

## Whitehall Borough, Pennsylvania uses Portable Traffic Analyzers to Enforce Residential Speed Limits and Reduce Man-hours

Whitehall Borough, Pennsylvania, is a thriving community of 16,000 residents, located approximately six miles south of downtown Pittsburgh. Residents cite community safety as one of the primary reasons they choose to live in Whitehall Borough, but similar to many communities across the United States, its police department often receives complaints from residents about speeding vehicles in residential areas.

In order to meet residents' expectations, greatly improve its ability to enforce speed limits and save man-hours in the process, the Whitehall Police Department has adopted the latest in traffic monitoring technology to help protect and serve its residents.

### **Traffic Analysis Technology the Key to Many Improvements**

Whitehall Borough installed Vaisala Nu-Metrics Portable Traffic Analyzer NC200 sensors, manufactured in the United States by Vaisala, Inc. The Portable Traffic Analyzer NC200 uses vehicle magnetic imagery technology to count vehicles, record their speed, and determine whether they are cars or trucks.

The NC200 is typically used by highway and transportation departments to perform traffic studies, with data used to determine maintenance needs or gain support for future highway project considerations. But now, police departments such as Whitehall have found application for the NC200 with outstanding success.

According to Deputy Chief of Police Richard Danko, Whitehall adopted the NC200 sensors primarily to monitor traffic on side roads and in residential areas where legislation restricts the police department from the use of radar enforcement. "Side roads are a problem for us since radar cannot be used," Danko confirmed.

Whitehall also initially tested the NC200s in an effort to reduce man-hours and manual car counts. The devices were placed in the center lanes of traffic in different residential areas of the village for five to ten days where they monitored traffic and gathered statistics, freeing officers to patrol other areas of the city. “Before it was hit or miss [to catch speeders], depending on whether we had a police vehicle in the area,” explains Danko, “but now, with the NC200 sensors, we can pinpoint specific times that speeding violations occur.”

### **Software Enhances Results**

Vaisala utilizes HDM Portable Traffic Analyzer Software in the NC200 devices, a windows-based software application that is used to program and retrieve data from the portable unit.

HDM Software correlates the traffic study and presents it in an easily interpreted report showing the results in an easy-to-read chart or graph that can be presented to city council members or the concerned parties directly.

An interesting feature of the NC200 is its ability to measure a vehicle’s speed and match that speed with a specific time of day. This makes it useful to state and local police who wish to use the NC200 for speed studies. In Whitehall, the city council receives complaints first-hand. Using the HDM Software, the police department can generate reports and present them directly to the council for further action and decisions.

“The NC200s are also incredibly beneficial because they tell us the specific times when high speeds are occurring,” Danko adds. “Because of the sensors, Whitehall has seen a definite reduction in man-hours, and just as important, we can also now determine when speeding is *not* occurring. Many times buses or heavy trucks are loud, and the perception is that they are speeding. The NC200s can easily prove whether there are in fact speeding vehicles, or if there is just traffic noise that makes people think there are speeders going by.”

Deputy Chief Danko concludes that while the NC200 was primarily adopted to assist police departments in enforcing speed limits, the technology has just as importantly saved valuable man-hours and taxpayer dollars. Instead of Whitehall police officers needing to be in areas where speeding is not a critical problem, or having officers dispatched during the wrong time of day, Whitehall can utilize its law enforcement resources much more effectively and efficiently, which saves time and money. Most importantly, the technology allows the police department to concentrate their efforts on protecting their residents.