

## **NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC CALMING PROGRAM (NTCP) ALABASTER, ALABAMA**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to the City of Alabaster. Alabaster's traffic calming program. Traffic calming is a term used in Traffic Engineering to encourage safer, more responsible vehicular driving. Traffic calming uses physical design and/or devices on existing streets to improve safety for roadway users, including pedestrians and bicyclists.

The purpose of this policy is to provide an appropriate and consistent treatment for traffic calming requests from a citizen group or HOA. This policy examined other Local, State, and National traffic calming standards to ensure that the guidelines and criteria are fair and equitable. Not every successful request is guaranteed to be constructed or funded and may rely on the number of requests received and available funding in any particular budget year.

These instructions outline the steps in the traffic calming request process. Please read and understand this document before filling out the Request for Traffic Calming form or Petition (Appendix G). A reduced speed limit request is also available through this process and additional information is available in the **Alabaster Code Section 42-31 through 42-35**.

### **Application**

This policy applies to local, residential streets only. State Roads, County Roads, collector streets, arterial streets, and streets that are located in commercial zoning districts, will not be considered for traffic calming.

### **PROCESS**

Projects that are being considered for the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program (NTCP) must follow the procedure that is outlined below. A flowchart summarizing this procedure is in Appendix A.

#### **Step 1: Request Traffic Calming**

A homeowner's association (HOA) or a neighborhood group must submit a written request for traffic calming on a specific street segment or segments to the City Administrator. A neighborhood that does not have an organized HOA may form a small group of 4 different property owners (1 individual from each owned property); however, the requesting group must live along the street being submitted for traffic calming. The written request must identify the perceived traffic problem and must include contact information for a representative (the requester) of the HOA or neighborhood group. Individual citizens and rental tenants are not eligible to initiate projects for the NTCP. Single-family home renters will need to request the participation of the property owner to represent them in any traffic calming request.

## Step 2: Initial Review

Upon receipt of a valid written request and per the guidelines of this policy, the Engineering / Public Safety Committee (PSC) will conduct an initial review of the street(s). This initial review will complete the following:

1. Ensure that the street(s) meets the minimum criteria
2. Conduct a field review and inspection of the street(s) to determine if a need exists
3. Determine if there are any preliminary solutions, such as posting speed limit signs, that could be put in place

In order for a project to be considered for traffic calming measures, the following **minimum criteria** must be met on the street(s) requested during the initial review:

- The posted speed limit is 30 mph or less on the street.
- The minimum width of the street is 12 feet.
- The street must be classified as a local street. No State Roads, County Roads, arterials, collectors, commercial areas are eligible for the NTCP. Certain traffic calming devices on Minor Collectors may be acceptable, as determined by the Engineer.
- The local street is a through street connecting between two collector streets, two arterial streets, or a collector to an arterial street. In other words, a through street is any street that a driver can use to 'cut through' from one larger street to another larger designated street (collector or arterial).
- Residential street 'circles' (having the same entrance and exit) and cul-de-sacs are not eligible for traffic calming.
- An exception to the requirement of a street being a 'through street' includes a local street that services a general public area, such as a public park, a school, or other larger venues/development/business in which there may be more traffic generated than just local residential traffic of a specific neighborhood. *Note: Individual resident, contractor, or delivery vehicle speeding issues should be addressed by the HOA or group with those residents/businesses and/or the Alabaster Police Department.*
- The street must measure longer than 500 feet between stop signs, sharp curves, or 90-degree turns.
- The combination of horizontal and vertical curves along the roadway is not such that would result in inadequate stopping sight distance for motorists as they encounter a potential traffic calming device.
- The street is not a transit route or a primary emergency access route.

Once the initial review has been completed, streets that meet the criteria will move on to Step 3. All other applications will be terminated. The requester will be notified if the street did or did not meet the minimum criteria including a summary of which criteria was either met or not met. If preliminary solutions, such as signage, are identified, they will be discussed with the requester.

### Step 3: Data Collection and Analysis

Upon passing initial review in Step 2, Public Works and APD staff will perform data collection for the requested street(s) to ensure the street(s) meet specific study criteria, as stated herein. Data will typically be collected on weekdays over a continuous, minimum 48-hour period while schools are in session unless otherwise advised in the request. Data will not be collected on holidays or at least one day before or after a holiday. The data collection will assist in determining the eligibility of the street(s) based on the following specific study criteria and Grading System:

- The maximum grade on the section of roadway that is being considered for traffic calming measures does not exceed 7 percent.
- The Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volume must be greater than 150 vehicles per day and less than or equal to 2,000 vehicles per day (in a 24-hour period).
- The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed is at least 2 mph faster than the posted speed limit.
- The combination of traffic volume and 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed of traffic will be quantified using the Grading System Criteria in Table 1. A total of at least **3 points** is required to move to Step 4.

| <b>Table 1 Grading System Criteria</b> |                |
|--|----------------|
| <b>Daily Traffic Volumes</b>           |                |
| 0 - 150                                | Not Eligible   |
| 151 - 300                              | 1              |
| 301 - 500                              | 2              |
| 501 - 700                              | 3              |
| 751 – 1,000                            | 4              |
| 1,001 – 2,000                          | 5              |
| 2,001+                                 | Not Eligible** |
| <b>85th Percentile Speeds*</b>         |                |
| 0-2 MPH                                | Not Eligible   |
| 2 MPH                                  | 1              |
| 3-5 MPH                                | 2              |
| 6 MPH                                  | 3              |
| 7 MPH                                  | 4              |
| 8 MPH                                  | 5              |
| ≥ 10 MPH                               | 6              |
| *over speed limit                      |                |
| ** Unless Approved by City Engineer    |                |

- Streets that do not have sidewalks on at least one side are given one (1) point resulting in the need to obtain at least 5 points from Table 1.
- Historical crash data will also be obtained and analyzed to assist in prioritizing traffic calming projects, however, crashes alone do not constitute the need for traffic calming devices.

The above criteria and a total of at least 3 points must be met to qualify for the NTCP. If Engineering / PSC determines that the street segment does not meet the study criteria, then the project request will be terminated. The requested street(s) will be ineligible for the NTCP for a period of two years unless Engineering / PSC determines that changing conditions, such as additional development, has resulted in a traffic volume or speeding problem. If Engineering / PSC determines that a street segment in question does not meet the above criteria in full, then Engineering / PSC will work with the Traffic Division of the Alabaster Police Department and the neighborhood association/group to address the problem with education and enforcement efforts. Education and enforcement efforts may include written information, temporary driver feedback signs, citations, etc. Further information can be found in Appendix C.

Special Exceptions-There may be circumstances where the City Engineer, Director of Public Works, Police Chief and Fire Chief recognize unusual traffic conditions where the conditions for the road do not meet the Average Daily Traffic (ADT) and/or 85<sup>th</sup> Percentile standards above. These may be along historically narrow streets, adjacent to intermittently peak traffic generators (like churches) or cluster neighborhoods with singular entrances/exits. In those instances, it MAY be determined the ADT and 85<sup>th</sup> Percentile standards be waived and the application may be forwarded to the Public Safety Committee to be considered for Step 4.

If Engineering / PSC determines that the above criteria are met in full, then the project will be included in the NTCP, and Step 4 will be initiated. Engineering / PSC will identify feasible and appropriate traffic calming alternatives to address the identified traffic problem. Examples of traffic calming techniques are provided in Appendix B.

#### **Step 4: Applicant Meeting and Conduct Petition**

Engineering / PSC will define the petition area. The petition area will typically include the following:

- Properties along the street that is being considered for traffic calming measures
- Properties along streets where access is substantially dependent upon the street that is proposed to be calmed
- Properties along any street that is expected to receive significant increases, as determined by Engineering / PSC, in traffic volumes or types as a result of the traffic calming installation

Engineering / PSC will prepare a petition packet that includes the petition form, a copy of the NTCP policy, a map of the study area, the approved traffic calming solution and approximate location, and the names and addresses of the property owners within the petition area. The petition packet will be given to the requester, who will be responsible for conducting the petition along with other volunteers from within the study area. In extenuating circumstances, the City may accommodate a neighborhood group in the petition process. HOAs will be responsible for conducting the petition process.

After the meeting, the requester must obtain supporting signatures, or “yes” votes, that represent **67 percent** (2/3) of the property owners within the petition area. Single-family home renters will

need to request permission from the property owner to represent them in the petition voting process. Only one vote per property will be counted. Missing signatures will be counted as “no” votes. The requester will have 45 days to collect signatures and submit the petition results after Engineering / PSC provides the requester notice to proceed. If the petition is successful, then the proposed project will proceed to Step 5. If the petition fails, or if the petition is not returned by the petition deadline, then the project is terminated, and the neighborhood group or HOA will be ineligible to submit another request for traffic calming for a period of one year, and the street(s) requested shall not be eligible for a period of two years. Engineering / PSC will make every effort to avoid installation of Traffic calming measures or devices adjacent to the property owners that vote “No”.

During the petition and signature process, if it is found by the HOA or representatives that the original NTCP measure is not acceptable to its residents, an additional meeting can be called to further discuss different alternatives. The additional meeting will follow the same format as the first meeting. A different alternative **must** be decided on at this meeting and the petition and signature-gathering process must begin again if this meeting is requested. If the petition is successful, the request will then move onto Step 5.

### **Step 5: Develop, Prioritize, and Install Traffic Calming Measures**

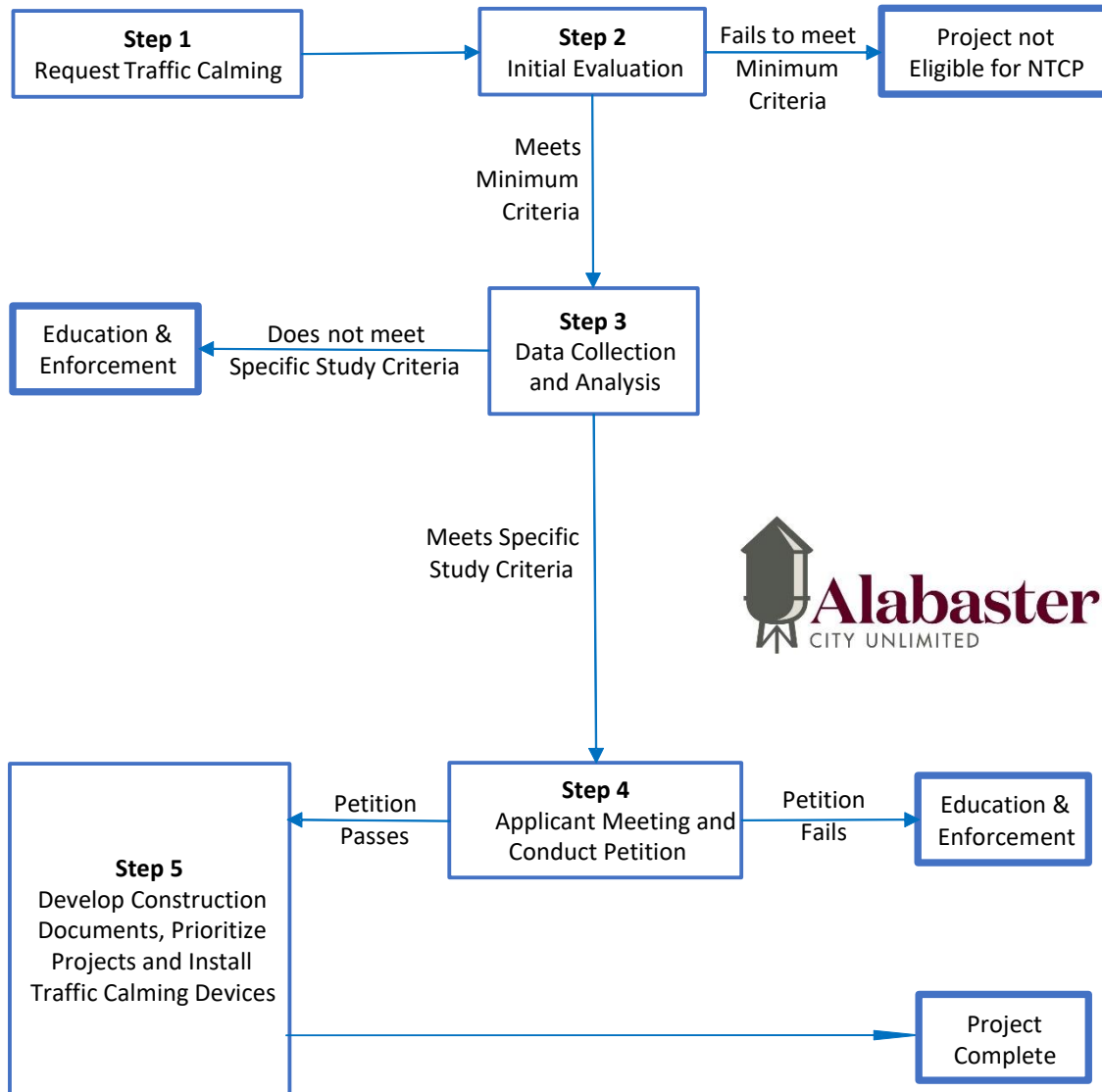
Based on the feasible and appropriate solutions identified by Engineering / PSC and property owners during Step 4, Engineering / PSC will develop construction documents with estimated costs for the proposed traffic calming measures to be implemented.

Projects will be prioritized by Engineering / PSC based on a variety of factors, such as availability of funding, Table 1 score, implementation costs, and cost-sharing participation with the HOA or neighborhood group. Projects that include HOA or neighborhood funding will receive higher prioritization. For example, if there are two identical projects each costing the same amount and one group elects to participate in the cost by providing 25% and the other group elects to participate in the cost of 75% than the project that participates with 75% of the cost will be higher on the list than the group that participates 25%. The cost to the City is smaller and the City’s limited funding for traffic calming will go further and include more projects when cost-sharing with HOAs and citizen groups. Projects funded 100% by the HOA or neighborhood group will get top priority for implementation but must be approved by the City of Alabaster.

Projects that have the highest priority will be implemented first. Implementation of a project will not occur until all associated maintenance/landscape/payment agreements have been finalized and City budget allows. Installation of the traffic calming measures will be performed by City crews or by a contractor that is selected by the City.

## APPENDIX A

### FLOW CHART FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC CALMING PROGRAM (NTCP)



## APPENDIX B

### TECHNIQUES THAT ARE SPECIFICALLY PERMITTED IN THE NTCP

#### Vertical Traffic Calming Measures

Vertical traffic calming measures are segments of roadway where vehicles are moved up and down causing some driver discomfort at higher speeds. By removing a vehicle's straight line of travel, vehicles are encouraged to reduce speed to navigate the movements.

A **speed cushion** is a series of small rubber speed cushions installed across the road. Designed to be wide enough to slow cars while narrow enough for emergency vehicles to straddle. Speed "bumps" are not allowed in the City as a traffic calming device. Speed Cushions will not be permitted on any Minor Collector Roadways that are included in the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program.



*EXAMPLE: Speed cushions that may be permitted in the City of Alabaster.*

## **Non-Physical Measures**

Non-physical measures are ones that do not require construction or physical changes to the existing roadway.



## Driver Feedback Signs

Driver feedback signs show the current speed limit and the speed that a vehicle is traveling at the moment. These signs inform drivers of the speed that they are traveling and encourage them to drive the speed limit. These signs can be programmed to alert a driver that is traveling over the speed limit by flashing and or displaying a message.



*This driver feedback signs lets drivers know the speed they are traveling and can tell them to slow down.*

## Reduced Speed Limit

Establishing a lower speed limit may help to reduce speeding and cut-through traffic in residential neighborhoods. Some local, residential roadways have speed limits that are posted at up to 30 mph. It may be desirable to lower the speed limits on these roadways from the City's default speed limit, 25 mph for local or residential roadways. The criteria for a reduction in speed limit differs slightly from the NTCP and can be found in the Alabaster Code Section 42-31 through 42-35.

## TECHNIQUES THAT ARE SPECIFICALLY PROHIBITED IN THE NTCP

**Rumble strips** are raised buttons, bars, or groves that are closely placed on a roadway at regular intervals. They cause both noise and vibration in vehicles as motorists drive over them. Typically, rumble strips are used to alert motorists of unusual conditions ahead. As motorists get used to the rumble strips, the strips become less effective over time. Rumble strips can result in increased noise levels for nearby residents. Also, rumble strips require a high amount of maintenance. For these reasons, rumble strips may not be used as a traffic calming technique in the City of Alabaster.



*Rumble strips may not be used as a traffic calming technique.*

**Speed Bumps** are shorter (six to 12 inches long) than speed humps (12-22 feet) and have been associated with maintenance, safety, and liability concerns. Speed “bumps” are not allowed in the City as a traffic calming device on residential streets.



*Speed bumps are not an approved traffic calming technique for residential streets.*

## APPENDIX C

### Failed Requests Options

**Education** is a key component of keeping all residents safe in the City of Alabaster. Engineering / PSC may assist the neighborhood HOA or groups in developing educational programs for the residents. This may come in the form of a flyer/brochure or written information. It will be the responsibility of the neighborhood HOA or groups to implement the educational programs.



*Temporary driver feedback signs may be used as part of the education efforts to control speeding in neighborhoods that request traffic calming.*



*Speed trailers may be used as part of the enforcement efforts to control speeding in neighborhoods that request traffic calming.*

**Enforcement** efforts may be completed in tandem with neighborhood education. The Alabaster Police Department will work with Engineering / PSC to help resolve traffic problems, such as speeding. Enforcement efforts may involve the use of speed trailers, officers and may include citations for violators.

## APPENDIX D

### Frequently Asked Questions

- **Can we have a “Slow - Children at Play” sign?** – Federal Standards discourage the use of “Children at Play” signs. There is a widespread false belief that traffic signs provide added protection. Studies have shown there is no long-term reduction in speed with these signs nor enforcement of ‘lower’ speeds. These signs may be found in locations throughout the city; however, these signs were placed before the MUTCD changed the recommendation for the use of this sign. The current edition of the MUTCD does not include this sign and therefore should not be used.
- **Can we have an All-way Stop for Traffic Calming?** – All-way stop signs must meet specific requirements found in the MUTCD. These requirements typically involve traffic volumes, crash history, and pedestrians. The MUTCD specifically states that “Yield or Stop signs should not be used for speed control.”. Multiway or All-way stop requests shall be requested separately and are not included in the NTCP.
- **What is the Speed Limit on residential streets when not posted?** – Per City of Alabaster Ordinance Section 15-301, the speed limit for residential streets where not posted is 25 mph.
- **Can I request that a speed limit sign be posted on a street or in a neighborhood?** – Yes, we can review current signage and recommend a speed limit sign location(s) should it not be posted. This is at the discretion of the City, per their findings and allowable budget. It should be noted, the City does not supply decorative posts or install decorative posts for signs. If a neighborhood has decorative posts or standards, the City can only supply the sign to the HOA for them to install on their post.

## APPENDIX E

### Definitions

- **Through Street** – A through street is a roadway that provides access to or connects to multiple similar type roadways. A through street gives priority to the vehicles using it. A through street does not end at a Cul-de-sac and typically connects to other through or collector streets.
- **85<sup>th</sup> Percentile Speed** – The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed is the speed at which 85 percent of the vehicles are traveling at or lower. For example, if the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed was found to be 32 mph, that means that 85 percent of vehicles were traveling at or below 32 mph.
- **Functional Classification** – Functional Classifications are classified based on the amount of access and mobility a roadway provides. These classifications provide different levels of emphasis in regard to traffic movement (getting from one side of town to the other) versus direct access to the property. There are three main categories; Local, Collector, and Arterial. Each has its own unique characteristics to regard to access versus mobility.
- **Public Safety Committee** – This committee, also known as PSC, consists of the Mayor, three City Council Members, Police Chief, Fire Chief, City Administrator, Public Works Director and Director of Engineering for the City of Alabaster.
- **Collector Street** are roadways that serve often definable neighborhoods, which may be bound by arterials with higher classifications. As their name suggests, collector streets ideally “collect and distribute” local traffic, providing a link between local neighborhood streets (i.e. non-arterials) and larger arterials. A Collector Street may be a Major Collector or a Minor Collector. Collectors serve very little “through traffic”. They do, however, serve a high proportion of local traffic requiring direct access to abutting properties.
- **Arterial Streets** are major roadways primarily serving “through traffic,” conveying traffic to and from expressways and freeways, and having minimum direct service to abutting land. In some cases, arterial roadways provide direct access to adjacent properties.



## APPENDIX F

### Additional Resources

Traffic calming programs have existed for many years throughout the country. A plethora of research has been conducted to find the best and most effective methods to use to make roadways safer for all users. The following is a list of resources that can be looked at for further education and information.

- FHWA Traffic Calming ePrimer - [https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/speedmgt/traffic\\_calm.cfm](https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/speedmgt/traffic_calm.cfm)
- ITE Traffic Calming - <https://www.ite.org/technical-resources/traffic-calming/>
- ITE Traffic Calming: State of the Practice, Reid Ewing, 1999 - <https://trid.trb.org/view/647739>
- Fact Sheet - <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812687>
- Ped Safety - <https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/pedestrian-safety>
- Speed Management - [https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/local\\_rural/training/fhwasa010413spmgt/](https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/local_rural/training/fhwasa010413spmgt/)
- MUTCD 2009 - [https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/kno\\_2009r1r2.htm](https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/kno_2009r1r2.htm)
- <https://www.ite.org/technical-resources/topics/speed-management-for-safety/speed-as-a-safety-problem/>
- City of Franklin, TN - <https://www.franklintn.gov>

## Appendix G

### Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program Forms

## Request for Traffic Calming

Please read through the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program (NTCP) prior to starting the traffic calming request process. Where an HOA exists, the request must come from the HOA. Where no HOA exists, a group of citizens may initiate the process. In order to request a Traffic Calming Study, 4 different property owners must sign (1 individual from each property is allowed to sign).

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

Neighborhood (HOA) Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

The Neighborhood Representative will serve as the liaison between the neighborhood group and the Engineering / PSC. The neighborhood representative will be responsible for obtaining the appropriate petition signatures.

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

HOA Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Neighborhood Name: \_\_\_\_\_

| Name | Address | Signature |
|------|---------|-----------|
|      |         |           |
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|      |         |           |

Please continue to next page.

Please describe the location and perceived problem below.

\_\_\_\_\_



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## Neighborhood Traffic Calming Petition Form

Name of neighborhood and/or requesting organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact person: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Street(s) to be calmed: \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Request Statement: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Alternative: \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURES:**

|    | Property Owner Name |           | Property Address | Telephone Number or Email |
|----|---------------------|-----------|------------------|---------------------------|
|    | Print Name          | Signature |                  |                           |
| 1  |                     |           |                  |                           |
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## Petition Proxy Voting Form

This form is to be used by those that reside in a rented single-family home and have contacted the owner of the property asking permission to vote for a Traffic Calming Measure on the owner's behalf. The renter must contact the owner of the property either directly or through the management company. The owner must fill out the following to allow the renter to vote on the Traffic Calming Petition and at the public meeting. An electronic scan/picture of this form is acceptable.

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

Owners Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Owners Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Voting Property Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I \_\_\_\_\_ (property owners name) hereby give permission to the renter at the above address to vote in all matters in the Traffic Calming process.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_