



# Slow Down in K-Town

*How to Create and Conduct  
an Education and Public Relations Campaign  
to Reduce Speeding  
in Your Knoxville Neighborhood*

A DIY Guide

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# Acknowledgments

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UT Center for Transportation Research

INTRODUCING....

K-T

THE K-TOWN SLOTH

WHO SAYS...



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*Speeding is not just a problem to be solved.  
It is an opportunity to bring neighbors together  
to forge a more livable community.*

# I. Introduction

This is a How-To Guide for conducting an Anti-Speeding Education and Public Relations Campaign (“Anti-Speeding Campaign” or “Campaign”) to reduce speeding in your residential neighborhood in Knoxville, Tennessee.

## A. Neighborhood Focus

1. This Guide outlines a neighborhood-focused, neighborhood-level Campaign. Each neighborhood implements its own Campaign.<sup>1</sup>
2. Whether or not your neighborhood has a formal neighborhood organization, the Campaign in your neighborhood will depend on individual neighbors, working together, who are willing to devote their volunteer time to the effort.
3. You can implement every one of the Campaign tools presented here or just the ones that make sense to you — your choice. Change and adapt these tools to your own needs, based on your own timetable.

## B. Support from the Office of Neighborhoods

Although each neighborhood must run its own Campaign, the Office of Neighborhoods offers support by providing:

- “Slow Down in K-Town” yard signs and bumper stickers while supplies last and as the budget permits.
- Fact sheets and other data about speeding and speeders.
- Printing of infographics and other hand-outs (for neighborhoods unable to afford these costs).
- An online survey platform for a survey of speeding attitudes in your neighborhood.
- Advice about approaching neighbors, running meetings, and dealing with conflict.
- Attendance at neighborhood meetings.
- Communication with the City’s Engineering and Police departments, as needed.
- A partner in brainstorming and vetting ideas, and ongoing support throughout your Campaign.

## C. Limitations and Potential

Your Anti-Speeding Campaign may not win over chronic speeders in your neighborhood — those for whom speeding is one long joyride and who resent anyone suggesting they do anything differently. Nor will it affect drivers who are speeding because they are high on alcohol or drugs.

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<sup>1</sup> Two or more adjacent neighborhoods may wish to launch a joint Anti-Speeding Campaign if they share one or more problem streets.

Instead, this Campaign is predicated on the notion that nearly all drivers speed at one time or another, and that most of us are open-minded enough to consider the consequences of speeding and the need to be more aware of our surroundings when driving in residential areas.

As far as we know, our approach to traffic calming education is different from any other program in the country. Other education programs are traditional city-wide public relations campaigns, with a lot of reliance on media and other forms of widespread advertising. The success of this type of public relations campaign is difficult to measure and usually ends when the money runs out.

The Anti-Speeding Campaign described here, however, can be implemented and repeated by a single neighborhood without much if any city support (although the City of Knoxville does provide support). In addition, success can be measured by the degree to which residents feel their streets are safer as a result of their Campaign.

Moreover, this approach has benefits that go far beyond the reduction of speeding. The process of conducting the Campaign can bring neighbors closer together and create a deeper sense of community. In this light, **speeding is not just a problem to be solved; it is an opportunity to bring neighbors together to forge a more livable community.**

The Office of Neighborhoods acknowledges the desire of many neighborhoods for physical traffic calming devices such as speed humps. But the reality is that, due to cost and staffing limitations, constructing physical devices in every interested neighborhood will take years, and some neighborhood streets simply will not qualify under the Neighborhood Traffic Safety Program (NTSP).

We do believe that this Anti-Speeding Campaign can be effective, and we are excited to introduce this new, pilot program to Knoxville. We invite your neighborhood to join this journey with us. We urge you to share what you learn with us, so others may benefit from your experience.



## II. Getting Started

It may seem like a huge task to take on just one of the projects in this Guide, but even a handful of people can accomplish a great deal. Here is one approach to getting underway.

### A. Read the Documents

For starters, please give a thorough read to this Guide and appendices. If something is not clear, direct any questions to the Office of Neighborhoods at 215-3232.

### B. Assemble a Leadership Team

Many great things have been accomplished by individuals acting alone, but you will be much more successful if you enlist others in the effort.

Start with a committee of three to five people if possible. If you don't know your neighbors, you may need to meet them in the street or literally go door-to-door voicing your concerns and enlisting the help of others.

For help, see "Door-to-Door Neighborhood Outreach" in Appendix A. If you are unsure about how to proceed, contact the Office of Neighborhoods.

### C. Apply for the NTSP?

Any neighborhood interested in conducting an Anti-Speeding Campaign should also determine whether or not to apply for the City of Knoxville's Neighborhood Traffic Safety Program (NTSP).

(Visit [www.knoxvilletn.gov/trafficsafety](http://www.knoxvilletn.gov/trafficsafety) or see "NTSP Overview" in Appendix D.)

Under the NTSP, neighborhoods submit an application and petition signatures to obtain a speed study and possible traffic calming devices such as speed humps, neighborhood traffic circles, and other measures on qualifying streets with significant speeding.

The Anti-Speeding Education and Public Relations Campaign described in this document serves as the education component of NTSP. Neighborhoods can apply for the NTSP at any time, and they can launch an Anti-Speeding Campaign at any time. You can pursue both simultaneously or one after the other.

The Anti-Speeding Campaign may be particularly useful to neighborhoods that:

- Do not wish to apply for the NTSP or wish to try this education component first.
- Have applied for the NTSP but are waiting in line for speed studies, the development of concept plans, or construction.
- Have seen results of their speed study but have been told they may not qualify for physical traffic calming devices for an indefinite period.

One final note: Under the NTSP, only local streets and minor collectors are eligible for consideration for physical traffic calming devices like speed humps.<sup>2</sup> *However, your Anti-Speeding Campaign can be applied to all residential streets.*

#### D. Identify the Problem

As a team, think about and write down a description of the speeding challenges in your neighborhood. These observations can be used in your education efforts and/or your NTSP application. Questions include:

- Source of Speeding: Neighbors? Cut-through drivers? All of these, or just one or two particular drivers?
- Source of cut-through drivers: School? Apartment complex? Large employer? Shopping center? (See Section I, “Addressing the Source of Known Speeders,” in the Campaign Tools section of this Guide.)
- Single driver? If you have just one or two drivers who are speeding, the solution may look quite different compared to a neighborhood with many speeders from many origins.
- Most endangered: Bicyclists? Children? Elderly? All pedestrians? Other drivers?
- Which streets suffer the most speeding?

“There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about.”

Margaret J. Wheatley

#### E. Get on the Same Page

As you begin working closely with others on a community issue, it is super important to share your reasons for being involved. Do you agree on the nature of the problem? Do you share the same goals? Do you agree on whether to apply for the NTSP? Do you agree on the approach and tone of your Anti-Speeding Campaign?

The fact is, you won’t agree on everything. Where will you compromise with one another? If you are not united at your first neighborhood-wide meeting, or at least honest about your differences, then factions may develop that will undermine your efforts. Your leadership, as a planning team, is critical to your success.

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<sup>2</sup> Most neighborhood streets are either local streets or minor collectors. For a definition of local streets, minor collectors and larger roads, see the [NTSP Program Guide](#) and the [Major Road Plan](#).

## F. Choose the Tone of Your Campaign

Those of us who are really upset about speeding drivers will naturally want to advocate strongly against their behavior — and maybe the drivers themselves. We may know people or know of people who have been killed or injured or just scared out of their wits by speeders. It may feel good and righteous and necessary to point fingers, single people out, and play the shame game.

However, this Guide suggests a different approach that engages speeders with diplomacy and tact, not anger or shaming. This involves respectful communication with cut-through speeders as well as speeders who live in our neighborhoods.

Here's the rationale for diplomacy. When a Knoxville police officer stakes out a street, flicks on the blue light, and issues speeding citations in or near residential neighborhoods, a high percentage of the "catch" are people who live in the neighborhood or immediate vicinity.

If we alienate our speeding neighbors or people who cut through our neighborhood frequently, nothing short of a speed hump or a police car — or a crash — will convince them to slow down from then on. However, if we appeal to their better natures, we are more likely to get results.

Your speeder, for example, could be a single Mom working two jobs and rushing to get her children to school so they aren't late. Maybe she is stressed, but she is not a bad person. Shaming is not helpful; being understanding is.

At one time or another, most drivers exceed the speed limit, and for different reasons, so it is important not to develop an "us versus them" approach. See the "Why People Speed" section in [Appendix J](#) (Traffic Safety Resources).

All of this is critical to community building within our neighborhoods. If we alienate our neighbors on whether they should speed or not, gaining their cooperation on other issues will be difficult if not impossible. We may make a bad situation worse.

Proceed cautiously when trying to convince others to drive slowly. The tone of your Campaign makes a difference!

## G. Design Your Campaign

With input and ideas from as many of your neighbors as possible, revisit your goals and articulate what you hope to accomplish. Based on these goals, select the Campaign tools that best address your needs. These can be from the Campaign Toolbox in Section IV of this guide, or you can create your own events and materials that you believe will work better in your neighborhood. In addition:

- Make sure you have enough volunteers to carry out your projects without burning out your leadership. Commit only to those elements that you know you can accomplish.

- Consider whether a steady stream of actions and events, carried out over a long period of time at your own pace, may have a greater impact on speeding drivers than a flurry of activities in a more compressed schedule.
- As a team, take on a very manageable project first. Get used to working with one another before embarking on a large project.
- Assign tasks. Establish a project planning calendar, like the one in [Appendix A](#), that shows who is responsible for doing what when. (This helps you see in black-and-white whether you have enough volunteers. If not, ask others to join in.) Create a separate calendar for each project or even each component of a large, complex project.
- Know the areas where the Office of Neighborhoods can assist, and plan to utilize those services as needed. (See Introduction.)
- Keep the neighborhood informed as you make progress.
- After you finish each project, debrief with your leadership team to identify what worked and what didn't. Adjust accordingly for your next steps.

When a person drives the same route to and from work for years, he knows every curve and intersection like the back of his hand. This ability to anticipate his commute route combined with a muscle memory of the maneuvers he always makes, causes him to drive faster.

Familiarity also breeds confidence which drives away any concerns about safety. However, familiarity is also a reason why most accidents happen near one's home.

Six Common Reasons People Speed While Driving  
<https://harrisgraves.com/six-common-reasons-why-people-speed/>

### III. Engaging Your Neighbors

The success of an effective anti-speeding education campaign will depend in large part on the extent to which you are able to enlist the support of your neighbors.

Increasing your leadership team from one or two people to four or five will mean more ideas, more energy, and more sharing of the load. Boosting total participation in your events will have a significant impact on your morale and on your ability to impress speeding motorists.

*The more you involve your neighbors on the front end, the more they are likely to greet anti-speeding efforts with a positive attitude — and even donate their time and resources to the effort.*

#### A. Neighbor to Neighbor

We run into our neighbors retrieving mail, parking cars, walking & jogging, walking dogs, and playing and working outside of our homes on the street or in the alley. Take advantage of these encounters to get to know your neighbors and then to bring up the subject of speeding. Always be on the lookout for allies and talent.

Neighbor-to-neighbor relationships are critical to any successful community organizing effort, including the operation of a successful Anti-Speeding Campaign.

If you are unsure about jumping right in, consider organizing a neighborhood picnic. Give yourselves time to get to know your neighbors just a bit before getting down to business.

“If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

African Proverb

#### B. Door-to-Door Visitations

Many of us would sooner get a tooth pulled than knock on a stranger’s front door — even that stranger who lives two doors up from our own. Part of our reluctance is rooted in the knowledge that we ourselves are sometimes hesitant to open our own doors to someone we do not know.

Here's the thing, though. As organizers of a community interest campaign, you can address qualms on both sides of that door. Moreover, you will find that the rewards of

meeting and talking to your neighbors will far outweigh any awkward or uncomfortable moments you may encounter in a door-to-door canvass.

See Appendix A for a guide on conducting door-to-door outreach. It was produced by the Office of Neighborhoods. Its sample “script” (questions to ask, things to say) uses speeding as an example topic in a door-to-door campaign.

In addition, consider the following:

- Door knockers should agree on why you are going door-to-door and exactly what information you wish to convey and collect. Here are some possible goals for a door-to-door canvass, but keep your focus limited to what can reasonably be discussed in a short, front porch visit.
  - Distribute printed materials to raise awareness about speeding.
  - Find out if others are concerned about speeding.
  - Identify possible volunteers for the education campaign.
  - Gather contact information of all interested neighbors.
  - Explain the NTSP.
  - Invite neighbors to a community meeting.
  - Gather pledge signatures and hand out bumper stickers.
  - Recruit participants for a Street Demonstration.
- Hand-outs can include one or all of the printed materials provided by the Office of Neighborhoods, as well as your own door-knocker flier explaining who you are, what you are doing, and how to get in touch with you.
- You might wish to leave one flier with the neighbors you talk to, and a separate flier or letter in the doors of those who are not at home or who choose not to answer the door. See “Canvass at Home” and “Canvass Missed You” fliers in Appendix B.

### C. Neighborhood Meetings

In your efforts to reduce speeding in your neighborhood, there are many reasons to meet as a group. These include:

- Socialize and get to know one another as neighbors.
- Share findings from your door-to-door canvass or from the Attitudes Survey.
- Hear from city officials about the NTSP or other safety issues.
- Hear from other traffic safety speakers (see Appendix C).
- Make decisions as a neighborhood.
- Brainstorm and plan anti-speeding events and other neighborhood improvement projects.
- Identify volunteers for these events and projects.

Successful neighborhood-wide meetings don’t just happen. Some planning needs to take place first, followed by advance publicity directed at your neighbors. For tips on

conducting an effective neighborhood meeting, see “Tips on Leading Neighborhood Meetings” in [Appendix A](#). The Office of Neighborhoods is available to help you.

## D. Communications

Boost your anti-speeding efforts by communicating with your neighbors on a regular basis. Staying in touch will a) keep the issue of speeding front and center in everyone’s mind, b) allow neighbors a basis for ongoing interaction should other community issues arise, and c) encourage a sense of community.

Neighborhood groups ideally use more than one form of communication to make sure they are reaching everyone in the neighborhood, regardless of income or technical savvy.

- Always include the name and contact information of at least one person and preferably two people in your group in all fliers, newsletters and social media posts. Neighbors you do not know will be much more responsive if they see that the organizers make themselves known and accessible.
- One-page fliers describe an event or action in the neighborhood, such as a neighborhood meeting, and are distributed door-to-door. But don’t put them in or on mailboxes, because the Post Office might fine you. (See samples and a how-to guide, [Appendix B](#).)
- Newsletters, as brief as one page or as many as 4-6 pages, can convey not only your anti-speeding messages but also welcome new neighbors, thank volunteers, and pass along information from the City. (See [Appendix B](#) for a sample newsletter and a guide for creating a newsletter.)
- Email is still a preferred form of communication for many, particularly for those who don’t want to answer unknown and possibly spam calls on their cell phones. Capture email addresses during door-to-door canvassing and at neighborhood meetings. It’s relatively easy to thank volunteers by email, in addition to recognizing them at your gatherings.
- Telephone contact, including text messages, is preferred by some people, because they can still listen to a voicemail even if they don’t recognize your number and don’t answer. If neighbors not previously involved show up for a meeting or event, and give their phone numbers, by all means call a few days later to thank them for attending and ask for their input.
- Facebook is a great way to post Anti-Speeding Briefs and news about your efforts. You can establish a Facebook page for all neighborhood postings, or one devoted to anti-speeding efforts. Either way, make sure someone is monitoring the posts and keeping the conversation civil and upbeat.

- [NextDoor.com](https://www.nextdoor.com) is a popular social media platform used by many neighborhoods in Knoxville.
- Other social media — including Twitter and Instagram — may also prove useful to your efforts.

When reaching out to neighbors, remember:

- √ Do not rely on just one form of communication.
- √ Fliers and newsletters, delivered door to door, are the most inclusive form of communication, because they reach everyone, including those without Internet access.
- √ Boost attendance at meetings and other events by using several forms of communication (fliers, social media, word of mouth, telephone, signs posted in the neighborhood). Repetition is effective: *“Well I guess they really are having this meeting; perhaps we should go. It seems important.”*

The AAA Foundation for Public Safety has long found that actual driving behaviors often contradict drivers’ attitudes about safety, sustaining a “do as I say, not as I do” culture on the roads applicable to many traffic safety issues.

With regard to excessive speeds, these findings suggest that most drivers have an unrealistic view of their ability to avoid a crash or drive proficiently and safely when speeding.

“Speeding Away From Zero: Rethinking a  
Forgotten Traffic Safety Challenge”  
Governors Highway Safety Association  
([www.ghsa.org](http://www.ghsa.org))  
January 2019



## IV. Campaign Toolbox

In this section, we cover the various tools you can deploy in your Anti-Speeding Campaign. Use what makes sense to you. Add your own tools. Think about the order you will implement these tools and ideas, so that you can build from one event or action to the next.

### A. Speed Data and Information

Your Campaign to reduce speeding in your neighborhood can be fueled, in part, by a range of information about speeders and speeding. Here is a run-down of what's available.

#### 1. Radar & Enforcement Data

The City of Knoxville conducts radar surveillance and speed enforcement in neighborhoods that apply for the Neighborhood Traffic Safety Program (NTSP) and meet the petition requirement.

- The Engineering Department runs radar studies on one or more specific streets targeted in your NTSP application. Over a period of several days, collected data will include the number and type of vehicles, how fast they were going, and at what times.
- The Knoxville Police Department may conduct enhanced speed enforcement on a problem street and provide general information about the number of citations given out for speeding and other traffic violations.

There may be a backlog of neighborhoods who have applied for the NTSP, met the petition requirement, and are waiting for these studies. Having the radar and enforcement data might benefit your Campaign, but your success is not dependent on this information. If you have the interest, energy and time to launch a Campaign, act now and don't feel the need to wait on this data.

#### 2. Fact Sheets and Infographics

Appendix D contains infographics and brochures that are suitable for distribution door-to-door in your neighborhood and/or at neighborhood meetings. These include:

- NTSP Overview
- Crash Facts
- Teen Driving Traps
- Pedestrian Safety Tips (for children)
- Bicycle Safety Tips (for youth and adults)
- Distracted Driving

In addition, the Transportation Planning Organization ([TPO](#)) produces five separate fact sheets on [Pedestrian & Bicyclist Crash Facts](#) in Knoxville, Knox County and the region. It also publishes a variety of bicycle safety resources [for both adults and kids](#).

### **3. Speakers at Neighborhood Meetings**

Bringing neighbors together to hear a traffic safety speaker is another way to raise awareness of the need for reducing speed and driving safely. The traffic safety experts listed in [Appendix C](#), “Speakers for Neighborhood Meetings,” are available free of charge and can address not only speeding but related topics as well. Just contact a speaker and agree on date, time, place and topic.

To plan such a meeting, see “Making Arrangements for a Guest Speaker at Your Neighborhood Meeting,” also in [Appendix C](#), and “Tips on Leading Successful Neighborhood Meetings” in [Appendix A](#).

You might also consider holding a joint meeting with an adjacent neighborhood or with the parent-teacher organization in a school near your neighborhood.

### **4. Anti-Speeding Briefs**

How do you keep the issue of speeding front and center in your neighborhood? [See Appendix E](#). These snippets of speeding information are available for you to copy and republish in your neighborhood printed hand-outs and in social media. These briefs:

- Cite statistics on speeding and pedestrian injuries in an appeal for compliance with traffic laws.
- Provide brief anecdotes or suggestions for watching our speed.
- Help drivers assess their own driving knowledge and likelihood of driving while distracted.

You can also create your own briefs. For example, you could link to a local news story about a car crash, pass along a photo of a wrecked car, or just make an observation about a recent incident in your neighborhood. (You may wish to ensure that pictures are appropriate for younger viewers.)

The idea here is to maintain a high level of awareness about speeding among your neighbors and encourage them to pass the information along to their friends and family members, some of whom may be cut-through drivers in [your](#) neighborhood.

### **5. Traffic Safety Resources**

In [Appendix J](#) you will find seven (7) pages of links to a wide variety of other resources – videos, traffic safety websites, research studies, and other information that will inform your efforts and spark other ideas for your Campaign.

## B. Survey of Neighbors' Attitudes about Speeding

The Neighborhood Traffic Safety Survey in [Appendix F](#) will help your neighbors focus on their own attitudes about speeding. It is meant to be anonymous, so that your neighbors feel free to say how they really drive and how they really feel about speeding.

Results from this survey may help you to shape the anti-speeding messaging within your neighborhood. You could also share the results in a flier or at a neighborhood meeting.

We recommend that you give your neighbors two ways to take the survey.

- First, if they do not have Internet access, distribute a paper copy and a way for respondents to turn in the survey anonymously.
- Second, offer the same survey online with the help of the Office of Neighborhoods.

Upon request, the Office of Neighborhoods can create a survey customized to your neighborhood, using an online platform called Survey Monkey. Even the link to your survey can be customized to your neighborhood.

The Office of Neighborhoods requests that you use the [Appendix F](#) survey, but you can add one or two additional questions if you wish. You must provide the wording for any additional questions. Contact Eden Slater at 215-3232.

A study by Liberty Mutual and SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) found that parents are setting a poor example for teens by engaging in unsafe driving behaviors, such as texting and driving, and are not listening to their kids' warnings.

Forty-one percent of teens say their parents continue these unsafe behaviors even after their teens ask them to stop, and 28 percent of teens say their parents justify unsafe behavior.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

### C. Pledge to Drive 25

As you meet and talk with your neighbors about speeding, ask if they would sign the Pledge to Drive 25 miles per hour or less on Knoxville's residential streets. The pledge form is located in Appendix G.

We encourage you to keep the signed forms and display them at your neighborhood meeting. You might also wish to create a Facebook page or web page with the signatures of neighbors who sign the pledge.

Appendix G also includes a copy of the Pledge; give one of these to each person who signs the Pledge.

Think of ways to promote the Pledge. Give updates on how many of your neighbors have signed. Ask local businesses to donate coupons to the first 50 who sign up. Give a larger prize to the 100<sup>th</sup> person to sign. Give prizes to the volunteers who obtain Pledges from a certain number of neighbors. Make it a friendly competition.

The simple act of signing the Pledge will make an impression on well-meaning drivers who, like most of us, find ourselves exceeding the speed limit even in residential neighborhoods.

Please keep the Office of Neighborhoods informed on how many of your neighbors have signed the Pledge. In addition, the Office of Neighborhoods may compile and post a list of all signers citywide.



### D. Bumper Stickers

We suggest that those who "Pledge to Drive 25" receive the "Slow Down in K-Town" bumper sticker, available in quantities from the Office of Neighborhoods. However, you can use the bumper stickers in any way that makes sense to you.

If enough neighborhoods distribute the bumper stickers, they will become a familiar sight around town, encouraging all of us to drive 25 or less no matter what neighborhood we happen to be driving through.

## E. Yard Signs

Yard signs are a key tool for any anti-speeding program. They:

- Alert drivers to the fact that they have entered a residential area.
- Remind drivers to slow down.
- Tell drivers that neighbors care about their street.
- Signal that neighbors (perhaps many neighbors) are watching the street.

The Office of Neighborhoods can provide your neighborhood with yard signs that, like city-supplied bumper stickers, feature K-T the K-Town Sloth reminding everyone to “Slow Down in K-Town.”

But there’s a lot more to say about yard signs — where to buy them, how to make them, where to put them, and where not to put them. [See Appendix H](#) – “Yard Signs.”

## F. ‘Signs for Safety’ Party

The most effective signs may be the ones you make yourselves. Have some fun by staging a “Signs for Safety” party with neighborhood kids and adults. Children’s art is very appealing and can do a better job of motivating drivers to slow down. (Adults can make signs, too!)

See [Appendix H](#) for tips on making homemade signs, including the use of blank corrugated plastic signs. Here are tips for staging a “Signs for Safety” Party:

- Your event can produce yard signs and/or poster-sized signs for street demonstrations (see next section).
- Find an indoor venue with plenty of floor and table space so the artists can spread out.
- Take 5-10 minutes to encourage a discussion about speeding, why people speed, and why we need for drivers to slow down. This will get everyone in the frame of mind to produce the most compelling slogans and pictures.
- Know the speed limit in your neighborhood. In Knoxville, the speed limit on local (residential) streets is 30 mph unless your neighborhood has gotten the Engineering Department to post your street(s) at 25 mph.
- Help children understand that the most effective signs are the ones with the fewest words, largest letters and just one or two large pictures.
- In your publicity for the sign party, make sure to note that children should be accompanied by a parent or guardian.
- It’s a party! Refreshments will make the atmosphere more festive.

No Need to Speed

**Thank You  
for  
Slowing Down**

**Your Short Cut.**

**Our Neighborhood.**

**Please Slow Down.**

Leave Sooner.  
Drive Slower.  
Arrive Alive.

Leave Sooner.  
Drive Slower.  
Enjoy the Ride.

Be the Driver  
Who  
Keeps Kids Safe

**It Can Wait.  
Slow Down.  
Get There Alive.**

Other Drivers

Make Mistakes

Slow Down in K-Town!

## G. Street Demonstrations

Imagine you come home from work every afternoon and usually exceed the speed limit to drive a long, straight “race track” of a street to get to your part of the neighborhood.

Or think of yourself as a “cut-through” driver, running late and using that same straight-away to avoid a busy intersection.<sup>3</sup>

Other than a police car, and perhaps even more than a police car, what would most impress you enough to slow down? What would stick in your mind the next time you drive that street?

The answer: People. Lots of people. Adults and children waving signs asking you to slow down. People blowing bubbles and sounding horns and having some serious fun. People reminding you that actual people live on and use this street. People making it clear that speeding on this street is no longer acceptable.

Such a gathering — a “Pro-Slow Demonstration” or whatever you wish to call it — can be held in one yard, perhaps at the entrance to a neighborhood. Or it can be neighbors out in their yards along the entire length of a street with lots of speeding.

Here are some tips for a successful demonstration:

- Pedestrian safety is paramount. Scope out location(s) in advance to make sure everyone will be well off the street. Emphasize that children must be accompanied by a parent. Appoint two or three people to serve as safety captains. If you can afford to do so, buy yellow vests from a local hardware store and distribute them to participants.
- Go door-to-door on the street in question, getting commitments to participate on a specific rush-hour morning or afternoon. Gather names and phone numbers for a possible last-minute change of plans.
- Pass out a flier to advertise the event. (See sample in [Appendix B.](#))
- Spreading out yard by yard makes sense if you have a lot of participation. If not, gathering in one location may have a bigger visual impact. Make sure you have permission of the property owner(s).
- Hold a “Signs for Safety” party, or just ask everyone to make their own signs. Encourage large and colorful letters.

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<sup>3</sup> It is absolutely legal to “cut through” a neighborhood. Taxpayer-funded city streets belong to everyone. What is NOT legal is to exceed the speed limit.

- Promote positive messaging. Some drivers may be your neighbors. Don't alienate them, or yell at them, even if they are persistent speeders. You may eventually "get through" to them.
- For extra safety, ask the Knoxville Police Department to join you if an officer and a car are available. You could also invite City officials, including your district City Council member.
- Inform the Office of Neighborhoods about your Campaign event(s), which can be covered in the City's weekly *Neighborhood Advisory* newsletter or on the OON Facebook page.
- Consider contacting newspapers and television stations to cover your event. Local TV news producers would be particularly interested in such "visuals."
- For wider impact, perform this activity two days in a row or once a week for 2 or 3 weeks.
- After your event, stake your signs along the street as reminders to drivers.

National surveys of U.S. drivers have found that although drivers identify speeding as risky, drivers nonetheless continue to speed. Drivers have a minimal perception of risk of either getting a ticket, causing a crash, or violating social norms.

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## H. 'People Live Here' Activities

One could easily argue that people speed through neighborhoods in part because there aren't any people around. We are all shut up inside our houses, condos and apartments. Getting outside is the simplest thing residents can do to let speeders know that the street is not a raceway and is shared space. Here are a few ideas.

- Take a walk around the block with friends on a regular basis.
- Organize a large neighborhood walk and bike ride. (Yellow safety vests can be purchased online or at a hardware or building supply store.)
- When you talk to neighbors, move the conversation close to the street.
- Set up an old-fashioned lemonade stand. Whatever happened to that time-honored way for youngsters to make a few dollars? Revive the tradition but only in areas where drivers can pull over safely and buy some refreshment. An adult should be present at all times.
- Go boldly where no neighbor has gone before: Do your Yoga or Tai Chi in your front yard. (You might inspire your neighbors to get more exercise!)
- Grab a baseball and a couple of gloves and play catch with your child or neighbor in your front yard.
- Set up lawn chairs near the street and invite your neighbors over for some iced tea or hot chocolate, weather permitting.
- With your neighbors, brainstorm other "There Are People Living Here" activities. Always be thinking: Can we do this (safely) in the front yard, near the street?

"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members."

Coretta Scott King

## I. Addressing the Source of Known Speeders

This Guide focuses mainly on speeders who live in the neighborhood or who are cutting through with no identifiable origin or destination. However, your observation of the traffic patterns in your neighborhood may tell you if the speeders are driving service vehicles, or if they seem to be originating from or headed to a specific location.

### 1. Service Vehicles

Some neighborhoods report that drivers of service vehicles are speeding through their streets. Vehicles serving neighborhoods include FedEx, UPS, construction contractors, city public services, lawn care outfits, pizza delivery, and the like. If such vehicles are speeding in your neighborhood, think about ways your group could contact their owners or interface (tactfully and safely) with the drivers themselves. If a driver is servicing a particular property, the property owner may not realize this person is speeding. Perhaps this owner would help devise a solution.

### 2. Schools

The drivers could be driving-age students — or parents rushing to work after dropping off their children.

- With diplomacy in mind, contact the principal of the school and your school board member to arrange a meeting with at least two members of your group. Politely explain the problem. Ask the officials to help brainstorm ways to reach and appeal to the drivers.
- If the problem is students, would the principal be willing to call a school assembly on the topic of safe driving? Perhaps someone from the neighborhood could be on a speakers' panel, along with officials from KPD, City Court, and the State Department of Motor Vehicles, and perhaps an emergency room physician who has worked on teens involved in car crashes.
- If, on the other hand, the problem lies with parents taking their children to and from school, would the principal be willing to publish an appeal from the neighborhood in communications with parents? Would they periodically include one of your Speed Briefs (Appendix E) in these communications? Could neighborhood residents be allowed to stand outside the school with signs appealing to drivers to slow down?
- Ask for time in front of a PTA meeting. Or suggest a joint PTA-neighborhood meeting to hear from one of the speakers listed in Appendix C. You could offer to sponsor the refreshments as a gesture of good will.
- These are just a few ideas. Be creative. If you can get the school staff or PTA involved, other suggestions will emerge.

### **3. Adjacent Neighborhoods / Apartment Complexes**

Sometimes it is pretty clear that some speeders live in a neighborhood adjacent to yours, especially if your neighborhood is their only way in and out.

If the residents live in an adjacent apartment complex and are not already members of your organization or otherwise involved in your Campaign, you might see if you can get any of the residents involved. Residents are more likely to listen to one of their own than to a non-resident. Approach the apartment manager or owner to request permission to pass out leaflets door-to-door or under car windshield wipers. Try to establish personal contact with residents on a door-to-door basis if possible.

### **4. Large Employers or Retailers**

Meet with the owners. If you get stonewalled, ask your City Council member to get involved to set up a meeting. Brainstorm ways to reach out to the drivers. For retail customers, the simplest approach might be placing personal appeal letters behind their windshield wipers over a period of several days. For employees, an appeal letter might work, along with a direct communication from the owner to the employees. Other ideas will come to mind as you engage in conversation with the owners.

The force involved in a crash is directly related to the speed at the time of a crash. In a high-speed crash, a passenger vehicle is subjected to forces where the structure of the vehicle cannot withstand the force of the crash and maintain survival space within the occupant compartment of the vehicle.

In addition, in high speed crashes, restraint systems such as airbags and safety belts are incapable of minimizing these higher levels of force.

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## J. Streetscapes and Placemaking

We drivers tend to speed up on wide roadways with very sparse surroundings. Prime example: Interstate 70 in Kansas. Conversely, we tend to slow down if there is more going on — if we are intrigued by the surroundings or if we are uncertain about what lies just ahead.

As residents, working together, we can transform our residential streets to be more interesting and, at the same time, more uncertain, making a driver feel as though he is traveling in a more complex physical environment. The idea is to present the driver with a streetscape that he feels is unsafe — for himself, for his vehicle, and for others — if he is speeding.

This grass roots effort to encourage the driver to slow down is sometimes called psychological design or mental speed humps, and it involves elements of placemaking.<sup>4</sup> The effectiveness of this approach to calming traffic has not been studied, and it is definitely more of an art than a science. What works on one street might be different than what works on the next street. Experimentation and creativity will produce the best results. Here are a few ideas, and neighborhoods are encouraged to come up with others.

### **1. Neighborhood Entrance Sign**

Make it clear to drivers that they are entering a residential neighborhood by installing a neighborhood entrance sign, which also helps create a sense of community among neighborhood residents.

Check with the Office of Neighborhoods to make sure you are following city regulations and to learn how other neighborhoods have designed and created entrance signs. Be sure to involve neighborhood residents in the discussion, design and placement of your sign.

### **2. Children's Toys**

Children's toys in a yard close to the street give the impression that children may dart out in traffic. This may make a driver slow down. This technique does not actually have to involve children — just the evidence of children. Balls, an old kid's bike, and toddler riding toys are possibilities. You have to be willing to sacrifice these items to theft.

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<sup>4</sup> Placemaking in this context would be located in private spaces (front yards) but with a clear public impact. "Placemaking," according to Wikipedia, "is a multi-faceted approach to planning, design, and management of public spaces. Placemaking capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well being."

### **3. Front-Yard Gardens**

A vegetable garden requires a lot of TLC. If you plant your beans and tomatoes in your front yard, you will spend more time there. You will also attract curious neighbors and runners/walkers.

### **4. Outdoor Seating Areas**

Lawn chairs, a café table and chairs, and benches can all be placed near the street to remind drivers that people are nearby. Better yet, use the furniture to get together with your neighbors and plan your next streetscape project!

### **5. Paint the Speed Limit**

Upon request, the Engineering Department will consider painting the speed limit directly on a particularly busy street at a strategic location. Call 3-1-1 to get things started. Be patient; Engineering gets lots of requests for lots of different things.

### **6. Parked Cars**

For most drivers, parallel parking along streets creates uncertainty about whether a car might pull out. Moreover, a line of parked cars “narrows” the street literally and visually. This option may not be appropriate, legal or safe for all streets. Call 3-1-1 to request a review by the Traffic Engineering section. Park at your own risk.

It is legal to park cars on most residential streets within the City of Knoxville, but the vehicles must be operable and have current license plates. Cars cannot be parked on streets with a yellow curb or that are designated with no-parking signs. For other parking and traffic regulations, see Chapter 17 of the [Knoxville City Code](#).

### **7. Yard Art**

A bench painted in rainbow colors. An old non-working bicycle anchored upright and painted bright yellow. A family of flamingos. Anything unusual and colorful near the edge of your yard can add to the visual complexity the driver experiences on your street. Plus, it’s a lot of fun. See who can come up with the most colorful and unusual piece of homemade yard art. Google “yard art” for ideas.

### **8. Landscaping / Trees**

Create a more complex but visually pleasing streetscape by planting trees, bushes and flower beds close to the street. Flower beds, in particular, are relatively easy to plant, with quicker results, and send the message that someone is tending and cultivating this piece of land.

Avoid planting close to intersections if possible. But if you do plant anything close to street or driveway intersections, make sure the maximum height of the plant, when fully grown, will not exceed 30 inches. Otherwise, your plantings may obstruct sight distance for drivers.

See Appendix I for other important details on planting trees and shrubs in the city right-of-way and underneath utility lines, and for utilizing the free and excellent advice of the City's Urban Forester.

3,255 teen drivers were involved in fatal crashes in the U.S. in 2017.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Vehicle speeding seriously impacts pedestrian and bicyclist safety not only by increasing the chances of a crash, but also by increasing the risk of death when they are involved in a crash.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

## V. Conclusion

This Guide offers ideas and resources for a neighborhood-focused, neighborhood-run Anti-Speeding Education and Public Relations Campaign. The Guide also:

- Recommends ways to engage and involve neighbors at every step and with every action or event.
- Urges tact and diplomacy in communications with speeding motorists.
- Argues that a steady stream of events and actions — implemented over time and at your own pace — will result in the greatest positive impact.
- Emphasizes that speeding is not just a problem to be solved but an opportunity to bring neighbors together to forge a more livable community.

But this is a Guide and not a Book of Rules. It's your neighborhood and your Campaign. Implement as few or as many of these anti-speeding tools that make sense to you. Do what feels right for your situation and your neighborhood.

Whether you closely follow the advice and ideas provided here, or plow new ground on your own, the Office of Neighborhoods asks that you:

- Inform us of your efforts;
- Call on us for support;
- Share your experiences, failures and successes;
- Document your work with photographs and written observations; and
- Suggest how this Guide can be improved.

Please partner with us to address speeding in your neighborhood.

Slow Down in K-Town!

## Categories of Speeders

NHTSA (National Highway Transportation Safety Administration) released a study in 2016 identifying four different categories of speeding drivers: “Deliberate Speeders,” “Typical Speeders,” “Situational Speeders,” and “Unintentional Speeders” (NHTSA, 2016).

“**Deliberate Speeders**” were found to engage in more aggressive and deliberate speeding events and engage in risky driving behaviors more often than other driver types. “Deliberate Speeders” also had the most favorable attitude toward speeding. Young males were more prevalent in this category.

“**Typical Speeders**” comprise the largest number of drivers with an even distribution across all driver demographics. These drivers engage in casual speeding most often.

“**Situational Speeders**” engage in minimal amounts of aggressive speeding and cruising speeding and only engaged in speeding events slightly more than “Unintentional Speeders,” however “Situational Speeders” did not share the same favorable views regarding not speeding as unintentional speeders.

“**Unintentional Speeders**” generally engage in incidental and casual speeding. These speeders have attitudes and beliefs that are most favorable toward not speeding. Both “Situational” and “Unintentional Speeders” are mostly comprised of older drivers (NHTSA, 2016).

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