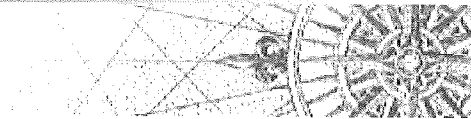




04/10/07



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Council approves new traffic-calming policy

Calling the document a "work in progress," Town Councilors April 9 unanimously approved a new traffic-calming policy.

The policy provides a mechanism for citizens concerned about traffic safety in their neighborhoods for contacting town officials for possible action. It also guides town staff in making appropriate responses.

"The purpose of the policy is to attempt to balance the desire of many residents to have control over traffic-calming, and to feel there is something that they can do, with the needs of the Town to have a consistent, and fair, and reasonably efficient way of implementing such a policy," said Town Councilor Cynthia Dill, who chaired a citizen committee charged with drafting the policy.

Neil Williams, Cape Elizabeth chief of police, told councilors that his department receives complaints primarily about speeding in neighborhoods each spring, when citizens increase their outdoor activities, and each fall, when school begins. Often complainants call immediately for the installation of speed bumps, and they will often contact other town staff when their requests are refused.

"This gives consistency," Williams said of the policy. "It also gives the department heads and myself a clear understanding of where we go."

The policy outlines courses of action citizens may take when requesting ways for calming traffic in their neighborhoods. Richard Berman, a Hannaford Cove Road residents who served on the Traffic Calming/Roadway Safety working group, outlined the policy procedure through a flow chart.

Citizens seeking traffic-calming in their neighborhoods must submit a request in writing for a speed study to be conducted by the police. Speeding may be addressed through passive measures, such as speed notification sign boards, neighborhood mailings and periodic radar enforcement; standard measures, such as turn restrictions or pavement markings; or, in serious cases, "physical alteration" control measures such as speed tables, pedestrian islands or traffic circles.

The degree of traffic-calming will depend on the type of road, speed and volume of traffic, presence of "pedestrian generators"

such as a school or park, and agreement among neighbors as to what kind of measure is needed.

Berman called the last component "neighborhood buy-in," and it was common among sample roadway policies studied from other communities.

Each degree of traffic calming is more costly, Berman pointed out. Consequently the most restrictive measures - physical alterations - will require 75 percent neighborhood approval, and approval by the Town Council.

Dill said that roadway safety was one of the reasons she ran for the Town Council, and that she pushed to have roadway safety among council goals in 2006. The resulting Traffic Calming/Roadway Safety working group included 18 members of the public, Town staff and elected officials. The group held nine meetings on the draft policy, held one public forum, conducted site walks and gathered 45 pieces of communication from citizens.

During a public hearing on the policy April 9, Oakwood Road resident Gary Beckwith said the goal of roadway safety will depend on continually educating drivers, and on continual enforcement.

The policy was one of three goals taken on by the working group. The group will continue work on specific recommendations for pedestrian and bicycle safety; and recommendations to enhance pedestrian-friendliness in the Town Center. During the group's deliberations, technical amendments to the policy may be drafted and submitted to the council for approval.

The group's next meeting will be on at 8:45 a.m. April 27 in the William H. Jordan Conference Room at Town Hall.

Previous stories:

- [Separate hearings set on eldercare zoning amendments, traffic-calming policy \(03/06/07\)](#)
- [Traffic Calming/Road Safety Working Group to recommend draft policy to Town Council \(03/03/07\)](#)
- [Public Forum on road safety slated for Sept. 28 \(09/19/06\)](#)
- [Road safety working group seeks input from citizens \(08/26/06\)](#)
- [Working groups to eye traffic-calming; possible 'pay/display' system for Fort Williams Park \(04/11/06\)](#)

*Approved unanimously
4/9/07*

**Town of Cape Elizabeth
Traffic Calming Policy**

The Traffic Calming Policy represents a commitment by the Town of Cape Elizabeth to promote and maintain safety and livability. This policy provides a process for identifying, evaluating and addressing undesirable traffic conditions. The policy provides procedures for town staff to follow and an open process for citizen participation.

Procedure for request for Traffic Calming

1. To initiate a request for traffic calming, a citizen must submit in writing to the Cape Elizabeth Police Chief, or designee, a request to evaluate a road for traffic calming per the Traffic Calming Policy. The request shall include the citizen's address, daytime phone number, and the street/intersection to be studied. The citizen may also provide his/her assessment of the area contributing traffic that may require calming.
2. Upon receipt of the written request, the Police Chief shall schedule a speed study to be conducted by the Police Department for the area. A summary of the speed study shall be prepared and shared with the initiator of the request.
3. If the speed study indicates that average speeds do not exceed 5mph above the posted speed limit, then the initiator and the Police Chief shall review the implementation of **Passive Traffic Control Measures**.

Arterial, Collector, and Rural Connector Roads are intended to efficiently move automobile traffic and therefore are only eligible for Passive Measures, and only if the average peak hour speeds exceed 5 mph over the posted speed limits. These roads are: Route 77, Mitchell Road, Shore Road, Scott Dyer Road, Sawyer Road, Wells Road, Two Lights Road, Fowler Road, Old Ocean House Road, Charles E. Jordan Rd and Spurwink Ave.

If the speed study indicates that average speeds exceed 5 mph above the posted speed limit, the Police Chief will identify the neighborhood impacted by possible standard traffic control measures. The initiator may then elect to collect the signatures of a minimum of 51% of the households in the neighborhood that are in favor of traffic calming measures.

4. If less than 51% of the households agree that traffic calming measures are needed, then the initiator and the Police Chief shall review possible implementation of **Passive Traffic Control Measures**.

If 51% or more of the households in the neighborhood agree that traffic calming measures are needed, the Police Chief will conduct a traffic volume study.

5. If the volume study indicates a traffic count of less than 100 cars during the peak hour, the Police Chief and the initiator, in collaboration with the neighborhood, shall review possible implementation of **Passive Traffic Control Measures**.

If the volume study indicates a traffic count of 100 or more cars during the peak hour, the Police Chief shall determine if a school zone or pedestrian generator or a sidewalk is present.

6. If there is no school zone or pedestrian generator, or there exists a sidewalk, the Police Chief and initiator, in collaboration with the neighborhood, shall review and implement **Standard Traffic Calming Measures**.
7. If there is a school zone or pedestrian generator or lack of a sidewalk, the Police Chief and initiator, in collaboration with the neighborhood, shall review implementation of **Physical Alteration Traffic Calming Measures**.
8. The initiator, in collaboration with the neighborhood, shall obtain signatures for at least 75% of the households in the neighborhood supporting the proposed **Physical Alteration Traffic Calming Measures**. All households fronting on proposed **Physical Alteration Traffic Calming Measures** must be included in the 75% supporting installation of the **Physical Alteration Traffic Calming Measures**.

If support of less than 75%, or support of less than all households fronting on proposed **Physical Alteration Traffic Calming Measures** is obtained, the Police Chief and initiator, in collaboration with the neighborhood, shall review and implement **Standard Traffic Calming Measures**.

8. If 75% or more of the neighborhood support **Physical Alteration Traffic Calming Measures**, the Town Council will consider the proposed alterations and may hold a public hearing prior to voting to consider approval. If not approved by the Town Council, the Police Chief and

initiator, in collaboration with the neighborhood shall review and implement **Standard Traffic Calming Measures**.

Passive Traffic Control Measures

Passive measures include educational methods and police enforcement. No minimum criteria must be reached to be eligible for this level. Some examples of measures that can be taken under this level are as follows:

1. Police enforcement. Periodic radar enforcement.
2. Speed notification sign board. This device displays a motorist's speed as they approach the sign board in an effort to educate the driver that their speed might be inappropriate and to raise driver consciousness of their travel speed.
3. Neighborhood mailings. A letter sent from the Town to all of the residents of the road or neighborhood asking for their assistance to help control the speed that they travel in the neighborhood.
4. Adopt-a-Cone. This is a voluntary program for the citizens of Cape Elizabeth who are in an area where speeding is habitual. Each volunteer resident will be issued a traffic cone and asked to place that on a designated spot on the roadway in front of their residence thus bringing attention to a passing driver to please slow down. The volunteer places the cone out in the morning and brings the cone back in before dusk. The volunteer stores the cone at their residence until the end of the program. The program will be in operation between May 1 and October 31 of each year.
5. Evaluation for pedestrian and/or bicycle safety improvements.

Standard Traffic Control Measures

Standard measures are traffic organization and control techniques that influence driver performance without substantial infrastructure changes. Some examples of measures that can be taken under this level are as follows:

1. Turn restrictions. These restrictions could be full time or just during peak travel times and require police enforcement to be effective.
2. Pavement markings. Using paint to narrow travel lanes can have a calming effect and provide extra room for bicycles and parked cars. Some communities feel that this type of treatment gives the road a more urban look and is less appealing. This technique is not effective when the travel surface of the road is 11' wide per lane or less.
3. Plantings. Installation of salt tolerant trees near the roadway can narrow the perceived width of the road, creating a "psycho-perceptual impact," where most drivers will slow down. Species selection must take into consideration plant tolerance and preservation of sight distance from adjacent roadways (no low hanging branches) as well as the needs for snow plowing/removal efforts.

Physical Alteration Control Measures

Physical alterations are design changes in the road infrastructure that create partial barriers or interruptions in the flow of traffic to slow drivers. These measures are not appropriate for arterial, collector and rural connector roads where the primary function is to convey traffic. Some examples of measures that can be taken under this level area as follows:

1. Speed Tables. Speed tables will only be used in a limited fashion. While these devices can be effective in reducing speed at the point of origin and are relatively inexpensive to build, they also cause aggravation to motorists and can cause them to divert onto other local roads to avoid them. A maximum of two speed tables may be approved per road, unless no other traffic control device is installed, in which case the Police Chief may authorize additional speed tables.
2. Chokers/Pedestrian Refuge Islands. Chokers are the narrowing of streets, either at an intersection or mid-block, to reduce the width of the traveled way. Chokers can be designed to widen the sidewalk (bulb design) or an island may be constructed, which would force the traffic toward the curb (island choker). Either way, chokers appear to have the greatest effect in the area of pedestrian safety. By reducing the amount of roadway width, the choker dramatically reduces the exposure time that a pedestrian is in the street. Additionally, both chokers and refuge islands break up the appearance of the roadway and may be landscaped to increase the attractiveness of the area.
3. Traffic Circles. Traffic circles are different from traditional roundabouts in that they are circles placed in an intersection without modifying the outside curbs. As with roundabouts, motorists must yield to traffic in the circle. The primary consideration for installing these types of devices will be the effect on emergency vehicles, school buses and snow plowing/removal. They must be designed in a way that these types of vehicles can either turn left by going around the circle or in some cases turn left in front of the circle by driving over mountable splitter islands.
4. Plantings. Installation of salt tolerant trees near the roadway can narrow the perceived width of the road, creating a "psycho-perceptual impact," where most drivers will slow down. Species selection must take into consideration plant tolerance and preservation of sight distance from adjacent roadways (no low hanging branches) as well as the needs for snow plowing/removal efforts.

Definitions for Traffic Calming Policy

SPEED STUDY – A speed detail conducted by the Police Department consisting of a 5 day period with details conducted twice a day for 20 minute intervals. Time of day for the detail will be determined after consultation with the citizen making the request.

NEIGHBORHOOD- The neighborhood consists of the households on the road in question and the households on the side streets that directly come off that road. Should a side street continue onto another main road, the Police Chief or designee, in conjunction with the Public Works Director or designee, shall determine those households on the side road that appear to be affected by any proposed Traffic Control Measures. (This shall be interpreted in favor of inclusion of households)