

# **DRAFT Charlotte County Traffic Calming Policy**

## **Introduction**

Charlotte County is aware that speeding and excessive traffic volume are two of the most common residential traffic complaints reported to local law enforcement and traffic engineering officials.

Due to recent roadway construction activities in the county, coupled with an increase in residential development activities, some of the county's local residential streets are experiencing an increase in traffic volume. Usually in a hurry to get to work or home, commuters often ignore residential areas regarding safety and quality of life issues.

Residents who live on these local roads perceive a danger to walkers, joggers, bicyclists and children playing outdoors. These concerns can lead residents to initiate efforts to alleviate such situations.

The purpose of this document is to outline the procedure to develop the optimal solution(s) to each situation. There are many factors taken into consideration to determine the most feasible traffic calming measures which include: the surrounding roadway network, resident access, speed and/or volume of traffic, accident history and nearby construction.

The installation of traffic calming measures are subject to the availability of funding.

## **What Roadways are Covered?**

These guidelines are specifically designed for neighborhood roads and streets that are classified as **local residential streets with a posted speed limit that is 30 miles per hour or less.**

**Additionally, residents on roadways where less than 45% of the lots are developed will typically not be eligible to request any traffic calming studies and/or measures.** Deviations from this threshold may be considered by the Board of County Commissioners.

## **Procedures for Implementation of Traffic Calming Measures**

Below are the five steps for implantation of traffic calming option(s) under this program on a roadway that meets that basic criteria that at least 45% of the lots are developed and the posted speed is 30 miles per hour or less on a local roadway:

Step 1: Initiation

Step 2: Eligibility criteria

Step 3: Traffic Engineering Data Collection and Traffic Calming Measure

Step 4: Petition Form and Petition Signature Requirements

Step 5: BOCC Meeting

## **Step 1: Initiation**

The process will be initiated through residents' requests. The local community such as a Homeowners Association, or a minimum of five signatures from five different owners of five separate properties in the neighborhood will be required to submit request for traffic management to the Traffic Operations Division.

Traffic Engineering staff will review the request with the person initiating the request to better understand their concerns, and to explain the County's policies, the process for installing and removing traffic calming devices, and the potential costs for installation and removal.

Traffic Engineering staff will determine the size and the limits of study area based on the surrounding roadway network that will most likely be impacted by the request. Initially staff will establish an area encompassing a 1500 feet radius from the roadway location, however this distance is subject to change based on the impacted roadway network. The applicant will be notified of the study area limits.

## **Step 2: Eligibility Criteria**

The roadway must meet the following criteria:

- **The roadway must be a functionally classified as a local residential street within a residential neighborhood and must have a posted speed limit, of 30 miles per hour (MPH) or less as determined by County Staff. Traffic calming can only be installed on local residential streets.**
- **The roadway must be County owned and maintained and adequate public right-of-way must be available for the project.**

If the above criteria are met data collection and a traffic study will be initiated.

Based on collected data and analysis County staff will determine the eligibility of the roadway for traffic calming and prepare a draft report based on the criteria below:

- **The roadway must have a minimum average daily traffic count (ADT) of 500 vehicles per day and a maximum ADT of 2000 vehicles per day (seasonally adjusted) as determined by County staff. ADT criteria may be reduced if a significant safety issue exists as determined by County staff.**
- **The measured 85<sup>th</sup> percentile travel speed on the roadway must be greater than ten (10) miles per hour over the posted speed limit as determined by County staff. Speeding criteria may be reduced if a significant safety issue exists as determined by Traffic Engineering.**
- **Cut-Through Traffic – Daily and hourly volumes collected greater than 20% of the average daily traffic. The average daily traffic is calculated by multiplying the number of homes on the block by ten.**

For locations that do not meet the above criteria, no additional studies will be conducted within at least two years.

### **Step 3 - Traffic Engineering Data Collection and Traffic Calming Measures**

#### **Traffic Calming – Tier 1**

If the designated location meets or exceeds the thresholds identified in step 2, County staff will first suggest possible solutions that can offer positive results but are not traffic calming methods. These are primarily education and enforcement-based measures called Stage 1 traffic calming. These include:

- **Radar Speed Trailer Deployment** – This is a temporary device that is primarily used to inform motorists regarding the fact that they may be significantly exceeding the posted speed limit and encourages them to slow down. This device is also used to collect traffic data.
- **Increased enforcement** – This is traditional enforcement activity on the part of the Sheriff's officers. The intent is to modify behavior to result in a safer situation for all drivers and neighbors.

#### **Follow-up Data Collection**

If one or more of the Tier 1 Traffic Calming measures is implemented County staff will wait approximately Thirty (30) days and conduct another speed and/or volume data collection. The data will then be analyzed to determine if the Traffic Calming measure was successful. If the measure was successful, and the thresholds identified in Step 2 are not met or exceeded then the traffic calming process will end at this point.

If the location continues to exceed the thresholds for speed and volume on a residential street, County staff will move on to analyze possible Tier 2 Traffic Calming methods

#### **Traffic Calming – Tier 2**

County staff will conduct a formal Traffic Calming Study to suggest possible solutions to the problem. The solutions could involve physical modifications of the street intended to control speeds and/or volumes. These are called Tier 2 traffic calming methods and measures and may include:

- **Traffic Signing and Pavement Markers** – Traffic Engineering staff will review all traffic signing and pavement markings in the area. If necessary, staff will install additional signing and striping. When appropriate, changes and additions will be reviewed with applicant and those possibly impacted
- **Lowering of speed limit** - For roadways with a posted speed limit of 30 mph County staff will direct the applicant to request a speed reduction from 30 mph to 25 mph. This will

be considered only after a speed study shows that a lower speed limit is appropriate and would be effective. Studies have shown that artificially lowering a speed limit will not result in lower speeds. The change in the speed limit will have to be approved by the Board of County Commissioners.

If the speed limit change is implemented, County staff will wait approximately three to six months and conduct another speed and/or volume data collection. The data will then be analyzed to determine if this Traffic Calming measure was successful. If the measure was successful, and the thresholds identified in Step 2 are not met or exceeded then the traffic calming process will end at this point. If the location continues to exceed the thresholds for speed and volume on a residential street, County staff will move on to analyze other possible **Tier 2 Traffic Calming** methods below:

- **Vertical Deflection:** Speed Humps, Speed Tables, Raised Cross Walk, Raised Intersection
- **Horizontal Deflection:** Mini Roundabout, Realigned Intersection
- **Street Width Reduction:** Curb Extensions, Chicanes, Mid-Block Raised Medians
- **Routing Restriction:** Diagonal Diverter, Closure

Once it has been determined that a given location meets the above criteria, the following agencies will be notified that traffic calming measures are being considered, and their input will be requested:

- Fire and EMS, Sheriff's Office, School Board, and Waste Management

**Step 4 – Petition Form and Petition Signature Requirements (TBD – Only one alternative will be decided upon when this draft policy is finalized)**

ALTERNATIVE #1 - The County Public Works Department will prepare an official petition form and will send mailings to all the residents in the study area.

ALTERNATIVE #2 - The County Public Works Department will prepare an official petition form and will appoint a contact person. This contact person will be required to obtain signatures.

It is required that signatures of at least 51% of all developed lot owners in the affected study area for or against consideration of traffic calming measures are obtained and received by Public Works within 90 days.

Each affected property owner will be counted as one vote, regardless of the number of separate properties owned. In the case of multiple owners, only one vote will be counted for that property. A minimum of 51% of the developed lot owners within the affected study area must be in favor of the proposed traffic calming measures before they can be considered for approval by the Board of County Commissioners.

Mailings not returned to Public Works within 90-day period will be deemed null and no further action will be taken. Signatures are final and may not be added or removed from a petition once the petition has been received by County staff.

If the required petition majority is not achieved within the signature period, the location shall not be reconsidered for a period of at least two years from the date the signature period expires unless traffic patterns substantially change as determined by County staff.

ALTERNATIVE #3 – If either of the alternatives above are not chosen hence no additional signatures are required, and if staff has determined the feasibility of the request with associated costs, a public hearing will be advertised and conducted for the BOCC to decide on approval or denial.

#### **Step 5: BOCC Meeting (TBD)**

If either Alternative #1 or #2 is selected and upon receipt of a petition with the required minimum percentage of affirmative signatures, the Public Works Department will submit the report and a recommendation for BOCC approval as a consent agenda item at a regularly scheduled BOCC Regular and/or Land-Use Meeting. Once the BOCC approves the item, the Public Works Department will use the identified funding source for implementation of the approved traffic calming measure.

If Alternative #3 is selected, then staff will prepare for a public hearing to be conducted by the BOCC

#### **Removal of Traffic Calming Measures**

A petition for removal of traffic calming measures may be accepted provided that the following conditions are met:

- The traffic calming measure to be removed must be in place for a minimum of three years.
- A petition requesting removal must be signed by 51% of all developed lot owners in the affected study area.
- If traffic calming devices are removed, no consideration will be given for the construction of new Residential Neighborhood Traffic Management Program Devices for a period of not less than ten years, unless the opening, closing or completed reconstruction of an adjacent road significantly affects traffic in the neighborhood. The process for application and consideration of a request for removal shall follow the procedures outlined in this policy.

Where traffic circulation or safety concerns justify their removal as determined by County Staff traffic calming measure installed pursuant to this policy shall be removed upon approval by the BOCC.