

“TRAFFIC CALMING 101” SUMMARY

Founded on the idea that streets should help create and preserve a sense of place, that their purpose is for people to walk, stroll, look, gaze, meet, play and even work alongside cars—but not be dominated by them.

Traffic calming is a system of design and management strategies that aim to balance traffic on streets with other uses.

Traffic calming tools take a different approach than only designing a street as a conduit for vehicles to pass through at the greatest possible speed.

The techniques lessen the impact of motor vehicle traffic by slowing it down or literally, “calming it”.

Calming motorized vehicle speed helps build an environment friendly to people on foot.

Of the 12 techniques listed in “Traffic Calming 101”, three are discussed below as the Palatine Township Road District is proposing to remove them from Briarwood Lane.

I. TIGHT CORNER CURBS (hair pin turn)

The longer the radius of a curve, the faster a vehicle can move around that curve—as many pedestrians witness when they are confronted by a car whizzing around the corner seemingly out of nowhere. Reducing a corner radius to somewhere between one and twenty feet can:

- a. Inhibit the speed of turning vehicles
- b. Give pedestrians a better chance to see and be seen by approaching traffic

The Road District proposes to remove the very turns that slow traffic and as a result, will increase motorist speed. If you have no reason to tap the brake, you will step on the gas.

II. CHICANES (essentially, the easy “S curve” on Briarwood Lane)

- a. Narrow, curving roads encourage motorists to drive more slowly and carefully
- b. An undulating path interrupts any clear view ahead and compels drivers to slow down

The Road District says their proposed design will make the road “curvier and safer” but they are removing the tight corner curve designed to slow speed. This is a double negative as vehicles will travel faster around the long racetrack curves making the road more dangerous to pedestrians and motorists.

III. BULBS-CHOKERS-NECKDOWNS (the current bridge width + 301 driveway safety zone)

- a. Provide a haven for pedestrians waiting to cross the street
- b. Shorten the crossing distance
- c. Deflect through traffic at a corner

The Road District proposes to put a guardrail on the side of Briarwood Lane that is currently open for pedestrians to safely step off the bridge when necessary. The proposed design is more dangerous as it creates a 130’ “channel” with no exit for pedestrians when cars approach. The posted speed within the Plum Grove Estates is 25 mph and at the Bridge, the advisory sign reads “Narrow Bridge, 15 mph”.