

NTMP – Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Who can submit an application for NTMP project?**

Each NTMP application requires a primary applicant and a secondary applicant. Any two concerned residents can submit the NTMP application on behalf of their neighborhood. However, the applicants also carry the following responsibilities: (1) gather support from residents, (2) arrange a meeting venue should a public meeting is needed, (3) serve as liaisons between the City and residents.

2. **What information does an NTMP application require?**

On the NTMP application, the applicant must describe traffic issues experienced by the residents and list all streets in the neighborhood where the issues are observed. Based on the information on the NTMP application, the NTMP staff will define the study area, place the application in either the Volume Control or Speed Control Programs, request the applicant to collect support signatures from residents along the streets where traffic issues are observed.

3. **How many signatures are required to indicate support for an NTMP application?**

The petition requires a minimum of 25 resident signatures or signatures from at least 30% of all properties in the study area. Multiple signatures from the same household are counted as one signature. In lieu of the petition, the applicant can submit a letter of support from the Homeowner Association (HOA), civic club, or super-neighborhood, etc.

4. **What's the next step after I submit an NTMP application?**

We will review the application for completeness. Common errors on the application are: (1) the primary and secondary contact persons live in the same household, (2) the study area does not meet the ordinance's definition, and (3) petition form is missing.

5. **My application was accepted and I received a project number, but I have not heard from the City since then. What should I expect next?**

The NTMP has limited funding and a long waiting list. When funding becomes available and we are ready to work on your project, we'll reach out the contacts on the application.

6. **I submitted an application for the Volume Control Program. Can I request to switch to the Speed Control Program?**

If speed cushion is the only traffic calming device that the neighborhood is interested in and test devices have not been installed, then we can consider requests to switch the program.

7. **I submitted an application for the Speed Control Program. Can I request to switch to the Volume Control Program?**

If locations of the proposed speed cushions have not been approved by the PWE Director, then we can consider a formal request from the neighborhood to switch to the Volume Control Program.

8. **What traffic data do you collect? And for how long?**

We typically collect traffic volumes, speeds, and if needed percentage of trucks. The data is collected for at least one full day (24 hour period) on a typical school day. We also collect data on the weekend if that's the period when traffic problems are usually observed. We previously collected data for 7 days straight, but our statistical analysis revealed no significant differences among school days; therefore, to conserve resources, we now only collect data for one full day.

9. **I was told that a traffic study is not needed. Why are you collecting traffic data in our neighborhood?**

The NTMP ordinance indicates that a traffic study and public meeting are not required for neighborhoods that request the Speed Control Program AND do not have minor collectors. Your neighborhood has one or more streets classified as minor collectors; therefore, we are collecting traffic data on those streets.

10. **Do the traffic calming devices work?**

The tables below show the effects of various traffic calming devices on speed and cut-through traffic. Before and after traffic data are also available on GIMS for several neighborhoods in Houston.

Table 1. Speed Effects of Traffic Calming Measures

Speed Effects: Traffic Calming Measures	Speed Before	Speed After	Percent Δ
Speed Cushions	35.9 mph	26.9 mph	-20%
Mini-Circles	34.2 mph	30.3 mph	-11%
Narrowings	34.9 mph	32.3 mph	-7%
Diagonal Diverters	29.3 mph	27.9 mph	-4%

Table 2. Volume Effects of Traffic Calming Measures

Volume Effects: Traffic Calming Measures	Average Δ Volume After	Percent Δ Volume
Speed Cushions	-165 veh/d	0%
Mini-Circles	-293 veh/d	-5%
Narrowings	-263 veh/d	-10%
Diagonal Diverters	-1167 veh/d	-35%

11. **What's the difference between a speed hump and a speed cushion?**

A speed hump, built of asphalt, runs the full width of the street while a speed cushion, or rather a set of speed cushions, has gaps so that vehicles with wider wheel bases, such as emergency vehicles or buses, can pass through them with minimal impact.

12. **What's the difference between an asphalt speed cushion and a rubberized speed cushion?**

A rubberized speed cushion comprises of 10 rubber modules that are bolted down onto the pavement. Each cushion is 78" wide and 80" long. The asphalt speed cushion has the same width but longer (144" long in the direction of travel); and as the name implies, it's built of asphalt.

13. **How far from an intersection do you place speed cushions?**

We typically place speed cushions about 300' from a stop sign or small-radius curve.

14. **What's the average spacing between speed cushion locations?**

The cushions are typically placed 400' to 700' apart. They are on average about 500' apart. When determining the spacing, we consider a number of factors such as existing stop sign locations, block length, traffic volume, severity of speeding problem, roadway width, on-street parking, roadway alignment, connection with collectors and thoroughfares, etc.

15. **How fast can I drive over the speed cushions?**

Drivers can drive over the speed cushions at 20-25 miles per hour.

16. **Will the speed cushions (or traffic calming devices in general) affect fire trucks?**

There are gaps in between the speed cushions that allow fire trucks to go through with minimal impact. It should be noted that all locations of speed cushions (and traffic calming devices) are reviewed and approved by the Fire Department prior to installation.

17. **Will the speed cushions affect bicyclists?**

The speed cushions are designed to allow vehicles to travel over them at 20-25 miles per hour. Bicyclists are anticipated to be able to go over them at similar speed. In addition, there are gaps between the cushions that allow bicyclists to go around them if they so choose.

18. **Will you place speed cushions in front of my driveway?**
We avoid placing speed cushions in front of a driveway or a resident's window. Whenever possible, we place speed cushions at the property line. We also prefer to place speed cushions near an existing street light to improve visibility.
19. **How do you decide whether a street should have asphalt cushions or rubberized cushions?**
We consider the pavement conditions and traffic volume when selecting the cushion type. We typically specify asphalt speed cushions for asphalt roadways. For concrete streets that are in good condition and do not carry a heavy traffic volume or a high percentage of trucks, rubberized speed cushions can be used; otherwise, we'll also use the asphalt cushions.
20. **Can I pay to have one speed hump (or one speed cushion location) installed in front of my house?**
No. The City ordinances have specific requirements for the approval and installation of a traffic calming device. The requirements may call for installation of speed cushions at several locations on your street and on other streets in your neighborhood. We encourage you to collaborate with other residents to submit an NTMP application, and on which you can indicate that you want to privately fund the installation.
21. **How much does a speed cushion cost?**
A rubber or asphalt speed cushion costs about \$1,300. Depending on the pavement width, each location may require 2 to 5 cushions. For example, a street that is 22' wide will need two cushions (for a total cost of \$2,600 if rubber cushions are used); a street that is 30' wide will require 3 cushions (for a total cost of \$5,100 if the asphalt cushions are used).
22. **Do the speed cushions reduce property values?**
No. A research study on this subject concluded that the effect of speed humps on the real-estate value was random and statistically insignificant. For more information, see "Economic Impact of Speed Humps on Housing Values", ITE Journal, January 2000.
23. **Who will pay to maintain the traffic circles?**
We form the traffic circle out of plastic bollards, which we will maintain. If the neighborhood pays to transform the circle into landscaped or paver circles with concrete curbs, then the neighborhood will be responsible for the maintenance cost.
24. **Can more than one members of a household submit comments?**
We cannot prevent multiple members of a household to submit separate comments; however, we'll only code one response for each property (e.g., 'Support' or 'Do not support'). If comments from the same household are conflicting, we'd likely code 'Neutral' as a single feedback for the property.
25. **I have a rental property in the project area. Can both I (as the property owner) and the current resident submit comments?**
Similar to multiple comments from the same household, we'll only code one response for each property (e.g., 'Support' or 'Do not support'). If comments from the current resident and property owner are conflicting, we'd likely code 'Neutral' as one feedback for entire property.
26. **How do you evaluate residents' comments?**
We generally look for majority support of the proposed traffic calming plan. Majority support means more than 50% of the properties that submit comments show support for the project. However, even when we receive majority support for the entire neighborhood, we will modify the plan to achieve greater consensus if we see a pattern of opposition from certain street(s) or strong support for additional traffic calming devices on a particular segment. If the modification is significant, we'll mail the revised plan to the residents for review and comment.
27. **Can I submit my comment prior to the comment period?**
The comment period follows the public meeting where the proposed traffic calming plan is presented and discussed. We typically do not accept comments before and after the comment

period; however, if you have a special circumstance and notify us in advance, we can consider accepting your comment prior to the comment period. For projects that do not require a public meeting, the comment period will be explicitly spelled out in the notice letters to residents.

28. **Can you install all-way stop-control instead of speed cushions?**

Warrant criteria as described in the Texas Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (TMUTCD) must be met before we can authorize the installation of stop signs. Moreover, an all-way stop-control is not a traffic calming device and numerous researches have shown that an unwarranted all-way stop-control can result in an unsafe intersection.

29. **How can I request the removal of speed cushions (or traffic calming devices) that were installed by the NTMP?**

You can submit an application to remove one or more traffic calming devices on your street. The application will require a petition of 25 signatures or 30% of support from residents on that street. We will notify all residents within the 0.5 mile radius of the devices proposed for removal. We will move forward with the removal, and bear the removal cost, if we receive majority support from the residents.

30. **A speed hump on my street was installed many years ago and is in bad conditions. Can you replace it with asphalt or rubberized speed cushions?**

The asphalt speed humps were installed many years ago under a program that no longer exists. The current NTMP does not have resources to maintain these humps. We encourage you to submit an NTMP application. Within the context of an NTMP project, we can replace damaged speed humps with speed cushions.

31. **Can you install traffic calming devices on 4-lane streets?**

The ordinance does not allow installation of traffic calming devices on major thoroughfares and major collectors. There are 4-lane streets that function as a major collector but have not yet been classified. Legally they are qualified for traffic calming; however, we have avoided installing traffic calming devices on these roads because they tend to carry more commercial traffic, and thus it's more difficult to obtain support from property owners.

32. **My neighborhood NTMP project follows the Speed Control Program and does not require a public meeting. Can I still request a public meeting? How?**

Yes, any resident in the affected neighborhood can submit a request for the public meeting. You can send the request to the neighborhood project champion (e.g., the primary NTMP applicant or president of the HOA, civic club, super neighborhood, etc.) so the champion can secure a meeting place and work with the City to schedule a date and time. The City will prepare the meeting invites and mail them to all the residents.

33. **Following up on the question above, can I request the public meeting at any time during the project?**

The request should be submitted any time prior to the close of the comment period as specified on the project notice.

34. **Following up on the question above, what will be discussed at the meeting?**

We will present the overall NTMP process, traffic concept plan, a summary of residents' comments, and next steps in the process.