Traffic-calming Measures

November 2011

Glossary

For up-to-date knowledge relating to healthy public policy

This glossary was developed in conjunction with the document "Urban Traffic Calming and Health: A Literature Review" for the purpose of describing and illustrating the various traffic-calming measures referred to in the review. The review in question can be consulted online at: http://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/ReviewLiteratureTrafficCalming_En.pdf.

This glossary identifies and describes traffic-calming measures, and offers the terms side by side in French and English. It may be of general interest to those seeking a simple way to orient themselves with respect to the numerous existing calming measures or those who are more generally interested in policies related to transportation or mobility. For these reasons, the NCCHPP is publishing the Glossary as a separate document as well as an appendix to the literature review.

As mentioned in the literature review, some of the devices described below are not considered by everyone to belong to the category of what are generally referred to as "traffic-calming measures." However, they are included in this glossary because some of the studies consulted for the literature review and some traffic engineers treat them as traffic-calming measures, in certain contexts.

Bike box/
Sas vélo*, *Sas cyclable

A bike box is a facility that allows cyclists to position themselves in front of vehicles stopped at an intersection with traffic lights. This painted space on the pavement makes cyclists more visible and ensures them start-up priority when the light turns green.

Source: www.flickr.com.
Photographer: Richard Drdul.

Bike lane, Cycle lane/
Bande cyclable

A bike lane is a portion of the road reserved for the exclusive or preferential use of cyclists. Unlike a cycle track, which is physically separated from motor vehicles using the road, a bike lane is delimited by road markings. The space needed for the bike lane is generally obtained by eliminating one traffic lane, by narrowing one or several lanes, or by eliminating parking spaces for cars.

Source: www.pedbikeimages.org.
Photographer: Steven Faust.

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Chicane, Serpentine, Reversing curve, Twist/ *Chicane*

A chicane is a series of horizontal deflections (usually three in a row) installed on an otherwise straight road to create an “S” shaped traffic lane.

Source: www.pedbikeimages.org.
Photographer: Dan Burden.

Choker, Mid-block narrowing, Pinch point, Mid-block yield point, Constriction/ *Goulot d’étranglement*

A choker is an isolated narrowing of one or several traffic lanes created by the installation of horizontal deflections in the centre or on the sides of the road. The term “choker,” like its equivalents, is usually reserved for narrowings located other than at intersections.

Source: www.cyclestreets.net.
Photographer: unknown.

Crosswalk, Zebra crosswalk, Zebra crossing/ *Passage piéton*, *Traverse piétonne*, *Traversée piétonne*

A crosswalk is a facility designed to make crossing the road easier for pedestrians by delimiting a space with road markings to indicate that it is meant to be shared with pedestrians.

Source: www.pedbikeimages.org.
Photographer: Dan Burden.

Curb extension, Bulb-out, Bulbout/
Saillie de trottoir*, *Avancée de trottoir

A curb extension is a continuation of the sidewalk at an intersection intended to make pedestrians more visible and decrease their exposure to collisions by reducing crossing distances. A curb extension can also be used to reduce the width or the number of traffic lanes.

Source: www.flickr.com.
Photographer: Richard Drdul.

Cycle track/
Piste cyclable

A cycle track is a portion of the road reserved for the exclusive use of cyclists. Unlike a bike lane, which is delimited by road markings, a cycle track is physically separated from motorized traffic by bollards, medians, parking spaces, etc. The space needed for the cycle track is generally obtained by eliminating a traffic lane, by narrowing one or several lanes, or by eliminating parking spaces for cars.

Source: www.flickr.com.
Photographer: Eric Gilliland.

Diagonal diverters, Full diverters, Diagonal road closures/
Terre-plein diagonal*, *Îlot diagonal

A diagonal diverter is a raised island placed diagonally at an intersection so as to allow only right turns. Diagonal diverters can be designed to allow pedestrians and cyclists to continue on their way unobstructed.

Source: www.flickr.com.
Photographer: UrbanGrammar.

Forced-turn island, Right-turn island, Forced turn lane, Deflector island, Forced turn channelization/
Îlot de canalisation*, *Îlot tourne-à-droite*, *Îlot tourne-à-gauche

A forced-turn island is a median positioned at the approach to an intersection that orients vehicles in the desired direction or directions.

Source: Ewing, 1999, p. 29.

Full closure, Full street closure, Cul-de-sac, Dead-end/
Fermeture de rue*, *Impasse*, *Cul-de-sac

Full closures often take the form of barriers that prevent motor vehicles from continuing along the road, but allow pedestrians and cyclists to pass.

Source: www.pedbikeimages.org.
Photographer: Dan Burden.

Gateway/
Portail d'entrée*, *Porte d'entrée

Gateways are facilities designed to indicate entrance to a calmed area.

Source: www.pedbikeimages.org.
Photographer: Dan Burden.

Mini-roundabout, Mini-traffic circles, Intersection islands/
Minigiratoire*, *Îlot circulaire

A mini-roundabout is an intersection with a central island that is usually raised and circular. Vehicles entering the circle must yield passage to those already inside and must travel around in a counterclockwise direction.

Source: www.pedbikeimages.org.
Photographer: Dan Burden.

One-way street/
Rue à sens unique

A one-way street is a street on which vehicles are authorized to travel in only one direction. One-way streets can be used, with minimal cost, to prevent through traffic from using local residential streets instead of roads designed to handle larger traffic volumes (collector roads and arteries) to cross an area. For example, the installation of two facing one-way streets going in opposite directions can force drivers to turn onto an intersecting artery, and prevent vehicles from continuing in a straight line along local streets.

Source: www.flickr.com.
Photographer: Guillaume Goyette.

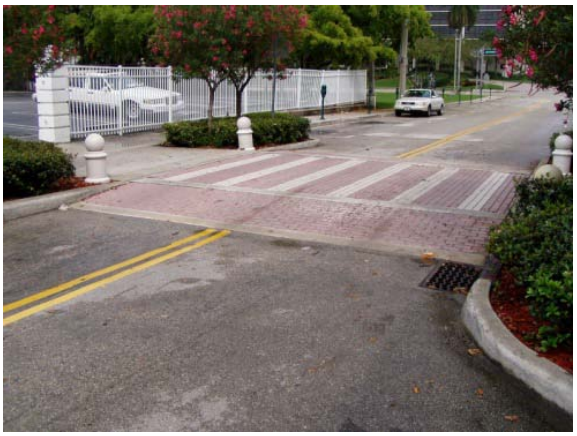
Pedestrian refuge, Median refuge/
Refuge piéton

A pedestrian refuge is a median typically located in the middle of the road to allow pedestrians to cross in two stages.

Source: NCCHPP.
Photographer: Olivier Bellefleur.

Raised crosswalk, Raised zebra crossing, Raised crossing, Hump pelican/
Passage piéton surélevé*, *Traverse piétonne surélevée*, *Traversée surélevée

A raised crosswalk is a facility designed to make crossing the road easier for pedestrians and which typically raises the pavement to the level of the sidewalks. Raised crosswalks are often made of a textured and coloured material to indicate clearly that the space is meant to be shared with pedestrians.



Source: www.pedbikeimages.org.
Photographer: Dan Burden.

Raised intersection, Raised junction, Intersection hump, Table, Plateau/
Intersection surélevée

A raised intersection is an intersection where the pavement has been raised relative to the level of the roads leading to it. The platform created by the vertical deflection is often made of a textured material and is raised to the level of the sidewalks to indicate clearly that the space is meant to be shared with pedestrians.

Source: www.cyclestreets.net.
Photographer: unknown.

Raised median, Centre island narrowing, Traffic island/
Terre-plein central*, *Îlot central

A raised median is a raised island usually built down the central axis of two-way roads to separate traffic going in opposite directions and reduce lane widths.

Source: www.pedbikeimages.org.
Photographer: Dan Burden.

Road diet, Lane reduction/
Régime routier

A road diet usually refers to the conversion of a four-lane road into a three-lane road, with one lane for traffic going in each direction and a central lane reserved for left turns from either direction. The space recuperated can be used to add bike lanes, sidewalks, or vegetation.

Source: www.pedbikeimages.org.
Photographer: Dan Burden.

Roundabout, Modern roundabout/
Carrefour giratoire*, *Giratoire

A roundabout is an intersection at which vehicles entering must yield right of way to vehicles already circulating around a central circular or oval-shaped island. To slow down traffic and induce drivers to yield right of way, there are horizontal deflections at the entrances which position vehicles to rotate in the correct direction. Roundabouts generally replace intersections with traffic signals on roads designed for quite high traffic volumes (collectors, arteries).

Source: www.flickr.com.
Photographer: WSDOT.

Speed bump, Bump/
Dos d'âne

Speed bumps, not to be confused with speed humps, are narrow vertical deflections that generally extend less than 30 centimetres across. In cars, it is easy to travel over them at very low speeds (5-10 km/h) or very high speeds, in which case the suspension system can absorb the deflection. Thus, their use is generally restricted to areas where high speeds are impractical, such as parking lots or alleyways.

Source: www.flickr.com.
Photographer: Bridget Ames.

Speed Camera/
Radar photo

Speed cameras are devices that allow vehicles exceeding the speed limit to be identified automatically.

Source: www.flickr.com.
Photographer: B.T. Indrelunas.

Speed cushions, Speed lumps/
Coussins berlinois

Speed cushions are vertical deflections designed to act on cars in the same way as speed humps, while having a minimal effect on heavy vehicles, such as emergency vehicles (fire truck, ambulance, etc.) and buses.

Source: www.flickr.com.
Photographer: Richard Drdul.

Speed hump, Road hump, Hump/
Dos d'âne allongé

Speed humps, not to be confused with speed bumps, are wide vertical deflections that typically extend three to four metres along the road. They can only be travelled over comfortably at low speeds (15-30 km/h). Thus, their use is widespread on local streets in residential neighbourhoods, in school zones, around parks, etc.

Source: www.pedbikeimages.org.
Photographer: Dan Burden.

Speed limit painted on the asphalt/
Marquage au sol indiquant la limite de vitesse

Road markings indicating the speed limit are often used in conjunction with other calming measures, such as vertical or horizontal deflections.

Source: www.flickr.com.
Photographer: Ian Britton.

Speed table, Trapezoidal hump, Speed platform/
Plateau ralentisseur

A speed table is a vertical deflection spanning the pavement, whose top is usually flat and extends far enough along the road for a car or even a heavy vehicle to rest on it. The vertical contour of speed tables allows them to be easily crossed at faster speeds than speed humps allow, which is why they are generally used on collector roads and arteries.

Source: Boulter et al., 2001, p. 11.

Speed-activated sign/
Signal lumineux activé par la vitesse

A speed-activated sign is a device that usually indicates the speed of vehicles and whether they are travelling under or over the speed limit.

Source: www.flickr.com.
Photographer: Eric Allix Rogers.

Stop sign/
Panneau d'arrêt

A stop sign is a traffic sign indicating that drivers must stop their vehicle and wait until the lane is free before continuing on their way. Its purpose is usually to manage right of way for users of an intersection. However, it is also sometimes used as a traffic-calming measure. For example, stop signs have been used in the past to slow down traffic in certain areas, and thus make them less attractive to through traffic.

Source: www.flickr.com.
Photographer: Bridget Ames.

Textured crosswalk, Textured crossing/
Passage piéton texturé*, *Traverse piétonne texturée*, *Traversée texturée

A textured crosswalk is a facility designed to make crossing the road easier for pedestrians and which is made from a textured, and often coloured, material to indicate clearly that the space is meant to be shared with pedestrians.

Source: www.pedbikeimages.org.
Photographer: Richard Drdul.

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Authors: Olivier Bellefleur and François Gagnon, National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy

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