

## Part 8: PILOT PROJECTS

*The final mission* assigned by the Town Council is that the Task Force identify pilot projects that would implement our recommendations. In approaching this undertaking, the Task Force sought projects that would demonstrate many recommendations we make and also, if possible, would locate them in each of the Town's quadrants. We do not assign any priority or order among the projects because we believe those decisions must be Council's and will necessarily involve choices among the full range of projects which compete for Council approval and funding.

### **Public transportation enhancements**

*Current Situation:* The area along the Route 15 By-pass east of town in the area of the Ft. Evans Road presents a very dangerous situation. Pedestrians (often mothers with several young children in tow) routinely dodge fast moving cars and trucks to cross the By-pass. By enhancing the public transportation options for citizens on both sides of the By-pass, the Task Force feels that the number of pedestrians crossing on foot would be lessened. As this report is being written, Loudoun Transit is finalizing plans to place three or more buses into daily service along established routes throughout Leesburg. One of the planned routes may help to alleviate this problem and is scheduled to begin in early 2001.

Currently the bike trails and paths in Town are not fully connected. Using the public transportation system to supplement this network is a viable option.

*Overall Goal:* Provide a safe, convenient and inexpensive way for residents to cross Route 15 By-pass in the areas of Ft. Evans Road and Edwards Ferry Roads. Help to shore up the missing links in the bike trail network.

#### *Proposed Enhancements:*

1. *Proposed device and location:* Shuttle bus service at Route 15 By-pass on east side of town.

*Proposal details and expected results:* The town should investigate the possibility of a shuttle bus system linking the residential neighborhoods otherwise within walking distance of commercial areas on both sides of the By-pass in the northeast quadrant. This would provide an alternate to crossing on foot. Retailers who would primarily benefit from the service would be expected to underwrite all or some part of the service, possibly through contract with Loudoun Transit.

This recommendation guards against the possibilities of delayed implementation of the new routes or final route selection that does not include frequent service into residential areas and to and from commercial areas on both sides of the By-pass in the northeast quadrant.

2. *Proposed device and location:* Free or reduced fares at Route 15 By-pass on the east side of town.

*Proposal details and expected results:* Loudoun Transit should be encouraged to offer free service for riders boarding at the last stop before a By-pass crossing who depart at the first stop after. This may attract ridership from pedestrians who otherwise feel constrained to make the crossing on foot.

3. *Proposed device and location:* Bike racks on buses throughout the entire public transportation system for the Town.

*Proposal details and expected results:* Loudoun Transit should be encouraged to equip its fleet with exterior bike racks. This would enhance usage by children, in particular, compensating for gaps in the trail system for both general transportation as well as recreation. For all bicyclists, the routine availability of such racks would allow public transportation to serve as the staging link for bicycle trips which otherwise must be served by automobiles.

### **Integrated Edwards Ferry Road program.**

*Current Situation:* Edwards Ferry has evolved from a country dirt road into a local through collector for the Town. The commercial development on the eastern end of the street has placed a great deal of traffic pressure on the almost purely residential west end of the street. If traffic calming measures are not taken, the continuing in town and county development to the east will only cause irreparable harm to the quality of life for this neighborhood and decrease the area's value to the Town as a whole.

The stop signs installed at Woodberry Street and Catoctin Circle have brought safer egress from Woodberry, safer and more orderly traffic movement at the Catoctin Circle intersection, and overall lower speeds. They remain in place, however, on a provisional basis pending Council receipt and approval of this report.

*Note:* We are aware that downtown traffic patterns present Council with a conundrum, and that the present intersection of East Market with Church Street and Edwards Ferry Road will be increasingly taxed both by natural traffic growth and by opening the courthouse complex. There are no magic solutions to these problems. However, we urge the Council to involve neighborhood residents in the planning of solutions in this area and to strive in lessening any adverse effects those changes would have on the neighborhood's quality of life and safety.

*Overall goal:* Slowing traffic on Edwards Ferry, reducing the number of vehicles using it as a cross-town shortcut, and making the street safer for pedestrians and bicyclists would greatly enhance the quality of life for the residents along the street and preserve the value this neighborhood.

*Proposed Traffic Calming Measures:*

1. *Traffic calming device and location:* Stop signs at Edwards Ferry Road's intersections with Woodberry and Catoctin Circle.

*Proposal details and expected results:* Make permanent the stop signs at both intersections. As stated above, these devices have helped make for a safer residential traffic environment.

2. *Traffic calming device and location:* Extended and "squared curbs"; landscaping; "entering neighborhood" signage at Edwards Ferry Road's intersection Catoctin Circle.

*Proposal details and expected results:* "Squaring -up" the southwest quadrant curb will allow for the permanent installation of the stop sign as stated above. More importantly, square corners have a traffic calming effect, as opposed to the rounded corners which tend to allow traffic to move more swiftly. Landscaping and "entering neighborhood" signage on south side of intersection will alert drivers to the transition from the commercial district into the residential area.

- See Illustration No. 1, "Squaring-up" Edwards Ferry /Catoctin Circle Intersection.

3. *Traffic calming device and location:* Neighborhood transition landscaping and signage at Dodona Manor.

*Proposal details and expected results:* Mark transition between the downtown historic area and the residential area by use of a landscaped island and sign which slow traffic by drawing the driver's attention and also by the perceived narrowing of right-of-way.

- See Illustration No. 2, Dodona Manor Landscaped Signage.

4. *Traffic calming devices and locations:* "Road Diet", landscaping, signage Edwards Ferry Road's intersections with Plaza Street.

*Proposal details and expected results:* Westbound traffic entering the neighborhood on Edwards Ferry Road presently merges from two lanes to one lane on the west side of the Plaza Street intersection. This is a dangerous situation which often causes drivers in the right lane (which ends shortly after Plaza) to greatly increase speed in order to overtake and pass competing traffic in the left lane. This "speeding by design" has a ripple effect which tends to increase the speed of all westbound traffic.

This situation can be improved by two actions. First, by closing off the right merge lane on the west side of Plaza and landscaping that lane to fit the overall streetscape. Second, by controlling the flow of traffic on the east side of Plaza by making (i) the right lane a "right turn only" to the north, (ii) the center lane "straight only" continuing into the neighborhood, and (iii) the left lane "turn-left-only" to the south.

Landscaping of the center island on the west side of the intersection and appropriate "entering neighborhood" and "No Trucks" signage should be installed as

well. These calming devices would alert drivers of the change from commercial/high density residential to a lower density residential district where slower, safer driving is imperative.<sup>1</sup>

- See Illustration No. 3, Edwards Ferry / Plaza “Road Diet.”

*5. Traffic calming device and locations:* New street signs strategically placed at Edwards Ferry intersections.

*Proposal details and expected results:* New street signs which incorporate readable block numbers would assist drivers (especially delivery truck drivers) who find themselves in residential neighborhoods when they are seeking the commercial area with Edwards Ferry addresses.

### **Oakcrest Manor pedestrian refuge.**

*Current Situation:* The Town Council responded to complaints of speeding on Oakcrest Manor Drive by installing all-way stop signs at Wildman Street. The Task Force received complaints of continued speeding from a number of residents in the area who requested installation of a speed hump or bump. There are many children in this neighborhood and Oakcrest Manor serves as a major bicycle route to Ida Lee Park. Heavy automobile traffic is associated with Paxton Child Development Center and services and activities at St. Johns Catholic Church. Church-related parking routinely overflows on-site parking and generates pedestrian crossings.

*Note:* As stated earlier in this report, traffic calming devices require broad neighborhood support and we would urge Council undertake this possible pilot project only if such support is established. The Task Force also does not recommend the use of speed humps or bumps in the Town.

*Overall Goal:* Calm traffic in the area and make the area safer for pedestrians.

*Traffic calming device and location:* Pedestrian refuge or raised pedestrian crosswalk at Oakcrest Manor around the entrance to St. Johns Catholic Church.

*Proposal details and expected results:* With the installation of either of the above devices, we feel that the twin problems of fast-moving traffic and pedestrian safety could be addressed. Both devices tend to calm traffic. As well, both alert drivers that pedestrians could be in the roadway. The pedestrian refuge can be an attractive addition to the streetscape which would give slower moving pedestrians a safe haven when crossing this wide street.

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<sup>1</sup> The Task Force is sensitive to staff’s concern that measures which add to southbound Plaza Street between Edwards Ferry and East Market Street could aggravate level of service at the Plaza-East Market intersection. Because that intersection is already under consideration for improvements, the Edwards Ferry-Plaza ‘diet’ proposal presents timing issues that should be addressed with implementation.

### **Clubhouse Drive bicycle path.**

*Current Situation:* Club House Drive lacks sidewalks but hosts speeding traffic in part due to ample width of pavement.

*Overall Goal:* Calm traffic in the area and make the area safer for pedestrians and bicyclist.

*Traffic calming device and location:* Bicycle and pedestrian lane markings all along Club House Drive.

*Proposal details and expected results:* We recommend that the Council consider marking part of the paved right-of-way as a path reserved for bicyclists and pedestrians. Bike lanes visually narrow the roadway and provide a safe haven for both pedestrians and bicyclist.<sup>2</sup>

- See Illustration No. 4, Clubhouse Drive Bicycle Lane.

### **North Street parking adjustments.**

*Current situation:* North Street NW (and also NE, immediately east of King Street) is plagued by rising traffic volume. One long range aid to the problem—no surprise to the Council or staff—would be opening a street in the northwest quadrant of town serving King Street traffic finding its way to the school board offices, the old hospital complex, the Rust Library, Morven Park or the new residential neighborhoods developing in their vicinity. (Illustration No. 5, “Northwest Passage.”) We add our endorsement to such a street as the best long-term assistance to the traffic burden borne by the North Street NW residents as well as functioning as a much-needed traffic link in its own right. In the short run, on-street parking remains the major factor in keeping North Street traffic slow; however, poor visibility at the Wirt Street intersection makes egress from Wirt a perilous undertaking.

*Proposed solution and location:* Although we are reluctant to remove any spaces from the tight downtown inventory, we recommend that no parking areas in the vicinity of the North—Wirt intersection be adjusted to improve sight distance.

### **Sycolin Road renaming.**

*Current situation:* The extension of Plaza Street southeast to connect to Sycolin Road at the By-pass resulted in a truncated segment of Sycolin Road in town. Delivery vehicles, in particular, become inappropriate “cut-through” traffic as they find themselves on the wrong segment of Sycolin looking for the path to the right one.

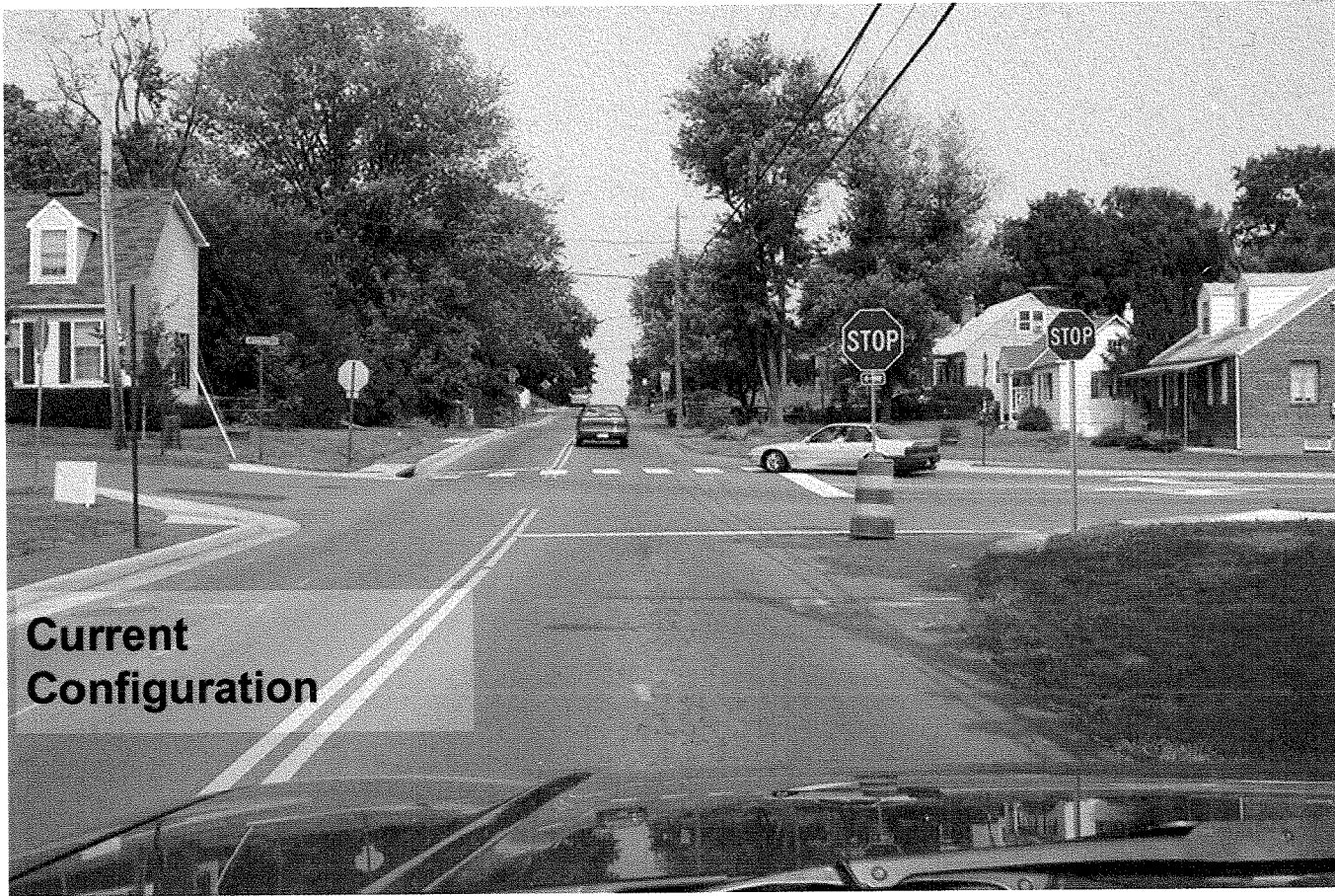
*Proposed solution and location:* Renaming the segment running from East Market Street to its dead-end terminus in the vicinity of the Douglass Support Center “Old Sycolin

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<sup>2</sup> As with the ‘road diet’, we acknowledge staff’s opposition to marking bike paths that don’t link into networks. While this, too, may present an issue of timing, linked with construction of a South King Street trail, trail networks have starting and stopping points—inevitable gaps—and it is impossible that every piece of a linked network be put in place at one time.

Road” would help eliminate the confusion caused by streets no longer having an apparent relation to each other having the same name.

# Edwards Ferry and Catoctin Circle



# Edwards Ferry Road at Dodona Manor



**Traffic Calming Measures  
Landscaping and Signage**

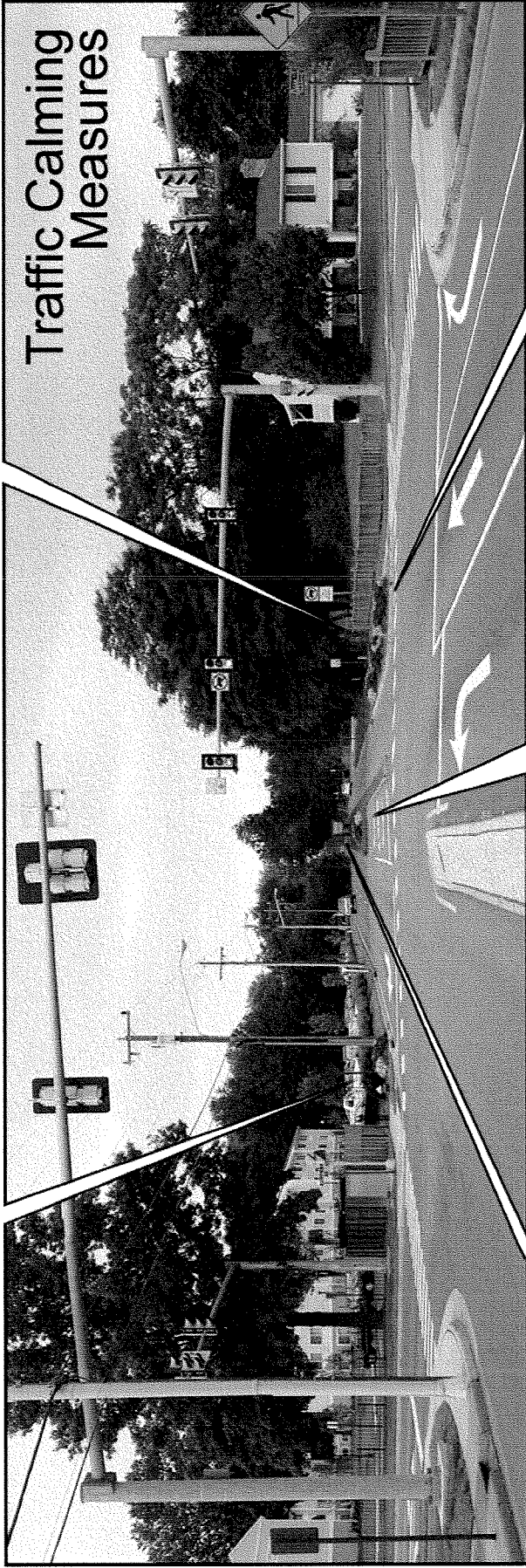


**Current Configuration**



# Edwards Ferry Road at Plaza Street

Landscaping

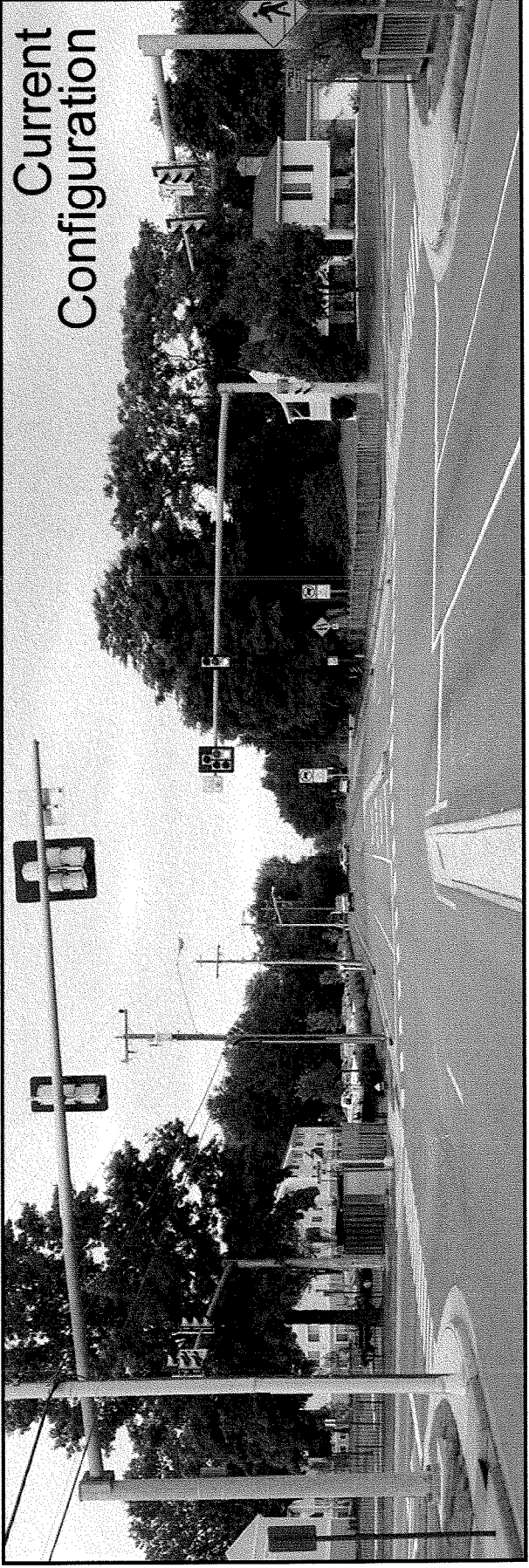


Traffic Calming Measures

Gateway Signage

Center Island

Lane Closure



Current Configuration

# Clubhouse Drive

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Current Configuration



Traffic Calming Measure  
Bike Lane

# Leesburg "Northwest Passage"

Hypothetical North Street  
Relief Connector

