

# Sunset series



## Traffic calming



### Creating slower, safer spaces for all

People use roads every day, whether they drive, bike, walk or roll. With so many uses and so many users, it is important we design the road to be safe for all users.

One of the most common safety concerns we hear from many people is people speeding in motor vehicles.

To help reduce the risk of speeding and provide safer spaces for all users – especially in residential areas and downtown city centers – design engineers use a measure called traffic calming.

### What is traffic calming?

Traffic calming is a traffic management approach that uses a combination of physical design tools and techniques to reduce speeding by people driving motor vehicles and encourage safer driving behavior. It can be used at a single intersection or an entire corridor.

### Traffic calming examples

Let's explore a few traffic calming measures that can improve user safety:

**Bump-outs.** Bump-outs – also known as curb extensions – physically narrow the roadway at intersections, increasing the overall visibility of pedestrians by aligning them with the edge of the travel lane. This measure is effective as it helps reduce the crossing length for people walking, biking, and rolling using the intersection. It also tightens how drivers can turn at the intersection, encouraging slower turning speeds.



**Median Refuge Island.** A median refuge island is a protected space in the center of the roadway to allow two-stage crossing for people walking, biking and rolling. These islands can enhance safety by building expectations through visual cues that people might be walking, biking or rolling through the area and can -- at times -- narrow the travel lanes.

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**Narrowing lanes.** Reducing the width of travel lanes helps slow traffic speeds. The narrow environment offers enough width for vehicles to travel, but naturally makes drivers feel like they need to drive more carefully to avoid the close surroundings.

**Trees and decorative landscaping.** Trees and decorative landscaping are another way to slow speeds. These elements, whether they are along the medians or boulevards, may alter drivers' perceptions of how wide the road is and therefore helps with reducing driving speeds.



**Gateway elements.** Gateway treatments, such as signage, artwork, or other elements, help alert people driving that they are entering a different area. This naturally causes drivers to slow down and pay attention to the environment change.

## Traffic calming considerations on Sunset Drive

We have an opportunity to include some traffic calming designs to Sunset Drive to improve how the road functions and make it safer for all users.

The types of features we could include will depend on several factors:

- Right-of-way space available
- Project budget and goals
- Community interest and support
- How the feature fits in the overall design

These factors will guide our engineers to determine the best approach for Sunset Drive.

## Sharing your vision for a better Sunset Drive

You still have time to share your thoughts for a better Sunset Drive. We want to know what elements could make this road better and safer for you and others. We will use your input and our project goals to develop an initial design to share later in spring. To provide your thoughts, go to our [interactive comment map](#).

If you want to learn more about traffic calming, check out the links below:

- [U.S. Department of Transportation](#)
- [Institute of Transportation Professionals](#)
- [Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths](#)