

2020 JAN 29 PM 2:39



### Transportation Advisory Committee

November 7, 2019

Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present: Dana Miller (Chair), Larry MacDonald (Vice Chair), Annis Sengupta (Clerk), David Coleman, Clifford Gaysunas, Charles Hamad, Jeremy Romanul, Jeffrey Roth

Ex Officio Committee Members Present: Glenn Clancy (Belmont Director of Community Development and Town Engineer); Jay Marcotte (Director, Department of Public Works); Sgt. Matt Benoit (Belmont Police Department)

#### **7:00 pm      Traffic Calming Policy Public Presentation**

Dana Miller, Chair, explained that the purpose of the meeting is to take comments on the draft Traffic Calming Policy before we submit it to the Town. The public may be given an opportunity to discuss specific issues with traffic around town after discussion of the policy is complete.

A draft of the policy is available for public review here:

<https://www.belmont-ma.gov/transportation-advisory-committee/pages/traffic-calming-policy-draft>

Miller introduced the committee members and gave a twenty minute presentation that provided an overview of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Traffic Calming Policy before opening the floor to public comments.

The TAC was created in January 2019. Nine volunteer members were appointed by the Belmont Select Board. The TAC works closely with the Belmont Police Department, the Town Engineer, and the Belmont DPW. The TAC is charged with making recommendations to the Select Board on transportation improvements and policies.

More information on the TAC is available at:

<https://www.belmont-ma.gov/transportation-advisory-committee>

### Presentation highlights:

- The Townwide Traffic Study was completed in 2019. Results of the study are summarized in an April 1st presentation to the Select Board, available online here:  
[https://www.belmont-ma.gov/sites/belmontma/files/uploads/2019-04-01\\_belmont\\_townwide\\_study\\_bos\\_meeting\\_\\_0.pdf](https://www.belmont-ma.gov/sites/belmontma/files/uploads/2019-04-01_belmont_townwide_study_bos_meeting__0.pdf)
- The study documented the high volume of traffic present in Belmont.
  - 22,000 vehicle trips are documented on Trapelo Road at Mill Street
  - 21,000 vehicle trips are coming through the Belmont Center underpass.
- Most traffic coming through Belmont is not local.
  - 97% of traffic on Pleasant Street is from outside Belmont
- The Study recommended mitigation strategies including to
  - Employ self-regulating roadway design
  - Keep vehicles on the main roads

The Traffic Calming Policy is a response to these recommendations. Please refer to the posted presentation slides for details on the presentation.

### Public Questions

1. Does every request go up to the Select Board?
  - No. Every request will receive a preliminary evaluation. If the preliminary evaluation is unable to document problems with cut-through traffic, the speed of traffic, and/or a history of collisions in the area in question, then the TAC will invite in the neighbors to discuss the findings of the preliminary evaluation and no further action will be planned in response to the request..
2. What is the process for appealing a TAC recommendation?
  - There is no formal process for appealing a TAC recommendation. Residents are invited to meetings with the TAC to discuss possible recommendations and the residents' opinions are solicited at these meetings before the TAC votes on any recommendations. The Select Board then considers the TAC recommendations.
3. How do you determine whether a car is from in-town or out-of-town?
  - For the Townwide Traffic Study, the consultants did a license plate study of the cars. They recorded every license plate physically.

4. Understanding that the specifics of the request may vary, what is the timeline from when a request is submitted and when you hear back about whether it will be followed up on?
  - The timeline of evaluation will vary depending on several factors, including such things as whether utility maintenance or roadwork could temporarily distort usual traffic behavior in the area in question; in such an event, the evaluation will be conducted after the utility maintenance or roadwork has been completed. TAC is committed to addressing requests in a timely manner.
  - TAC Member Gaysunas: Determining the timeline for implementation will also be influenced by other town constraints that may defer the project's implementation.
  
5. Is there a more extensive policy online?
  - If you go to the main page of the town's website, you can find all of the documents on the Transportation Advisory Committee page. The draft is available online here:  
<https://www.belmont-ma.gov/transportation-advisory-committee/pages/traffic-calming-policy-draft>
  
6. Are there any specific proposals at this point?
  - The committee receives requests on an ongoing basis. If there is a transportation emergency, call the police. If there is a problem that is not an emergency, contact Glenn Clancy and the Select Board, and the concern will be brought to the TAC.
  
7. Has there been a study on the relationship between the volume on main streets and the cut through traffic on residential streets?
  - Yes. The town is aware that the volume of traffic on the main roads is contributing to cut-through traffic in the neighborhoods. Part of what the town wants to do is create a transportation plan for Belmont, including a determination of major routes that should carry the traffic and the local roads.
  
8. Since you have done a lot of studies and have access to a lot of data - would the TAC proactively decide to implement traffic calming in particular places around town?
  - Typically, the TAC doesn't work that way because neighbors would want to determine whether traffic calming is appropriate. The TAC does give the Police Department the option to recommend locations for consideration of traffic calming, and any proposal would be subject to a public hearing for which abutting residents would be notified. The Police

Department is aware of active trouble spots and Glenn Clancy, Town Engineer, has knowledge--but, generally, the process is initiated by residents.

9. There is a difference between traffic calming and measures that rely on enforcement, so is a sign that says no left turn between 7-9 considered to be part of the policy?
  - Glenn Clancy: Those kinds of access restrictions can be implemented on the municipal level. The Select Board must approve any restrictions that are recommended by the TAC or other committees dealing with traffic issues in town. That kind of signage would go up because the traffic counts and the studies have determined that there is a certain percent of traffic above normal in certain hours. That is a regulatory approach. Volume and speed are two very distinct problems.
  
10. I understand that traffic signals are governed by the state. Does the state control the intervals of when pedestrian lights go on? At the signal I use in Cushing Square, cars turn right and left while pedestrians have a crossing. What does it take to change that sequencing? It is totally nuts. I have been at other intersections where when the pedestrian signal came on, all traffic had to stop.
  - Glenn Clancy: Traffic signals need to meet warrants from the Federal Highway Administration, and Massachusetts has adopted the Federal standards with amendments. Those warrants must be met. Once you meet that determination, engineers look at the data and design timing and phasing of signals to manage that activity. They do that at the approval of MassDOT. There are locations where you can design a signal so that there is an exclusive pedestrian phase. Allowing turns during a pedestrian phase is common. MassDOT looks at Level of Service. Level of Service A is the best - that means there is no delay at any time. One way you get at a reasonable level of service on the Trapelo-Road-Belmont-Street corridor is to allow simultaneous left hand and right hand turns during the pedestrian phase. We are starting to install signs that remind drivers to yield to pedestrians on turns. There are two in Cushing Square.
  
11. Is safe routes to school part of the traffic calming policy?
  - Safe Routes to School is a separate effort. Some TAC members participate in the Safe Routes to School effort.

## **Public Comment Themes**

- **Process and Communication**

Residents raised concerns that the process, as it is described, lacks clarity about when issues raised to the committee will be addressed and how residents will know whether decisions have been made and whether their concerns will be addressed. One resident noted that, while there is a sense of urgency in relation to traffic issues on the part of residents, this sense of urgency is not reflected in the policy. In response, the TAC will explore whether the committee could provide email confirmation that requests had been received and could provide updates to the primary petitioner as to the status of the request as it moves through the process.

Residents also expressed an interest in knowing what other concerns had been brought before the committee and what the outcomes of the processes had been. The TAC will explore how best to make available to the public the prioritized list of approved projects that will be maintained--so residents can see what has been happening and what has been done. The TAC would like to explore wiki maps or other strategies to communicate with the public.

One resident suggested that the TAC set up a Parent Advisory Committee. The TAC explained that several committee members have children in Belmont. The parent perspectives are represented directly by committee members and through coordination with other town efforts that work directly with parents such as Safe Routes to School.

TAC members assured the public that the process is completed as expeditiously as possible.

- **Preliminary Evaluation Criteria**

One resident made a compelling case for expanding the criteria to include measures of demand and revising the criteria for speeding beyond the 85th percentile speed: "I work in public health and have an opportunity to work with communities on Complete Streets. I come from a public health lens. I am so glad we are trying to calm traffic so all modes can get to and from where they need to go. I have concerns about the criteria we are using, particularly the use of 85th percentile speeds at 30 mph.

Results show that the average risk of severe injury for a pedestrian struck by a vehicle reaches 10% at an impact speed of 16 mph, 25% at 23 mph, 50% at 31 mph, 75% at 39 mph, and 90% at 46 mph. The average risk of death for a pedestrian reaches 10% at an impact speed of 23 mph, 25% at 32 mph, 50% at 42 mph, 75% at 50 mph, and 90% at 58 mph. Risks vary significantly by age. For example, the average risk of severe injury or

death for a 70-year old pedestrian struck by a car traveling at 25 mph is similar to the risk for a 30-year-old pedestrian struck at 35 mph.

I would love to see some criteria in the policy that take into consideration places where our youngest are going to schools and parks and that recognize that demand is more important than the 85th percentile of speed. The use of the 85th percentile for speed was based on a 1964 Solomon Curve, which was based on what 85% of drivers feel is a comfortable speed to drive. Many drivers driving on our streets are driving 30 mph and if they hit my child, bad things will happen.

The National Transportation Safety Board's recommendations say we need to revise speed setting standards. See:

<https://www.nts.gov/news/speeches/JHomendy/Pages/homendy-20190409.aspx>

There are a lot of good best practices to look at. Fort Collins takes into consideration demand, for example, routes a certain distance from a bus line, and looks at equity and health - where there are populations 18 years old and younger, over 65, those of lower income without access to a car and therefore more at risk; that policy looks at safety measures and ADA compliance, sidewalk conditions, and it does look at speed limits and bicycle lanes."

This concern about the criteria was echoed by other members of the public who felt that a safe speed for local streets is closer to 20 mph than 25 mph.

TAC members are favorably disposed to re-examine the preliminary evaluation criteria, particularly the 85th percentile speed criterion. TAC members have been looking at updated standards, including those produced by NATCO and those being employed in other municipalities, such as Cambridge.

- **Regulatory Traffic Controls**

Although the TAC emphasized that the policy is focused on implementing self-enforcing roadway designs, residents expressed a continued interest in using regulatory traffic controls to manage cut-through traffic in town. Residents requested information about the TAC implementing restricted access signs or other traffic regulatory controls to reduce cut-through traffic on local roads. The side-streets feeding into Mount Auburn Street near Mt. Auburn Hospital in Cambridge were referenced as a successful example as well as Brookline's implementation of a resident-only

ordinance. The Belmont Police Department provided the following information on access restriction signs:

- Belmont currently has 60 access-restriction signs in place and only 4-6 officers available to enforce those restrictions. When the restrictions are enforced on one street, traffic goes into the next street over. I don't want to get people's hopes up that if there is a sign put in, that we will be able to enforce it.

TAC members experienced in traffic management shared a similar concern that the restrictions are frequently ignored especially by Belmont residents trying to access the schools in town. The restrictions in place apply to everyone and in combination can make getting through town and accessing the town's amenities challenging for residents, not only commuters. The TAC also noted that resident-only restrictions would similarly create challenges for residents with out-of-town guests or family. It applies to everyone and can have unforeseen consequences.

Residents also raised the issue of removing 30- and 35-mph speed limit signage that was required for special speed areas when the thickly-settled speed limit was 30 mph vs. the 25 mph speed limit of today. Belmont's Town Engineer reported that he has placed a request to MassDOT to remove the 30 and 35 mph signs. MassDOT has said that Belmont would need to do special speed studies to determine that a change in speed limit is warranted.

- **Traffic Flow**

One resident raised a concern that the town should also consider how to improve the flow of traffic through town so that traffic can move smoothly through town unimpeded. The TAC clarified that a town-wide transportation plan would take issues like traffic flow into account but that the committee is concerned about balancing the needs of motorists with those of bicyclists and pedestrians and that pedestrian safety is currently paramount.

- **Driver/Pedestrian Education**

Residents expressed interest in educating drivers about the 25 mph speed limit in town and educating pedestrians about the importance of using crosswalks. The TAC is interested in exploring a town-wide transportation plan, including considering which roads are appropriate to consider as main roads versus local roads, how to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians through town, and how to educate all modes

about transportation safety. That will begin to happen after the Traffic Calming Policy is finalized.

- **Coordination with and Reference to Other Transportation Initiatives**  
Residents expressed an interest in having the Traffic Calming Policy explicitly reference and link to other related transportation planning efforts in town, particularly the Complete Streets program and prioritization list. Interest in understanding the relationship among the TAC, the High School Traffic Working Group, Complete Streets, and Safe Routes to School was an overarching theme of the conversation.

TAC member D. Coleman gave the public some additional background information on the Complete Streets program:

- Complete Streets is the idea of rebalancing the use of the streets. Belmont has a Complete Streets program and it provides another way to address a traffic calming issue outside of this policy. The consultant that put together the Complete Streets analysis created a wiki map to collect data on particular problem areas in town. You could see a list of other people's complaints. A wiki map is something you could do besides a spreadsheet. The Complete Streets program is tied to funding put out by the state - \$400,000 per year. The consultant came up with a prioritization plan based on input we have been getting for that program.

### **Specific Problem Areas:**

- **Wellington Lane**  
A contingent of residents from Wellington Lane, for which a traffic calming request is currently before the TAC attended the meeting and provided some information about the problem on their road as they are aware of it. The following is one comment that exemplifies the problem as reported:

A resident of Wellington Lane, gave the following statement: "Our street is one block road between Concord Avenue and Somerset Street. We now have three young children on the street. We haven't had children here for a long time. Officer Ismello put a device up to assess traffic for a week. It is not a completely improved road, it is narrow, and cars try to pass each other on it. There are no pavement side pieces. The officer was unsure whether he was getting anything from the electrical device. I went out and studied the traffic over 90 minutes. I counted 68 cars; many hitting 30 mph. Those of us who live there are concerned."



The TAC provided the update that the Belmont Police Department has finished collecting data from the roadway and that we expect to have an update on the process at an upcoming meeting of the TAC. Residents of Wellington Lane will be notified when that meeting is coming up.

**8:40 pm**

**Meeting Adjourned**



# Transportation Advisory Committee

## TOWN OF BELMONT

19 Moore Street  
Homer Municipal Building  
Belmont, Massachusetts 02478-0900  
Telephone: (617) 993-2650 Fax: (617) 993-2651

Dana Miller - Chair  
Laurence MacDonald - Vice Chair  
Annis Sengupta - Clerk

Jessica Bennett  
David Coleman  
Clifford Gaysunas  
Charles Hamad  
Jeremy Romanul  
Jeffrey Roth

**Date:** November 4, 2019

**To:** Members – Transportation Advisory Committee

**From:** Glenn R. Clancy, Committee Liaison

**Subject:** Agenda for Meeting on **November 7, 2019 at 7:00 PM at The Beech Street Center, 266 Beech Street.** If you cannot attend the meeting, please contact me via e-mail.

**7:00 – 8:30** Traffic Calming Policy Public Presentation

**8:30 – 8:35** Old Business

- No Know Items

**8:35 – 8:40** New Business

- No Known Items

**8:40** Adjourn

Note: Times are tentative depending on the flow of the meeting, the time of any particular item may deviate ten to fifteen minutes from the schedule.

Cc: Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator  
Sgt Marc Pugliese, Belmont Police Department  
Jay Marcotte, Director, Department of Public Works  
Richard McLaughlin, Belmont Police Chief



# Belmont, MA Traffic Calming Policy

The Transportation Advisory Committee

# Agenda for This Evening: November 7, 2019

## For Your Comment: The Draft Traffic Calming Policy

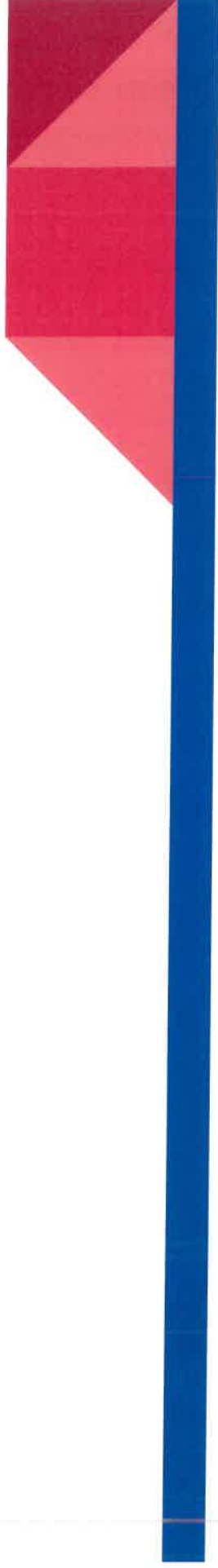
1. The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)
2. Transportation challenges in Belmont
3. The draft Traffic Calming Policy
4. Your questions and comments about the draft Traffic Calming Policy
5. Next Step: a draft for Select Board approval

For those who could not attend this evening's meeting, we also invited comment on the document through email message to the Town Engineer--with a deadline of 4pm on November 7, 2019.



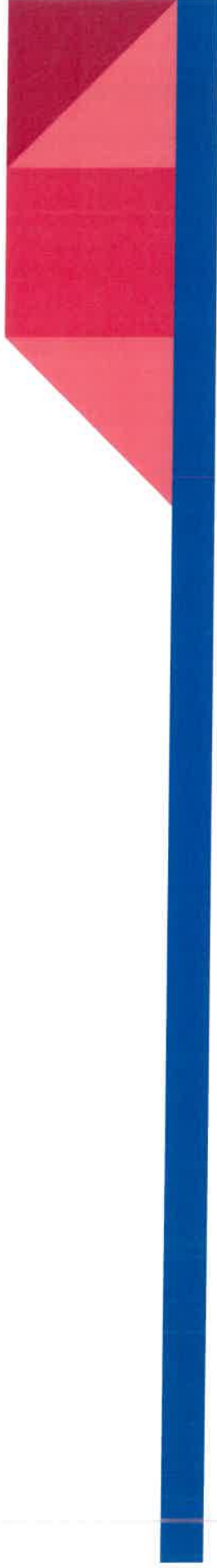
# Belmont Transportation Advisory Committee

- Established and appointed by the Select Board in January, 2019
- Nine volunteer members
- Works with Town Engineer, Public Works, and Police
- Meets first and third Thursdays of the month



# Transportation Advisory Committee Charge

- Make recommendations to the Select Board about:
  - ◆ the improvement of public ways in Belmont for pedestrian, bicyclist, and vehicle traffic
  - ◆ policies to address documented transportation challenges
- **This evening we are focusing on the Traffic Calming Policy**



# Belmont is challenged by Cut-Through Traffic

- Regional congestion contributes to cut-through traffic in Belmont
- Neighborhoods near congested main roads experience a high volume of cut-through traffic

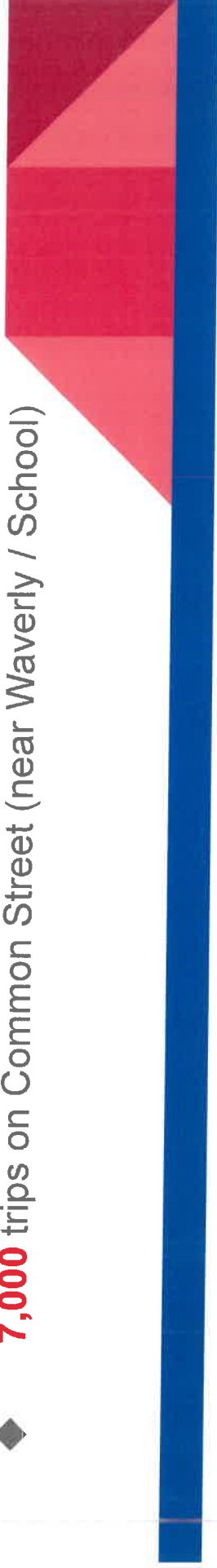
**Town Wide Traffic Study (presented 4/1/2019)**



# Among the Belmont Town-Wide Traffic Study Findings

→ Between 6am and 6pm, there are more than:

- ◆ **22,000** vehicle trips on Trapelo Road (near the intersection with Mill)
- ◆ **21,000** trips that pass under our railroad bridge in the center of Belmont
- ◆ **17,000** trips on Pleasant Street (near Route 2)
- ◆ **13,000** trips on Mill Street (near Trapelo Road)
- ◆ **11,000** trips on Brighton Street
- ◆ **10,000** trips on Trapelo Road (near Common Street)
- ◆ **7,000** trips on Common Street (near Waverly / School)

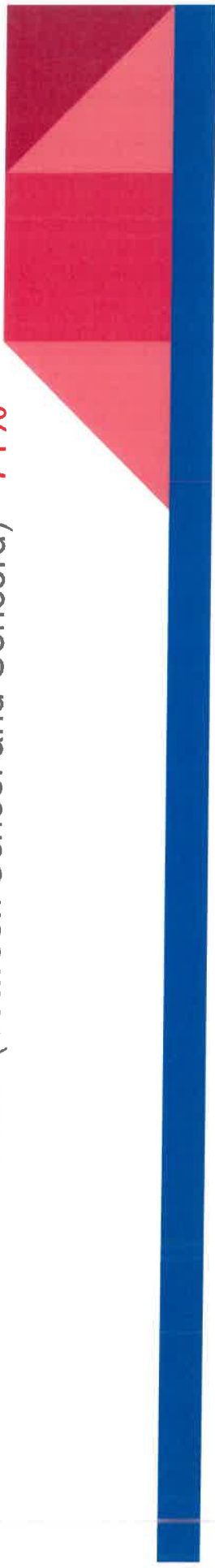




## The vast majority of the cars on our main roads during commuting hours are not from our town

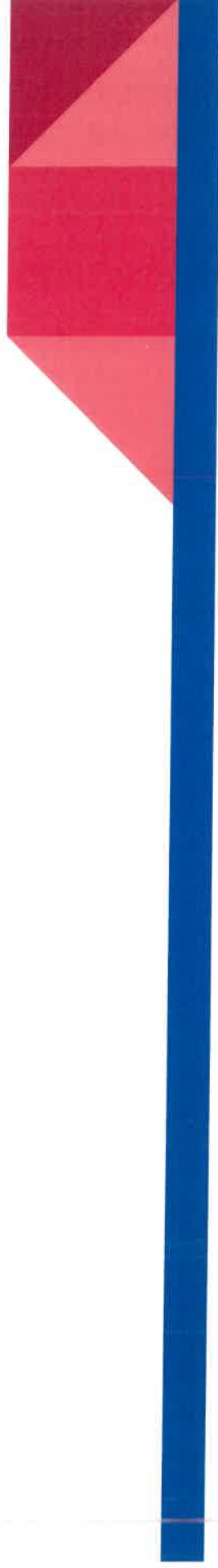
Of the cars travelling on our roads between 8 and 8:30am, the percentage from outside Belmont on

- Pleasant Street (between Frontage and Brighton): **97%**
- Park Ave (between Frontage and Rutledge) **95%**
- Brighton Street (between Hoitt and Statler) **86%**
- Waterhouse (between Westlund and Statler) **77%**
- School Street (between Stone and Bow) **74%**
- Lower Goden Street (between School and Concord) **71%**



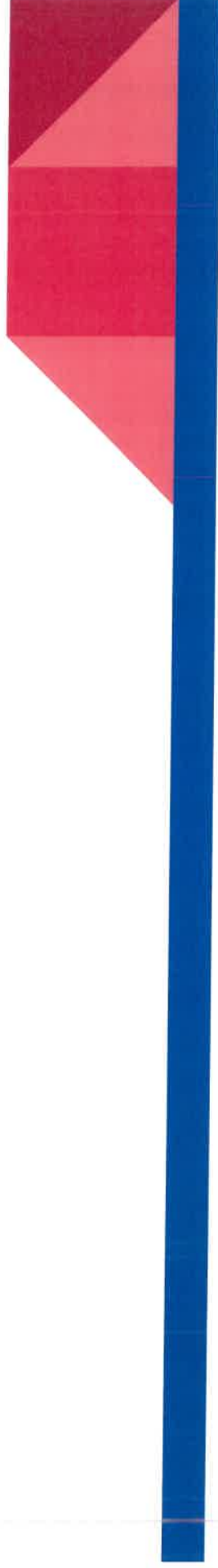
# Transportation Challenges in Belmont

- Pedestrian safety
  - Bicyclist safety
  - Safety for those in automobiles
- Exacerbated by:
- Cut-through traffic
  - Unsafe automobile speeds



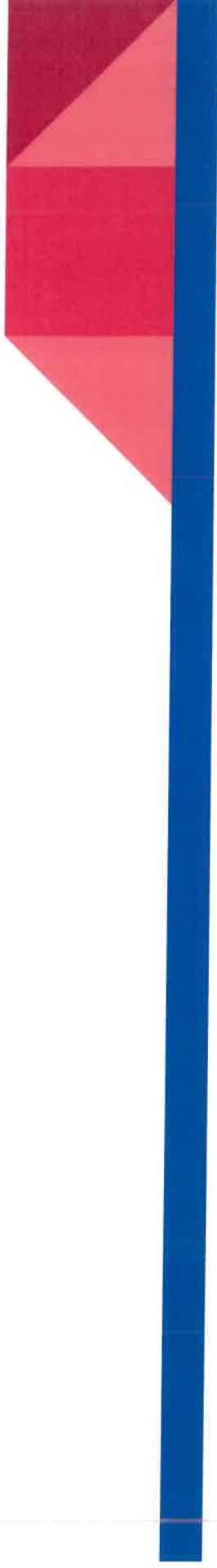
## **Recommended Mitigation Strategies from Study Report include:**

- 1. Employ self-regulating roadway designs**
- 2. Keep vehicles on main roads**



# Our Policy Is Designed To:

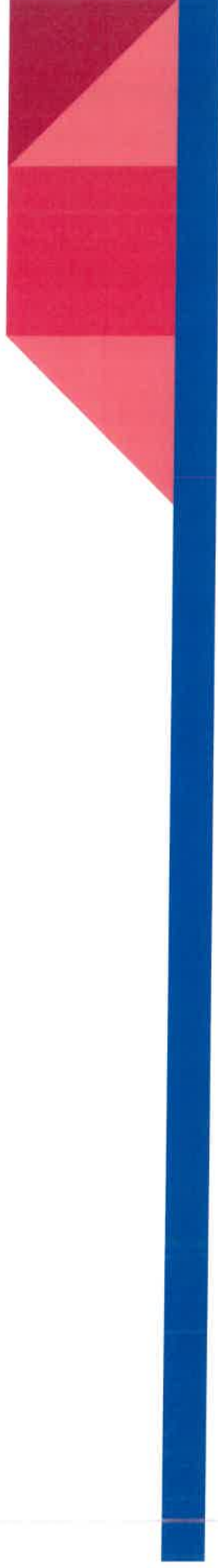
- ★ encourage resident involvement in all phases of the program;
- ★ provide a clear and transparent procedure for addressing concerns about pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit users, and motorists;
- ★ guide the selection of traffic calming projects with objective, needs-driven criteria;



# The Process of Developing the Draft

**In the course of developing a draft Traffic Calming Policy for Belmont, the TAC:**

- ★ Analyzed traffic calming policies from other Massachusetts towns
- ★ Consulted with our engineering, public works, and police experts
- ★ Examined Belmont transportation challenges



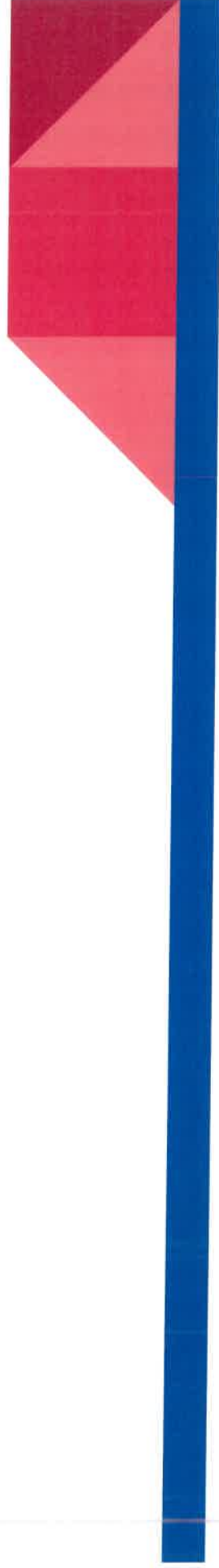
# Traffic Calming: Objectives

- ★ Reduce vehicle speeds to the speed limit and increase driver attentiveness;
- ★ Improve safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, users of public transit, and motorists through the reduction of dangerous driving behaviors and the reduction of the probability and severity of crashes;
- ★ Increase mobility for individuals through the use of non-automotive modes of transportation;
- ★ Improve quality of life for residents and visitors by making streets and neighborhoods safer and more appealing.



# Traffic Calming Methods: Designed to be Effective without Enforcement

- ★ Narrowing the real or apparent width of the roadway
- ★ Deflecting the vehicle path
- ★ Altering the vertical profile of the vehicle path

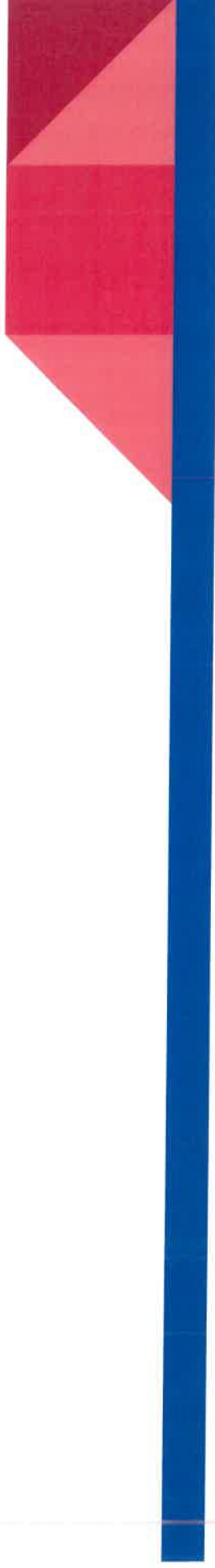


# Regulatory Traffic Controls

→ **Must Meet Federal and State Guidelines**  
→ **and Require Enforcement**

- **Stop Signs**
- **Posted Speed Limits**
- **Truck Exclusions**
- **Signalized intersections**

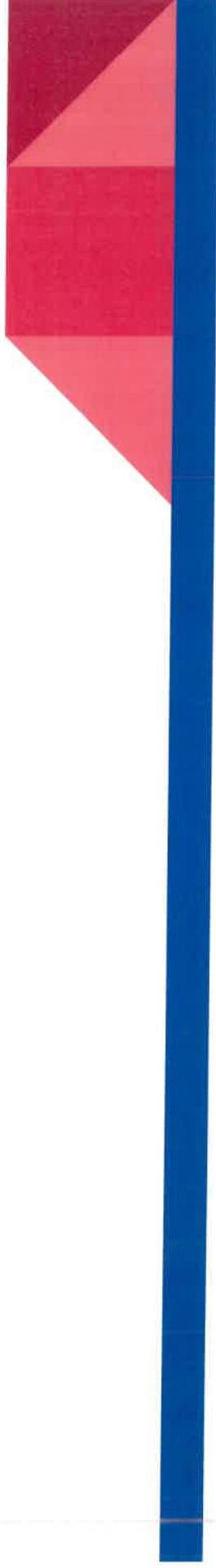
The TAC process for managing requests for regulatory traffic controls will be separate from the process for managing requests for traffic calming





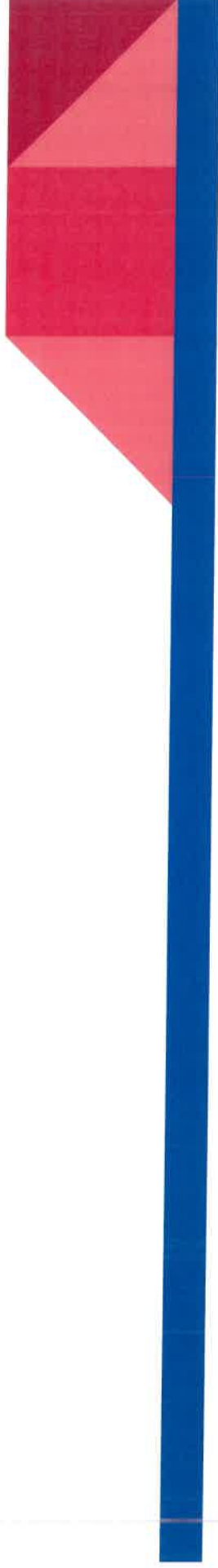
# Traffic Calming Requests:

- ◆ **Who May Submit?**
  - **Town residents, abutters, those who work or own businesses in Town, Town boards, and Town departments.**
- ◆ **A completed Traffic Calming Request form must be signed by:**
  - **at least five different street addresses or**
  - **fifty percent of the abutters in the directly affected area**  
**(whichever is less)**



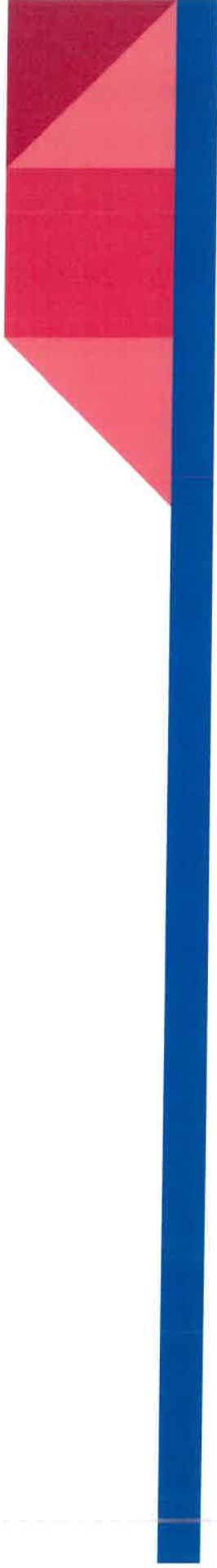
# Roads Eligible for Traffic Calming

- ◆ Only roads under the jurisdiction of the Town of Belmont
- ◆ Traffic-calming will be considered for all eligible roads
- ◆ Options for arterial roads, truck routes, emergency-response routes, and public bus routes may be limited by Federal and State law or other functional considerations.



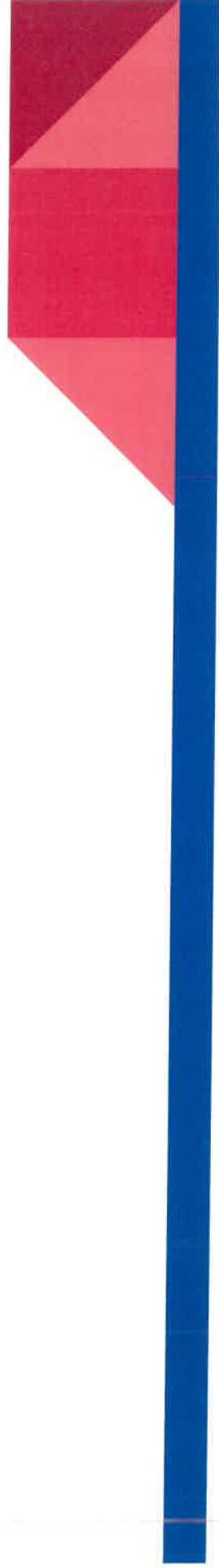
## **How will Belmont manage requests for traffic calming?**

1. Requests are submitted in writing
2. Town staff gather information
3. TAC convenes public meetings
4. TAC makes recommendations to the Select Board about these improvements
5. The Select Board makes final determinations for all projects.



# Criteria for the Preliminary Evaluation

- ◆ Speed
- ◆ Cut-Through Traffic Volume
- ◆ Traffic Collisions



# Traffic Calming Needs Assessment

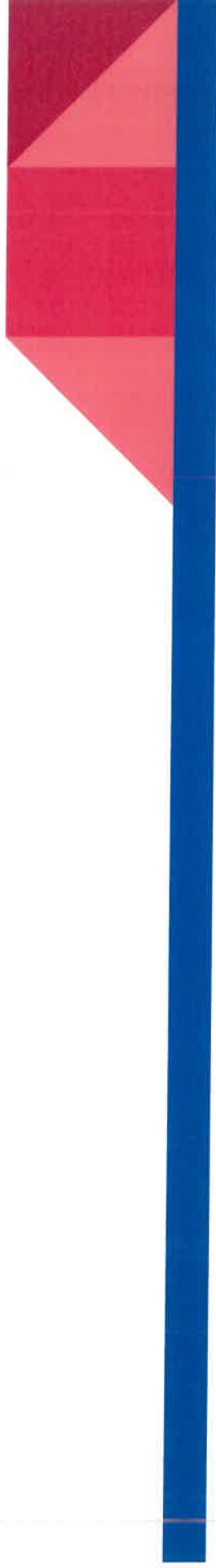
The Town Engineer, working in coordination with other Town staff (Police, Fire, DPW) will compile data in a standardized report for the geographic area under study:

- Roadway Attributes
- Evaluation Scoring



# Priority List of Traffic Calming Projects

- The TAC will use the Needs Assessment scoring to create and maintain a priority ranking of traffic calming projects.
- The Town Engineer will review the list of priority projects in the context of multiple factors, including budgetary constraints, and the timing of utility maintenance and pavement-management projects, and make a final recommendation for projects to be completed within each budget cycle.
- Recommended traffic calming projects that must be reviewed as part of the Town's annual capital budgeting process will be subject to final approval and appropriation by Town Meeting.



# Traffic Calming Request Form



## XIII. Traffic Calming Request Form

Please complete both sides of this form and return it to:  
 Traffic Calming Program, Belmont Department of Community Development  
 100 Main Street, Belmont Building, 13 Main Street, 2nd Floor  
 Belmont, MA 02458

1. Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Your Home and/or Belmont Business Address: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Your Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Your Telephone Numbers  
 Day: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Night: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Please circle the best way to reach you during the day:  Phone, or  Email
7. About which street(s)/intersection/location are you making this request for traffic calming?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
8. Are there particular times of day, days of the week, or circumstances that are related to the problems that you have observed at the street(s)/intersection/location?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

9. Please circle each problem that applies to the street(s)/intersection/location listed above:

- |                           |                                     |                   |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Speeding                  | Cars Parked Too Close to Corner     | Difficult to Bike |
| Difficult to Cross Street | Drivers Not Yielding to Pedestrians |                   |
| Other (please describe):  |                                     |                   |

**Please Complete Both Sides Of This Form**

10. Please use the space below or an attached document to describe your concerns about the street(s)/ intersection/ location. It may be useful to draw a picture to more clearly identify the concerns that have prompted your traffic calming request.

11. Please use the formatted space below to provide the name and address for each traffic calming request signatory. A sheet may be appended with additional signatory information.

	Name	Address	Signature
1.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____	_____
8.	_____	_____	_____
9.	_____	_____	_____
10.	_____	_____	_____
11.	_____	_____	_____
12.	_____	_____	_____
13.	_____	_____	_____
14.	_____	_____	_____
15.	_____	_____	_____
16.	_____	_____	_____
17.	_____	_____	_____
18.	_____	_____	_____
19.	_____	_____	_____
20.	_____	_____	_____