



# **TRAFFIC REQUESTS POLICY**

**BOWLING GREEN, KENTUCKY**

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## CITY OF BOWLING GREEN TRAFFIC REQUEST GUIDELINES

### **SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION**

#### **Section 1.1 Why have a policy:**

With any growing city, there will be changes in traffic. Over time they can be significant. In addition there are day to day issues that Citizens or staff might become aware of that need to be addressed. This policy provides information on how those issues or requests are addressed. The goal of this policy is to provide a consistent means of addressing issues and providing information on what traffic items are addressed at what levels of involvement from the community. Sometimes changes in traffic control are a matter of public safety. Sometimes it is a matter of addressing an inconvenience. All of these requests have varying levels of community involvement. This policy helps everyone understand how these issues are reviewed.

#### **Section 1.2 Separation of Considerations:**

Traffic requests are broken down into two main categories; Clarifications and Traffic Changes. An example of the first category, clarification, is helping drivers understand which lane to use when making turns at an intersection. This may involve simply adding markings and signs to help drivers boost understanding how to proceed.

The second category, Traffic Changes, involves requests that would actually change the dynamics of traffic, such as adding a traffic signal or stop signs.

#### **Section 1.3 Handling of Requests:**

We handle the two different categories through different processes.

##### Clarification Request:

The simplest process involves Clarification of traffic conditions. These requests would be evaluated based on our professional experience, national guidelines and/or studies. These type of requests would not typically involve community feedback.

##### Traffic Change: Change of Traffic Control Device, Markings or Signs:

These tend to be a little more complex in what would be considered. These requests are also evaluated based on our engineering judgement, professional experience, national guidelines and/or studies, but would also involve the community to some extent. The level of community involvement would depend the particular staff or citizen request. For example if a property owner requested



the conversion of a parking space to handicapped parking space, this would typically only involve that particular property owner. However, a request to remove parking along either one side or both sides of a street could involve input from the whole street where the parking would be affected.

## **SECTION 2 CLARIFICATION REQUESTS**

### **Section 2.1 Process of considering Clarification Requests:**

As stated previously, Clarification Requests typically involve calling attention to or improving an existing condition.

Sometimes these cannot be carried out or may not result in the solution that was originally envisioned. This is because sometimes guidelines or other sources along with engineering judgement might not allow what is requested.

Sometimes the request is simply a maintenance request such as faded paint, missing signs, etc. that are more easily accommodated.

### **Section 2.2 Examples of Clarification Requests (Not all inclusive):**

1. Adding a traffic island or other traffic markings to protect a sign that drivers tend to run over or otherwise damage (existing sign);
2. Vehicles parking too close to an intersection or traffic control device (where the proper parking position and/or distance from the control device is clearly identified in the On-Street Parking section of the TMM);
3. Speeding problems where additional speed limit signs are requested;
4. Pedestrians and/or Bicycles warning signs in neighborhoods;
5. Roadway markings faded;
6. Sight distance issues, such as vegetation blocking sight distance;
7. Any other condition where there will not be a change to the existing traffic control scheme but a clarification that conforms to existing guidelines.

## **SECTION 3 TRAFFIC CHANGE: CHANGE OF TRAFFIC DEVICES, MARKINGS OR SIGNS:**

### **Section 3.1 Process of considering Traffic Changes:**

As previously stated, these tend to be a little more complex in nature in the overall traffic control scheme. In these request we review the request, national guidelines and/or studies, experience and engineering judgement just as we would for a clarification requests. But we would also involve the community to some extent.

The level of community involvement would depend on the changes staff or citizens are requesting. Although we would want 100% agreement from a particular street or neighborhood, sometimes that is simply not possible. When



we have property owners who are opposed to such changes, we try to work with them to reach an acceptable solution. However, if a majority of the neighborhood is for a traffic change staff recommends, then we would proceed with the solution. The reality is that sometimes a traffic condition needs to be addressed based on traffic needs or safety concerns of the larger community or city as a whole.

Often large scale traffic control changes involve studies, (such as speed studies, traffic volume counts), to determine the proper course of action. These type of requests tend to be more involved.

The path to making a recommendation to answer a request for a traffic control change, often involves the neighborhood, staff and possibly detailed traffic studies.

It should be noted at this point, that there are some rare conditions where staff may need to forego public involvement. When doing so staff will inform the media via city's public information office. These conditions most often result from an immediate need, such as public safety. Examples include a sinkhole blocking a roadway, or an immediate traffic control deficiency. Other examples include an intersection where there have been multiple crashes that have resulted in injuries.

### **Section 3.2 Examples of Traffic Change Requests:**

1. Adding new stop signs to existing intersections where some approaches already have stop signs;
2. Adding traffic signals or converting intersections to/from signalized or stop controlled;
3. Adding centerline stripes and/or adding edge line stripes;
4. Parking changes that involves whole sections of roadways or go beyond those in the on-street parking manual;
5. Adding multiple handicapped parking spaces;
6. Adding mid-block crosswalks or at intersections where crossing traffic is not stopped nor has a traffic signal;
7. Any other condition where there would be a significant change to the existing condition where staff feels the request requires community involvement and/or a study.

## **SECTION 4 REQUESTS NOT CONSIDERED**

### **Section 4.1 Why we don't consider some requests:**

Sometimes, citizens will make requests that we simply cannot implement. This is because of those previously mentioned national guidelines, studies, city ordinances, state or federal law or engineering judgement that guide our actions.



Implementing requested changes would make a situation less safe or cause more problems than the resulting benefits.

**Section 4.2 Examples of Such Requests:**

1. Speed humps or other such devices that cause a significant vertical change in vehicles in an effort to slow the vehicle down (Speed humps, bumps, ramps, raised crosswalks, raised intersections, etc.). The City of Bowling Green has a specific moratorium against adding these features;
2. Children at Play Signs (nationally accepted as NOT recommended for use) because of ever changing neighborhood composition and that ambiguity of information;
3. Stop signs at locations other than intersections such as mid-points to sections of roadways or other locations that would tend to cause the stop signs to be ignored or disrespected; and
4. Crosswalks at locations where they are specifically discouraged (such as higher speed roadways with no refuge for pedestrians).

**Section 5.0 Limitation on Reintroduction of Request:**

Once a request has gone through the entire traffic request process it is considered closed, regardless of the outcome. The same request, or its counterpart, cannot be presented for reconsideration for a period of at least one year, unless City staff determines that specific conditions or events have changed from the time it was originally considered. Otherwise, a single repeated request could negatively impact the progress of other requests. Generally, national guidelines deem data obtained during a traffic study as valid for a period of three years unless something significant happens that would affect traffic patterns and volumes.