

Livable Delaware Activity

Activity/Policy/Program name: Traffic Calming Manual/Program

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Purpose: To work with communities to design roads so that vehicles travel safely and slowly through the community.

Enabling Laws: 17 Del. C. § 131(a), The Subdivision Regulation law at 17 Del. C. § 508, and The General Rulemaking Authority in 29 Del. C. § 8404(8)

Policies: The policies governing the Traffic Calming Program are contained in the Delaware Traffic Calming Design Manual that was approved in August 2000. During development of the manual, it was recognized that there would be linkage between the "Traffic Calming Design Manual," the "Road Design Manual" and a landscaping manual anticipated to be produced by the Field Services section. This linkage was assumed to take the form of mutual and reciprocal reference between each manual as well as the coordination of the policies. Specifically, the landscape manual is to contain a traffic calming section that will identify species, applicability and landscape maintenance responsibility. Structural maintenance responsibilities would be handled as the maintenance of curbs and road structures are currently handled. It would be useful to address these maintenance issues in a coordinated maintenance policy for the entire Department.

History: The Delaware Department of Transportation recently initiated the Delaware Traffic Calming Program based upon a community outreach process which strove to incorporate a broad range of viewpoints. Some of the individuals involved included members of the Delaware legislature, business interests, environmental interests, community representatives, and emergency services personnel. Upon completion, the manual formed the basis for one of the few statewide traffic calming programs in the United States and is the first statewide traffic calming manual in the country. The motivation behind the development of this program is the issue of livability of both existing and planned communities throughout the state. Historically, transportation needs have determined the location and nature of communities, towns, and cities, worldwide. Over the last 50 years, the automobile has taken the lead in that process and has been the nexus around which the phenomenon of the modern subdivision has coalesced. Larger, wider and straighter have become the ideals for the roads in these new communities. While these ideals have facilitated the use of the automobile, it has caused speeding and safety concerns in those same communities. It has also had the unintended result of segmenting communities, as these new roads have become unsafe to cross on foot or by bicycle.

Current Situation: Traffic Calming is intended to modify the effect of automobile based communities. Traffic Calming, appropriately and successfully applied, will prevent excessive speed and unsafe behavior, while allowing for safe pedestrian and bicycle use. It will also beautify the communities through the use of landscaping measures. When properly applied, traffic calming measures will help to offset the affects of excessive traffic and

encourage livability in the subject communities. The program is still new, but communities and legislators have discovered this option and have begun requesting studies.

Revisions/Actions Needed: It is assumed that periodic reviews will be conducted to keep pace with national practices and the development or revision of State and Federal guidelines and policies. While, no modifications are planned at this time, it will be necessary to work with the Field Services section during the development of a landscaping manual/policy to ensure compatibility. It is not known if modifications to the Traffic Calming Design Manual will be required in response to that effort.

Resources Needed to Create/Revise: None needed at this time.

Process for Creation/Revision: None needed at this time.

Schedule: None needed at this time.

Measures to Guide Progress: Before and after speed and volume studies will be conducted at each study location to determine effectiveness.

Interactions or Inter-relationships with Other Agencies or Units of Government: Coordination between the Department, the State's legislators, and local/municipal governments is an integral part of this program. In most cases, State legislators will be expected to contribute to the cost of construction and maintenance of measures on subdivision streets from their allocation of the Community Transportation Funds (the funding source allocated to each legislator for the maintenance of streets in subdivisions within their district).