

Town of James Island
Public Works Department
Traffic Calming Policy and Procedures
Guide



January, 2020

Traffic Calming Policy and Procedures

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy and procedures guide is to provide residents of the Town of James Island with a plan and the tools needed to slow traffic in their residential neighborhoods and to improve the quality of their lives. Resources and materials from the Federal Highway Administration, South Carolina Department of Transportation, Charleston County and other local municipalities have been used to put together this comprehensive and locally customized policy and procedures plan.

General Policy:

The general policy of the Town of James Island in regards to Traffic Calming is to encourage and allow methods to be employed that reduce hazards from vehicular traffic, nurture and encourage a neighborhood atmosphere and maintain public safety. The Town of James Island strives to achieve these goals through sound, accepted engineering practices, community participation in the decision process and responsible financial stewardship.

Procedures for Traffic Calming:

The Town has adopted a three-point method of addressing neighborhood traffic issues: Education, Enforcement and Engineering. There are several options under each general method that neighborhoods can use to reduce traffic issues. Not every option is right for every neighborhood and the variety ensures that there are several choices to try in order to provide a measured solution.

Traffic calming programs are only implemented in residential neighborhoods under the jurisdiction, or partial jurisdiction, of the Town of James Island. These programs may be initiated at the request of the Neighborhood Association or by evidence of substantial interest from residents in the neighborhood.

Education:

Education of the public shall be a component of any traffic calming program. There are several ways that the Town of James Island can educate the public about traffic issues. These include the following public awareness measures:

- Distribution of traffic safety brochures within the neighborhood, area schools and businesses.

- Presentations at public events on programs such as child safety seats, seatbelt usage, pedestrian safety, bicycle safety, safe driving tips or Operation Lifesaver.
- Driver education and enforcement presentations to younger drivers.

The Town of James Island will partner with SCDOT and the Charleston County Sheriff's Office through the Island Sheriff's Patrol to provide educational materials to local neighborhoods and institutions. Other groups and agencies will be involved in these programs as appropriate to the overall program.

Enforcement:

The Town of James Island will work with local law enforcement including the Island Sheriff's Patrol to provide participating neighborhoods with increased presence and enforcement activities. Some law enforcement activities will include:

- Increased enforcement by officers, especially during times that residents report most incidents occur.
- Public Service Announcements to remind motorists that speeding will result in tickets and accidents.
- Driver Feedback Radar Signs.

Reducing the Speed Limit:

In 2013, Town Council passed an Ordinance that allowed for the reduction of the speed limit on Residential Streets. In the Town of James Island, the speed limit on residential streets can be lowered to 25 mph.

If you live on a SC Department of Transportation owned and maintained street, then the Town of James Island must perform an in-house traffic study and receive the necessary approval and permits from SCDOT. Part of this approval process will be support for this from your neighborhood. If you have a Neighborhood Association, then you will need to provide evidence of their support, such as minutes from a meeting or a neighborhood petition. A sample petition form is at the end of this guide. If you do not have a Neighborhood Association, then we encourage you to organize a Neighborhood meeting to discuss and vote on the issue. If those options are unavailable, then the Town can assist in soliciting resident feedback.

Engineering:

One of the best known traffic calming device is the speed “hump”. While this is the first option people think of when considering traffic calming for neighborhoods, there are often several reasons for not using them on many roads and in many neighborhoods. The Town of James Island offers and encourages the use of several other types of physical, engineered methods to address traffic calming measures and recommends serious consideration of these alternatives.

Other engineered devices for traffic calming include:

- All Way Stop Control at intersections (AWSC)
- Pedestrian Crossing Signs and Crosswalks
- School Zone Signing
- Raised crosswalks at strategic locations
- Driver Feedback Radar Signs

For any engineered traffic calming device, all applicable SCDOT and FHWA regulations and guidelines must be followed. An engineering study may be required, and for certain devices engineering drawings will be required. Any work within a SCDOT right of way requires SCDOT approval and encroachment permitting.

All roads which are to be considered for traffic calming devices must meet the following criteria:

- Must be either a local residential or minor collector road.
- 30 mph or less existing speed limit
- Two lane paved road (may have parking and may have turn lanes).
- Traffic volume less than 4000 AADT (average annual daily traffic).
- Within the Town of James Island Town Limits and under the Town’s jurisdiction.
 - Areas where the jurisdiction is mixed between the Town, City of Charleston and/or Charleston County may be considered. However, consultation and possible approvals may have to be obtained from other jurisdiction(s) before any traffic calming measures can be taken.

Getting Started:

The first step for a neighborhood to participate in a traffic calming program is to contact the Town of James Island Public Works Department. A Neighborhood Association representative should schedule an appointment with Town Staff or attend a Town Neighborhood Council meeting and present their request. A copy of the Town’s Policies and Procedures will be provided as well as the forms to begin this process. If a formal neighborhood association does not exist, enough resident interest in traffic calming measures can result in further study from the Public Works staff at the Public Works Director’s discretion.

The Town of James Island will first perform an in-house traffic study and review whether the data warrants further study. As part of the overall program concept, a cost analysis will be performed to determine if funding will be available for construction and maintenance.

Some methods may be initiated at staff level, such as increasing law enforcement in a neighborhood or adding “Children at Play” signs.

For other traffic calming measures, such as speed humps, on eligible roads and/or neighborhoods, the following program criteria will be considered by Mayor and Council:

- Approval of Neighborhood Association (if one exists).
- Average speed exceeds posted limit, or the 85th percentile speed exceeds posted limit by 5 mph or more.
- Primary emergency vehicle route or bus route.
- Any possible interference with storm water drainage.
- For SCDOT roads, approval and necessary permits from SCDOT.
- Criteria for the desired devices if an engineering study is commissioned for the project.
- Funding for traffic calming devices is available and approved for use by the Town of James Island.

Any recommended traffic calming program will go back to the neighborhood for feedback. Feedback may include public meetings and/or mailouts and should be considered from residents directly impacted by the installation. Council may give more weight to residents along the stretch of road where proposed devices are to be installed. Staff will present any recommendations to Town Council for consideration. If approved by Town Council, further approvals and/or consultation with other jurisdictions may need to be obtained. If the road is a SCDOT-owned and maintained road, the proper channels for DOT must then be followed. That includes getting necessary approval and any encroachment permits that may be needed.

Please see below for a Summary of the necessary steps in the process:

Sequence of Events:

- Neighborhood Association Group or enough residents agree there is a traffic problem and requests assistance from the Town.
- Returns completed Traffic Calming Program Application.
- The Public Works Department will investigate the situation by field inspection of conditions, requesting additional law enforcement and/or conducting a traffic study.
- Public Works develops appropriate program for the neighborhood. At this point it may be necessary to engage the services of an engineering consultant to do a traffic study if sufficient funds are available in the budget. Town Administrator and Mayor are

informed of the proposed program details and anticipated costs. In-house traffic studies may also be performed by the Town.

- Traffic studies should show the average speed is over the speed limit or the 85th percentile is 5 mph or more to warrant additional study by the Town.
- If further study or action is warranted, an engineering firm will be engaged to evaluate the situation and develop a strategy for traffic calming. A public meeting will be held to inform the residents of the neighborhood that traffic calming is being proposed and to get their ideas and suggestions as well as hear comments from those who want traffic calming measures and those who do not. Residents not able to attend this meeting can voice their opinions by emailing, writing to or coming by Town Hall to discuss the issues with Town staff.
- Reactions and suggestions from the initial public meeting will be evaluated and studied by the engineering firm and Town staff. If warranted, a neighborhood traffic program will be developed from this information and presented to the residents at another public meeting, and/or mailouts where residents can see what is being proposed, express opinions about the program and suggest changes to the program.
- The proposed traffic calming program goes to Town Council for approval.
- SCDOT approval and permits must be obtained for DOT-owned roads.
- The plan is put out for bid to contractors.
- Qualified low bidder is approved by Town Council.
- Construction is scheduled.



Town of James Island

Traffic Calming Program Application

Please Print Clearly

Authorized Neighborhood Representative:

Neighborhood/Subdivision:

Contact Address: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Phone Number(s): _____

Name of Problem Street(s):

Description of Problem:

Neighborhood Representative Signature and Date:

Please attach any Neighborhood correspondence on this issue.

For Office Use Only: Inspection Date: _____ Photos: _____

Posted Speed Limit: _____ Type of Roads: _____

Road Owner: _____ Jurisdiction(s): _____