

Tools and Ideas

Neighbourhood Traffic Calming

CityPlan

Riley Park/South Cambie **RPSC**

What is Traffic Calming?

Traffic calming involves slowing the speed or reducing the volume of vehicular traffic on neighbourhood streets to increase safety and livability in the neighbourhoods. Traffic calming measures could include traffic circles, corner bulges, partial diverters, diagonal diverters, signs prohibiting a vehicular movement, street closures, street narrowing, and speed humps (see illustration).

Examples of these calming measures can be found in neighbourhoods in Vancouver which have already been traffic calmed such as the West End, Strathcona, Mount Pleasant, Shaughnessy, Grandview-Woodland, Kitsilano, and Hastings-Sunrise.

How are Priorities Established for Starting Traffic Calming Plans?

It begins with an individual or group contact by phone, e-mail, in person, or letter to the Neighbourhood Transportation Branch at City Hall to describe a traffic speed or volume concern on their neighbourhood street.

City staff evaluate the concern. This would involve reviewing existing traffic in terms of speed, volume and accidents, doing field checks, and acquiring more data which can provide a measure of the "before" condition in the event that calming measures are implemented.

In the past, neighbourhood traffic calming plans were initiated on either a first-come, first-served basis or were generated from City initiatives such as Local Area Plans. Due to increasing demand for these traffic calming plans, there is a current backlog of neighbourhoods waiting for a plan. Thus, priorities have been established for traffic calming plans.

To be equitable, priorities are based on the criteria which objectively measure the problem. The primary criteria for setting priorities are speed and volume. Other factors include proximity to a school zone, Greenway or Bikeway, and/or a "pedestrian generator" (e.g. Skytrain station, bus loop, or retail area), or a lack of a sidewalk.

What is The Process for Implementing a Traffic Calming Plan?

There are three possible processes for traffic calming depending on the problem and potential solutions: the Local Improvement Program; a "neighbourhood-wide" traffic calming plan; or a "street segment" traffic calming plan.

- The Local Improvement Program is available for residents to pay for the cost of traffic calming measures - like traffic circles or corner bulges - when their street is not deemed to be a problem or they are very low on the priority list. In this process, at least 2/3 of property owners must agree (by signing a petition) to pay for the traffic calming device. Corner bulges can often be added at no extra cost when a street is being curbed.
- A neighbourhood-wide plan is City-funded and is used when the problem is nonlocal, external traffic short-cutting through the neighbourhood or if the solution involves diversionary measures. Usually the problem on one street likely cannot be addressed in isolation from other streets in the neighbourhood so the neighbourhood-wide plan is necessary. The planning process is a fairly long one as extensive neighbourhood consultation and consensus is required.

- A street segment calming plan is also City-funded and is appropriate if the problem is localized on a particular street segment and the solution involves non-diversionary measures. Only immediately affected residents are consulted because traffic diversion to adjacent streets would not be expected. However, traffic counts would be done on adjacent streets to ensure there is no diverted traffic.

In addition to these processes the Bicycle Network Program utilizes traffic calming measures on the City's bike routes help to give cyclists some priority on the street and to keep the route from becoming attractive to commuting motorists.

The Greenways Program provides paths for pedestrians and cyclists. Traffic calming measures are also used as tools for creating greenways.

Landscaping of Traffic Calming Projects

The City will put basic landscaping in as part of traffic calming (e.g., in a traffic circle). However, residents may make arrangements with the City to do the landscaping themselves if they would like to personalize it more to the neighbourhood.

Traffic Calming and Management in RPSC

One area in Riley Park-South Cambie (RPSC) that has a completed Traffic Calming Plan is Douglas Park. It is the area bounded by 16th Ave, King Edward Ave, Oak St, and Cambie St. These plans use speed humps, traffic circles, corner and mid-block bulges, turning restrictions, and additional stop signs are used to slow down traffic and reduce short-cutting.

In RPSC there is traffic calming associated with the Mid-town, Heather and Ontario Bikeways. Proposed bike corridors that may have traffic calming associated with them include 19th Ave., 28th Ave., 45th Ave., Prince Edward St., and Yukon St. Speed humps and traffic circles have been

built in association with the Douglas Park Traffic Calming Plan, the Ontario Bikeway, the Heather Bikeway, and the Midtown Bikeway. Speed humps have been proposed for/built on W 19th Ave (900 blk), Laurel St (3600 blk), Heather St (3600 blk), Ontario St (4500 - 4900 blks), W 37th Ave (100 - 400 blks), Willow St (4900 - 5000 blks), Peveril Ave (00 - 100 blks), and Dinmont Ave (4200 - 4400 blks). Traffic circles have been built at Laurel and 20th, Laurel and 22nd, Laurel and 26th, Laurel and 32nd, Willow and 26th, Willow and 37th, Ontario and 19th, Ontario and 21st, Ontario and 37th, Heather and 18th, Heather and 20th, Heather and 22nd, Heather and 26th, Heather and 27th, Heather and 30th, Sophia and 23rd, Prince Edward and 36th, Prince Edward and 40th, and Ash and 27th.

Neighbourhood Traffic Calming Measures

