

Planning *by* Design

Traffic Calming Devices

What is Traffic Calming?

Traffic calming is a form of traffic planning. It attempts to equalize the use of streets between cars, pedestrians, and bicycles.

Traffic calming uses devices and techniques to reduce traffic volume and speed while maintaining mobility and access. Making drivers aware of sharing the road with other users and designing safe and accessible streets are goals of traffic calming. The following examples are some of the many traffic calming devices that can be used.

Traffic Circles/Roundabouts

Traffic circles or roundabouts are raised circular islands typically landscaped and located at the intersection of two streets. Roundabouts improve traffic efficiency, increase safety, reduce noise and pollution, create vistas, and add green space.

In some locations roundabouts can replace traffic signals. Roundabouts tend to cost the same or less than conventional intersections but have lower maintenance costs. Studies show when compared to two-way or four-way intersections roundabouts can reduce traffic speeds to 15-20 mph and reduce crashes by 50-90 percent. Roundabouts are a popular and effective way to slow traffic, reduce through traffic, and improve the aesthetics of our communities.



Median Barriers

A median is a paved or planted raised strip of land dividing a roadway. Medians help slow and channel traffic by controlling vehicle movements. When placed on the center of roadways or at intersections, medians improve traffic flow and efficiency. Medians reduce traffic from entering adjacent neighborhoods by preventing left turns and cross traffic.

Motorist and pedestrian safety is increased by over 50 percent when a raised median is used over a conventional shared center turn lane. By limiting



turning movements, medians help reduce serious vehicle crashes. Medians act as refuge

areas for pedestrians crossing streets. Landscaping medians creates an attractive streetscape for residents.



effectively prevent illegal parking at intersections, protect on-street parking, and increase pedestrian visibility by placing pedestrians where motorists can see them. Curb extensions improve sight distance and decrease pedestrian crossing widths and time. When used in commercial areas and neighborhoods, curb extensions help slow traffic and decrease turning speeds. Curb extensions add additional space for landscaping and seating and improve the appearance of the street.

Curb Extensions/ Bulbouts

Curb extensions or bulbouts extend the sidewalk or curb line into the street. They are placed at intersections or at midblock locations and extend the width of a parking lane. Bulbouts

Additional information on traffic calming devices is available from MCPC.

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