



Did you know?

Roundabouts Improve Safety



City of St. Louis
Street Department



Smart Growth
A M E R I C A



TRAFFIC CALMING PROJECT

2025

PROJECT REPORT

Community Engagement Roundabout Demonstration

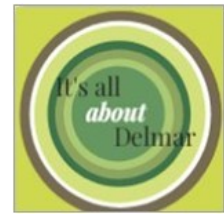
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PROJECT BACKGROUND

It's All About Delmar, a Smart Growth America program in St. Louis, aims to help residents with various traffic issues in and around residential areas. Our project provided residents with a chance to name and evaluate traffic calming issues, test measures, and to start implementing solutions. This planning initiative aimed to balance the use of Delmar Boulevard among automobiles, pedestrians, cyclists, residents, and children at play. This initiative supports traffic calming and safety methods in residential communities. The proposal reduces speeding traffic enforcement, road design changes, and installing traffic calming devices while ensuring mobility and access. The initiative aims to enhance driving safety on Delmar Boulevard between Vandeventer and Taylor Avenues with strategic changes. Resident interest has been an important part, following a community engagement model of ask, align, and act. At community meetings, residents received updates on the city planning process for the area, including security camera installations and sidewalk modifications for accessibility needs. Surveys about speeding were distributed by It's All About Delmar team at meeting and community events, and the responses showed that action needed to be taken to reduce traffic speeds. Resident buy-in and ownership were crucial for effective traffic calming and speed reduction proposals.

A program of the St. Louis Association in St. Louis MO is sponsored by Smart Growth America. This program is in St. Louis MO and aims to help residents with various traffic issues in and around residential areas. Our project provided residents with a chance to identify and evaluate traffic calming issues, test measures, and to start implementing solutions. This planning initiative aimed to balance the use of Delmar Boulevard among automobiles, pedestrians, cyclists, residents, and children at play. This initiative supports traffic calming and safety methods for the residential section in hopes of reducing traffic speeding, proposing street design changes, and the installation of traffic



calming devices in an equitable manner. The initiative aims to enhance driving safely on Delmar Boulevard between Vandeventer and Taylor Avenues. Resident interest has been an important part of strategic change proposals. At community meetings, residents received updates on the city planning process for the area, including security camera installations and sidewalk modifications for accessibility needs. A part of this project was the distribution of surveys about street improvements. These surveys were delivered at community meetings and events. Responses were clear, residents wanted to reduce traffic speeds.

Residents have helped to enhance Delmar's by partnering with the Department of Forestry, 120 street trees were planted to create a green canopy that visually narrows the street, encouraging drivers to slow down. Other environmental additions include installing trash cans and residents regularly picking up litter and disposing of trash containers. Beautification projects are addressing vacant lots along the street. Private investments are energizing the real estate market with new and renovated buildings. Our traffic calming proposals aim to improve infrastructure for residents and enhance cooperation in Delmar's residential area.

PROBLEM

Problem 1: Delmar Avenue is often referred to as the "Delmar Divide." The division arises from historical segregation practices and policies, including redlining, racial covenants, and static urban planning decisions. An economic and racial divide exists, with residents south of Delmar generally being wealthier and predominantly white, while those north of Delmar belong to predominantly black communities that have faced historic destabilization, including insufficient private and public investments and reduced public services.

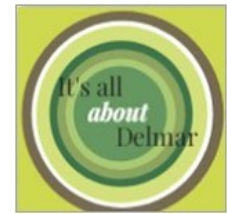
Planning research often misses how neighborhoods disconnect from cities and nearby areas (Environment and Planning B: Urban Analytics and City Science). Studies show poor neighborhoods,



regardless of race, are less connected to mainstream (nonpoor and white) neighborhoods than nonpoor neighborhoods, with this gap widening during the pandemic. Delmar serves as the boundary between neighborhoods with different socioeconomic characteristics. Efforts for collaboration on street infrastructure needs can be helpful for all the neighborhoods along the corridor.

Problem 2: During the 1950s, Delmar's thriving commercial sector faced significant challenges as the use of streetcar transportation diminished. Later, the area between Taylor and Vandeventer Avenues became vacant and unoccupied. Despite this, public policies continued to favour commercial interests rather than adopting zoning regulations for this stretch that would support new residential development emerging in the 1970s. Research shows that wide residential streets, such as Delmar Avenue, have several negative implications: promotion of speeding and elevated accident rates. Public speed policies did not keep up with a community changing from commercial to residential. The speed limit in St. Louis is **25 miles per hour**, unless otherwise posted. (1960 C., § 824.030; 1994 C., § 17.10.030; Ord. No. 57831, § 1 (part), 1979.) 17.10.040. Delmar does not have posted speed limits. Our speed counter recorded 1,512 vehicles over a two-hour period from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm on May 14, 2025. About 20 percent, or 302 vehicles, were recorded driving over the speed limit.

Problem 4: 2024 saw the highest number of crashes in St. Louis, reports Trail Net, a transportation advocacy group. They found that high speeds on wide streets were a contributing factor, like the crashes on Delmar. One incident on Delmar Boulevard led to 4 deaths. Another crash caused 2 deaths and 3 injuries. Recently, a vehicle hit a signal pole, causing it to fall onto a car and inflict severe damage. Fortunately, there were no serious injuries. The front of a commercial building was damaged by two crashes. Children have been hit by cars when crossing the street. A church is



currently renovating its exterior due to multiple accidents. It is common to see automotive parts associated with collisions ejecting debris all along Delmar.

Delmar Avenue, known as the "Delmar Divide," reflects historical segregation practices like redlining and racial covenants. This has led to an economic and racial divide, with predominantly white, wealthier residents living south of Delmar, and predominantly black communities facing historic disinvestment north of it. The area once thrived commercially but declined in the 1950s with the fall of streetcar transportation. Wide streets on Delmar encourage speeding, leading to frequent crashes that increase insurance costs, deterring reinvestment.

Several crashes have impacted Delmar Avenue significantly. In 2022, a crash involving a stolen car resulted in four deaths. In 2023, three individuals were injured. In 2024, a pedestrian accident occurred. In 2025, a crash damaged traffic signals at Vandeventer and Delmar. Residents reported their vehicles being hit, while cars have collided with a business twice and a church hit multiple times. Pets have been run over and killed.

PEOPLE AND THEIR INVOLVEMENT

Stakeholders such as locals, businesses, churches, and community groups were informed about the problems, able to name related key issues, and express interest in effective mitigation strategies.

Other stakeholders were public authorities such as government regulators. Together, several stakeholders developed and participated in a pop-up event designed to display various strategies for mitigating and reducing vehicular traffic speeds while communicating traffic calming measures to the greater community. The stakeholder groups included:

Parents	Public Safety Officials	Media/Information	Architect Groups
Property Owners	Renters	Seniors/Disabled	Government Officials
Community Groups	Churches	Local Businesses	Engineer
Children and youth	Elected Ward Leaders	Community Leaders	Community Members



The **It's All About Delmar** team, consisting of an Urban Planner, two City Planners, and an Architect, and design and social work students. The Urban Planner managed the project from August 2024 to May 2025, focusing on community engagement and event leadership.

APPROACH

The methodology employs a community engagement model, which serves as a method for planning and evaluating traffic methods undertaken by our program. Below is a general outline of the model:

1. Identification of community stakeholders, including parents, property owners, community groups, children and youth, information technology professionals, public safety officials, renters, religious institutions, elected ward leaders, media representatives, seniors/disabled individuals, local businesses, community leaders, architectural groups, students, government officials, engineers, and community members. Stakeholders were identified from both sides of Delmar.
2. Inform stakeholders about current Delmar street improvements from the city planning department details at community meetings.
3. **We asked** stakeholders to provide suggestions for improving Delmar during our meetings and at events. Surveys are distributed at meetings to give stakeholders a written chance to express their concerns. **We aligned** community responses with successful traffic models that effectively address concerns. **We acted** by responding to the community with information grounded in evidence-based research.
4. The goal of **It's All About Delmar** is to involve the Delmar community in decision-making for street improvements. To establish a consensus, an essential objective encourages cooperation between residents living north and south of Delmar.



5. The selected engagement strategies included community meetings/events, media, volunteer opportunities, mail campaigns, signage and a model demonstration of chosen strategies. The action plan involved data collection, organizing and attending community meetings, planning events and creating artwork that represented resident expectations.
6. **Community Engagement Meeting, April 13, 2024.** The first community meeting saw the **It's All About Delmar** introduction of the project at Ranken Technical College. Flyers were distributed door to door to announce the meeting. The City's Planning Department discussed upcoming improvements on Delmar, such as red-light cameras and sidewalk modifications for the elderly and disabled. Residents received a survey to complete and were encouraged to participate in future meetings.

Community Engagement Meeting, June 4, 2024. The second community meeting was held via Zoom. The **It's All About Delmar** team explained "Traffic Calming," principles to reduce negative vehicle impacts and enhance conditions for non-motorized street users. Residents received a survey and were encouraged to complete this and join future meetings.

Community Engagement Event, June 19, 2024. The third community gathering during the Juneteenth Celebration at Galilee Missionary Baptist Church. Here, the **It's All About Delmar** team displayed renderings of traffic calming designs like bump outs and roundabouts. Residents were polled about narrowing Delmar and roundabout locations for Delmar.

Community Engagement Meeting, September 28, 2024. The fourth community meeting was held on Zoom. The **It's All About Delmar** team shared survey responses from previous meetings. Residents discussed narrowing the street from Taylor to Vandeventer with bump outs and roundabouts, renderings were viewed. Next, we needed to prove the feasibility of these changes and considered contracting Trail Net for this task.

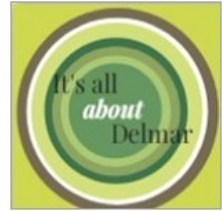


Community Engagement Meeting, October 12, 2024. The fifth community meeting was conducted via Zoom, providing residents an opportunity to engage with a representative from Trailnet, who outlined their involvement in traffic calming initiatives. However, subsequent discussions between the **It's All About Delmar** team and Trailnet did not result in their capacity for our demonstration project. The St. Louis Association of Community Organizations, led by Judith Arnold, an urban planner, organized the demonstration event.

Community Engagement Meeting, November 16, 2024. The sixth community meeting was held at the West Side Missionary Baptist Church for residents who had not previously participated but sought information. The team presented the current city-planned street improvements on Delmar. Traffic calming strategies, such as roundabouts and bump outs, were discussed as feasible solutions for narrowing the street and reducing speed. Renderings were presented.

Community Engagement Meeting, February 20, 2025. The seventh community meeting was held on Zoom for residents who had not previously participated but sought information. The **It's All About Delmar** team presented the current city-planned street improvements on Delmar. Traffic calming strategies, such as roundabouts and bump outs, were discussed as feasible solutions for narrowing the street and reducing speed. Renderings were presented.

Community Engagement Event, April 30 2025. The eighth and final community gathering summarized previous meetings and events. Supported by three elected officials, the team showcased a roundabout and bump outs at Delmar and Taylor Avenues. Residents reviewed renderings and observed lowed traffic through a pop-up demonstration. Additionally, a storyteller recounted the history of Delmar and highlighted significant landmarks along the street. A survey for residents was distributed and completed.



7. Media

Drawing from previous experience, the **It's All About Delmar** team adopted a conservative media strategy. We combined flyers, door hangers, postcards and social media to promote engagement opportunities. The residents expressed appreciation for receiving flyers or door hangers at their doors to announce meetings. Additionally, they valued ZOOM meetings, which led to increased participation. Visual representations were a part and particularly effective, with residents responding positively to the rendering's presentations. We shared images from meetings and events on Facebook and Instagram. A traffic counter mechanized the number of vehicles passing through the intersection and the number of the vehicles.

With a drone, auto traffic and aerial photography were taken on the day of the demonstration to be posted right after this report is submitted.

8. Volunteer Opportunities

In terms of community development, **It's All About Delmar** successfully achieved its objective of uniting residents from both north and south of Delmar to address the issue of street traffic improvements. This was accomplished through volunteer opportunities such as litter pickups. Volunteer opportunities concentrated on data collection and diverse aspects of community well-being, including social event planning and attendance, environmental conservation, and social welfare initiatives. Individuals and teams planting trees and flowers. Residents received a stipend for their efforts.

9. Roundabout Demonstration Event

The one-day demonstration project on April 30th at the intersection of Delmar and Taylor engaged community members in collaborative efforts to highlight proposed enhancements for Delmar.



Utilizing a prototyping process, a pop-up demonstration featured a roundabout and bump outs constructed with lighter, cost-effective, readily accessible materials. This initiative was designed to visually present the new concept for community evaluation through a temporary installation. Several days before the event, street signage was placed to inform people about the construction of a roundabout demonstration. Stakeholders received a postcard by mail about the event, and a flyer was posted on social media. The objective was to enable residents to better comprehend, support and learn about a desired outcome of traffic calming on Delmar.

An informational tent provided a project summary, visual renderings, and surveys away from the demonstration area. Residents learned about upcoming project steps, Delmar's significance, and notable sites along the street. Residents had the opportunity to interact with one another in a relaxed environment while studying the issues.

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Attendance at meetings and events increased to 140 residents interested in the street improvement project and its survey. Many people wanted to discuss roundabout locations, share experiences from driving on Delmar, or inquire about construction timelines. The majority were happy about the interest in conceptual changes coming to the area.

Out of 172 surveys, 83% wanted Delmar to become narrower between Vandeventer and Taylor Avenue and agreed on widening tree lawns for bump outs. Additionally, 80% believed roundabouts are an effective way to calm traffic and reduce speeding. The selected locations for roundabouts on Delmar are Taylor Avenue, Vandeventer Avenue, Pendleton/Boyle Avenue, and Sarah Street. The conception of roundabouts are to address traffic crashes at these intersections. Some individuals also value the design elements, like neighbourhood names on the roundabouts. Many believed the wider tree lawns might be used for planting trees for environmental purposes. Roundabouts and



street bump outs are best practice models for traffic calming according to the Federal Highway Administration and the AARP Liveable Communities and effectively reduce crashes compared to current intersections.

10. Impact

The **All About Delmar** project brought together 172 residents from North and South of the “Delmar Divide.” They were able to reach a consensus on traffic issues by learning what was on tap for Delmar, best practices, dialogue and from survey responses. Residents chose roundabouts and bump outs to reduce Delmar traffic in the residential area. Residents reviewed plans for roundabouts and bump outs at intersections, showing interest in implementing these designs at a key intersection. This engagement process facilitated communication among residents and enabled different neighbourhoods to address their shared concerns collectively.

11. Documentation and Reporting

We obtained letters of support from the three local Alderpersons for our demonstration site. They backed the demonstration roundabout at Taylor and Delmar Avenues and secured permissions from the Streets Department and the Board of Public. The Street Department recommended contractors for the construction of the temporary roundabout, bump outs, and warning lights. Our engineers provided the contractor with a detailed drawing of the street dimensions, which was utilized for implementation. The demonstration was set for April 30th. Traffic lights were turned off. **All About Delmar** measured speed and volume from 5pm to 7pm before and during the demonstration to get a sample of speed and automobile volume. Based on the data from the Street Logic Pro traffic counter, 1,362 vehicles passed through the intersection before the installation, with 20 percent exceeding the speed limit. The installation slowed all the traffic of moving vehicles. Click on the link to see drone visualization. newdiem.com/gf



Before the demonstration, 1,000 postcards were mailed to stakeholders in zip codes 63108 and 63113. Social media such as email and Facebook posted flyers invited others. Street signs were produced and strategically positioned in proximity to the project location. The area was litter free by resident volunteers. An information tent set-up and contained renderings, a storyteller and refreshments. Even through the raindrops, about 120 residents were present to lean from **It's All About Delmar** who presented survey findings and the next steps.

12. Lessons Learned

- Despite initial setbacks, we completed the project by staying focused and persevering.
- We saved time and optimized participant numbers with a 1,000-postcard mailing by zip code.
- Informative door hangers alleviated anxiety about the pop-up demonstration.
- Volunteers participated through resident involvement and student service projects.
- Securing support from all elected officials at the demonstration site obtained the necessary project permissions.
- Analogous events were successfully modelled.
- We did not make assumptions but instead identified the needs of all key stakeholders.
- Successful engagement model: ask, align, act
- Residents selected the locations for the street improvements.
- If you give the right resources and tools to people, they will use them with success.
- The roundabout could have been a little wider.

13. Next Steps

This report will be sent to Smart Growth of America, the City's Street Department, Planning Department, and the Board of Public Service, and made available to residents. It supports a grant application for Great Streets and proposes a new ordinance allowing citizens to decide on street changes without Aldermanic initiation.