

# Foxhall Community Association Board Meeting – January 11, 2024

## Presentation on Traffic Calming by Thurston County Public Works

### Background

The Thurston County Public Works department conducted a 'speed study' on 3 FCA roads during October/November 2023. (See results below)

Since the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds were greater than 5 mph over the posted speed limits, FCA qualifies for a "traffic calming" program offered by the County.

On January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2 representatives from Thurston County Public Works attended our board meeting. They discussed their program and answered our questions.

These representatives were:

Sam Bloom, EIT- Associate Civil Traffic Engineer

Becky Conn - Traffic Engineering and Operations Manager

### Speed Study Results

The speed study that was conducted at the address of (5027 Foxhall Dr NE) resulted in the 85th percentile 36.8. The number of vehicles counted was 392. The highest speed was 65 mph (4) vehicles.

The speed study that was conducted on 4711 Foxtrail Dr NE resulted in the 85th percentile 33.8. The number of vehicles counted was 117. The highest speed was 55 (4) vehicles.

The speed study that was conducted on Foxhall Dr. NE East of Foxhall CT NE resulted in the 85th percentile = 27.3. The number of vehicles counted was 385. The highest speed recorded was 55 mph (2 vehicles)

### The Traffic Calming Program – Quick Summary

The program has 2 phases:

Phase 1: Education - 6 months

Phase 2: Physical changes to the road to reduce speeds

We qualify for Phase 1 given the concern noted above, and Phase 1 is in progress now.

Depending upon the results of Phase I, the county will make recommendations for Phase 2. The FCA membership will then decide (by petition) what they would like to do. For a summary of 2 phases, see the end of write up.

Sam shared this table for Phase 1 vs. Phase 2 options:

# Foxhall – Moving Forward

		Low Cost	Med Cost	Higher Cost	Time to Implement
Phase 1: Try for 6 months	Speed Trailer	X			Short
	Targeted Enforcement	X			Short
Phase 2: Different device options	Speed Cushions		X		Medium
	Narrowing Feat.			X	Long
	Islands/Circles			X	Long

**Comments from the presentation:**

**1. Signage**

Sam said that the addition of more speed limit signs doesn't work. Drivers become immune to the signs.

State laws determine the placement of stop signs.

**2. Flags on Speed Limit Signs**

However, techniques that draw attention to the posted speed limit do work. These include flags on the speed limit signs and the use of radar carts. These aren't permanent techniques, so drivers don't become immune.

We now have these flags on the 25 mph signs at each FCA entrance.

**3. Personal signs ("Drive carefully like your kids live here")**

Sam said that these work but not if they are always up because they will be ignored at some point. It's most effective to put them up just for a while. Take them down and put them back up again.

Effective times are 'back to school', start of summer vacations (or other vacations), etc.

**4. Radar carts**

We are on the schedule for these.

One will be placed in our community for a week or 2, and then it will be moved to a new location in our community.

**5. No technique reduces speeds forever.**

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These techniques need to be repeated every 6 months, 1 or 2 years (depending upon the situation). The Traffic Calming program will repeat the steps noted above (flags, radar carts).

We can contact the Traffic Calming Department and ask that they repeat the addition of the flags and the placement of the radar carts.

**6. We can educate our community. Examples:**

We can send out mailings (paper, email). And we can educate members via social media.

**7. Delivery drivers – how do we educate them?**

Sam does not have a contact list for drivers, but he shared these ideas:

- \* verbally tell drivers
- \* create flyers and leave on porches for delivery people to pick
- \* contact local offices?

**8. Sheriff**

We asked if we should contact the sheriff. Sam said that the sheriff's office isn't staffed to patrol our area

But if anyone knows of a "repeat offender" or a specific time of day when most speeding is done, the sheriff's office might send an officer to investigate

**9. Pedestrians, Horses, Bikes**

When walking, pedestrians and horses should face oncoming traffic. People should wear reflective clothing.

Use the shoulder of the road where feasible.

**10. Manage Vegetation along roads**

A question was asked about vegetation along our roads.

- We should work to increase visibility, especially near curves.
- Ideally, we should have suitable shoulders for pedestrians (where feasible)
- The county setback along our roads is on the plat maps. Sam could not give us an exact number (width, height) for how much the vegetation should be cut back. It depends upon the road.
- 10' from edge of the road is a rough estimate only.
- Sam said he would drive our roads and give us feedback
- Ideally the homeowner should trim back vegetation, though the County has the right to do so on their easement/right-of-way

**10. School bus stops**

We asked what can we do to ensure the safety of our students going to/from the bus stops, especially when it's dark. He re-iterated the advice he gave earlier.

- \* walk facing traffic
- \* wear reflective clothing
- \* walk on the shoulder

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There was a long discussion about the placement of the bus stops. The county doesn't determine where the bus stops are, the transportation director of the school system does.

Penny Goode described how she has contacted the school district about moving the bus stops to make it safer for the students.

We need to collect data about the number of students (with ages), distance that they walk, etc.

Becky said that if we can provide data, she can try to talk to the transportation director.

**11. Speed Humps, Road Narrow, Traffic Circles**

Speed "bumps" are no longer implemented. Sheep "humps" are now implemented and they are not as abrupt as "bumps" and have a "pass through" for ambulances/EMTs.

If the Phase I education is not effective, the county will make recommendations for a Phase II. One of the options are "speed humps".

Dave raised the concern about horse trailers and speed bumps. Sam said that the "speed humps" aren't that abrupt like a speed bump.

Other options to reduce traffic speeds are narrowing the roads (Sam showed a diagram) or traffic circles, or raised crosswalks (where appropriate). In a Phase II, the county will recommend specific changes for our roads.

The community must file a petition, with 51% of the membership in favor of implementing the recommended options.

Sam did not make recommendations. He just told us what options exist in Phase II.

In Phase II, the county will pay for these changes. The county has a prioritized list of roads that need these modifications, so there's no guarantee as to when these road changes would occur for a specific road (a year or more?). If the community pays (some/all?) for these road changes they will probably be done sooner.

If FCA gets to Phase II, Sam sent Karen the petition information.

**12. What about 'rumble strips' (as used on Carpenter near Brighton Parkway).**

Sam said that these are very noisy and the noise can be heard up to 500 feet away. No one will want these near their homes. And FCA doesn't have a segment of any road where these could be placed and be more than 500 feet from a residence.

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**Summary of the Phases**

The following was sent by Brandi Schroeder – Eng. Tech II, Thurston County Public works

**Our traffic calming program is split into two phases:**

-Phase 1 focuses on changing driver behavior through education. We ask that neighborhoods participate in phase 1 for at least six months.

-If the speeding problem still persists we move onto phase 2 which allows for the installation of physical traffic calming devices (such as speed cushions).

The speed cushions (or other traffic calming device) can either be paid for privately through your neighborhood (scenario 1) or potentially through our traffic calming program (scenario 2).

Our traffic calming program prioritizes neighborhoods that have requested traffic calming based on several different criteria.

**Scenario 1: Neighborhood privately funds the installation**

1. Neighborhood completes a preliminary petition in which 30% of current households in the neighborhood are represented
2. County completes the planning and design (with neighborhood participation and acceptance by the local fire district)
3. Neighborhood completes the Final Design and Construction Petition in which 51% of current households in the neighborhood are represented
4. The construction is fully funded by the neighborhood (estimate \$5000-\$7000 per speed hump), the county provides construction inspection
5. The speed humps are maintained by the County after construction

**Scenario 2: County potentially funds the installation through our Traffic Calming Program funds**

1. Neighborhood completes the Design and Construction Petition in which 51% of current households in the neighborhood are represented.
2. County reviews the petition. If the 51% is met then the neighborhood will be considered for traffic calming program funds.
3. Each Spring the county uses a priority matrix to score all neighborhoods that have submitted a petition.
4. The top neighborhoods will be contacted, and the County will work with them to complete the planning and design.
5. The construction is paid for by the County.

If we get to this phase and you decide which scenario your neighborhood would like to pursue, I can send you an example petition.