

City of Omaha

**TRAFFIC
CALMING
PROGRAM
SUMMARY**

Adopted July 1999

Prepared by: City of Omaha Planning Department
City of Omaha Public Works Department

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROGRAM INCEPTION

The Omaha City Council approved a resolution on October 27, 1998 directing the Planning Director to form a committee to review the Transportation Element of the City's Master Plan for the purpose of conducting a review of residential traffic flow within the zoning jurisdiction of the City of Omaha. This review specifically called for the establishment of a set of guidelines regarding the control of traffic in existing and new residential neighborhoods and that such guidelines and traffic control policies include reference to traffic calming devices. In addition, this review was to look at the issue of increasing public participation in the planning process.

With the support of the Mayor, City staff from the Planning and Public Works Departments assembled a committee to represent all the facets of the development community and existing neighborhood groups. Committee membership included two members of the City of Omaha City Council, a representative from the Mayor's office, attorneys working with the development community, local engineering consultants, six neighborhood citizen representatives, Douglas County engineering staff, Metropolitan Area Planning Agency staff, emergency response personnel from both the City of Omaha and Douglas County, and City of Omaha departmental staff.

VISION AND GOALS OF THE TRAFFIC CALMING PROGRAM

Once assembled, the Traffic Calming Program Committee established the Vision of the Traffic Calming Program based on the City Council's resolution. The Vision is as follows:

To provide safe local residential streets, signed for a 25 mile-per-hour speed limit, for all residents of Omaha so that all legitimate uses of residential streets, in addition to the automobile, are provided for.

The Goals of the program were established to help attain this Vision. They are as follow:

1. Provide citizens of Omaha information on what traffic calming measures are available.
2. Develop a program designed to address issues regarding the control of speed, volume, and flow of traffic on local streets in existing residential neighborhoods, as well as in new residential subdivisions.
3. Provide a mechanism to implement appropriate traffic calming techniques.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The Traffic Calming Program Committee met four times throughout the winter and spring of 1999 to accomplish the Goals set out before them. The following document is the product of this committee. Related Master Plan amendments that incorporate this program into the Master Plan were sent to the City of Omaha Planning Board in June 1999. These amendments, together with a resolution approving the Traffic Calming Program, were then sent to the Omaha City Council in July 1999.

The Traffic Calming Program Committee recommended that this program be entirely funded from the City of Omaha general budget. This will allow the Traffic Calming Program to rank

and evaluate proposed projects yearly and also design and construct traffic calming projects during the annual construction season. The ranking system will allow projects to be re-evaluated annually if available funding is fully expended during a given year on other higher ranked projects.

TRAFFIC CALMING TECHNIQUES

The Traffic Calming Program includes active devices, passive devices, preemptive tools for new developments, and retrofitting tools for existing neighborhoods. Each device has varying impacts on traffic speeds and volumes. Particular neighborhood characteristics will be studied so that the most effective device or group of devices can be designed and implemented accordingly. Any proposed traffic calming device(s) must be evaluated with respect to the surrounding neighborhood for compliance with the City of Omaha Master Plan's guideline of street system continuity. The City of Omaha will implement the least intrusive solution to the traffic calming problem.

Some of the devices proposed by the City of Omaha include:

- Designing streets with offset intersections (for new developments),
- Designing streets with curvilinear streets (for new developments),
- Limiting the length of unimpeded straight road segments,
- Installing traffic circles (a raised island at an intersection),
- Raising intersections and crosswalks,
- Providing on-street parking,
- Planting street trees and other landscaping,
- Speed humps or speed tables,
- Semi-diverters, neck-downs, bulb-outs, and chokers (to narrow the driving lanes),
- Chicanes (creating a serpentine appearance to the street), and
- Median barriers, forced-turn channelization, and cul-de-sacs.

A more detailed description of these devices can be found in the City of Omaha's Traffic Calming Program, available through the Public Works Department.

IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The City of Omaha has strived to create a comprehensive program for responding to citizen requests, studying the entire neighborhood and reviewing possible alternatives with the residents, implementing an agreed upon course of action, and then reviewing the results of such action in this traffic calming program. When reviewing possible measure to be taken, the overall street design must be considered. This not only includes what traffic calming devices to use, but it also considers landscaping measures that can help interrupt continuous sight lines of drivers, and the installation of sidewalks or pedestrian crosswalks where they are needed. Involving the residents of the neighborhood under study provides an opportunity for them to become stakeholders in the process, thus increasing the acceptance and effectiveness of the decided course of action. Also, involvement of emergency response agencies in the process is imperative to maintain the critical balance between emergency response times and more livable streets. It must be kept in mind as

well that the use of just one traffic calming device most often will not solve all the traffic issues facing a neighborhood. By creating a comprehensive implementation and review process, a more livable and safe street system can be achieved for all residents of the City of Omaha.

The following is a summary of the policies and procedures of the Traffic Calming Program. Included in this summary is an overview of the minimum eligibility requirements to qualify for the program and the ranking system that will prioritize qualified projects if funding is limited.

POLICIES FOR THE TRAFFIC CALMING PROGRAM

1. This program is limited to residential streets with a posted speed limit of 25 MPH and defined by the MAPA Federal Functional Classification map as 'LOCAL'. Residential streets defined by the MAPA Federal Functional Classification map as 'COLLECTOR' will be dealt with separately on a case-by-case basis.
2. Property owners interested in this program are obligated to request routine speed enforcement from the Omaha Police Traffic Division along the street segment in question prior to initiation into this program.
3. The request for a project will come from those property owners along a local residential street which are negatively impacted by excessive through traffic volumes and speeds. City staff will determine the area for each project. Examples of the proposed project area definitions are shown on pages 9 and 10. The project area for a mid-block treatment will be defined as those property owners on both sides of the street segment between two intersections, whereas the project area for intersection treatments will be defined as those property owners within 300 feet of the intersection, or one-half block, whichever is smaller.
4. Traffic may be rerouted to another adjacent street as a result of a traffic calming project. The City of Omaha staff, on a case-by-case basis, will define the allowable increase of this traffic.
5. Reasonable emergency access must be preserved.
6. Reasonable vehicular access will be maintained. This program will also promote pedestrian, bicycle, and transit movement.
7. The City Traffic Engineer will continue to direct the installation of all traffic control devices (signs, signals, and markings) in compliance with the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices.
8. The City reserves the right to modify and update this program as additional national or state traffic calming policies are published.
9. The minimum criteria that are required to participate in this program are as follows:

NEIGHBORHOOD APPROVAL

66% of the property owners within the defined project area must support traffic calming for the street (one lot = one vote).

TRAFFIC SPEEDS

Eighty-fifth percentile speed greater than 30 MPH along the street is mandatory.

TRAFFIC VOLUMES

ADT (average daily traffic) greater than 1000 vehicles on the street is mandatory.

10. The City of Omaha will provide yearly monies for “Traffic Calming” in its annual budget. These monies will be spent on projects that have been ranked by a scoring system. This scoring system is defined below. This is based on a 33 point scale:

SPEED

Minimum threshold for speed is 30 MPH for 85th percentile* speed. Scoring is based on 1.5 points awarded for every MPH of the 85th percentile speed over 30 MPH.

Maximum score is 15 points.

*85th percentile speed is the speed below which 85% of the motorists travel.

VOLUME

Minimum threshold for volume is 1000 ADT (average daily traffic). Scoring is based upon 1 point per every 200 vehicles per day above the minimum 1000 ADT.

Maximum score is 10 points.

PEDESTRIAN GENERATOR POINTS

Extra points are given for pedestrian generators such as schools and parks. One point is given for each pedestrian generator impacting the study area.

Maximum score is 3 points.

REAPPLICATION CREDIT

Additional points will be awarded if a proposed project, that meets the minimum criteria for inclusion in the program but is not funded because other qualified projects rank higher and expend available funding, is resubmitted the following year for continued consideration. The first such reapplication will receive 2 additional points on the project’s ranking score. Each subsequent reapplication will receive 1 additional point for a total reapplication credit not to exceed 5 points. The project under consideration must continue to meet the minimum criteria of the program each year the project is resubmitted for funding consideration.

Maximum score is 5 points.

11. New developments will have traffic calming issues addressed during the platting process.

PROCESS OF THE TRAFFIC CALMING PROGRAM

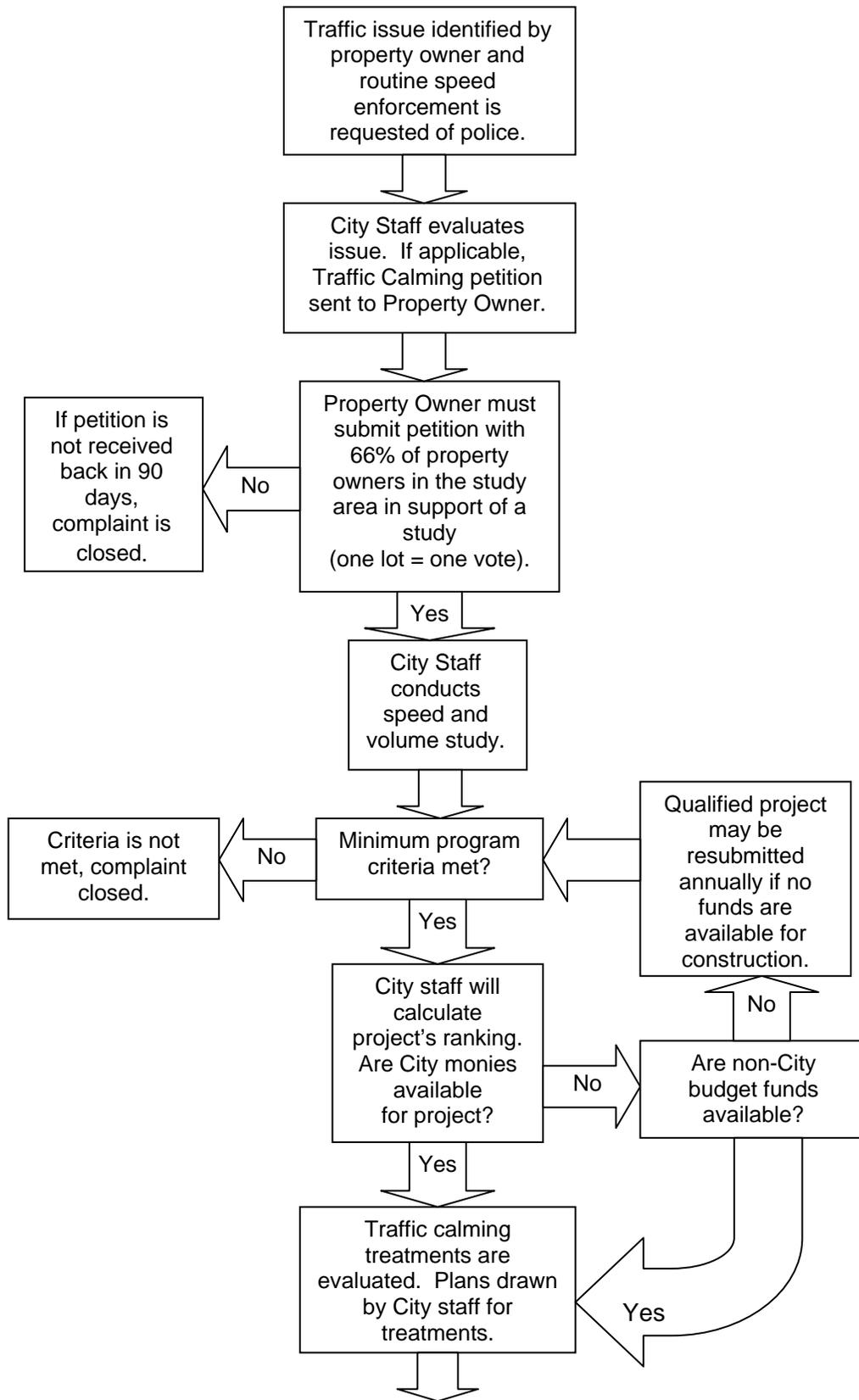
1. Property owners contact City Staff regarding neighborhood traffic problem(s).
2. City staff will evaluate the traffic problem(s). If the concern is appropriate to be considered for the Traffic Calming Program, the property owner(s) will be sent a Traffic Calming Program Petition. The City staff will define the petition area to be covered. The petition area will be based upon established guidelines. (see examples on pages 9 and 10 of this document)
3. Property owner must obtain signatures of other property owners in the petition area. Signatures of property owners representing 66% of the property owners within the defined petition area are required to continue moving the traffic calming project forward (one lot = one vote). If a signed petition representing 66% of the property owners in the petition area is not received within 90 days of the petition mailing date, the initial investigation will be closed.
4. Once the property owner submits a qualifying petition and it has been verified by City staff, the City staff will schedule the speed and volume study.
5. The proposed street segment must meet the minimum criteria, as explained above, to be considered for the traffic calming program.
6. If minimum program criteria are met, the project's rank will be calculated using the scoring system explained above. The City of Omaha will maintain an annual project listing for each construction season. When monies are available for a project (based upon its ranking), City staff will proceed with the development of an appropriate traffic calming treatment. City staff will draw up any required plans. Funding mechanisms that do not include City budget monies will be considered for qualified projects that do not rank high enough on the priority list to be funded through the City budget during a given construction season. If such "outside" funding is not available, a project that continues to meet the minimum qualifications may be resubmitted for City funding the following year and will be given bonus points in the ranking system for continued interest and support.
7. If the construction of speed humps or speed tables are the proposed traffic calming treatment, City staff will proceed with the location and installation. (Proceed to step 12, as steps 8 through 11 are not applicable for the installation of speed humps or speed tables.)
8. If speed humps or speed tables are not proposed, a neighborhood meeting will be held to discuss the proposed method of treatment and the construction schedule.

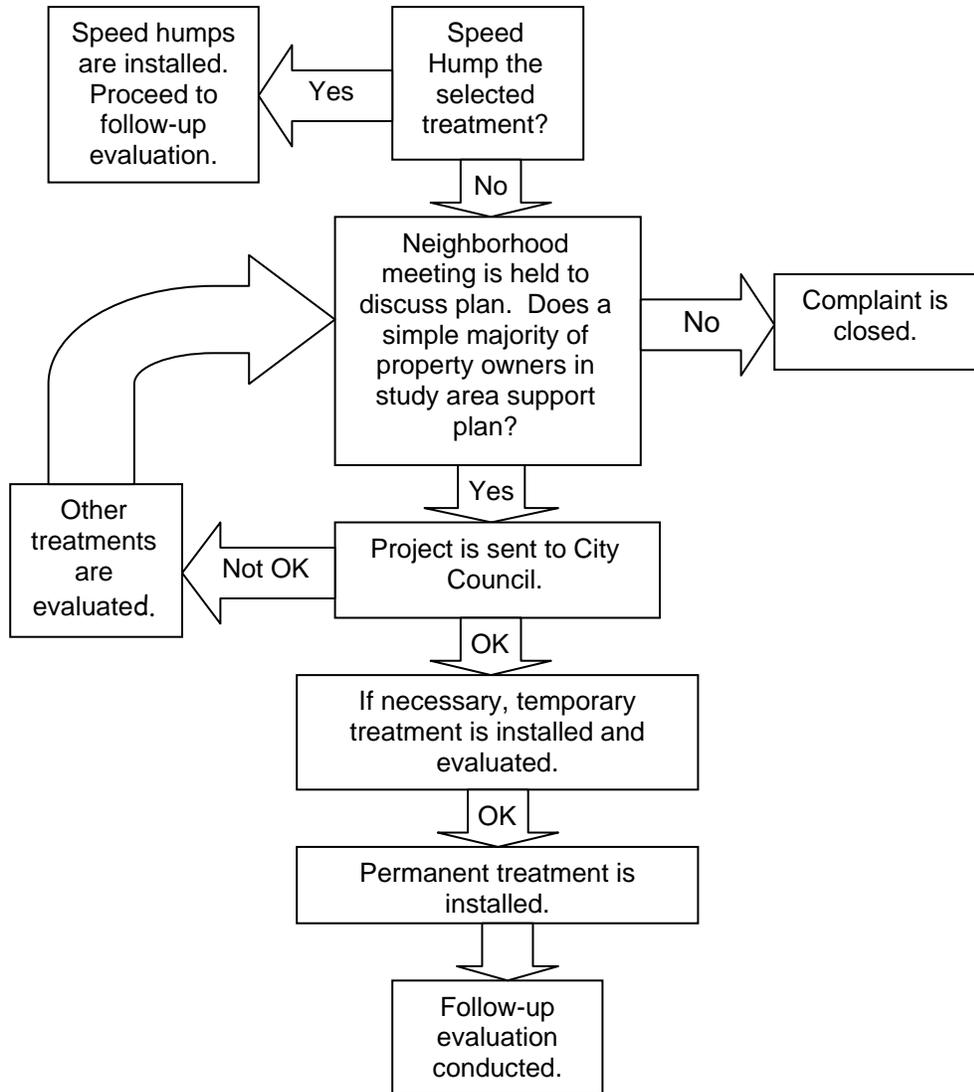
9. If property owners within the study area support the proposed treatment by a simple majority, then the project is sent through City Council for approval.
10. If needed or appropriate, the traffic calming treatment is tested with a temporary treatment.
11. If both property owners and the City approve the temporary treatment for effectiveness, permanent construction commences.
12. City staff reviews treatment for overall effectiveness. Adjustments are made accordingly.

The proceeding information was meant to be a summary of the policies and procedures of the Traffic Calming Program. If you desire a copy of the complete document that was approved by the Omaha City Council, please contact City of Omaha Public Works Department at 444-5250.

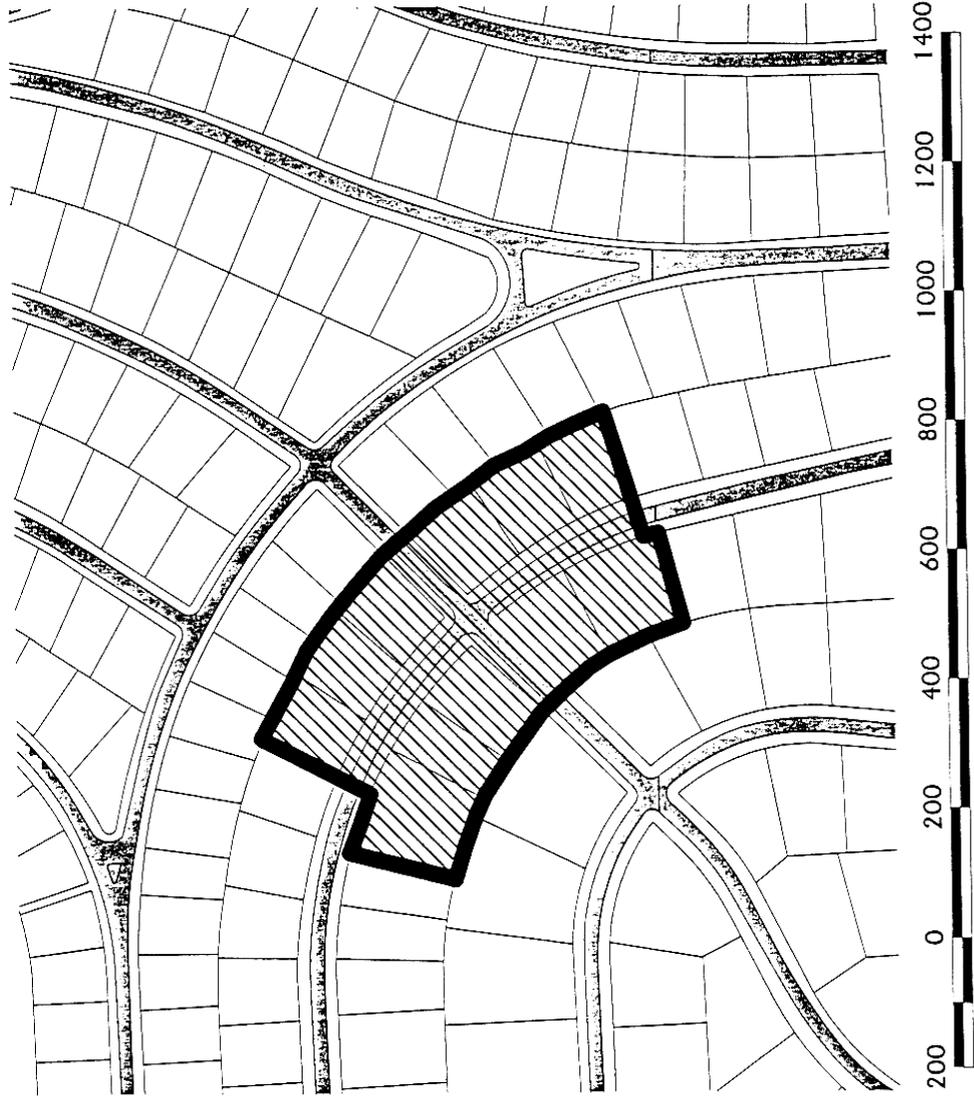
As a property owner, if you feel as though your neighborhood might benefit from being included in the City of Omaha's Traffic Calming Program, and you would volunteer to circulate a petition along your street, please contact the City of Omaha Public Works Department at the telephone number listed in the enclosed cover letter. By administering the City of Omaha's Traffic Calming Program, the Public Works Department wants to assist you and your neighbors in making your streets safer and more livable.

Traffic Calming Project Process Flow Chart





Petition District for Intersection Application



NOTES
Limits are:
1/2 block or
300 feet,
whichever is smaller

Petition District for Mid-Block Application

