



City of Commerce City

TRAFFIC CALMING HANDBOOK

January 2026

Introduction

The City of Commerce City’s Traffic Calming Handbook establishes a clear, consistent process for evaluating and addressing traffic-related concerns raised by residents. This handbook outlines the administrative procedures used to document, assess, and respond to neighborhood complaints regarding speeding, cut-through traffic, and pedestrian safety on local and residential streets.

Traffic calming is a proactive strategy employed by local governments to mitigate the negative impacts of vehicle traffic by altering driver behavior and improving conditions for all road users. It typically involves the installation of physical measures, such as speed humps, curb extensions, traffic circles, or narrowed travel lanes, designed to slow vehicle speeds and encourage safer, more attentive driving. These measures not only enhance roadway safety but also support the overall livability and vitality of residential and mixed-use areas.

A comprehensive traffic calming approach often combines a series of integrated improvements rather than relying on a single device. It also includes the broader “Three E’s” of effective traffic management:

- **Engineering** (physical street modifications),
- **Education** (community outreach and behavior change), and
- **Enforcement** (targeted compliance efforts).

The City’s approach to traffic calming is rooted in a systems-level perspective. Neighborhoods cannot be evaluated in isolation, and a solution that may be effective in one area may not be suitable in another. City staff carefully assess whether a traffic calming measure is both appropriate and sustainable, ensuring it does not create unintended negative impacts on adjacent neighborhoods or the broader transportation network.

While community concerns about speeding or unsafe streets are understandable, solutions such as lowering speed limits, adding stop signs, or increasing enforcement are not always effective or appropriate on their own. This handbook aims to avoid ad hoc or reactionary measures by ensuring traffic calming requests are addressed through a structured, data-driven process.

To prevent overuse or inappropriate application of traffic calming tools, Commerce City follows a **four-phase process** for evaluating and implementing solutions:

1. **Documenting the problem** and community concerns.
2. **Conducting field observations** and collecting relevant traffic data.
3. **Identifying appropriate solutions** based on context, safety, and engineering standards.
4. **Monitoring and evaluating** the effectiveness of implemented measures.

The goal of the Commerce City Traffic Calming Handbook is to enhance safety, improve neighborhood quality of life, and promote the efficient use of City resources. While this handbook is **not intended** to

eliminate traffic, create play areas in the street, or restrict access to public roadways, it **is designed** to improve travel conditions for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers by reducing speeding and enhancing roadway safety.

This handbook provides guidelines for traffic calming on **local and collector roads**. While the use of traffic calming on arterial streets remains a subject of professional debate, Commerce City may consider such measures in unique circumstances where residential or high-pedestrian areas are directly impacted.

Purpose

To create a uniform set of procedures and criteria for evaluating and implementing traffic calming on Commerce City streets in response to resident concerns. This handbook prioritizes **education, enforcement, and engineering** as the foundation for effective traffic management. Traffic calming efforts may include speed reduction, improved pedestrian safety, and a reduction in the frequency or severity of crashes at targeted locations.

Coordination and Scope

All traffic calming initiatives will be coordinated among Commerce City Police Department, the Traffic Engineering Division of Public Works, and the relevant fire district, including South Adams Fire, to ensure responses and procedures are compliant with emergency services protocols.

This handbook applies to **all roadway functional classifications**. Notably, **speed humps will not be installed on arterial roads**.

Key Definitions and Data Collection

85th Percentile Speed - The speed below which 85% of motorists travel; this standard metric helps evaluate driver behavior and set speed limits—widely used in U.S. traffic engineering.

Accident Record Investigation - A review of crash history over the past 12 months (or longer) to identify patterns involving pedestrians, bicyclists, or speed-related incidents.

ADT (Average Daily Traffic) Counts - Required on all study streets—including local, collector, and adjacent arterials—for a minimum of a continuous 24-hour weekday period to gauge volume. These counts will be conducted in accord with agency-accepted procedures.

Arterial Minor - Minor arterials collect and distribute traffic from principal arterials and expressways to streets of lower classification and, in some areas, allow traffic to directly access destinations. They serve secondary traffic generators such as community business centers, neighborhood shopping centers, multifamily residential areas, and traffic between neighborhoods.

Arterial Principal - Principal arterials permit traffic flow through the urban area and between major destinations. They are of great importance in the transportation system since they connect major traffic generators, such as the central business district, to other major activity centers.

Collector - Collectors provide for land access and traffic circulations within and between residential neighborhoods and commercial and industrial areas. Streets serve the purpose of moving traffic over short distances and provide accessibility to various land uses. They distribute traffic movements from these areas to the arterial streets.

Local street - Local streets provide direct access to properties abutting the roadway and within the immediate vicinity. Service to through-traffic is deliberately discouraged on these roadways. A Local Street offers the lowest level of mobility.

Origin–Destination (O–D) Study - Applied when through-traffic is suspected, this involves monitoring vehicle entry and exit at neighborhood gateways over peak periods. The recommended procedure involves stationing two observers at each gateway to the neighborhood. One observer will record inbound activity and the other will record outbound activity. Information to be recorded includes the time of day (at one-minute intervals) and the vehicle license number of all vehicles that enter or exit the neighborhood; license numbers and the time of day must be correlated. These studies will normally be made for a continuous two-hour period in morning and afternoon peak travel hours. For neighborhoods that have certain types of problems, O-D surveys may be needed at other times of the day.

Petition Sponsor: The originator of the traffic calming request who serves as the primary point of contact for neighbors and acts as a community ambassador for traffic calming efforts in their neighborhood.

Speed study - A study using equipment to measure, collect and statistically analyze the speeds of vehicles.

Spot Speed Survey - Measures actual speeds and the proportion of vehicles exceeding posted limits;

Traffic calming - methods used to reduce vehicular speed and volume and increase the sharing of streets by pedestrians and other users. Generally refers to physical measures and roadway design changes but enforcement and education can be components.

Traffic control - signs, signals and markings designed to regulate and warn. Examples include: stop signs, speed limit signs and traffic signals. Traffic control is not a part of traffic calming.

General Information

- Requests for a transportation study may be initiated by the residents of the area in coordination with the local neighborhood group.
- All requests shall be in the form of a formal petition submitted on the “Request for Transportation Study” form, obtainable from the Public Works Department by calling **(303) 289-8150** or by visiting the website at: c3gov.com/TrafficCalming
- Public Works may establish working groups to review the study information and comment on recommended solutions.
- Transportation study requests will be accepted on a rolling basis. Studies will be conducted by Commerce City Public Works Traffic Engineering division or consultants hired by the department in the order in which they are received and the potential severity of the transportation concern.
- Completed applications should be sent to: [**CIPInfo@c3gov.com**](mailto:CIPInfo@c3gov.com)
- Commerce City maintains the right to conduct a transportation study without a request from the community based upon safety and mobility consideration.
- Each request for a transportation study must include a list of signatures and addresses from residents on the block or blocks where the study is requested. Collected by the petition sponsor, these signatures confirm that neighbors are aware of the request.

Policies

The following policies are established as part of the City of Commerce City Traffic Calming Guidelines:

- An Origin-destination study, speed study, or spot speed survey shall be the basis for deciding the appropriate solution(s) for a traffic safety or mobility situation or need.
- Public Works shall be responsible for conducting the studies and making recommendations for implementation.
- Traffic calming measures shall conform to engineering and procedural standards established by the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices, Institute of Transportation Engineers, and the Transportation and Mobility Manager (Traffic Engineer) or designee.
- Through traffic should be encouraged to use higher classification streets (i.e. arterial and collector streets)
- In areas where speeding is determined to be a problem, traffic calming measures shall be implemented to reduce speeds.
- Ingress and egress of police and emergency vehicles must be maintained or not substantially hindered.
- The final location of traffic calming installations shall be determined by the Traffic Engineer or designee.
- Installation of traffic calming measures shall conform to engineering and procedural standards and shall be determined by the Traffic Engineer or designee.
- Study recommendations should not result in a significant reduction of the capacity of intersections and roadways where they are placed.
- Study recommendations should not inadvertently divert significant volumes of vehicular traffic onto adjacent residential streets.
- Recommendations for identified problems should be cost-effective.
- Public Works may consider the installation of traffic calming measures on a trial basis. All such installations should be evaluated for effectiveness within six months.

- Physical traffic calming measures such as speed humps will not be considered on roadways with a grade of 8% or more, arterial and collector streets, and through truck routes.
- Traffic calming measures shall have no significant adverse impact on fire, police and emergency services.
- Traffic calming measures may be justified if the Origin-Destination study proves at least 30% of the total daily traffic volume is a result of cut-through traffic.
- Traffic calming measures shall be considered if the average daily traffic (ADT) exceeds 800 vehicles per day (vpd) or if the peak hour volume is greater than 150 vehicles on residential streets.
- Crash data shall be analyzed by type, severity, location, road- way condition, and time of crash. Accident rates shall be considered problematic when there are three or more reported cases involving pedestrian, bicycle and automobiles along a local residential street within one year.
- Studies shall not be conducted during holidays or at times of the day that does not reflect “typical” traffic conditions within the neighborhood. To the greatest extent possible, transportation studies should examine traffic during times when potential conflicts or problems are most likely to occur.

Threshold-Based Speed Response

Arterial and Collector Roads

1. **< 3 mph over limit (85th percentile)**
 - No engineering measures.
 - Confirm data integrity (e.g., weather effects).
 - Option to repeat study after 6 months.
2. **3–5 mph over limit**
 - Deploy **Education and Enforcement**:
 - Review and optimize signage.
 - Distribute neighborhood traffic brochures.
 - Increase or targeted police patrols.
3. **> 5 mph over limit**
 - Use **Education + Enforcement + Engineering**:
 - On collectors (≤ 30 mph posted) consider speed humps/cushions—pending no emergency services objections.
 - Additional measures: radar speed signs, striping, other low-impact options.
 - No speed humps on arterials.

Local Residential Roads

1. **< 3 mph over limit**
 - No measures.
 - Repeat data validation and offer a study repeat after twelve (12) months if requested by a resident.
2. **3–5 mph over limit**
 - Education and Enforcement only (as above).
3. **Level 3 Triggers (install engineering devices)** if any apply:
 - 5 mph over limit,
 - $\geq 1\%$ drivers exceed speed limit by >15 mph, or

- One or more vehicle vs. pedestrian/bicycle crash involving excessive speed in past 12 months.

Implement **Education + Enforcement + Engineering**, with education/enforcement as above plus physical devices.

Site-Specific Requirements

- **Emergency Response Impact:** Devices must not materially delay Police or Fire operations.
- **On-Street Parking:** Minimize impacts; direct resident input required if parking will be reduced.
- **Snow Routes:** Avoid installing on priority snow removal corridors.
- **Transit Routes:** No impediments to RTD service.
- **Traffic Redistribution:** Study must include adjacent streets to avoid negative spillover.
- **Design Standards:** Must comply with current version of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and Institute of Transportation Engineers guidelines (e.g., speed hump specs).

School and Parks Rules

- Install vertical devices (speed humps/tables) on streets fronting **new school sites**.
- Similarly, if measured 85th percentile speed exceeds the limit on roads adjacent to **public or HOA-maintained parks or youth sports fields**, vertical calming is required—regardless of the extent of speed exceedance.

Traffic Calming Implementation Process

Step 1: Traffic Calming Request

Requests for traffic calming studies can be sent to Public Works on a rolling basis. The requests must come from a neighborhood association or group known as a Petition Sponsor. Individuals requesting a traffic calming review must work through their neighborhood association or group, if applicable. If no formal association exists in the neighborhood, then residents will be expected to work directly with their neighbors for a petition signature.

All requests should outline the neighborhood traffic problem to be investigated. Requests shall be submitted on the Request for Traffic Calming Study form. This petition shall contain signatures from at least 50 percent of residents in the affected area. This ensures that all residents in the affected area are in agreement that there is a problem and would like the City to investigate.

Step 2: Engineering Review and Data Collection

On finding that the identified street meets the aforementioned standard and is eligible for traffic calming, Public Works will identify the limits of the street to be subject to the study process.

Engineering review and data collection shall be performed by the City Traffic Engineer or designee. The process will involve study area determination, data collection, and analyses. Data collection consists of one or more areas:

- Vehicular volume Speeds
- Cut through traffic (Origin-Destination study)
- Crash rates
- Road alignment and grade Street or segment classification Parking
- Pedestrian activities Bicyclist activities
- Existing traffic calming measures/traffic control devices Other physical conditions on roadway or street segment.

Step 3: Analysis

The various data collected in the field reconnaissance and during the data collection effort will be

summarized and analyzed to determine if a problem does or does not exist, by comparing actual activity measures to established threshold values. Threshold values are presented in the above section for each of the basic types of traffic problems. It is emphasized that many of these suggested limiting values must be carefully weighed in the context of their application to problems within the study area. Moreover, experience gained in the future may suggest changes in these values to better relate to problem definition.

Step 4: Formulate Improvement Concepts

Once the nature and degree of the traffic problem(s) is fully assessed, the City's Traffic Engineer (in conjunction with fire, police, public works, and City Manager's officials), will formulate a series of alternative improvement concepts if traffic calming is warranted. Any traffic control measure that has been found to be effective and is accepted by recognized governmental and professional agencies will be evaluated for potential application.

Formulation of improvement strategies will consider the following guiding principles:

- Changes that compromise public safety or significantly impact emergency vehicle access will not be employed.
- The capital and maintenance costs of improvements will receive appropriate consideration.
- Use of official traffic control devices shall conform in design and application to standards contained in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).
- Preference shall be given to those management techniques that will achieve the desired improvement and cause the least negative impact on the neighborhood.

Step 5: Presenting Alternatives to Neighborhood

There are three stages of intervention that can be used in traffic calming:

Stage 1: Education, enforcement, signage, and striping

Stage 2: Speed humps, raised crosswalks, raised intersections, mini traffic circles, chicanes, chokers, intersection narrowing, and center island narrowing

Stage 3: Roadway closures and signals

When a traffic problem can be addressed using Stage 1 tools, the City will notify the Neighborhood Association and petition originator via letter. No further action is required for the City to go ahead with the project. If the problem is to be addressed using Stage 2 or 3 tools, the City requires a resident-led petition from affected residents before proceeding. Certain Stage 2 and 3 tools require extensive design

and will take time to complete. In addition, a public meeting must be held where the proposed traffic calming measure is presented to the neighborhood.

Petition Requirement:

1. $\geq 50\%$ support among affected households.
2. Circulate petition online or at the public meeting.

Step 6: Agency Review

- Traffic Engineering Division submits proposals with petitions to Police, Fire, Street Maintenance, and impacted School District.
- Agencies assess operational impacts.

Step 7: Notification and Design

- Notify neighborhood of installation timeline.
- Engineering secures funding and designs device(s).
- Budgetary issues may delay installation.

Step 8: Post-Installation Monitoring

A follow-up general study of the plan and its effectiveness will be completed within a year following construction of the traffic calming measure(s). The city reserves the right to remove any traffic calming measure that is potentially unsafe and impairs the public safety and welfare.

Appendix

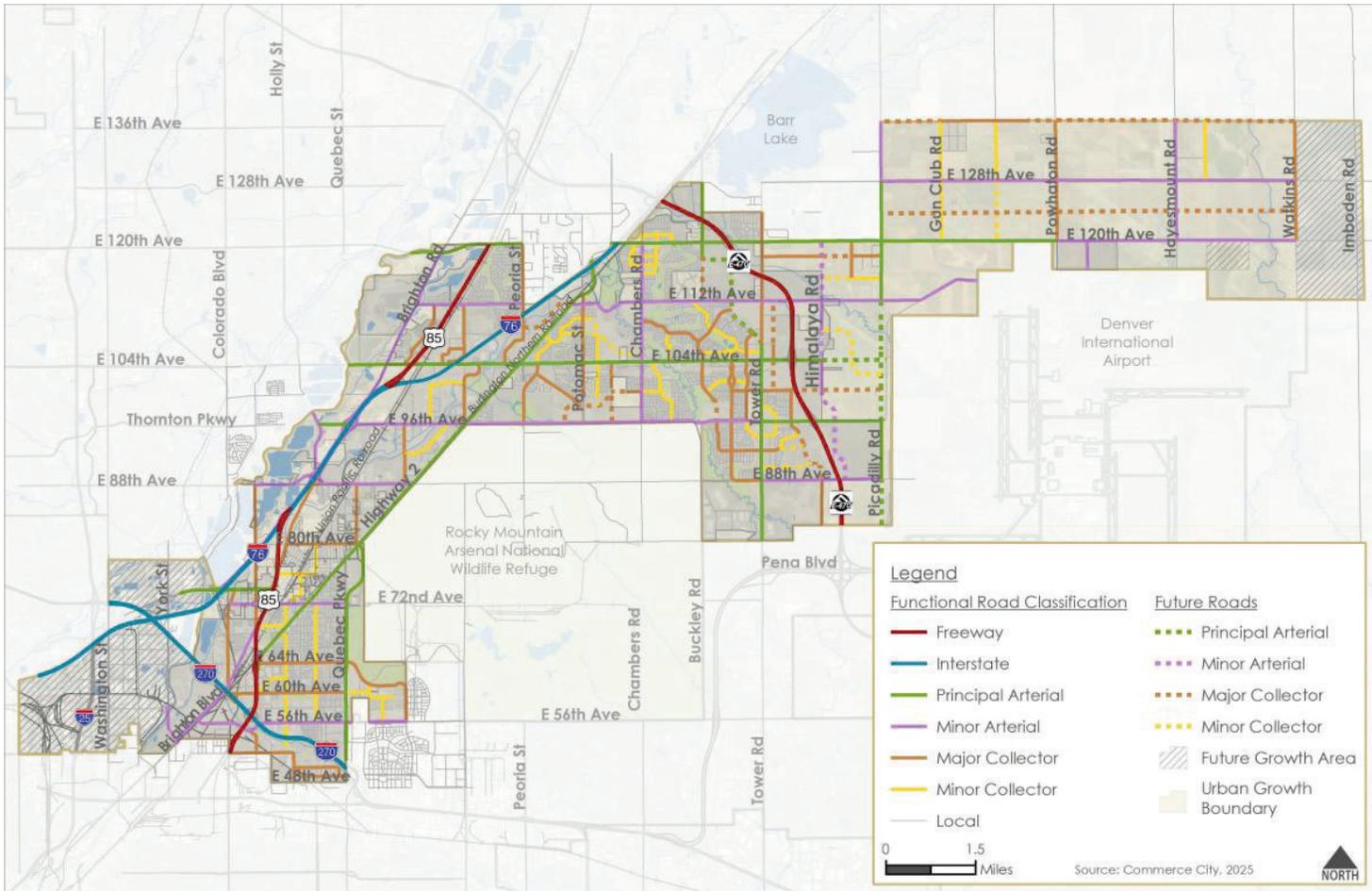
City of Commerce City Roadway Classification Map

Traffic Calming Measures Approved for Use in the City of Commerce City Illustrations of Traffic Calming Measures

Request for Transportation Study

Traffic Calming Petition

Roadway Classifications

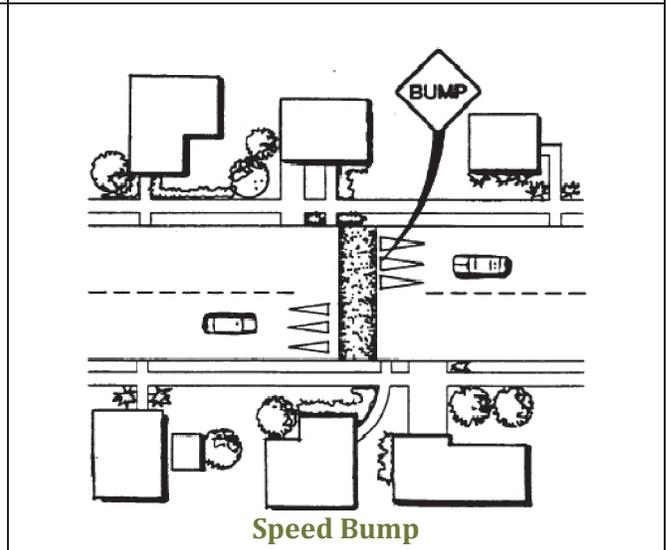
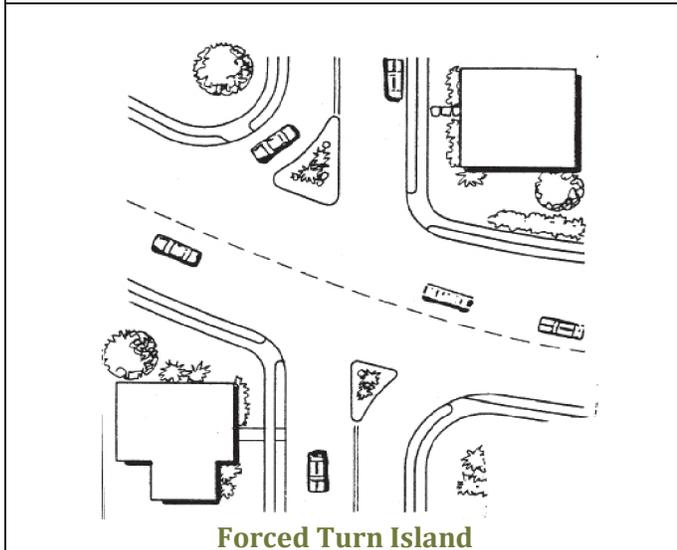
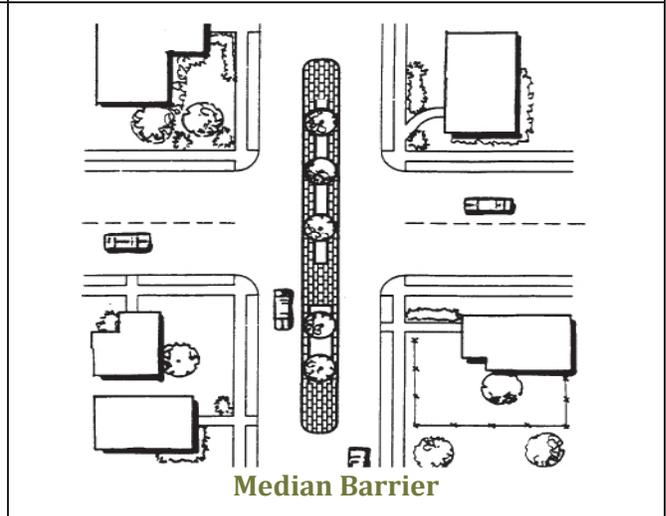
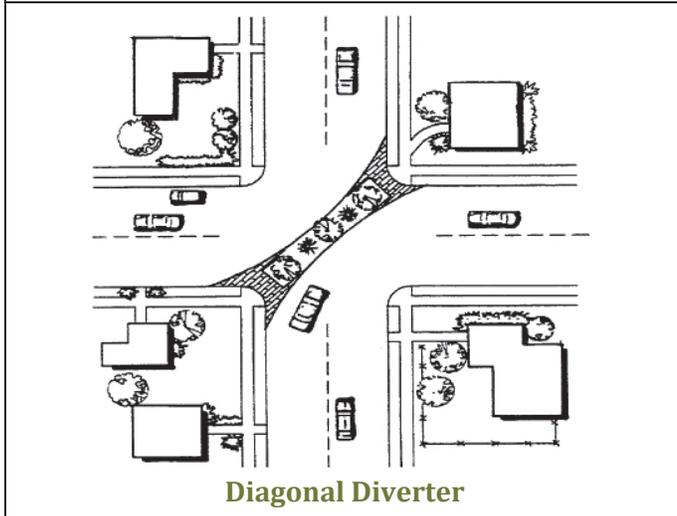
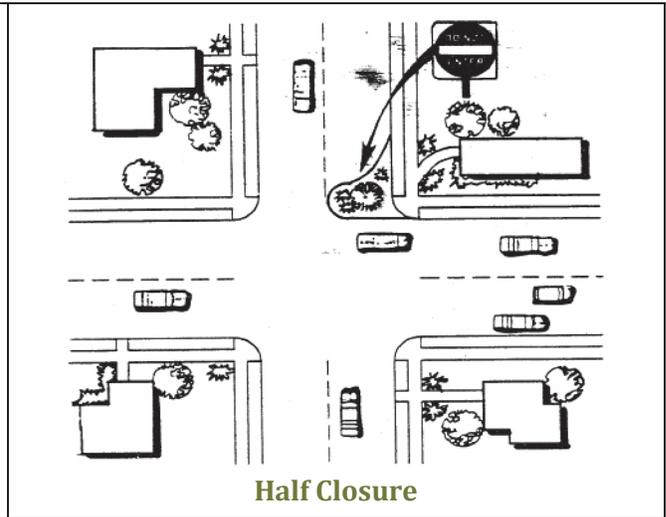
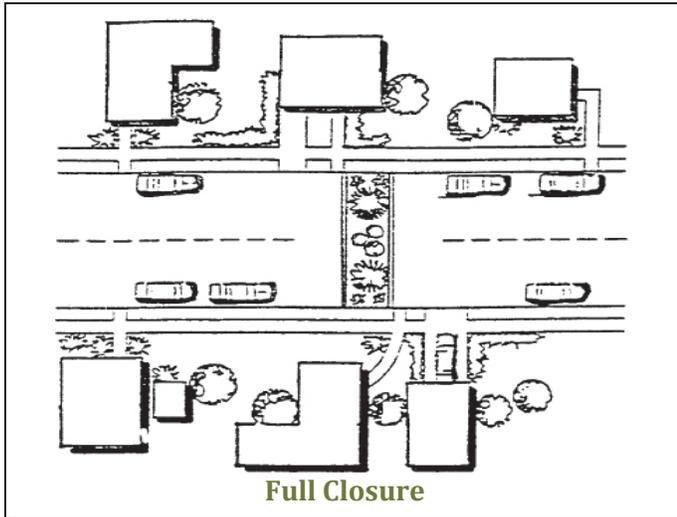


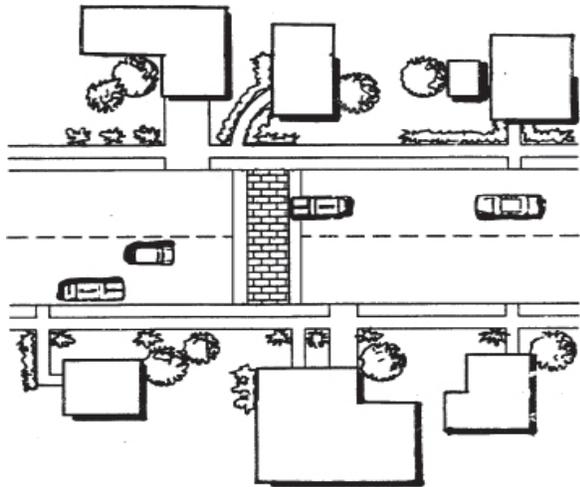
Traffic Calming Measures Approved for Use in the City

- **Bulbouts** – An extension of a curb in the form of a bulb, usually at an intersection or mid-block, that narrows the vehicular pathway and inhibits fast turns.
- **Chicanes** – A series of fixed objects, usually extensions of the curb, which alter a straight roadway into a zig-zag or serpentine path to slow vehicles.
- **Chokers** – A narrowing of the fixed street, often in mid-block and sometimes near an intersection. May be done with curb extensions, landscaping or islands in the street.
- **Circles** – A small circular island, usually less than 26 feet in diameter, used in the middle of intersections and intended to force vehicular traffic to slow and negotiate around it.
- **Diagonal diverters** – A partition that connects two diagonally opposite curbs, bisecting the intersection, to force motor vehicles to slow down and turn.
- **Forced turns** – Islands used on approaches to an intersection that force drivers to turn in only one direction (usually right).
- **Full street closures** – Barriers placed across an entire width of street to completely close the street to through-traffic, usually leaving only sidewalks open.
- **Gateways** – Also known as entry treatments; may involve alterations in the pavement surface, with bricks, stamped concrete, or other colored materials intended to signal to drivers that they are entering a neighborhood or community that requires lower speeds.
- **Half closures** – Barriers that block travel in one direction for a short distance on an otherwise two-way street.
- **Medians** – Narrow islands constructed between travel lanes through an intersection. They are intended to prevent left turns from the major street and through movements along the minor street.
- **Raised crosswalks** – A traditional pedestrian crossing area purposely raised above the normal pavement surface level in order to give motorists and pedestrians a better view of the crossing area.
- **Speed humps** - Mountable obstructions installed on the pavement surface, across the traveled

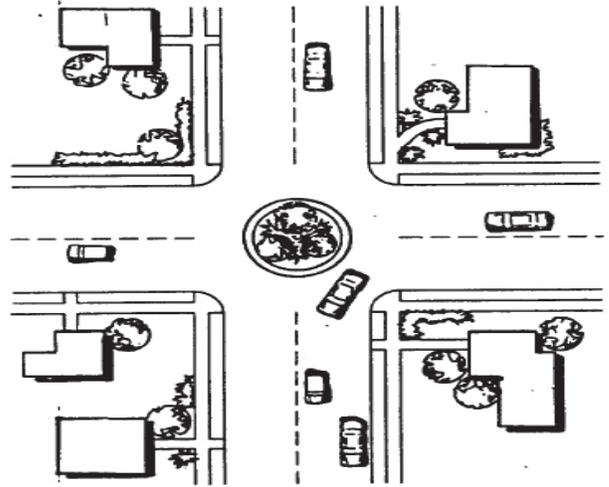
lanes, and intended to cause vehicles to slow. Speed humps utilize larger vertical radii than speed bumps that result in wider widths and a gentler crossing by vehicles.

Illustrations of Traffic Calming Measures

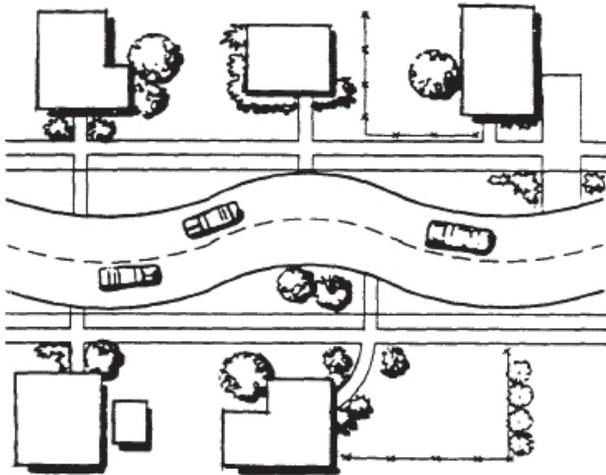




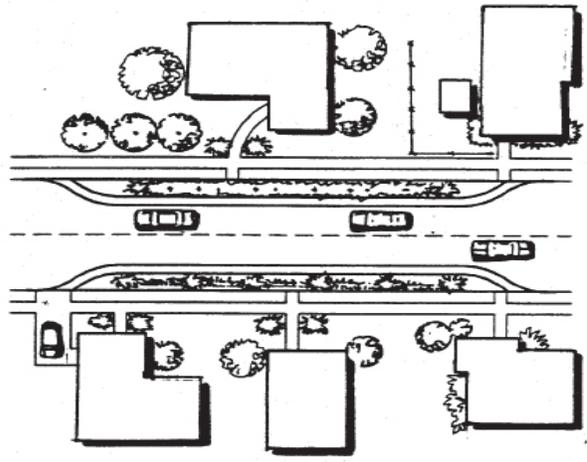
Speed Table



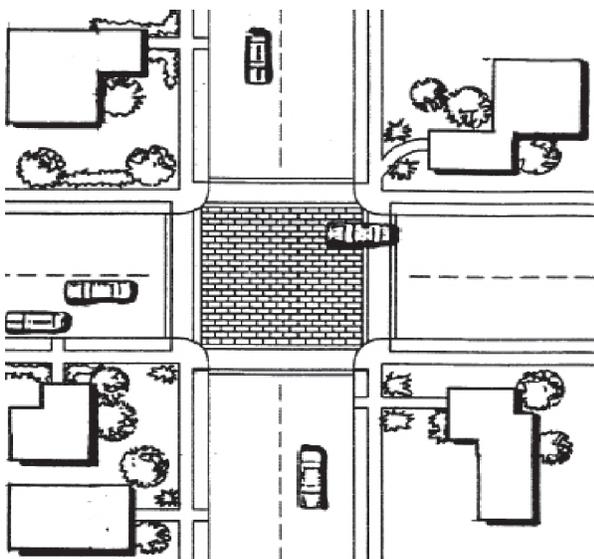
Traffic Circle



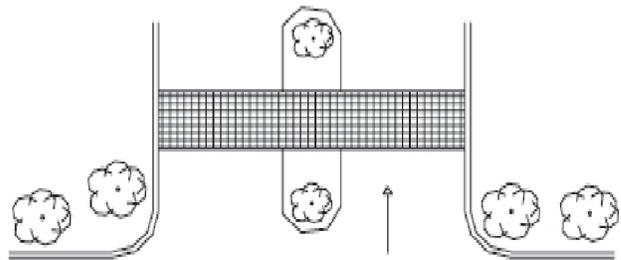
Chicanes



Chokers



Pedestrian Refuges



Entrance to Traffic Calming Neighbourhood

Gateway

Request for Transportation Study

The following is a request for a traffic calming study. The request shall be processed according to procedures in the City of Commerce City Traffic Calming Guidebook.

Street Information

Please provide the name(s) of the street(s) on which a study is requested as well as the boundaries of the street segment. (Note: Boundaries may change at City of Commerce City's discretion).

Street: _____ Traffic Problem(s): _____
From: _____
To: _____

Contact Information:

Each request must provide a contact person who lives on the requested street segment.

Name of Representative: _____

Address: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email address: _____

I agree to be the contact person for the above request.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Evidence of Support Attached: Yes No

Note: Must have 50% of residents sign the request in order for the City to perform a transportation study

CITY OF COMMERCE CITY REQUEST FOR TRANSPORTATION STUDY

To the residents of _____ in the City of Commerce City.
 [local street name]

This request was made by you or your neighbors and will be investigated by the Public Works Department. Fifty (50) percent of affected households must be in favor of this review before any data collection begins.

On _____ from _____ to _____
 [local street to be 'calmed'] [street name] [street name]

Street Address of Affected Household	Representative of Affected Household (please print)	Signature
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		

Contact Name _____ E-mail Address _____ Phone _____

