



**WASHINGTON COUNTY**  
**Neighborhood  
Streets Program**

## **NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS PROGRAM POLICY**

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The Neighborhood Streets Program (NSP) is funded through the Urban Road Maintenance District (URMD). The goals of the NSP are to preserve and improve neighborhood livability within the URMD by:

- Encouraging positive driver behavior.
- Encouraging safe pedestrian and bicycle use.
- Improving safety for all travelers.
- Involving area residents in solving traffic problems.
- Making efficient use of tax dollars by prioritizing requests for improvements.

The objectives of the NSP are to:

- Positively influence driver behavior through education and design.
- Achieve lower vehicle speeds in neighborhoods with identified speed problems.
- Improve real and perceived safety for motorized and non-motorized travel.
- Promote mobility by accommodating the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users.
- Reduce cut-through traffic in neighborhoods.
- Increase access for all modes and preserve reasonable emergency vehicle access.
- Enhance the street environment.
- Incorporate the preferences and needs of those using the street.
- Encourage citizen involvement in all NSP phases.



## POLICIES

In order to ensure consistency, fairness and safety, the following policies have been adopted:

- Through traffic should be encouraged to use collectors and arterial streets as defined in the Washington County Transportation System Plan (TSP).
- Local road systems should be designed to complement planned land use and to reduce dependency on major road systems for local circulation.
- Traffic volumes and patterns should be consistent with their functional classification as defined in the TSP.
- Significant traffic volumes should not be rerouted from one neighborhood street to another.
- Traffic management treatments will be planned and designed under the direction of the County Engineer in accordance with applicable Washington County Road Design and Construction Standards (RDCS), sound engineering and planning practices.
- The relevant fire authority must be notified for design exceptions.
- Requests for self-purchase traffic calming treatments may be honored under special circumstances.
- Reasonable pedestrian, bicycle, transit service and motor vehicle access to neighborhood destinations must be maintained
- Speed cushion applications will follow the Institute of Traffic Engineers publication, "Guidelines for the Design and Application of Speed Humps" and RDCS.
- The grade for speed humps/speed cushions must be less than 8%. Grades >5% to 8% may be installed only if approved by the County Engineer or designee.
- A "least-cost, least-restrictive" approach is required before committing to more costly, more restrictive methods, unless otherwise approved by the Principal Traffic Engineer.
- Projects may not be in direct conflict with, or in violation of, the TSP, the Community Development Code or any other adopted ordinance, law or regulation.
- Projects are limited to the urban, unincorporated areas of Washington County on qualifying local streets, neighborhood routes and residential collectors. (Gravel or dirt roads not included.)
- Cul-de-sacs and stub streets typically will not meet minimum qualifications but will be reviewed and ranked on a case-by-case basis, as under certain conditions, such streets may carry the volume and speed needed to qualify.



# Traffic Calming Process

## PHASE 1: CHANGING DRIVER BEHAVIOR



### 1 Determine eligibility

- Unincorporated Washington County
- Classified as a local, neighborhood route or meets "residential collector" criteria



### 2 Recommend treatments

Potential recommendations include:

- Speed trailer
- Neighborhood Speed Watch program
- Lawn signs



### 3 County may recommend Phase 2

- If Phase 1 activities do not provide desired results

## PHASE 2: CHANGING THE ROADWAY ENVIRONMENT



### 4 Determine eligibility

#### All roads:

- Posted speed  $\leq$  35 mph
- 85th percentile speed  $\geq$  5 mph over posted speed

#### Local streets or neighborhood routes:

- Maximum of two lanes
- $\geq$  1,000 vehicles per day

#### Residential collectors:

- Road length  $\geq$  500 ft
- Residential property frontage
- At least three of these:
  - $\geq$  50 fronting properties/mile
  - On-street parking
  - No bike lane
  - No center two-way left-turn lane



### 11 Finished

- Review project results



### 10 Implement traffic calming plan



### 9 Share traffic calming plan

- Traffic calming plan distributed by mail or at community meeting



### 8 Vote on traffic calming plan

- 1 vote from each property
- Non-returned ballots = no "vote"
- County mails ballots
- 67% approval required to move forward



### 7 Draft a traffic calming plan

- Collaborate with neighborhood



### 6 Circulate petition

- 1 signature from each property owner
- 51% must sign to move forward



### 5 Rank eligible projects



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## **PHASE 1: PROCESS** *(Changing driver behavior)*

- Step 1** Neighborhood residents submit a request describing their traffic concerns. Requests can be submitted in writing, in person, online or by phone to NSP staff.
- Step 2** Staff verifies that the requested street is eligible for participation. Street must be within the Urban Road Maintenance District (urban unincorporated Washington County) and a local street, neighborhood route, or residential collector.
- Step 3** Staff evaluates the traffic concern area for potential Phase 1 treatments.
- Step 4** Phase 1 recommended treatments are implemented. This may include County and/or resident actions.
- Step 5** After 12 months, if staff determines there has been no improvement, the request moves to Phase 2: Physical Treatments.

## **PHASE 1: POSSIBLE TREATMENTS**

**Brush trims:** The trimming and removal of brush by homeowners or County crews to allow better sight distance.

**Neighborhood Speed Watch program:** Allows residents to check out a radar unit and record the speeds of vehicles traveling in their neighborhood. Speeders are identified through Oregon Driver & Motor Vehicle Services and sent warning letters asking them to slow down. The letters are not violations, but reminders about the posted speed and concern for safety.

**Speed radar trailer:** County may deploy a portable trailer equipped with a radar unit which detects the speed of passing vehicles and displays it on a digital reader board. This device shows drivers their "actual" speed versus the posted speed and encourages compliance.

**Pavement markings:** County may install pavement markings, which may include centerlines, fog lines, crosswalks and school crossings.

**Signs:** County may post appropriate traffic control signs, which may include speed limit, parking, dead-end, school signs, etc.

**Neighborhood Traffic Safety campaign:** Short-term reminders to slow down are effective in getting people to change their driving behaviors. These can include:

- A personalized newsletter mailed to the community. Information includes traffic volumes and speeds in the area, recommended traffic calming measures, traffic laws, pedestrian safety or other safety information.
- Lawn signs alerting drivers to slow down. Up to two lawn signs per address can be provided for yard placement.
- Additional items with a "Slow Down" message to distribute throughout the neighborhood



**Targeted Enforcement:** Increased enforcement by the Washington County Sheriff's Office, Traffic Team.

## **PHASE 2: PROCESS** (*Changing the roadway environment*)

- Step 1** Staff gathers and analyzes traffic data to determine if the street meets minimum qualifications.
- Step 2** If the minimum qualifications are met; staff applies the project ranking process. Ranking is completed annually each fiscal year for available funding.
- Step 3** Staff and residents discuss results and next steps. Residents circulate petitions demonstrating interest in NSP participation. At least 51% of all the identified property owners and business owners within the petition area (determined by staff) must sign the petition. Only one person may sign per single-family residential tax lot. If a home or business is occupied by a tenant rather than the property owner, he/she may sign as a representative of the owner.
- Step 4** Staff and residents discuss potential treatments and draft a proposed traffic calming plan.
- Step 5** Staff mails a ballot to measure support for the proposed traffic calming plan. At least 67% of the property and business owners must support the plan for it to be considered for final design and implementation of treatments.

The balloting area is determined by the Principal Traffic Engineer. Each business owner and property owner is entitled to one vote. Only one person may sign the ballot as a representative of the property owner. If a home or business is occupied by a tenant rather than the property owner, a ballot will be mailed to the registered property owner. Unreturned ballots are considered "no" votes, unless a recipient requests to be removed from the balloting. Staff must receive ballots within four weeks from the date of mailing.

If less than 67% of the property owners vote for approval, the plan fails. A neighborhood will not be eligible for reconsideration for at least two fiscal years from the date of the unsuccessful vote.

Extension of the voting is at the discretion of the County Engineer or the Director of the Department of Land Use & Transportation.

- Step 6** If at least 67% of the property owners support the plan, the neighborhood will be presented with a final design in the form of a mailing or at a community open house.
- Step 7** If staff recommends installing temporary treatments, they will be in place for an evaluation period, typically three to six months. Data will be collected before and after installation of the temporary treatments. Traffic calming treatments that shift



the traffic to another street shall not be used, unless the traffic is diverted to a collector or arterial street. If the strategy is expected to cause an increase in traffic volume on another local street or neighborhood route, the affected area will be considered for further mitigation measures.

An impact threshold curve is generally used to identify acceptable levels of diversion from local streets. Generally, it establishes the following limitations:

- Local streets
  - An increase of up to 150 vehicles per day (vpd) is acceptable on any adjacent local street.
  - The total traffic volume on another local street (existing volume plus increased volume) should not exceed 2,000 vpd.
- Neighborhood routes
  - A maximum of 150 vpd diverted to an adjacent local street is acceptable.
  - The maximum amount of traffic diverted to an adjacent neighborhood route is 400 vpd.
  - The total traffic volume on another neighborhood route (existing volume plus increased volume) should not exceed 5,000 vpd.

**Step 8** The traffic calming plan is constructed.

**Step 9** After construction is complete and traffic has had an opportunity to adjust to the changes, staff conducts a post-construction review. This may include data collection and/or opinion surveys.

**Step 10** Traffic calming treatments can be removed by neighborhood petition. At least 67% of residents in the original impact area must sign the petition for removal. Petitions will be presented to the Board of County Commissioners for authorization.

Traffic Calming treatments can also be removed at the discretion of the County Engineer, if the measures are deemed unsafe or have created a negative impact that cannot be corrected.

Before treatments are removed, residents will be notified in writing regarding the reason(s) for their proposed removal. A neighborhood meeting will be held to field questions and listen to concerns.



## PHASE 2: MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

The following minimum qualifications must be met before proceeding to Project Ranking:

### All roads:

1. Posted speed  $\leq$  35mph
2. 85th percentile speed is  $\geq$  5 mph over the posted speed

### For local streets or neighborhood routes:

1. Maximum of two lanes
2. Traffic volume  $\geq$  1,000 vehicles per day.

### For residential collectors:

1. Total length of road segment  $\geq$  500 feet
2. Adjacent to residential properties (according to zoning).
3. Must meet at least three of the following criteria:
  - a. On-street parking
  - b. No center two-way left-turn lane
  - c. No bike lane
  - d.  $\geq$  50 fronting properties per mile

## PHASE 2: PROJECT RANKING

The highest-ranking projects are selected for available funding. Project identification considerations also include size and complexity, compatibility with other transportation projects and budget. The number of projects constructed in a year is dependent on available funding.

The top 50% of unfunded projects in a year are carried over to the next fiscal year's program. If they are not funded within that two-year timeframe, they will be reevaluated to determine whether the issue still exists. **Projects that are initiated but fail due to a lack of neighborhood support will not be reconsidered for traffic calming treatments and ranking for two fiscal years.**

1. Initial ranking by the greatest number of criteria met from the following list:
  - a. For local streets or neighborhood routes:
    - i. Residential density is over 50 dwelling units per mile
    - ii. A sidewalk or pedestrian path along the street is missing or has gaps
    - iii. A public school or park is adjacent to the street
    - iv. A pedestrian generator (retail, commercial, transit, institutional) is within 1,000 feet
  - b. For residential collectors:
    - i. On-street parking present



- ii. No center two-way left turn lane
  - iii. No bike lane
  - iv. At least 50 fronting properties per mile
2. Second ranking is by the speed differential between 85th percentile and posted speed
  3. In the case of a tie, highest ranking goes to the roadway with highest volume

Local streets, neighborhood routes and residential collectors will be ranked on one list. The top-ranked project on a local street or neighborhood route will be selected. The top-ranked project on a residential collector will be selected. As funding allows, additional projects will be selected based on their ranking without consideration for street classification or any factors other than overall ranking.

## **PHASE 2: POTENTIAL TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES**

### **Speed Reduction**

- Choker medians
- Painted lines or other pavements markings
- On-street parking
- Speed cushions
- Street trees
- Traffic circles
- Speed display signs
- Rumble strips

### **Reduce Traffic Volume**

- Diagonal diverters
- Semi-diverters

### **Pedestrian Safety**

- Curb extensions
- Raised crosswalks
- Marked crosswalks

### **Other Options**

- Entrance treatments
- Chicanes
- Pedestrian refuges/slow points
- Median barriers

## PHASE 2: PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Selected projects are implemented as soon as practical, with some caveats.

- **Funding:** The County works on a July-June fiscal year; projects may have to wait for the next fiscal year for implementation.
- **Seasonal work:** Some construction work requires certain environmental conditions, such as minimum temperatures or dry pavement.
- **Cost:** The County minimizes project costs to fund as many projects as possible. When possible, smaller projects are done in conjunction with larger projects (i.e., the County's annual overlay contract or a major utility rehabilitation project). In most cases the waiting period is no more than one year.
- **Equipment and staff availability:** Work performed by County crews must be scheduled with other responsibilities.
- **School-related improvements:** Whenever possible, school zone improvements should be done during the summer to minimize impacts to school operations.

## LIMITATIONS

In order to implement as many projects as possible, the NSP funds basic improvements. Additional improvements or amenities can be paid for by the neighborhood. For example:

- To reduce neighborhood traffic infiltration and speeding, NSP might fund construction of a concrete "traffic circle." If the neighborhood wants a landscaped "traffic circle", they pay for the landscaping and assume responsibility for its maintenance.
- Staff and the neighborhood residents who worked on the traffic calming plan might recommend installing three speed cushions, but others in the neighborhood would like five. Provided the Principal Traffic Engineer approves two additional speed cushions, the neighborhood would pay for their installation.

The NSP does not fund traffic signals, sidewalks, streetlights, storm sewer installations or any other capital improvement not related to traffic calming plans. Staff can provide information on alternative funding options for these improvements.

In most instances, the State of Oregon determines speed zones, not Washington County. County staff can provide information on how speed zones are determined and the procedures for changing them.