

Ross Township Traffic Advisory Board Program Manual

Objectives, Policies, and Procedure

*Adopted by:
Ross Township Traffic Advisory Board*

Date:



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INTRODUCTION

The Township of Ross places a high value on township livability. Although livability has a sense of opinion and an array of definitions, it can be generally thought of as encompassing the following characteristics:

- The ability to experience a sense of home and privacy.
- The ability of residents to feel safe and secure.
- The ability to conveniently, safely, and enjoyably walk, bike, drive, and take transit.
- The ability of parents to feel that their children's safety is not at risk when playing in the neighborhood.
- A balanced relationship between the utilization and needs of a neighborhood.

Township traffic conditions can have a significant impact on these characteristics.

As population and employment in Ross Township continues to grow, Ross Township's streets can be expected to experience increased pressure from traffic. One of the many goals of Ross Township is that this growth must be managed to balance our economic, social, and environmental health and to maintain a sustainable township. Quality neighborhoods and businesses are the fundamental building blocks of a sustainable township, and to maintain this quality, Ross neighborhoods and economic sectors should be protected from the negative impacts of traffic. We insure this by the use of design and management tools, which enable people to travel in and between neighborhoods and businesses safely, efficiently, and economically as a pedestrian, bicyclist, motorist, or transit rider with minimal conflict or disruption to the residents or other travelers.

There has been a concern about the effects of traffic within the township. Restraining traffic has been a common aim of those residents concerned with driving patterns in their neighborhood and main artery roads. A vision is currently in progress for streets that motorists should respect the quality of life aspect in the township they drive through and behave accordingly. Due to the fact that many residential streets have become the accommodation of traffic, some of it unrelated to the residents themselves, we must encourage social links within a community that will provide respectful traffic access to the desired destination.

At the same time, traditional Traffic Engineering means of controlling traffic (speed zoning, stop signs, and traffic signals) have less and less effect in management of driver behavior. Police enforcement is and will always remain as an effective tool to reinforce motorist behavior. However, it is recognized that providing an enforcement level that is effective in modifying behavior will require a significant commitment of Police resources.

The Township of Ross is committed to developing an effective approach to managing township traffic. Citizen involvement is an important component of this approach.

To maximize neighborhood involvement in improving traffic conditions, Ross Township has developed the Traffic Advisory Board.

OBJECTIVES

The Traffic Advisory Board establishes a procedure so that residents can submit requests for traffic improvements to Ross Township. The traffic board municipal traffic engineer will evaluate requests. A neighborhood traffic management program will be implemented, if resources are available and the request meets one of more of the following criteria:

1. Improve neighborhood livability by mitigating the negative impact of vehicular traffic on residential neighborhoods by encouraging drivers to use major/minor arteries such as McKnight Road, Babock Boulevard, and Route 19.
2. Promote safe, reasonably convenient, accessible, and pleasant conditions for bicyclists, pedestrians, motorists, and residents in the community.
3. Encourage citizen involvement in all phases of traffic management activities.
4. Make efficient use of Township resources by prioritizing traffic management requests.

POLICIES

The following policies are established as part of the Traffic Advisory Board as to successfully address the potential impact on the surrounding neighborhood and promote consensus among residents of the affected streets.

1. Township streets are functionally classified based upon the volume of traffic it serves and most importantly by the connections it makes within the transportation system. Streets are classified as either: Collectors, or Local Streets.
2. Emergency and service vehicle access and circulation must be preserved.
3. Projects should encourage and enhance pedestrian and bicycle mobility and access within and through the neighborhood and also facilitate easy neighborhood access to public transit. Adequate access should also be maintained.
4. The Township shall employ traffic management and traffic control devices to achieve the objectives. Traffic management devices including traffic circles, speed bumps/tables, diverters, medians, curb extensions, and other means shall be planned and designed in keeping with sound engineering and planning practices. The engineer shall direct the installation of traffic control devices as needed to accomplish the project, in compliance with Ross Township Ordinances.
5. To implement the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program, certain procedures shall be followed in processing traffic management requests in accordance with applicable codes and related policies, and within the limits of available and budgeted resources.

6. Neighborhood cut-through traffic should be routed to arterial streets as designated by the Traffic Board.

PROCEDURE

The Traffic Advisory Board provides a mechanism for residents to work with the Township to make decisions about how traffic management devices might be used to manage traffic in the Township. This section describes the steps involved in participating in the program from the initial written request, to developing a traffic management plan, to installing one or more traffic management devices.

The Traffic Advisory Board process is intended to ensure that all stakeholders are provided the opportunity to be involved. This ensures that consideration of traffic problems on the study street does not result in the exacerbation of traffic problems on adjacent roads and does not eclipse the needs and quality of the Township as a whole.

Step 1: Request/Screening

Written Request.

A resident or group of residents must submit a transcribed request to Ross Township's Traffic Advisory Board, specifying the street(s) and the specific issue(s) of concern. Requests will be accepted via mail, e-mail, or dropped off at the municipal building at 1000 Ross Municipal Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15237.

The transcribed request must be turned in 21 days prior to the Traffic Advisory Board designated meeting.

Eligibility for Further Consideration.

The traffic board will look at each request on a case by case basis and will determine if the request warrants a traffic management plan based on review. The Traffic Board will assess the case through evaluation of an equation of speed and volume of traffic in the area of concern. If the traffic data meets or exceeds one or more of the criteria in Table 1, the traffic board will assign a point value to the location based on the Pennsylvania Traffic Calming Handbook. Based on the point value, the neighborhood will be on the list of eligibility for development of a traffic management plan to address the goals of this program. The Traffic Board may request a written petition for the affected area.

Request List.

The traffic board will keep a list divided into volume-related requests and speed-related requests. Requests will be ranked by their assigned point value. This list will be available to Ross Township's Manager and Ross Township's Board of Commissioners. The manager and/or

Commissioners will select traffic management plans to be developed from the list prepared by the traffic board.

The traffic board will notify pending petitioners' representatives annually of their placement on the list. Periodically, but not less than annually, the municipal manager and/or the commission will notify the traffic board in writing as to which, if any, requests have been approved for advancement to the neighborhood traffic management plan development phase. The traffic board will re-evaluate requests after three years to ensure the accuracy of traffic data and will obtain any updated data needed to extend the request.

Step 2: Traffic Management Plan Development

Study Area Meeting. Prior to developing a traffic management plan, the Township Manager will schedule a public meeting with the purpose of a creating a study area that includes the affected street as well as nearby streets that may experience an impact because of changing traffic patterns. Municipal staff, traffic board members, and the traffic engineer will facilitate this meeting. The Commissioner(s) representing the vicinity of the proposed study area is expected to attend the meeting; all other Commissioners will be invited. The study area will be determined based upon input collected at the meeting and supported by available traffic data, including speed studies, automatic traffic recorder counts, intersection turning movement counts and/or origin/destination surveys. The study area should be well-defined at the outset, minimizing the possibility that it will later need to be expanded.

Once the study area is determined, the traffic board and traffic engineer will develop a scope of work for traffic data collection and project a cost for the project. Existing traffic data will be used when available and applicable. The traffic board will recommend the final study area, including scope and costs, to the commission for approval.

Development of Improvement Options. After traffic data is collected, the traffic board, traffic engineer and petitioners will work together to develop options that address speed, volume or a combination of traffic problems in the study area, as well as guidelines for implementation.

Options might include one or more traffic calming devices, including but not limited to, speed humps, chokers, center islands, median barriers and realigned intersections. Design factors such as steep roadway grades, horizontal/vertical curvature of the roadway, proximity to intersections, and drainage issues might affect the feasibility of employing some traffic calming measures. Other issues such as the impact of traffic calming devices on snow removal, emergency response, noise levels, and on-street parking also need to be considered. Ross Township's public safety agencies will have the opportunity to review and provide comment on proposed options. Approximate costs will be developed for each option.

Improvement Options Presentation Meeting The proposed traffic management options will be presented at a public meeting. Municipal staff, traffic board members and the traffic engineer will attend and facilitate this meeting. The commissioner(s) who represents the study area is expected to attend the meeting. All other Commissioners will be invited to attend.

The goal of this meeting is to reach a consensus on an option. The costs and associated pros and cons for each option will be presented. If a consensus cannot be reached at the first meeting, an additional meeting may be necessary. If consensus cannot be reached, it may be decided that the study area needs to be adjusted. If so, the request will return to step one of this procedure. Once a consensus is reached, the preferred option will be refined to include more detailed cost estimate, a proposed implementation plan and a schedule. The plans will be presented at a regularly scheduled traffic board meeting for final comment and then recommended to the Board of Commissioners.

Step 3: Commissioner Approval Process

The Board of Commissioners will review the recommended option at a regularly scheduled meeting. If deemed necessary, a separate public meeting may be scheduled. The Board will have sole discretion as to how the plan shall be implemented. The Commissioners can approve the plan, amend it, vote it down, table it, or send it back to the traffic board with comments.

Once a plan is approved, the Board will determine if funding is available to implement it within the budget year. If funding is not available, implementation may be deferred.

Step 4: Installation and Evaluation

Once the traffic calming devices are installed, data will be collected at predetermined locations and time intervals to determine if the devices meet the goals. The traffic board and commission will receive reports on the effectiveness of devices.

The devices will be installed and evaluated as detailed below:

- Devices will be installed as either permanent or temporary, as described in the approved plan.
- Temporary devices will be evaluated by the Traffic Board during the test period established during the approval step, as detailed in the approved plan. Permanent installations may also be tested, if the plan establishes the need.
- After the test period is completed, a report is prepared by the Traffic Board summarizing the results of the data collected during the test period.
- The traffic board will present its report and recommendations at a Board of Commissioners meeting.
- If the devices are permanent, and the traffic board and/or commissioner(s) determines that the results have met the intended goals, no further action will be taken.
- If the devices are temporary, the traffic board will recommend to the Commissioners that the devices should be removed, modified, or permanently installed. The Commissioners will determine if the temporary devices are to be removed, modified or made permanent.

TABLE 1- TRAFFIC DATA CRITERIA

Roadway Classification	Warrant	Threshold
Local Street	Average Weekday Daily Traffic Volume (24 hour)	2,000 vehicles per day
	85 th Percentile Speed	7 mph > established speed limit
	Highest One Hour Traffic Volume on an Average Day	200 vehicles per hour
Collector Street	Average Weekday Daily Traffic Volume (24 hour)	5,000 vehicles per day
	85 th Percentile Speed	7 mph > established speed limit
	Highest One Hour Traffic Volume on an Average Day	500 vehicles per hour

- Threshold volumes are two-way volumes.
- Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) Volume is define as the totally volume of vehicular traffic during a typical 24 hour weekday. The AADT volume is calculated by taking the total volume of traffic during a number of whole days- more than 1 day and less than 1 year- divided by the number of days in that period.
- 85th percentile speed is defined as the speed on a roadway, at or below which 85% of the motor vehicles travel.

If the eligibility review determines that at least one of the appropriate speed/volume threshold criteria are met, then a cumulative point value will be assigned to the request as follows:

- One point for every 200 vehicles (local roads)/ 250 vehicles (collector road) over the daily traffic volume threshold criteria or one point for every 20 vehicles (local road)/ 25 vehicles (collector road) over the highest peak hour volume threshold criteria. Only one point total based upon volume to be considered, either per day or per highest peak hour, whichever point total is greatest; and
- One point for each mile per hour over the speed limit threshold criteria. If a request does not meet any of the eligibility criteria, the application will not be further considered.