



From: Damien Carbery,
Riverwood Residents Association

Carpenterstown
Dublin 15

To: Alan Sherry, Administrative Officer
Operations Department
Grove Road, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15
roads@fingal.ie

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Re: Control of Vehicle Speeds in Residential Areas

Riverwood Residents Association represents the residents of Riverwood estate in Carpenterstown, Dublin 15. Implementing a 30km/h speed limit in the housing estate roads would be a very positive move that would improve the safety, air quality and noise levels for residents of all ages.

The housing estate roads in Riverwood are meandering and often lack footpaths. Both of these are features intended to make the estate seem smaller and more intimate. The meandering roads aspired to reduce vehicle speeds by forcing drivers to slow down as they went around each bend. The omission of footpaths aimed to reduce vehicle speeds by forcing putting pedestrians on the road and very close to vehicles. Unfortunately neither feature is working quite as planned.

Riverwood residents are fortunate that there are a number of open spaces areas of various sizes spread throughout the estate. The largest open space area, facing Riverwood Chase and Copse, has a playground, basketball court, tennis courts in addition to grass spaces. This attracts children and adults, by foot and in car, from other areas in Riverwood and beyond.

Riverwood also has a number of pre-schools and crèches. This increases the pedestrian and vehicle numbers travelling in and out of the estate at multiple times during the day. Furthermore, numerous children walk through the estate, en route to the nearby primary and secondary schools.

Although it is difficult for vehicles to travel at 50km/h along the meandering estate roads in Riverwood, some drivers seem determined to try to reach that speed. For example, there is a creche at 28 Riverwood Chase. It is 435 metres from the entrance of the estate. Travelling at a constant 50km/h, it would take 31 seconds to drive to that house. It would take 52 seconds at a constant 30km/h. Covering the entire 435 metres at the current speed limit is impossible so the 21 second difference would be less.

For some people the saving of a maximum of 21 seconds seems to be very important. Ironically, they don't connect the risk they pose to children in the estate with the fact that they are collecting a child.

The sight lines along the estate roads are insufficient for such speeds. Illegal parking of cars of footpaths occurs throughout the estate (due to insufficient driveway space) and pedestrians are often

forced onto the road to pass these cars. Children are highly mobile and unpredictable and can quickly enter the path of a vehicle without warning.

If vehicles travelled at lower speeds on the housing estate roads parents would be more likely to move around the estate without their vehicles and to allow their children to move around without their supervision.

Safety Benefits

If a pedestrian is hit by a car travelling at 30km/h they have a 90% chance of survival. If they are hit by a car travelling at 50km/h they have a 50% chance of survival. This is according to the RSA “The Faster The Speed The Bigger The Mess” leaflet.

HARD AND FAST FACTS

Pedestrians hit by a car...

at 30 km/h – 1 in 10 will die



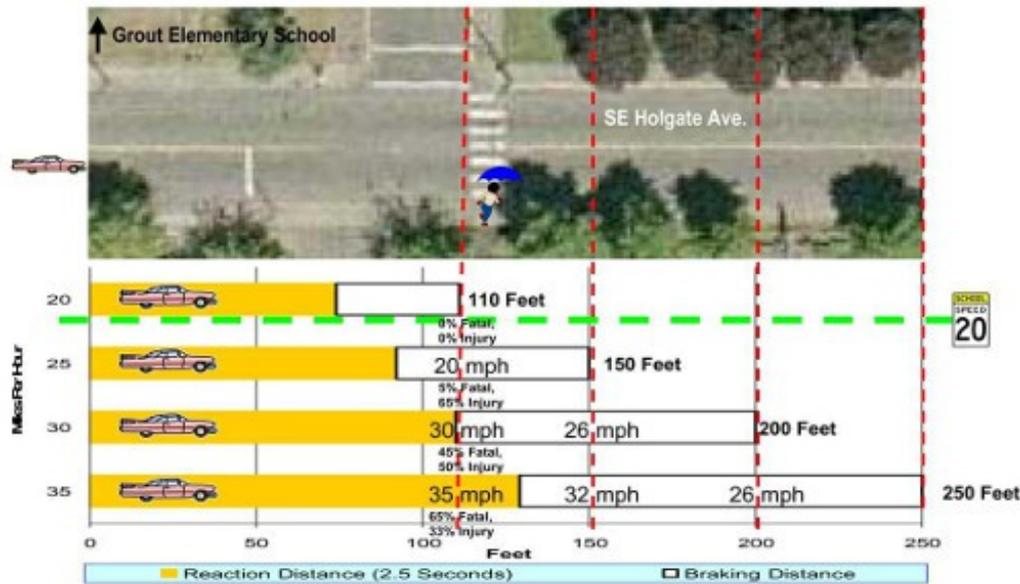
at 50 km/h – 5 in 10 will die



at 60 km/h – 9 in 10 will die



EFFECTS OF SPEED ON STOPPING DISTANCE



District Coalition - Southeast Uplift Neighborhood Association



The Portland Department of Transportation (Oregon, USA) produced the above graphic highlighting the stopping distance based on speed. Travelling at 20 mph (approximately 30km/h) requires a stopping distance (reaction plus braking) of 110 feet (33.5 metres). In the photo, anything above that results in the car still in motion when it reaches the zebra crossing, resulting in the child being hit.

Benefit to Drivers

Driving at or below 30km/h in Riverwood is actually easier than travelling faster. At this lower speed you have more time to see and react to hazards. This results in a more relaxing drive within the estate.

Drivers also benefit from improved fuel economy as accelerating to 30km/h uses less fuel than accelerating to 50km/h.

Other Benefits

Motor vehicle emissions are lower when travelling at lower speeds. There are less emissions as people move around the estate without cars.

Accelerating to and travelling at 30km/h is less noisy than 50km/h. Less engine noise, less tyre noise. This is more pleasant for pedestrians.

With more people out of their cars there will be improved passive surveillance in the estate. This could help reduce crime and aid our Neighbourhood Watch programme.

Conclusion

We would welcome the introduction of a 30km/h speed limit in the Riverwood housing estate roads.

Acknowledgements

Portions of this submission were derived from the Dublin Cycling Campaign submission to South Dublin County Council on their consultation about introduction of a 30km/h speed limit in residential estates and the Skerries Cycling Initiative submission to Fingal County Council.