reflect a speed or volume problem on the street.

### **Council Priority**

A Livable Community for All; Engaged, Responsive and Service-Oriented Government

### **Environmental Impact of Action**

Traffic calming can result in reduced speeds of vehicles; however some studies have indicated that driver behavior may result in increased emissions due to speeding up after passing the calming measure. Traffic calming can also improve the perceived and actual safety for bikers and pedestrians, which may encourage more people to use alternative modes of transportation.

### **Fiscal Impact of Action**

The annual Capital Budget allocates funding for traffic calming and new sidewalk requests. The Public Works operating budget includes annual funding for facility repair and marking.

### **Racial Equity Impact Statement**

We are uncertain how the existing policy affects residents of various racial backgrounds. The process for requesting traffic calming is a neighborhood driven process.

### **Attachments and Links**

Administrative Regulation 96-1 Guidelines and Procedures for Traffic Calming Devices Installations  
City Code Section 13.28.020 Guidelines for installation of speed humps and other traffic calming devices

**13.04.020 Definitions.**

As used in this title:

“Commercial vehicle” means any vehicle designed for and regularly used for carrying freight or merchandise.

“Crosswalk” means continuations of sidewalk space across all intersections, streets, highways or public ways.

“Device” means any marking, sign or other traffic direction erected for the purpose of directing, warning or regulating traffic.

“Driver” or “operator” means any person who is in actual control of a vehicle.

“Flat-top speed hump” or “speed table” means a raised section of asphalt or other construction material constructed on a roadway, with an approximately 10-foot flat section measured parallel to the curblines and with a height of approximately three inches. Such “flat-top speed humps” shall be installed for the purpose of improving pedestrian and traffic safety.

“Intersection” means the area embraced within the prolongation or connection of the lateral curblines or, if none, then of the lateral boundary lines of two or more highways which join one another at an angle, whether or not one highway crosses the other.

“Motor vehicle” means every vehicle designed, constructed or intended to be propelled or drawn by any power other than muscular power, including but not limited to automobiles, motorcycles, motor-bicycles, tractors and trailers.

“One-way street” means a public highway upon which vehicular traffic is permitted to move in one direction only.

“Parking or standing” means leaving any vehicle standing on a public highway, whether or not attended.

“Pedestrian” means any person afoot.

“Private roadway or driveway” means every road or way not open to the use of the public for purposes of vehicular travel.

“Public highway or highways” means any street, road, way or thoroughfare used by the public for vehicular travel.

“Raised walkway” means an area of raised pavement located at an uncontrolled pedestrian crosswalk. The raised walkway shall be approximately three inches high, approximately 22 feet long, with a 10-foot flat area and shall be striped as a crosswalk.

“Roadway” means that portion of a street or highway between the regularly established curblines or that part improved and intended for vehicular travel.

“School bus” means only buses painted orange and black, with orange predominating, and equipped with “School Bus” signs and with stop sign up and visible.

“Sidewalk” means that portion of a public highway between the building line and the curbline designed for pedestrian traffic.

“Speed hump” means a raised section of asphalt or other construction material constructed on a roadway, with a dip and crown shape as viewed in cross section, on a base approximately 12 feet long, measured parallel to the curblines of the roadway, and with a height of not less than three inches nor more than four inches. Such “speed humps” shall be installed for the purpose of improving pedestrian and traffic safety.

“Traffic” means and includes not only motor vehicles, but also vehicles of every description and pedestrians and animals.

“Traffic calming devices” include signs, pavement markings, speed humps, raised walkways, flat-top speed humps or speed tables, and other physical devices placed or installed on a highway which limit access, restrict traffic flow, or channel or slow vehicle movement for the purpose of reducing traffic hazards and improving pedestrian safety.

“Traffic sign” means every device or sign erected or placed upon or along a highway for the purpose of directing, warning or regulating traffic, including but not limited to stop signs, slow signs, traffic lights and all parking signs regulating the time of or forbidding parking.

“Unregistered vehicle” means any motor vehicle, except a vehicle exempted from registration by State law, which does not have valid registration plates or which has expired registration plates or stickers or fictitious registration plates or stickers attached to the vehicle.

“Vehicle” means any conveyance or appliance moved over a highway. (Ord. 2011-29 § 1 (part), 2011/Ord. 2004-38 § 1 (part), 2004/Ord. 2002-36 § 1 (part), 2002/prior code § 13-2)

## Chapter 13.28

### TRAFFIC CALMING DEVICES

Sections:

- 13.28.010 Erection and maintenance of traffic calming devices.
- 13.28.020 Guidelines for installation of speed humps and other traffic calming devices.

**13.28.010 Erection and maintenance of traffic calming devices.**

A. In the regulation and supervision of traffic, the Director of Public Works is authorized to place, erect and maintain upon the public highways of the City such traffic calming devices as the Council may direct, at the locations designated by the Council or as determined by the City Manager or his or her designee.

B. In accordance with Chapter 2.12, the City Manager or his or her designee may establish such regulations and standards as are necessary to accomplish the purposes and intent of this chapter. (Ord. 2011-29 § 1, 2011/Ord. 2002-36 § 1 (part), 2002/prior code § 13-75)

**13.28.020 Guidelines for installation of speed humps and other traffic calming devices.**

Except as specifically determined necessary for the safety and control of vehicles, pedestrians, traffic speed, and/or traffic volume, the City Manager or his or her designee shall adhere to the following guidelines for the installation of speed humps and other traffic calming devices on the public highways of the City:

A. Traffic Signs and Pavement Markings. Traffic calming devices, including, but not limited to, flat-top speed humps or speed tables, raised walkways and raised intersections, and speed humps, should be painted with distinctive markings, which should include reflective tape or paint, and traffic signs indicating the presence of the traffic calming device should be placed on the right-hand side of the public highway at the approach to each such traffic calming device.

B. Restrictions on Slope or Grade of Public Highway. Speed humps and other traffic calming devices should not be placed on a public highway where the slope is 8% or more. Placement of humps on slopes increases the potential for vehicles to lose control when crossing a speed hump particularly when going down or up a steep grade. Additionally, there can be sight line problems that occur for drivers going up a grade.

C. Restrict Placement in Front of Driveways. Speed humps and other traffic calming devices should not be placed in front of a driveway.

D. Distance Between Speed Humps and Other Traffic Calming Devices. Speed humps and other traffic calming devices should be spaced no less than approximately 150 feet apart and no more than approximately 300 feet apart along a public highway.

E. Avoid Conflicts with Utility Access Points. Speed humps and other traffic calming devices should not be placed on or near underground utility access points, boxes, vaults, and manhole covers.

F. Distance from an Intersection or Stop Sign. Speed humps should not be placed within 75 feet of an intersection or within 100 feet of a stop sign.

G. Proximity to Street Lights. Speed humps and other traffic calming devices should be located under street lighting whenever possible.

H. Restrict Placement on Cul-de-Sacs and Dead End Streets. Speed humps and other traffic calming devices are not recommended for placement on dead end streets or cul-de-sacs. However, if the dead end street provides access to a public destination, such as a park, this restriction may be waived.

I. Minimum Visibility for Approaching Drivers. Speed humps and other traffic calming devices should be visible from a vehicle within 100 to 200 feet from its approach. (Ord. 2011-29 § 1, 2011)

SUBJECT: Guidelines and Procedures for Traffic Calming Devices Installations

EFFECTIVE DATE: April 8, 1996; **REVISED April 15, 2003**

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### Traffic Calming Devices - Petition Process and Installations

#### PURPOSE/SCOPE:

To provide written guidelines for the administration of *Takoma Park Code* Chapter 13, Vehicles and Traffic, as amended, pertaining to the installation of traffic calming devices.

Traffic calming devices include signs, pavement markings, speed humps, raised walkways, flat-top speed humps or speed tables, and other physical devices placed or installed on a highway which limit access, restrict traffic flow, or channel or slow vehicle movement for the purpose of reducing traffic hazards and improving pedestrian safety.

#### PROCEDURES:

##### I. Request for Speed Hump Installation.

A request for installation of one or more traffic calming devices can be made by petition.

##### A. Petition Request.

1. Residents of one or more blocks of a street can submit a petition to the City Manager indicating that the residents of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the households want one or more traffic calming devices to be installed on that street. This petition may also include a description of the specific locations of the proposed traffic calming devices, or may indicate that the locations will be determined in consultation with the Public Works Department. Proposed locations of traffic calming devices shall comply with the requirements of the *Takoma Park Code* and relative State and County laws, and shall not obstruct manholes or other accesses to utilities.
2. If a traffic control device installation is being requested for only one block of a street, the petition must also be circulated to the residents living on the street within one (1) block of the requested installation site or block.
3. The City Clerk will validate the petition, will determine the total number of eligible households residing on the street, and will compute the

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PROPOSED: \_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
City Manager

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percentage of households signing the petition. If that percentage is two-thirds (2/3) or greater, and after the requirements of Section I.B. have been complied with, the City Clerk will so inform the Council, who shall schedule a public hearing.

**B. Citizens' Association Meeting / Information Sheet.**

1. When a traffic control device request is made by petition, and after the petition is verified by the City Clerk, the City Clerk shall notify the citizens' association or associations in whose area the request is located, and shall instruct the petitioners to contact the citizens' association most affected by the proposed traffic control device installation to request that the association place a discussion of the traffic control device request on the association's next meeting agenda.
2. If the citizens' association most affected by the proposed traffic control device installation meets within 60 days of the date the association is notified, the petitioners shall ask the citizens' association to discuss the proposed traffic control device at that meeting. The citizens' association may submit a letter to the City Clerk within the 60 days either supporting, opposing, or taking no position on the proposed traffic control device. If the citizens' association does not submit a letter, no assumption shall be made about the position of the citizens' association on the traffic control device.
3. If the affected citizens' association does not meet within 60 days of the date the association is notified, or if there is no citizens' association covering the area where the proposed traffic control device would be located, the petitioners shall call a meeting to discuss the proposed traffic control device. The President of the affected citizens' association, if one exists, shall be consulted about the time and place of the meeting, but petitioners shall be responsible for notifying residents of the affected "traffic impact area" as defined by the Traffic Impact Areas map that is adopted as part of these regulations. The traffic impact area includes the residential arterial roads within and immediately surrounding the area. If there is no citizens' association in the area of the proposed traffic control device, the petitioners shall advise the City Clerk about the time and place of the meeting. The petitioners shall provide a letter to the City Clerk indicating the number of people attending the meeting and the sentiment

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of the attendees toward the proposed traffic control device.

4. In order to advertise the meeting, petitioners are encouraged to prepare a one-page information flyer concerning the request. This flyer should include a sketch and description of the proposal, including the specific locations or numbered street block of the proposed traffic control devices as indicated in the petition, and a phone number of one of the petitioners to call for more information. Petitioners are encouraged to distribute this flyer to residents of the affected "traffic impact area" as defined in Section I.B.3.

**C. City Clerk Authorized to Develop Standard Forms.**

To assist residents in petitioning for traffic control device, the City Clerk is authorized to develop and distribute a standard "Request for Traffic Control Device Installation" petition form and a standard "Information Sheet" form.

**II. Procedures for Public Hearing and Speed Hump Installations.**

**A. Conduct of Public Hearing.**

1. After having been notified by the City Clerk that a valid petition requesting a traffic control device installation has been received, and after the requirements of Section I.B. have been complied with, the Council will schedule a public hearing to solicit the opinions of the entire neighborhood and the City at large.
2. The City clerk shall send notice of the public hearing to all residents of the street which is proposed to receive a traffic control device installation, to the local neighborhood citizen association, and to adjoining neighborhood citizen associations. The public hearing shall be advertised in the Takoma Park newspaper of record.
3. After conducting the public hearing and declaring the hearing record closed, the Council shall announce its decision within fifteen (15) days of the close of the hearing record. Under extraordinary circumstances, this time limit may be extended by majority vote on the Council.
4. The Council may approve, approve with modifications, or deny the

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requested traffic control device installation.

5. The City Clerk shall notify the petitioners, and their neighborhood or civic association of the Council's decision, which shall also be published in the Newsletter.

**B. Guidelines for Evaluating the Public Hearing.**

The following criteria are intended to guide the Council in determining whether a request for a traffic control device installation is reasonable and justified. These should not be considered exclusive criteria.

1. The street has not been identified and is not used by the Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department as a primary fire and rescue route into a neighborhood.
2. The impact of traffic control devices on adjacent neighborhoods be assessed.
3. The petitioners have made efforts to provide broad notification to potentially affected residents.

**III. Procedures for Removing a Traffic Control Device Installation.**

**A. Removal of Traffic Control Device Installations.**

1. Upon request of two-thirds (2/3) of the households of a street containing a traffic control device installation, and after six months have elapsed from the initial installation of the traffic control device(s), the Council may consider removing the traffic control device installation, except as provided in Section III.B.
2. The request for removal must be made by petition, subject to the procedures specified in Sections I.A. and I.B. above.

**B. Exception to Petitioned Removal of a Speed Hump.**

Speed humps installed prior to December 2, 2002, the adoption date of Ordinance #2002-36, shall not be removed or altered pursuant to the provisions of Section III.A(1). The

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City Council adopted Ordinance #2002-36 to revise Chapter 13, Vehicles and Traffic, of the *Takoma Park Code*, to define traffic calming devices, including raised walkways, and to expand the scope of existing provisions to encompass traffic calming devices. Pre-existing speed humps may be altered, replaced, or substituted with another form of traffic calming device at such time as the speed hump is removed, destroyed, or deteriorated and scheduled for replacement by the Public Works Department.

#### **IV. Miscellaneous.**

##### **A. Placement of Traffic Control Devices near Parks and Playgrounds.**

The Council may initiate the installation of traffic control devices on streets adjacent to neighborhood parks, playgrounds, and schools.

##### **B. Authority of City over Traffic Control Devices.**

1. Nothing in these guidelines shall be construed as preempting the City at its initiative from installation, altering, maintaining, or removing a traffic control device or installing a traffic control device. The City Clerk will notify the appropriate neighborhood association and the affected residents of any proposed new traffic control device installations or changes to an existing traffic control device installation. The residents and the association will have an opportunity to discuss the proposed changes with the Council at a regular Council meeting before the changes are adopted and implemented.

#### **V. Implementation Responsibility.**

The Public Works Director or designee shall be responsible for advising the Council and public on the proper placement of traffic calming devices on City streets, and for overseeing the installation and maintenance of traffic calming devices in the City.

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City Clerk

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
City Manager

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

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