



## The Basics of Traffic Calming

Traffic calming aims to slow traffic through various changes to roadways. Traffic calming measures impose a reasonable speed limit by creating an environment that tells drivers to slow down.

Traffic calming generally involves making physical changes to roads and streets to give drivers the clues they need to slow down.

Partners for Active Living has advocated for such measures around town, working with Pine Street School, for example, to make it easier for kids to cross a nearby intersection.

The evidence for targeting parks, schools and other place where people are likely to walk or bike, clearly shows that slower traffic makes safer streets. Reaction times for drivers increase as speed decreases.<sup>1</sup> Driver focus areas dramatically increase as speeds decrease.<sup>2</sup> And the chances that an accident will be fatal for the pedestrian increases quickly with speed. At 20 miles per hour, for example, about 5% of pedestrians struck would die. Compare that to a 40% fatality rate at 30 miles per hour, and as high as an 80% fatality rate at 40 miles per hour.<sup>3</sup>

Traffic calming often provides a more aesthetically pleasing roadway because many of the strategies provide additional space for landscaping, another factor that helps drivers determine appropriate speeds.<sup>4</sup> These changes have to involve more than simply lowering speeds limits. A 1997 Federal Highway Administration study showed that lowering speed limits does nothing to change driver behavior, and puts more of the safety burden on police enforcement.<sup>5</sup>

Traffic calming does not simply stop traffic, but creates a safer environment for automobiles to pass through an often congested area. A roundabout in Boiling Springs eliminated the need for eight stop signs, helping traffic move more smoothly and much more safely. In this case, traffic calming has an effect on air quality because automobiles do not need to stop<sup>6</sup>; automobile traffic is often improved.



This neighborhood roundabout eases the flow of traffic by eliminating stop signs while giving added protection for pedestrians.



The pedestrian refuge help makes this crossing safer for all users.

1. "Fatal Impact: The Physics of Speeding Cars." Australian Academy of Science, 2000. 2. "Literature Review on Vehicle Travel Speeds and Pedestrian Injuries Among Selected Racial/Ethnic Groups." National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1999. 3. "Main Street: When a Highway Runs Through It." Oregon Department of Transportation, 1999. 4. Mundell, Jim, PE. "Constructing and Maintaining Traffic Calming Devices." Seattle (WA) Department of Transportation. 5. "Effects of Raising and Lowering Speed Limits on Selected Roadway Section." Federal Highway Administration, 1997. 6. Cited in Gies, Erica. "The Health Benefits of Parks: How Parks Help Keep Americans and Their Communities Fit and Healthy." The Trust for Public Land, 2006.

### **About Partners for Active Living (PAL):**

Partners for Active Living seeks to make Spartanburg County a healthy, more livable community by promoting walking, bicycling, and physical activity on a daily basis.



# Partners for Active Living

Post Office Box 6728  
Spartanburg, SC 29304

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## -Some of our Initiatives-



### Welcome new staff members!

Partners for Active Living welcomes two new staff members to our team. **Melody Williams (left)** is our new Urban Trails Coordinator. **Veronica Kneeland (right)**

is a VISTA volunteer, and will work on



website improvements. We're excited to have them with us.

Prefer to receive this newsletter electronically?

Sign up for newsletters on our website: [www.active-living.org](http://www.active-living.org).

### Want to Get Involved?

*Opportunities to get active with PAL and our partners!*

**Fridays at noon:** Lunchtime Bike Ride, Mary Black Foundation  
**September 24, 2011:** Ride to the Hub City Farmers Market, 9 am

**September 30, 2011:** Yoga in the Square, 12 noon

**October 5, 2011:** International Walk to School Day

**October 8, 2011:** 3rd Annual iRecycle Half-Marathon, 8 am

**Save the Date: May 4, 2012** Spartanburg Downtown Criterium

**May 21, 2012:** The Assault on Mount Mitchell

*See our website for more details on these and other events:  
[www.active-living.org](http://www.active-living.org)*

In order to continue promoting active living and healthy lifestyles in Spartanburg County, we need your help.

**Please consider joining Partners for Active Living.**

You can now donate online by visiting our website: [www.active-living.org](http://www.active-living.org) or send your tax deductible gift to:

Partners for Active Living  
P.O. Box 6728  
Spartanburg, SC 29304