



**TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT**  
404 EAST WASHINGTON  
BROWNSVILLE, TEXAS 78520

**City of Brownsville**  
**Speed Hump Installation Policy**

**A. GENERAL**

Speed humps are an effective and appropriate device for safely reducing vehicle speeds on certain types of streets when installed accordance with the provisions of this policy.

In order for a speed hump installation to be effective, it should be located selectively, in accordance with defined transportation engineering criteria, for the purpose of improving documented speeding problems. Proper installation will also minimize driver frustration and encourage safe driving practices. This policy promotes reasonable opportunities for the residents and property owners most affected by a proposed speed hump, to participate together in the process that leads to its approval and installation.

**B. DEFINITIONS**

For the context of this policy only.

- **LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS** includes single family houses, townhouses, duplexes or apartments.
- **SPEED HUMP** a geometric design feature of a roadway consisting of a raised area in the roadway pavement surface, extending transversely across the travel way, whose primary purpose is to reduce the speed of vehicles traveling along the roadway.
- **SPEEDS** includes 15 % or more of the vehicles using the street, that exceed the legal speed limit by more than 5 miles per hour.
- **SPEED CRITERIA** is the speed that is five miles per hour over the legal speed limit.
- **STREET** refers to the street length that must be petitioned. It is a 1000-foot segment generally centered on the location of the proposed speed hump or the length of the city block, whichever is greater. If the 1000-foot segment extends into any part of an adjacent block, it includes the entire length of this adjacent block unless separated by an intervening thoroughfare, traffic signal, or offset intersection.

**C. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

ALL of the following criteria must be satisfied for a street to be considered eligible for installation of a speed hump.

1. **Location of the street.** The lane uses of the properties abutting the street where the speed hump is proposed must be composed primarily of low-density residential dwellings.
2. **Operational Characteristics of the Street.**
  - (a) The street must be used to provide access to abutting low-density residential properties known as a local residential street and/or must be used to collect traffic for such streets, known as a residential collector street.
  - (b) There must be no more than one moving lane of traffic in each direction.
  - (c) Traffic volumes on street must exceed more than 500 vehicles per day.

- (d) Fifteen percent or more of the vehicles using the street must exceed the speed criteria, which is five miles per hour above the legal speed limit.
- (e) The street must have a speed limit of thirty miles per hour or less, as determined in accordance with State Law.
- (f) The street must not be so close to a fire department facility as to significantly interfere with emergency vehicle operations.
- (g) The street must not be a part of any major roadways shown on the current Thoroughfare Plan. At the present, the Thoroughfare Plan is the 2000-2025 Brownsville Transportation Thoroughfare Plan. The current plan was adopted on Dec. 11, 1999 and amended on April 11, 2000.
- (h) The street must not be part of the State Highway System.

**3. Geometric Characteristics of the Street.**

- (a) As determined by the Traffic Department, the street must have adequate sight distances to safely accommodate the speed hump.
- (b) The street must not have curves or grades that prevent the safe placement of the speed hump. A speed hump may be located on a street that contains curves and/or grades, but the speed hump itself should not be located within a significant horizontal curve or a vertical grade greater than eight percent.
- (c) The street must have a history that shows the need for traffic calming. New subdivision developments cannot design new facilities that include speed humps.
- (d) Private property inside the city limits is not governed or controlled by this Speed Hump Installation Policy.

4. **Petition.** A petition that documents that more than two-thirds of the households in low-density residential dwellings on the street, support installation of a speed hump.

**D. SPEED HUMP REMOVAL**

One or more of the following criteria will be used to determine if an existing speed hump will be removed.

1. **Petition.** A petition that documents that more than half of the household in low-density residential dwellings on the street where existing speed hump is located support its removal.

2. **Existing Speed Humps.** Any speed hump in place at the time that this policy is adopted will remain in place until maintenance of the speed hump is needed. At that time, the City of Brownsville Traffic Department will determine if the speed hump meets all the eligibility requirements except the petition requirement. If it does not, the speed hump will be removed. Removal of the speed hump will be scheduled at the discretion of the City of Brownsville Traffic Department.

**E. SPEED HUMP LOCATION**

A speed hump must not be located in front of a property if the occupant of the property objects to its placement or, in the case of a property containing low-density multiple dwellings, if a majority of the households on the property object to its placement. Verification of this requirement is the responsibility of the applicant or applicants. The exact speed hump location is subject to traffic safety and operation requirements.

**F. DESIGN STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES**

The City of Brownsville Traffic Department shall prepare and maintain current design standards and installation procedures for speed humps in accordance with this policy.

## **G. PROCEDURES FOR SPEED HUMP INSTALLATION**

The initial request for the installation of speed humps must originate from one or more of the residents living on that street. A request in writing from a resident or representative must be delivered to the City of Brownsville Traffic Department or mailed to the address listed below:

**Speed Hump Installation Program**  
**City of Brownsville Traffic Department**  
**404 East Washington Street**  
**Brownsville, Texas 78520**

The request must include the name, address and telephone number of the person making the request.

1. A preliminary determination of eligibility based on available traffic data will be made in a timely manner.

- (a) The City of Brownsville Traffic Department Director will determine if the street meets ALL of the eligibility requirements in the Speed Hump Installation Policy.
- (b) The City of Brownsville Traffic Department Director determines the location of the speed hump if the street meets the minimum requirements for the installation of the speed hump.
- (c) The City of Brownsville Traffic Department will advise the applicant that they must submit a petition indicating that a minimum of two-thirds of the low-density dwelling households on the street support the installation of speed humps, as provided in the speed hump policy. Only petition forms supplied by the City of Brownsville Traffic Department or exact duplicates may be used for this purpose.
- (d) Schools and churches are exempt from the two-thirds street consensus requirement.

2. After verification of the petitions, the City of Brownsville Traffic Department will conduct the engineering studies and solicit comments and recommendations from other agencies. A determination of the streets eligibility for speed hump installation will be made in a timely manner, based on the speed hump policy.

## **H. RATING SYSTEM**

- Number of vehicles per day that exceed the speed limit by more than five mph.
- Number of schools, parks, churches, or institutions on the street (max of 2).
- Percent of petitioning households on the street requesting a speed hump.

1. The street with the highest rating will have the highest priority. If two or more streets have the same rating, the street with the earlier application date will have the higher rating. The City of Brownsville Traffic Director will keep a list of all the pending speed hump requests.

2. When the City of Brownsville Commission has approved a budget amount for speed hump installations, the City of Brownsville Traffic Department will determine which installations, based on the ratings, will be funded from the budget.

3. Upon funding approval, the speed humps will be installed.



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**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT SPEED HUMPS**

**Q. Is a speed hump really necessary?**

A. Not in all cases. Before it can be determined if a speed hump is really necessary, you must first contact and report the traffic problem to the Brownsville Police Department at (956)548-7000 so that a record can be established that there is indeed a problem. In some cases, this is all that is needed. You may also contact the City of Brownsville Traffic Department to determine in any additional traffic control signage is necessary. As for any emergency, you can call 911.

**Q. Why do we have speed humps?**

A. Speeding on residential streets is a common complaint of concerned citizens. Although enforcement of speed limits by police departments is an effective means of reducing speeds, limited resources do not allow such enforcements on regular and permanent basis. Research has shown that speed humps are an effective approach to slowing down traffic on residential streets.

**Q. What is a speed hump and how is it different from a speed bump?**

A. A speed hump is a gradual rise and fall of the pavement surface along the roadway extending across the pavement width. Generally, speed humps used on residential streets are 12 to 22 feet long with a maximum height of 3 to 4 inches. **Speed bumps**, which are seen in many private parking lots, are different from **speed humps**. A **speed bump** is abrupt, having a height of 3 to 4 inches over a length of 1 to 3 feet. Speed bumps cause most vehicles to slow down to almost a stop to go over it. On the other hand, **speed humps** are designed so most vehicles can go over them at 20 mph without causing driver discomfort.

**Q. Can speed humps be placed on any street?**

A. Speed humps are placed only on residential streets with not more than two lanes with a speed limit of 20 mph. Exceptions are made with speed limits of up to 30 mph. For safety reasons, speed humps are not installed on streets with high traffic volume or on curves.

**Q. What type of speed humps does the City of Brownsville use?**

A. The City of Brownsville uses the circular speed hump, which is 16 feet long and used on residential streets which provide access to multiple streets in the neighborhood.



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**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT SPEED HUMPS**

**Q. How can I request speed humps for my street?**

A. Applications are available for pick-up at the City of Brownsville Traffic Department at 404 E. Washington Street, Brownsville, Texas. The application may also be accessed on the City of Brownsville website at [www.cob.us](http://www.cob.us) under the services category. \*

**Q. Do speed humps delay emergency vehicles?**

A. Yes, speed humps do significantly slow down emergency vehicles, therefore, delaying arrival.

**Q. Do speed humps reduce cut-through traffic?**

A. The primary purpose of speed humps is to reduce the speeds of vehicles traveling along a roadway. Traffic diversion due to speed humps is a side effect which may or may not result. A possible disadvantage of speed humps is that motorists may avoid the speed humps by using nearby streets in the area.

**Q. How is a driver warned of the presence of speed humps on the roadway?**

A. On streets with speed humps, warnings signs such as “Road Humps Ahead, Speed Hump, Hump Areas” and “Hump” are placed before the beginning of each hump. To be properly visible, the speed hump is marked with white stripes.

**Q. What will happen if I go over a speed hump at a high speed?**

A. Going over a speed hump at a high speed may cause significant driver discomfort. At such speeds, the hump may act as a bump, jolting the vehicles suspension, causing lose of occupants or cargo and in some instances, causing the driver to lose control of the vehicle.

*\* The City of Brownsville Traffic Department reserves the right to decline any application that does not meet ALL eligibility requirements.*