

Traffic Calming FAQ List

What devices are proposed for installation?

Two types of devices have been proposed for installation, speed humps and raised crosswalks. Diagrams of both devices can be found in the September edition of the Chantilly Highlands newsletter, or on the website at www.chha.org. A speed hump is 12 feet in width, and has a maximum elevation of 3 inches. A raised crosswalk is a device that is 22 feet in width and again has a maximum elevation of 3 inches. The crosswalk has a 6 feet incline, followed by a 10 feet plateau (safe for crossing), then a 6 feet decline.

How were the devices decided?

The devices were selected after members of the CHHA Task Force formally walked through the neighborhood with representatives of both Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) and Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). FCDOT and VDOT made recommendations based on years of traffic calming experience. Speed humps, versus bumps, have been found to be more of an effective measure in reducing speed. Speed humps are also quieter than other devices. The raised crosswalks were suggested in areas of the neighborhood that lacked safe places for neighbors, especially children, to cross the street.

How were the locations of the devices decided?

The roads in our neighborhood are controlled and maintained by VDOT. We have to follow their policies with regard to the traffic calming improvements that can be installed. They have a minimum distance of approximately 800' that is required between devices. Existing Stop Signs and Traffic Signals need to be considered in this distance measurement, as they count as traffic control devices.

What is required for the final plan to be implemented?

A community meeting will be held to discuss all aspects of the traffic-calming plan. At this meeting, representatives of the CHHA Task Force, FCDOT, and VDOT will attend in order to answer questions and address concerns. Following the community meeting, all homeowners in the community will be mailed a ballot, which they will return via mail to Supervisor Frey's office. In order for the plan to be implemented, 50% of the residents need to return the ballots back to the county office. The ballots are sent to the county office, as they are considered the neutral party. Of those ballots returned, 60% need to support the entire plan for it to be approved. The plan is voted on in its entirety; residents vote either for or against all of the proposed measures. Supervisor Frey's office will tabulate the ballots. After tabulation, the county will contact the Task Force and FCDOT with the results of the vote.

Have the traffic calming devices in other neighborhoods been proven effective?

The traffic-calming program has proven to be an extremely effective method to reduce both volume and speed of vehicles in the neighborhood. According to a recent study conducted on Tuckaway Drive in Franklin Farms, where speed tables and raised crosswalks were installed in the summer of 2007, the following was found to be true: "The follow-up speed study conducted by FCDOT determined that, between November 2004 and November 2007, the average **daily traffic volumes** on Tuckaway Drive between Franklin Farm Road and the Fairfax County Parkway had been reduced from about 2,500 vehicles per day to about 1,700 vehicles per day. This is about a 33% reduction in average daily traffic.

Similarly, the study determined that **average vehicle speed** over this period had been reduced from 30.5 miles per hour (mph) in November 2004 to 20.1 mph in November 2007. This is a reduction in average speed of about 34%."

How will traffic-calming devices affect emergency fire and rescue vehicles?

Per Mike Coyle, of Supervisor Frey's office, he "checked with the Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT), and they stated that the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department does not have an issue with placing traffic calming devices on Cobra Drive and Kinross Circle. When a road qualifies for the traffic-calming program,

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FCDOT contacts Fire and Rescue to determine if there would be a problem with placing devices on that roadway. Typically, Fire and Rescue is concerned if the roadway is a major route for them.

The information that FCDOT disseminates regarding Emergency Response Time (ERT) is that ERT will be reduced anywhere from 3-10 seconds depending upon the type of measure and the type of emergency vehicle.”

Who pays for the installation and maintenance of traffic calming devices?

Every year the County sets aside funds to be used countywide for traffic calming. That fund is what is used to draw from when and if a community agrees to install devices. Therefore, there is no assessment to our community or any other community specifically. When our community qualified for the traffic-calming program, the funds were set aside at that time.

Why is Stone Heather Drive not included in the traffic-calming plan?

The original request by the HOA to the County included only Kinross Circle and Cobra Drive. Since the original petition signed by the community did not include Stone Heather, the county will not allow Stone Heather Drive to be added to the traffic-calming ballot. A request for a traffic calming study on Stone Heather Drive is possible once the current efforts are completed.

When I signed the original petition, was I agreeing to speed humps and raised crosswalks throughout the community?

No, the petition was not asking residents to endorse any specific traffic calming measure; it was rather asking residents if they would support traffic calming being investigated as a means to slow traffic in the neighborhood. The residents in the community, in an overwhelming number, agreed that a physical device of some sort should be further investigated.

The petition read as follows:

“Statement of request: I request consideration of remedial measures to reduce the speed of traffic on Kinross Circle and Cobra Drive, Sully District. Such remedial measures could include physical devices, traffic signs, and/or striping. I further understand that my signature on this petition is not an approval of any particular plan but a signature of support to have a community task force developed to recommend a solution to reduce the speed of traffic. I further understand that any plan adopted by the task force would be put forth for approval at a later date to all residences in the petition area.”

Are there other steps that can be taken before we pursue physical devices?

Yes and those steps have been taken. The HOA Board previously contacted FCDOT and VDOT and requested they provide “Watch for Children” signs as a means to alert drivers to the presence of children in hopes of slowing speeds. In addition, the HOA Board and residents have contacted the Fairfax County Police on a number of occasions about increasing patrols to monitor the speeds in the neighborhood. The police have come and gone. The HOA Board and residents have contacted the Fairfax County Police with the request to install the mobile speed monitoring stations throughout the neighborhood. The police have installed the devices, and then taken them away.

With the exception of the signs, all of these measures are effective when present, but when removed those motorists that have a tendency to speed will return to speeding. The advantage of the installed traffic calming devices is that they are there 24 hours a day, seven days a week.