

Helping Communities face the challenge and impacts of growth while maintaining community character and a sense of place.

FACT SHEET: 5

iTRaC is the Nashua Regional Planning Commission's new approach to community planning that focuses on integrating transportation, land use and environmental planning. The program was developed to assist communities in dealing with the challenges of growth in a coordinated way that sustains community character and a sense of place.

Traffic Calming

Traffic Calming techniques are designed to reduce vehicle speeds, increase space for pedestrians & bicyclists, create a sense of community, and improve the local environment. This is accomplished by creating physical structures and visual cues that induce drivers to slow down. Communities that implement traffic calming measures also see a reduction in both the number and severity of vehicular accidents. As more vehicles take to the road in this region, traffic calming techniques also play an important role in enhancing the livability of our cities and towns. When properly implemented, these measures decrease noise and air pollution and allow pedestrians and bicyclists to more safely and comfortably take to the streets. Best of all, traffic calming techniques can be customized to fit the needs of any community.



Curb Extensions, like this one in Milford, reduce crossing distances for pedestrians. Photo: NRPC

Traffic Calming Treatments Come in Many Varieties: Bike Lanes, Bulbouts, Chokers, Center Islands, Chicanes, Closures, CURB EXTENSIONS, Diverters, Median Barriers, Neckdowns, Roundabouts, Speed Humps, Pavement Treatments... and more!

Woonerf Anyone?

Traffic calming techniques trace their origins to the Dutch "Woonerf" plans of the 1970s, which introduced the concept of shared space between vehicles and pedestrians. Woonerf, meaning "street for living," incorporates narrow roadways without curbs or sidewalks. Cars are slowed by placing trees, planters, and parking areas in the street. In addition to being pedestrian friendly, woonerfs are ideal for creating public spaces.



Woonerf design in Asheville, NC. Photo: Annie Lux, Pedestrian & Bicycle Information Center

Pedestrian Safety: Facts & Figures

Traffic Calming Techniques play a key role in enhancing pedestrian safety. This is critically important given the high rate of pedestrian injuries and fatalities nationwide. Consider these US statistics from the NHTSA for 2005:

- 4,481 = pedestrians killed in traffic crashes
- 64,000 = pedestrians injured in traffic crashes
- 74% = portion of pedestrian fatalities occurring in urban areas
- 80% = portion of pedestrian fatalities occurring at non-intersection locations
- 5 = pedestrian fatalities in NH (lowest in nation per capita, 2nd lowest in absolute terms)



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Traffic Calming Techniques

There are a wide variety of Traffic Calming methods that can be employed to meet a community's specific needs, including the techniques described below. For more information on these and other traffic calming measures, please visit the iTRaC website at www.nashaurpc.org/itrac.



Speed Hump/Speed Table—rounded, raised devices typically 3-4 inches high at center, extending full width of road; can be combined with crosswalks
Benefits: most predictable speed reduction impacts, relatively inexpensive
Considerations: bus & emergency vehicle ease of access, drainage, snow removal

Curb Extensions—a.k.a. bulb-outs or neckdowns; extend curb line into the parking lane, reducing street width

Benefits: reduces crossing distance, improves pedestrian visibility, slows cars
Considerations: wide shoulder must be present, turning radius for large vehicles



Crossing Islands—a.k.a. center islands, raised islands in center of street allowing pedestrians to cross half of street, stop, and wait safely before crossing the other half
Benefits: improves pedestrian safety, highlights crosswalks, reduces vehicle speed
Considerations: ensure handicap accessibility and do not reduce bike mobility

Pavement Treatments—textured or colored pavement used to emphasize pedestrian crossings, intersections, or blocks; ex. brick, cobblestone, concrete

Benefits: reduces vehicle speed, improves aesthetics, highlights crosswalks
Considerations: cost; handicap, bike, and pedestrian maneuverability; longevity



Chicanes—curb extensions that alternate from one side of the street to the other, creating horizontal diversions of traffic

Benefits: decreases vehicle speed, navigable by emergency vehicles

Considerations: reduces on-street parking, ensure bike safety is maintained

Traffic Circles—raised circular islands in center of intersections that reduce vehicle speed by forcing motorists to maneuver around them

Benefits: manages traffic at intersections where volume does not warrant signal

Considerations: may be difficult for large vehicles to navigate, maintenance



Photos (top to bottom): trafficalming.org, trafficalming.org, walkinginfo.org, trafficalming.org, pedbikeimages.org, walkinginfo.org

For more details on this topic or an overview of the entire iTRaC program, contact Camille Pattison, iTRaC Program Manager, to schedule the iTRaC introductory presentation. camillep@nashaurpc.org



Nashua Regional Planning Commission in partnership with the NH Department of Transportation & the NH Office of Energy and Planning.