

PE6 Action: Traffic Calming

3 – 10
Points

A. Why is this action important?

Traffic calming measures enhance a community's quality of life by reducing opportunities for aggressive driving. Reduced vehicle speeds improve safety, which in turn encourages walking and biking. Traffic calming measures also support neighborhood revitalization and offer opportunities to create and preserve a sense of a community's place. For example, roundabouts can be enhanced through aesthetic treatments to highlight a community's sense of place or its history. Treatments can also incorporate resiliency measures such as raingardens to improve stormwater management. This Climate Smart Communities (CSC) action offers points for the installation of traffic calming measures at least one intersection.

B. How to implement this action

Implementing traffic calming measures requires careful analysis and public outreach. Each traffic calming measure has its own unique application and needs to provide for safety. They don't all fit every situation.

The New York State (NYS) Department of Transportation (DOT) considers community involvement a prerequisite to a successful traffic calming project. Understanding the concerns of the affected residents is key, as well as helping a community understand the impacts of traffic calming measures and the constraints within which a project must be developed. Several meetings should be held with the affected residents, from the time a problem is identified until the completed project has been evaluated. Without community involvement, the solution to a problem may not satisfy the needs of the residents and the project could result in failure.

The ["Project for Public Spaces Traffic Calming 101"](#) suggests the following considerations to help decide appropriate treatments:

- Who has jurisdiction over the road (state, county, town, city, village)?
- Identify surrounding uses (residential, commercial, retail, cultural, entertainment, civic, educational, other).
- Who are the users? For example, are there many elderly or disabled people or children?
- What kinds of activities are going on in the vicinity or are planned to go on?
- Are there plans for improving the area?
 - If so, how? What kinds of streets are being looked at? What is the ideal speed desired?
- Is there a problem with through traffic?
- Is transit service available? If so, where and what kind?
- Do emergency and service vehicles use the area? Do school buses?
- Where is drainage needed?

Depending on the responses to these questions, there are a variety of measures that can be implemented to calm traffic in your community. Measures can be as simple as landscape plantings. Regardless, any traffic calming measures must be balanced with considerations for all highway users and safety. In some cases, traffic calming measures could conflict with NYS Complete Streets measures. For example, curb extensions (such as bulb-outs) can be controversial with cyclists, who may be "squeezed" into vehicle lanes. Shared Lanes usually need to be wider, not narrower, to accommodate side-by-side bike and vehicle traffic. In commercial areas, very tight curbs can cause delivery trucks to run over the curb, prematurely damaging the sidewalk and curb, and potentially proving hazardous to pedestrians waiting to cross the road.

Traffic Calming examples:

- Plantings
- Roundabouts
- Raised Medians
- Raised Crosswalks
- Changing One-Way Streets to Two-Way
- Widening Sidewalks and Reconfiguring Traffic Lane Widths
 - Careful consideration is imperative where to implement this measure. Depending on circumstances, the widening of narrow lanes may be required to accommodate non-motorized traffic, or lanes may be narrowed to accommodate wider shoulders.
- Sidewalk Extensions
- Chicanes
- Tight Corner Curbs
- Diverters (islands to prevent certain through and/or turning movements).
- Road Humps, Speed Tables, and Cushions
 - Applicability on state roads depends on highway design speed and context.
- Rumble Strips and Other Surface Treatments
 - NYS DOT does not allow these on State Highways for the purpose of traffic calming.
- Diagonal Parking
 - NYS DOT guidance states that front-in diagonal parking is to be avoided due to restricted driver visibility while backing out of the parking space into traffic. This type of parking should be replaced with parallel parking or back-in diagonal parking in low-speed areas, and off-street facilities in high-speed areas. Front-in diagonal parking should only be retained on local streets and collectors where design speeds are 35 mph or less, traffic volumes are low, other parking measures are not feasible and there is no related crash history.

Stops signs are not considered traffic calming measures, as per page 1 of this [US DOT fact sheet](#).

NYS DOT Highway Design Manual Chapter 25 (currently under revision) explains the applicability of measures based on categories such as speed and context. Municipalities are encouraged to contact the [NYS DOT regional offices for guidance](#). Any project on the state system or impacting the state system, such as by diverting traffic to state highways, must be approved by NYS DOT. Professional Engineer signed project plans are required for these project reviews.

The NYS DOT Highway Design Manual, Chapter 25, notes that traffic calming can cause drivers to divert to alternate routes increasing volumes (and perhaps speeds) on those routes. Projects that will result in significant diversions of traffic to alternate routes should be developed in accordance with input from people who live or work along the alternate routes, and in consideration of area-wide traffic management plans. For local roads, it should only be used where it is important to give priority to residential area character or to non-motorized users of the roadway.

Municipalities should also contact the NYS Department of State Division of Local Services for training, technical assistance and [legal guidance on traffic-calming measures](#).

C. Timeframe, project costs, and resource needs

Some traffic calming techniques with a limited scope and scale can be implemented inexpensively, but others can be time-consuming and expensive. Treatments should be tailored to fit the needs of the community. Costs can be reduced by temporary deployment of less capital-intensive measures before transitioning to permanent measures, which will also provide an insight into the effectiveness of the proposed calming measures and the opportunity to make modifications before a permanent installation. (Refer to Appendix A of Chapter 25 of the NYS DOT Highway Design Manual, page 40 for guidance on temporary installations and the “Interim Design Strategies” chapter of NACTO’s Urban Street Design Guide).

D. Which local governments implement this action? Which departments within the local government are most likely to have responsibility for this action?

Any local government can implement this action as long as the measures are taken on local roads. Departments of public works, planning or transportation are typically responsible for this action. However, if the local road intersects a state road,

coordination with the appropriate NYS DOT Regional Office is required. Additionally, if the local government wishes to apply for federal funding, specific design criteria are required.

Department coordination with police and public safety personnel will also be necessary. For capital improvements projects, staff time and consultant services may be needed to implement the measures. Municipalities within a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) should consider contacting their respective MPO offices to inquire about potential resources such as MPO-funded corridor studies, for which the municipality may apply.

E. How to obtain points for this action

To earn points, local governments implement traffic calming for at least one intersection or a section of road. All traffic calming projects require monitoring. “Before” and “after” monitoring can be accomplished by providing documentation of community surveys and/or feedback in public meetings with the local residents affected by the project. Local feedback will help determine how well the project has responded to community concerns. Points for treated intersections and road segments are not additive within the same project boundary.

	<i>POSSIBLE POINTS</i>
Implement traffic calming at 1 intersection	3
Implement traffic calming at 2 intersections	4
Implement traffic calming at 3 or more intersections	5
Implement traffic calming for <1 mile of road	3
Implement traffic calming for 1– 2 miles of road	4
Implement traffic calming for > 2 miles of road	5

F. What to submit

Indicate which of the above point tiers you are applying for. Submit evidence that the traffic calming measures have been implemented by providing project maps, plans, or reports. At minimum, photographs (with dates) showing traffic calming features (before-and-after installation) must be included that indicate the project location (address). Provide public meeting records (before and after implementation) demonstrating community involvement. Surveys of affected residents to demonstrate if the project was successful are highly recommended. If a project impacts a state road, concurrence by NYS DOT must be documented.

The measure(s) may have been implemented within the last 10 years to be eligible for points.

All CSC action documentation is available for public viewing after an action is approved. Action submittals should not include any information or documents that are not intended to be viewed by the public.

G. Links to additional resources or examples

- [US DOT Federal Highway Administration, Traffic Calming public resource: Review of current traffic calming practices](#)
- [NYS DOT Highway Design Manual \(HDM\) – Chapter 25 Traffic Calming \(1999, under revision\)](#)
 - [Other pertinent HDM Chapters:](#)
 - Chapter 5 – Basic Design
 - Chapter 10 - Roadside Design, Guide Rail and Appurtenances
 - Chapter 28 - Landscape Architecture and Community Design for Transportation
- [National Association of City Transportation Officials \(NACTO\): Urban Street Design Guide](#)

- [Project for Public Spaces, Traffic Calming Toolbox](#)
- [Victoria Policy Institute, Transportation Demand Management Encyclopedia, Traffic Calming](#)
- [New York City DOT Traffic Calming Measures](#)
- [Institute of Transportation Engineers, Traffic Calming \(webpage\)](#)
- [Insurance Institute for Highway Safety](#)
 - [Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Simple Infrastructure Changes Make Left Turns Safer](#)
- [US DOT Federal Highway Administration, Fact Sheet: “Why Can't We Have Stop Signs to Reduce Speeding along my Street?”](#).

H. Recertification Requirements

The recertification requirements are the same as the initial certification requirements.