LAKE MACQUARIE CITY

Vehicle speeds and traffic calming

Fact Sheet

How and when does Council assess vehicle speeds?

Transport for NSW (TfNSW) is the responsible government agency for determining vehicle speeds on NSW roads.

The NSW Police is the government agency that is responsible for enforcing the speed limits on NSW roads.

Council assesses potential for vehicles speeding when considering infrastructure improvements, however is not responsible for enforcing speed limits.

Council considers the 'operating speed' environment of a road when undertaking road safety investigations.

Operating speed is the speed at which, or below, 85 per cent of cars are observed to travel under free-flowing conditions past a nominated point. This is called the eighty-fifth percentile speed. Free-flowing conditions occur when the traffic volume is small enough for drivers to travel at the speed they choose without restriction. On a high-volume urban road, free-flowing conditions will normally occur outside the morning and afternoon peak periods.

The assessments based on the operating (eighty-fifth percentile) speed will cater for the majority of drivers. It is not possible, for practical reasons, for any road authority to design or assess a road based on the one-hundredth percentile speed.

What can I do about speeding vehicles in my street?

Any anti-social behaviour or illegal activity should be reported to NSW Police for their consideration of surveillance and enforcement. NSW Police can request that Council conducts a speed and volume survey to make enforcement more efficient, or to assess if traffic calming devices are appropriate if they have concerns about driver behaviour.

Alternatively, you can nominate a mobile speed camera location at service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/nominate-speed-camera-location.

What is traffic calming?

Traffic calming is the reduction of a motor vehicle's intrusion into, and impact upon, urban life. This is done by moderating the quantity, speed or other characteristics of vehicular traffic to a level that is appropriate to the surrounding environment. On local roads, this is generally achieved by using physical devices, such as speed humps, streetscaping treatments and other measures, to influence vehicle operation.

The aim of traffic calming is to create safer and more liveable local roads.

When does Council install traffic calming devices?

Council considers traffic calming devices when developing or implementing one of the following traffic management systems:

1. **Local area traffic management (LATM)** considers the planning and management of road space within a local traffic area.

   It is often used to modify streets and street networks,to meet the changing needs of residents and users of the local area. LATM uses traffic calming devices to influence vehicle operation to create safer and more pleasant streets and are only used in areas containing local roads.

   Other physical barriers such as creeks, railways, reserves or impassable terrain can also define a local traffic area.

   Council considers a number of factors when assessing the suitability of LATM throughout the City, including vehicle operating speed (eighty-fifth percentile speed), traffic volume, 'rat-run' traffic, crash data, road hierarchy, heavy vehicles, road user activity (including cyclists and pedestrians), the topography of the road and activity generators in the area.

Version 1, December 2020

LATM and traffic calming devices have known potential negative effects. The negative effects could include:

- increased travel time for drivers and frustration for frontage owners (noise, signs, etc.)
- excessive acceleration and deceleration and associated noise
- possible discomfort for bus passengers and/or forced re-routing of buses to other streets
- effects on parking supply
- restricted access to properties adjacent to devices and perceived effects of the devices on the street appearance
- possible increased response times for emergency and service vehicles
- transfer of traffic from a higher classification street to the local street network to avoid the devices
- increase in delays at exits from the area
- additional cost burdens in terms of maintenance and enforcement.
- Some of these can be avoided or minimised, however, these negative effects generally make LATM and traffic calming inappropriate on higher classification roads, such as collector or arterial roads.

2. **40km/h speed limits:** Vehicle speed is a major factor in pedestrian injuries and fatalities, especially in areas with a high number of pedestrians. The use of 40km/h speed limits is one way to make major road safety improvements to these areas. As TfNSW is the only road authority that authorises speed limit changes, Council can prepare submissions to TfNSW for consideration.

   Currently, NSW speed zoning guidelines detail the use of 40km/h speed limits on roads that have traffic calming devices installed, or on roads that 'naturally' restrict the vehicle speed. 40km/h speed limits are used on local, regional and state roads. In addition, TfNSW authorises:

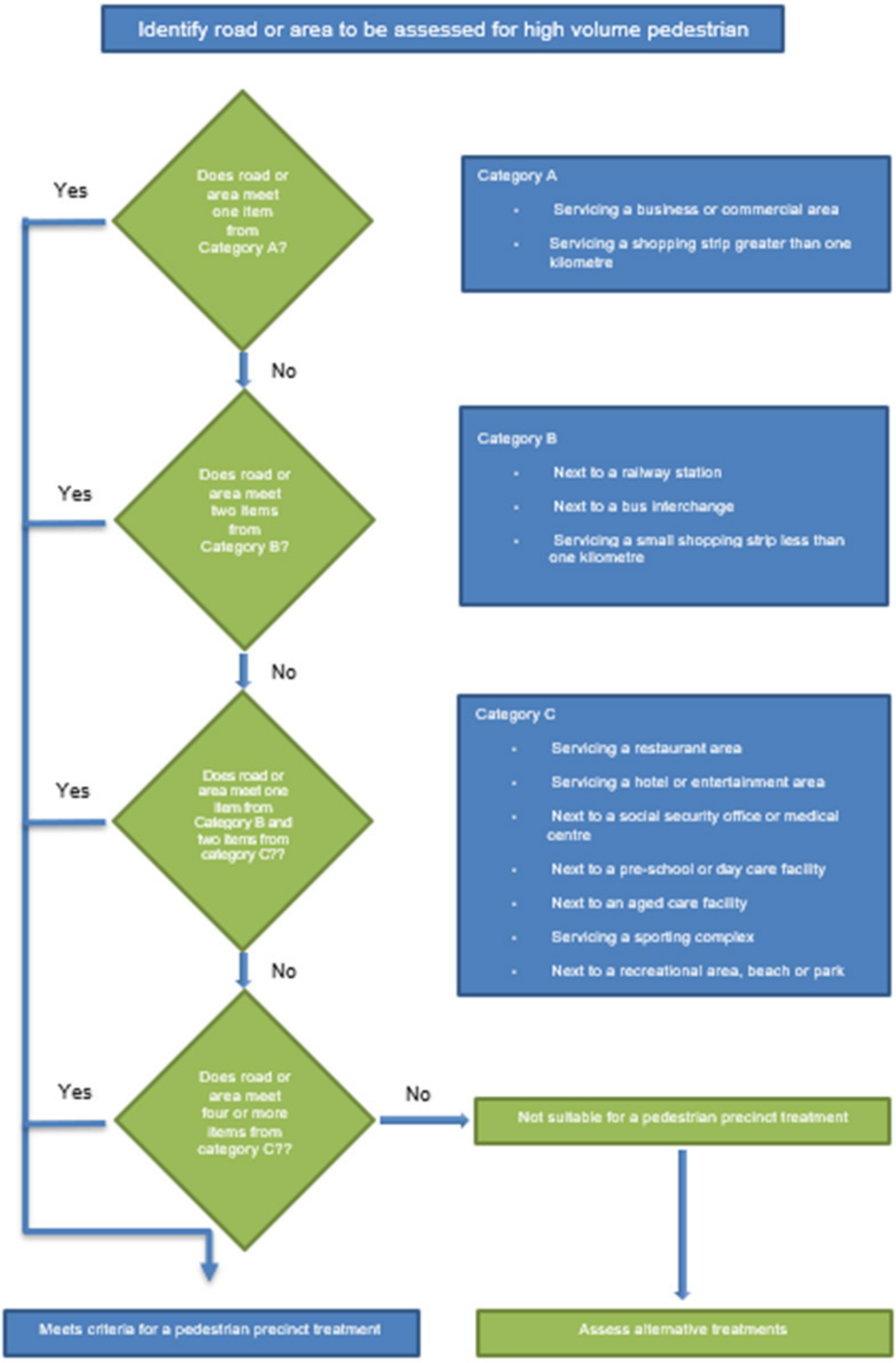
   - 40km/h speed limits at all schools (during specific hours)
   - 40km/h school bus speed limits (when the wig-wag lights flash)
   - 40km/h work zone speed limits.

   A 40km/h speed limit is appropriate in areas with relatively high volumes of pedestrians. These areas are typically characterised by commercial and recreational land uses. Criteria has been developed to assess an area as 'high pedestrian volume'. Streets under consideration must meet the specific requirements outlined in the TfNSW 40km/h speed limits in high volume pedestrian areas guideline, as shown in the following infographic (on page 3).

   To provide further road safety improvements, TfNSW is trialling 30km/hr speed limits in some places, as this reduces the likelihood of pedestrian fatality to 10 per cent, compared with 25 per cent at 40km/hr.

How we manage customer requests for traffic calming devices.

Customer requests for traffic calming devices provide staff with critical local knowledge. This helps us to identify speeding hotspots, which can inform future investigation areas. Requests are recorded and considered in accordance with our transport operations procedures when we are developing new traffic management projects. All new traffic management projects are recorded in our infrastructure planning database for consideration within our forward works program.


Identify road or area to be assessed for high volume pedestrian
Does road or area meet one item from Category A?
Yes
No
Category A
Servicing a business or commercial area
Servicing a shopping strip greater than one kilometre
Does road or area meet two items from Category B?
Yes
No
Category B
Next to a railway station
Next to a bus interchange
Servicing a small shopping strip less than one kilometre
Does road or area meet one item from Category B and two items from category C??
Yes
No
Category C
Servicing a restaurant area
Servicing a hotel or entertainment area
Next to a social security office or medical centre
Next to a pre-school or day care facility
Next to an aged care facility
Servicing a sporting complex
Next to a recreational area, beach or park
Does road or area meet four or more items from category C??
Yes
No
Not suitable for a pedestrian precinct treatment
Meets criteria for a pedestrian precinct treatment
Assess alternative treatments