

# **TOWN OF STOW**

## **TRAFFIC SAFETY POLICY**



**TRAFFIC SAFETY  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**August 2021**

## **Traffic Safety Advisory Committee**

### **Mission**

It is the intention of the Town, in creating the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC), to establish an advisory group that can receive all requests and suggestions for traffic safety improvements in the Town of Stow, and evaluate and recommend to the Town Administrator and Select Board various approaches that could be used to create safer and more livable neighborhoods.

Local traffic problems arouse emotion, as do their solutions. It will be the mission of this committee to provide a multi departmental approach to systematically and logically studying conditions and developing possible responses to propose to the Town Administrator and subsequently the Select Board. This Committee is advisory only, and will not have responsibility for any operational activities.

### **Responsibilities and Functions**

The TSAC will be responsible for promoting enhanced traffic safety in the Town of Stow by creating a forum where residents of the Town can voice traffic concerns, suggestions and requests, work with Town staff to examine alternatives to existing traffic situations, and identify long and short-term solutions to traffic issues in Stow.

While the Committee does not have the ultimate power to commit Town resources or approve projects, it is the Select Board's intention to support reasonable actions and recommendations of the Committee that are supported by the Town Administrator and department heads of the Town, and to the extent that Town Bylaws, Town Meeting action, and budgetary limits permit.

### **Traffic Safety Policy**

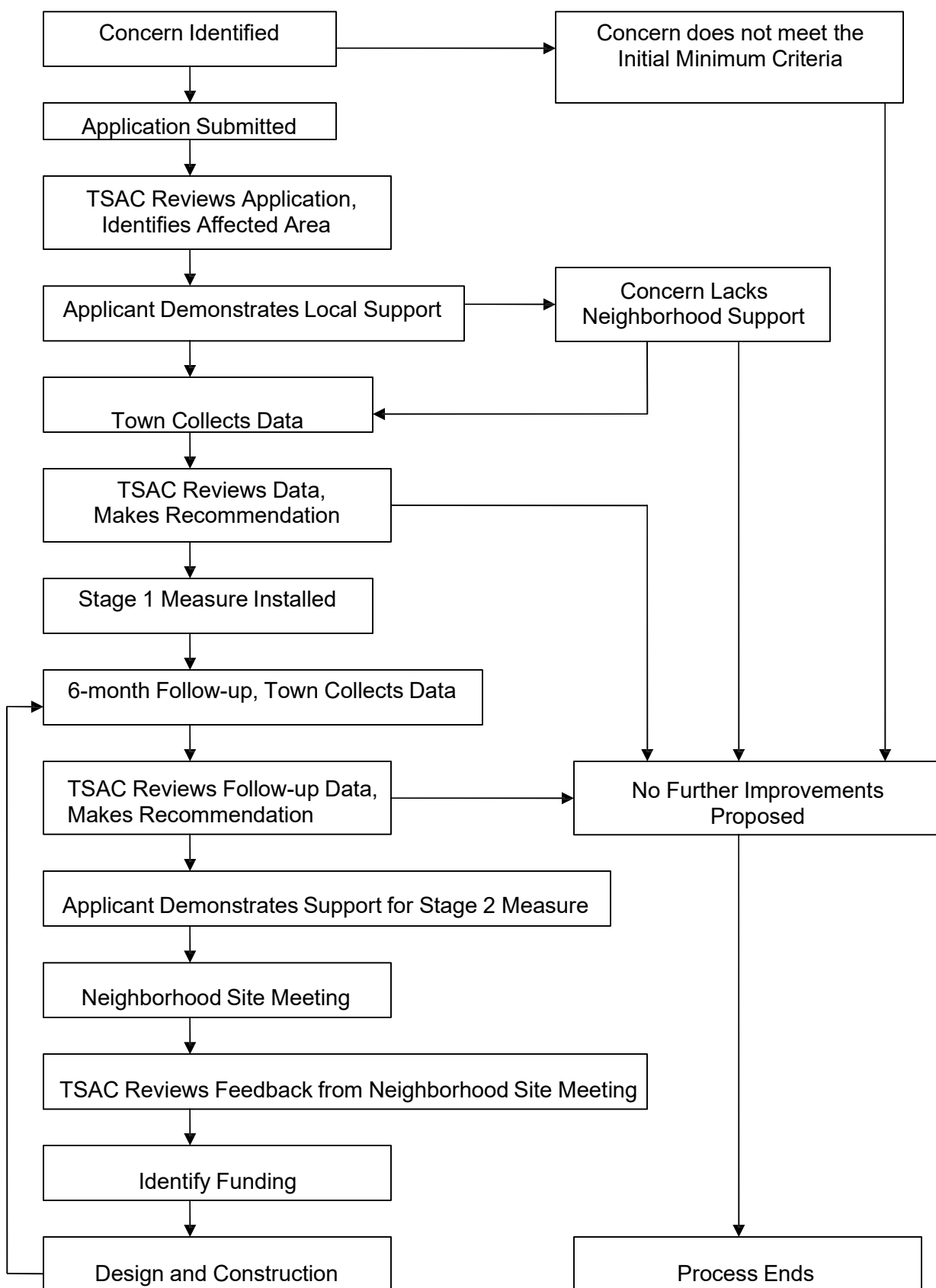
Traffic calming is a method of employing specific measures to reduce speeding, aggressive driving, and high levels of vehicular traffic traveling through local neighborhoods.

This policy has been developed in order to establish a structured process through which the Town can respond to and address residents' concerns regarding these types of traffic issues that occur on Town maintained residential streets. For traffic issues that arise on arterials and collector streets, each concern will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

The purpose of the policy is to verify a concern once it is brought to the Town's attention, evaluate it against set criteria, rank it against other known locations in Town, provide recommendations to address the issue, and determine the effectiveness of recommendations that are implemented.

A flow chart of the overall process is presented on the next page, while a description of each step is outlined in the following section.

## Traffic Safety Policy Process



## **Process and Requirements**

### *Step 1 – Report the Problem*

If a resident feels that there is a traffic related issue on their street, they should report the problem to the TSAC via the forms included in the appendix of this document, or through webforms on the Town website, or by email to [stowpolice@stow-ma.gov](mailto:stowpolice@stow-ma.gov)

Committee members will review the concern to verify that it meets the following initial minimum criteria:

1. Location of the concern must be a Town maintained residential roadway.

If the initial minimum criteria is met, the resident will be provided with a Traffic Calming Request Form (a copy of the request form is provided in the appendix as Attachment A).

Once this form is reviewed by the TSAC, a letter or email will be sent to the Applicant with notification of the upcoming meeting date.

### *Step 2 – Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC) Initial Review*

The TSAC may review the application to determine the limits of the *affected area* and may request a petition from a representative number of residents in this affected area to verify that there is a widespread concern for the traffic issue (a blank copy of the petition to be signed is provided in the appendix as Attachment B). The neighborhood may identify and list on the petition a resident who will serve as the primary contact with the Town.

A letter or email may be sent to the Applicant with the petition forms and limits of the affected area.

### *Step 3 - Neighborhood support*

In the event a petition is required by the TSAC as described in Step 2, the Applicant shall submit the petition signed by at least 50% of the households within the subject area. Upon submission, the petition will be reviewed by the Committee. If a request has met the next minimum criteria it will proceed to Step 4. A letter will be sent to the Applicant indicating receipt of petition forms and that data will be collected to evaluate the concern.

Minimum Criteria – Petition must be signed by at least 50% of households within the subject area as defined by the Committee in order to qualify as “widespread concern”.

In the event that the Applicant is not able to garner the required signatures, the TSAC may, at its discretion, continue to move the application on to the next step if it is determined that the concern warrants further review.

#### *Step 4 – Data Collection and Evaluation*

After verifying that the concern meets the minimum criteria set forth above, the TSAC, may initiate collection of traffic volume and speed data, obtain information on traffic patterns, and evaluate existing conditions in the area such as sight distances and traffic incident history. The TSAC will discuss their findings at a subsequent meeting of the Committee. In the event that the initial data collection cannot be obtained or performed without the assistance from a qualified traffic engineering firm, the TSAC, may recommend the SelectBoard support or initiate funding for further study and/or determine whether any other funding may be available for such data collection.

#### *Step 5 – TSAC Data Review, Evaluation, and Recommendation*

The TSAC will review and evaluate all data obtained in Step 4. If the data meets one or more of the criteria as set forth below in *Table 1*, the TSAC may recommend a Stage 1 traffic safety measure(s) as outlined in Step 6.

In the event multiple potential projects are being considered at any one time or within any one applicable funding cycle, the issue will be ranked by the point system outlined in Table 1 to assist in prioritizing the order in which any interventions are pursued and completed. The TSAC will include information on potential funding mechanisms, any available technical assistance resources, as well as a determination on anticipated benefits in writing to the Stow SelectBoard.

Table 1: Project Prioritization System		
85 <sup>th</sup> percentile Speed >20% over limit within affected area	15	
Traffic Volumes (measured in vehicles per day (vpd))	(vpd)	Points
	< 1000	5
	1001-5000	10
	>5000	15
Within ¼ mile of pedestrian point of interest (as defined in the Stow Complete Streets Prioritization Plan as amended)	10	
Lack of existing pedestrian infrastructure, including sidewalks, walking paths, multi-use paths, and/or crosswalks	5	
Proximity to concentrated crash locations	5	
Obstructed sightlines	5	

The point system outlined in Table 1 will be used by the TSAC to understand the relative significance of any one traffic issue. However, the TSAC may, at its discretion, continue to move the application on to the next step if it is determined that there are a specific combination of factors involved to indicate the concern is a significant priority. These concerns may include but is not limited to, accident data, traffic data, special pedestrian interest points.

#### *Step 6 – Stage 1 Traffic Safety*

Stage 1 traffic safety measures may be recommended for projects meeting a combination of the above criteria in Table 1. Such measures are typically low cost, can be easy to deploy, can offer quick mitigation of the issue, and/or can provide a combination of traffic safety and data collection. These methods may include but not be limited to:

- Use of a speed monitoring radar trailer or other temporary or permanent device
- Education / Public Awareness, including outreach to businesses and/or specific neighborhoods
- Traffic enforcement
- Signage and pavement markings
- Landscaping
- Other methods as determined by the TSAC

Upon identification of a Stage 1 Traffic Safety Measure appropriate for the affected area, the TSAC will submit as required a recommendation to the SelectBoard identifying the safety measure, metrics to monitor its success, estimated costs, information on installation, as well as any necessary pre-requisite design.

#### *Step 7 – Follow-up Data Collection*

If one or more of the Stage 1 traffic safety measures are implemented, the TSAC may work with Public Safety Departments, Town Staff and any consulting parties, to identify an appropriate monitoring period. During the monitoring period, the TSAC and/or its agent will collect additional traffic data to determine the effectiveness of the implemented measures.

#### *Step 8 – TSAC Data Review, Evaluation, and Recommendation*

The TSAC will review the follow-up data on determining the measure of success and if necessary hold a Public Hearing to determine how well it mitigated the identified issues, as well as any other impacts the intervention may have had on traffic patterns or overall use of the subject area. Metrics evaluated in making the above determination may include but not be limited to Public Hearing testimony, interviews with affected residents, speed data, crash incident reports and other data points as applicable.

In the event the TSAC deems the Stage 1 traffic safety measure to be insufficient, further measures may be evaluated and the TSAC may discuss concepts, cost estimates, and funding availability for possible Stage 2 traffic safety measures.

Stage 2 traffic safety measures may involve physical modifications to the roadway in

order to mitigate traffic safety concerns. Possible Stage 2 measures may include but not be limited to:

- Bulb-outs / Curb extensions
- Center island medians
- Chicanes
- Landscape treatments
- Mid-block chokers
- Pedestrian refuge islands
- Raised
- Crosswalks realigned
- Intersections
- Roundabouts
- Sidewalks
- Speed humps
- Speed tables
- Other measures
- as applicable

Upon identification of a potential Stage 2 traffic safety measure, the TSAC will schedule a Public Hearing with proper notice to all residents within the subject area. During the Public Hearing, the TSAC may require that committee members attend a neighborhood site visit to gain comment and feedback on the options for applicable traffic safety measures.

Upon conclusion of the Public Hearing, the TSAC will review the information gained during the hearing, including testimony from residents and information received during the sitewalk to make a written recommendation to the Selectboard and Applicant. The recommendation will identify any proposed Stage 2 Traffic Safety Measures, as well as information on the measure's estimated cost, installation, and pre-requisite engineering and design. Additionally, the TSAC will provide the Selectboard and Applicant information on potential funding sources and how the Stage 2 measure may fit into existing construction and/or design schedules.

#### *Step 9 – Design and Construction*

Actual implementation of stage 2 measures will be dependent on the TSAC's determination of project priority, including but not limited to its point ranking in Table 1.

Once funding for a specific project is in place, design and construction of the proposed improvements will proceed in accordance with Stow's Town Meeting schedule and proper bidding and awarding procedures.

#### *Step 10 – Follow-up Evaluation*

After the Stage 2 measures have been in place for approximately six months, additional data may be collected to determine their effectiveness.

Unless TSAC determines that the installed measures are a hazard, once they are installed, measures shall remain for at least 3 years. If a neighborhood decides that it no

longer wants the measures in place following the first three years, a process similar to that used for implementation of the Stage 2 measures will be followed, including demonstrating public support for their removal as evidenced by a petition signed by 75% of the residents within the defined area of the improvements, and evaluation by the TSAC.



## APPENDIX

## Attachment A – Traffic Calming Request Form

This form is used to report a speeding or traffic problem on a residential street. When this form is submitted, Town staff will evaluate the complaint to determine the nature of the problem, and make sure that the location is a town maintained, residential street. After the initial report Town staff will explain how residents may put together a petition to verify that there is a widespread concern for the speeding or traffic issue. [Please note to help the committee understand the issues in your neighborhood all fields are required.](#)

1. Contact Information

Name(please print): \_\_\_\_\_  
Address, City, and Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Please describe the location of the traffic concern. Attach a map or picture if necessary:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Please describe the nature of the neighborhood traffic problem you are concerned with (attach additional sheets if necessary):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Please list possible solutions to the problem that you would like the Town of Stow to consider:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please fill out this form and return to:

Traffic Safety Advisory Committee  
Stow Town Building  
380 Great Road  
Stow, MA 01775  
or email to [stowpolice@stow-ma.gov](mailto:stowpolice@stow-ma.gov)

**Attachment B – Neighborhood Petition Form (Page 1)**

Please fill out this form and return with attached sheets to:

Traffic Safety Advisory Committee  
Stow Town Building  
380 Great Road  
Stow, MA 01775  
or email to [stowpolice@stow-ma.gov](mailto:stowpolice@stow-ma.gov)

THE UNDERSIGNED AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING:

1. All persons signing this petition do hereby certify that they own property or reside within the following area: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. All persons signing this petition do hereby agree to the following problem in the defined area: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. All persons signing this petition do hereby agree that the following contact person(s) represents the neighborhood in matters pertaining to items 1 and 2 above:

Name of key contact person #1 (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Address, City, and Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (day): \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of key contact person #2 (optional) (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Address, City, and Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (day): \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please attach additional pages if necessary to discuss the request.*

Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

## Attachment B – Neighborhood Petition Form (Page 2)

This petition is provided so that residents in a neighborhood may verify that there is a widespread concern for a speeding of traffic issue.

Town staff will identify an “area of influence” in the neighborhood. The area of influence includes properties abutting the street and properties on intersecting streets within a reasonable distance of the problem street. The Planning Department will provide a map and addresses for the area of influence.

The petition must be signed by at least the majority (50%) of the owners or residents of properties within the “area of influence.” Each property is entitled to one signature. Valid signatures include those from (1) a property owner or spouse, (2) an adult head of household, or (3) an adult renting the property.

[illegible]

*(Additional copies of this page may be used.)*