

Traffic Calming Tools



A choker or neckdown at State and Park Streets.



A mid-block choker or bumpout on Front Street.

Chokers/Neckdowns

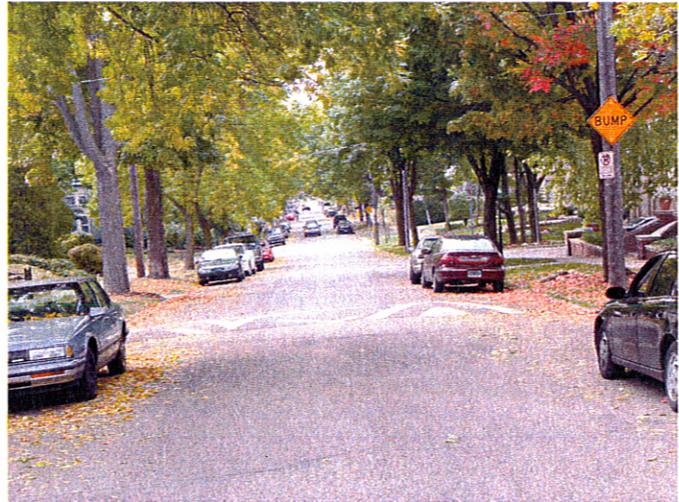
Chokers and neckdowns are effective tools for slowing traffic at intersections and mid-block locations, typically in a downtown setting or where there is high pedestrian crossings. The curb line is extended into the street, thereby narrowing the street width and slowing drivers. Also called “bulbouts” and “bumpouts” these measures can eliminate illegal parking at intersections and shorten the crossing distance for pedestrians. They can provide a neighborhood gardening space or place to sit.

The measure is usually 6 feet or slightly less than a parking stall width of a parallel parking lane. Their use should be restricted to streets with on-street parking and not on streets with a striped bike lane.

Traffic Calming Tools

Speed Humps

These common traffic calming measures, if properly spaced, can reduce speeds on streets. This measure is not appropriate for primary emergency routes or framework streets. Drivers feel a discomfort if they travel over 25 mph. Speed humps are 12 feet wide and 3 inches in height and extend the full width of the street. Painted “chevrons” on the speed bump increase the visibility for oncoming drivers and cyclists.



Speed Humps are intended for non-framework streets.

Raised Crosswalks

A raised crosswalk functions similar to a speed bump. A striped crosswalk is incorporated into a measure to facilitate pedestrian crossings. The crosswalk is raised 3 inches allowing pedestrians to be more visible to oncoming vehicles. Drainage requirements may limit the application of this measure.



Raised mid-block crosswalk on Front Street helps to make pedestrians and their pets more visible.

Traffic Calming Tools



Mid-block Deflector Island on Belmont Street.

Mid-block Deflector Islands or Short Medians

This measure works very well on streets with long blocks. They require drivers to deflect their travel paths on otherwise straight streets. Placed at the entrance to a neighborhood, often with textured paving on either side, they create attractive gateways. They may also serve as a pedestrian refuge area at crosswalks.



Mid-block Deflector Island on Terrace Street.



Deflector Islands at State Street and Boardman Avenue.

Traffic Calming Tools

Traffic Circles

These small traffic circles are raised circular islands located most commonly at four-legged intersections. The traffic circles slow drivers using the intersection or even mid-block on streets with long blocks. The circles also can provide an attractive gateway into a neighborhood. Unlike Chokers/Neckdowns, drainage is usually not an issue with this measure.



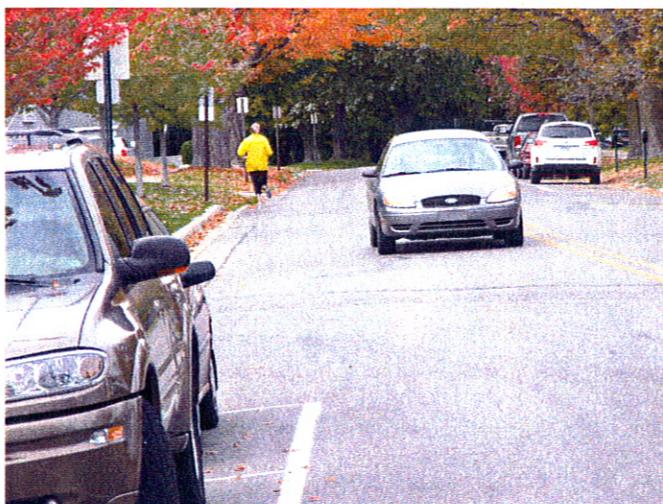
Traffic circle on Webster Street.

Chicanes

These measures effectively realign otherwise straight streets to form S-shaped curves. They are often designed as a series of lateral shifts rather than as continuous curves. Chicanes can be accomplished by taking stretches of curbs and angling them out on one side, then doing the same further down the street on the alternate side. If parking demand is high, parking lanes alternating back and forth along the block can be an inexpensive measure to help lower speeds.



Chicane in Brighton, Michigan.



Chicane created by alternating on-street parking from one side to the opposite side on Washington Street.

Traffic Calming Tools



Closely spaced street trees along Cass Street add beauty and if reinforced with other physical measures can help to slow drivers.



Edge striping for parking helps to narrow the appearance of Union

Psycho-perception Measures

Measures such as restriping to visually narrow lanes, without physical changes, won't fool many drivers. However, psycho-perception measures are most effective when used in conjunction with physical measures. Edge striping, adding bike lanes, optical speed bars (transverse markings at narrowing markings), street trees, instant-feedback signs are examples of these types of measures.



One study showed that streets with on-street parking slowed driving speeds by 7.5 miles per hour compared to similar streets without on-street parking.



The contrasting pavement color on the Brighton, Michigan street gives an appearance of a narrower pavement. (Photo by Dan Burden)

Traffic Calming Tools

Skinny Streets

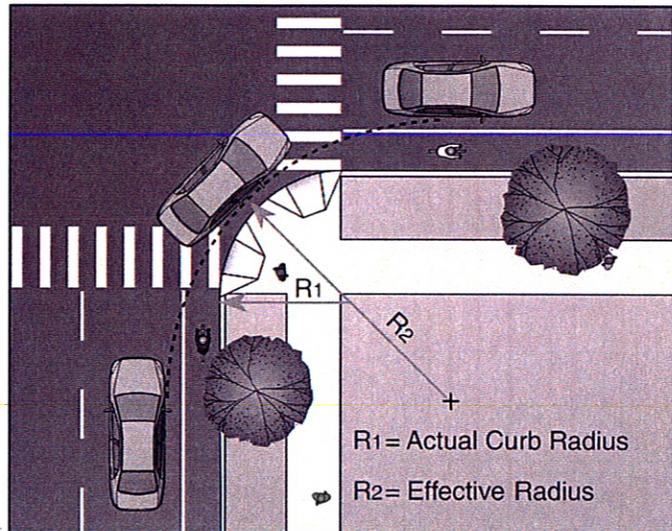
Narrower streets help to reduce driver speeds, especially if on-street parking is prevalent. This measure could be considered if the street is proposed to be totally reconstructed. Studies show that the number of crashes stay the same when a street is narrowed; however, the severity of crashes is lessened due to the slower driver speeds. Narrower streets also require less materials to construct and the amount of storm water runoff is reduced.



Wadsworth Street is 27 feet wide, but widens south of Eighth Street.

Tighten Corners

By reducing the radius of the street corners, street intersections can be made tighter. This measure is effective in slowing the driver's speed when turning the corner. The tighter corners also help to shorten the crossing distance for pedestrians thus decreasing the exposure time when crossing the street. Like narrower streets, this technique requires less materials to construct and the amount of storm water runoff is reduced.



By tightening the street corners, turning movements are slowed and pedestrian safety crossing the street is enhanced.