

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

Time to tame Pottstown's speeders

Discussing a recent traffic fatality caused by speeding earlier this month, Pottstown Council President Dan Weand has called for installing speed bumps on residential streets as they do in Jenkintown and other progressive towns.

It's an idea whose time has come in Pottstown.



Commentary by
Thomas Hylton

A century ago, as more people started using cars, traffic engineers designed our streets to maximize traffic flow.

The unintended consequence has been making our streets less safe for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists alike, because it's easier to speed.

Starting in the 1960s, planners in the Netherlands began purposely installing obstacles in the street to force drivers to slow down to navigate around them.

It worked so well other European countries followed their example. The concept was gradually adopted in the United States, including Pennsylvania.

Pottstown's default speed limit is 25 miles per hour. That's plenty fast for motorists to get where they want to go in residential neighborhoods.

Speed limit signs are easily ignored, and police enforcement, while necessary, is expensive and impractical. You can't have a police officer on every street 24/7.

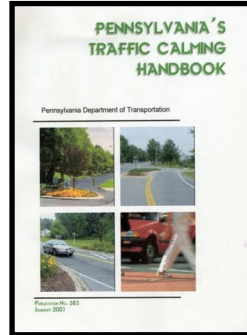
Speed barriers can be omnipresent.

Complaints will come from motorists who have been used to speeding for years and don't want to be inconvenienced.

But safety is more important.



ABOVE, speed "humps" in Detroit have gaps to allow emergency vehicles to pass through unimpeded.



P e n n D O T adopted its first traffic calming manual in 2001. It lists various methods — including physical barriers — to induce motorists to slow down.



ABOVE AND BELOW, the Dutch use various obstacles to force motorists to slow down.

