

Vehicle Speed Evaluation
Porters Neighborhood
Gainesville, Florida

Prepared For:
City of Gainesville
Public Works Department

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August 26, 2015

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8-26-15

INTRODUCTION:

The City of Gainesville, Florida takes great pride in their communities throughout the region. In the early years of redevelopment within the City, one community that stands out and is of historic value, “The Porter’s Neighborhood” was welcomed and recognized as being within the new boundaries of the Community Redevelopment District. Being now within the District, the City Public Works Department (PWD) and the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) provided for new opportunities in drainage solutions, street improvements, entrance features to the neighborhood, traffic calming, sidewalks, lighting, park enhancements, etc. As part of these improvements, revived parks and public places became amplified with local neighbors and citizen’s partaking and providing input as a community.

With this success story evolves the final actions by the City to evaluate the neighborhood vehicle speed assessments. With these most recent improvements of “NEW” road widenings, sidewalks, signage, lighting, traffic calming, on street parking, etc., the City Public Works Department has requested their annual service provider Transportation Consultant, George F. Young, Inc. (GFY) to evaluate all roads within the Porter’s neighborhood for speed limit assessments.



The following aerial depicts the Porters neighborhood area.



EXISTING CONDITIONS:

As part of the speed evaluation and items that are included in a speed assessment, the following were inventoried within the Porter's Neighborhood:

- a. Speed limit postings
- b. Roadway characteristics
- c. Entrance features
- d. Traffic calming features
- e. Lighting
- f. Sidewalks
- g. Visual restrictions/hazards
- h. Clear zone
- i. Vehicle types
- j. Pedestrian/Bicycle movements
- k. Community opportunities



EXISTING CONDITIONS (Continued)

a. Speed limit postings:

1. The area-wide inventory demonstrated very limited postings.
2. The postings are consistent at 25 miles per hour.
3. The postings do meet City and State standards and guidelines.



EXISTING CONDITIONS (Continued)

b. Roadway Characteristics:

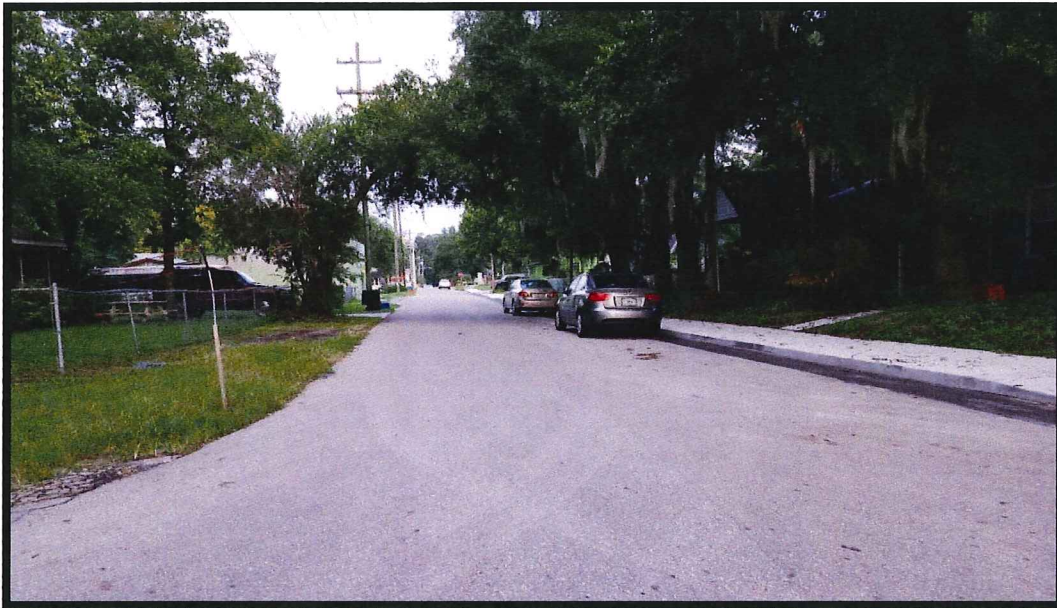
1. Sub-standard roadway conditions – the definition of a sub-standard roadway may be defined as a “windshield survey” supplemented with field measurements or ground observations to determine if a section of roadway meets City standards, while providing a general description of the physical constraints that may prevent upgrading the sub-standard condition, with a detailed description of the proposed improvements. The National Highway Safety Standards considers travel lanes less than 9 feet wide sub-standard and mitigation measures should be considered.



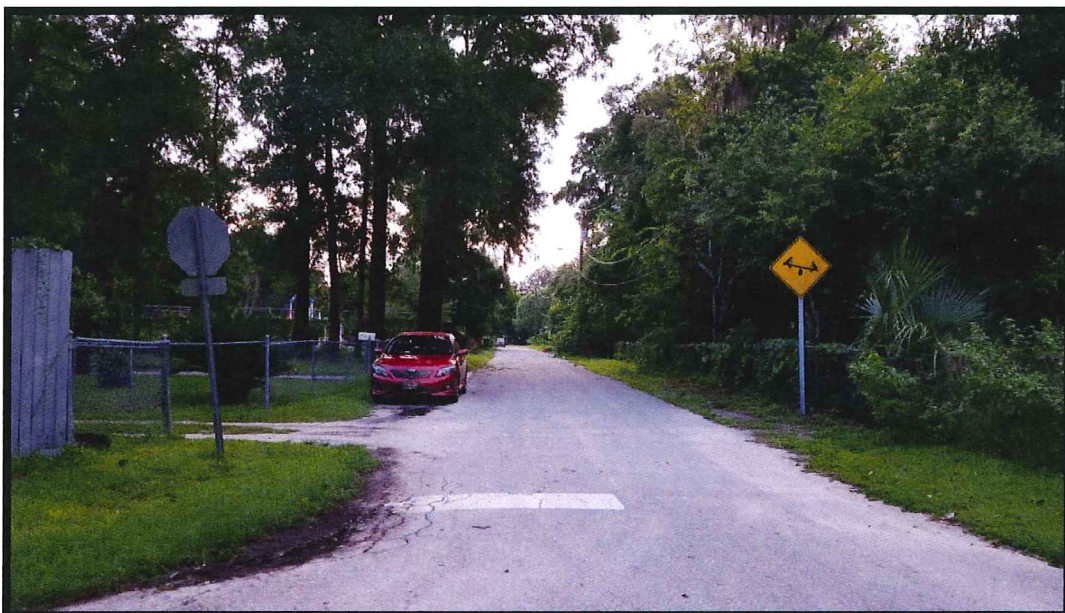
Sample of a sub-standard roadway

EXISTING CONDITIONS (Continued)

2. Parking – The City most recently provided parking spaces along the north side of South West 5th Avenue for the residences. Additionally, parking has been designated near the community parks for ease of access and safety.



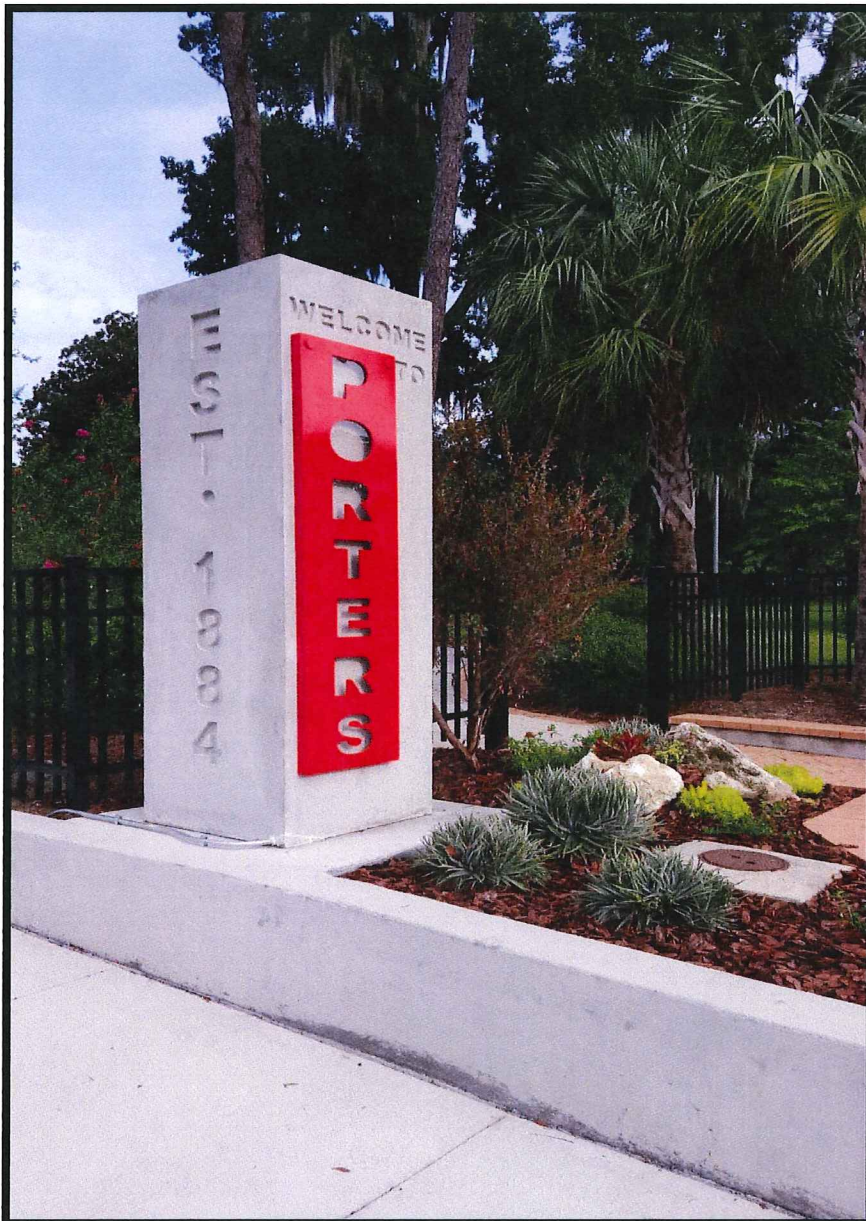
3. Roadway widths – Several are less than 18 feet across (substandard)



EXISTING CONDITIONS (Continued)

c. Entrance features:

1. Several Porter's neighborhood entrance signs are posted throughout the area. Most recently, the PWD and CRA worked hand-in-hand to provide a spectacular and meaningful entrance feature at the intersection of S. Main St. and S.W. 5th Ave.



EXISTING CONDITIONS (Continued)

d. Traffic calming features:

1. Several roadways within the area have traffic calming devices and notifications in place.



e. Lighting:

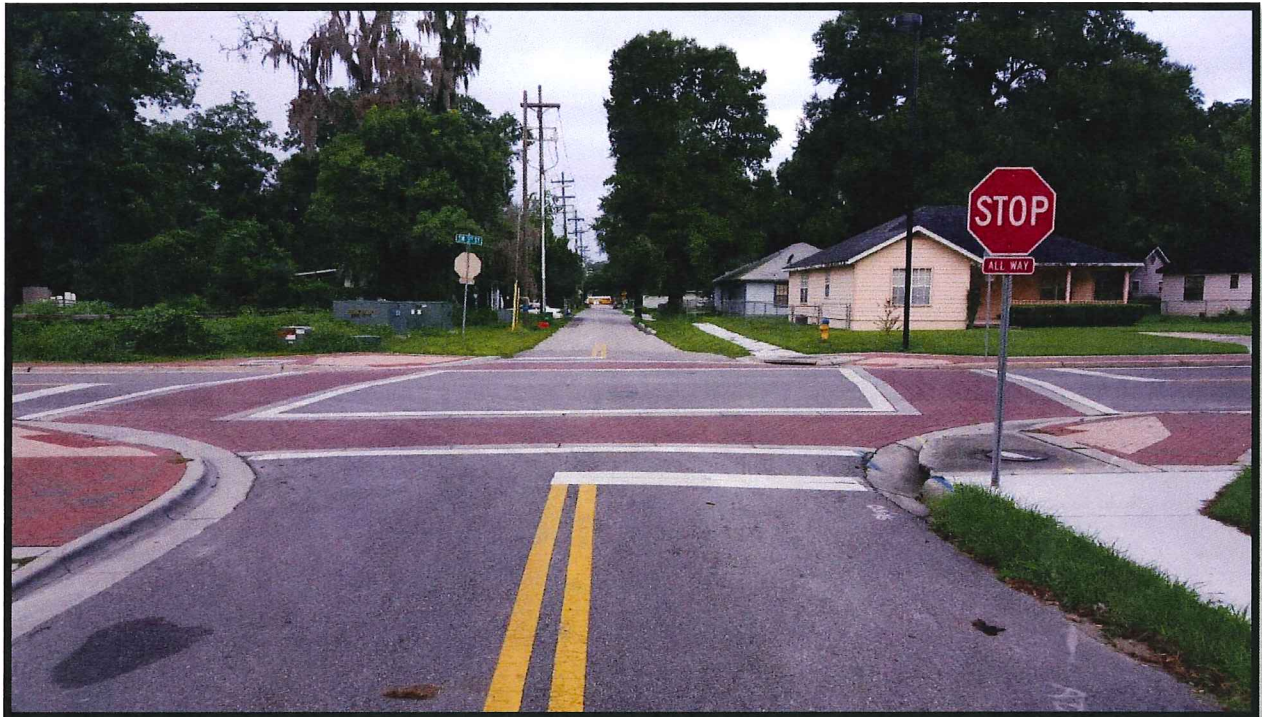
1. Roadway lighting in this area meets code.



EXISTING CONDITIONS (Continued)

f. Sidewalks:

1. The PWD and CRA have upgraded and provided new sidewalks, markings, ramps in heavily used pedestrian areas and/or school corridors.



EXISTING CONDITIONS (Continued)

g. Visual restrictions/hazards:

1. There are several roadways with site restrictions which are hazardous (sub-standard). Vegetation has grown to a mature state that signs are being blocked of the intended messages.



h. Clear zone:

1. There are several roadways, as illustrated above, that the clear zone is sub-standard. The vegetation is within four (4) feet of the edge of the roadway as suggested for local urban roadways.



EXISTING CONDITIONS (Continued)

i. Vehicle types:

1. The area is utilized by several means of vehicle types from cars, mini-vans, pick-up trucks and bicycles. On several occasions, lawn maintenance crews with trailers and delivery vehicles use the streets within the neighborhood for parking. On occasion, outside large trucks will use the neighborhood as a short-cut to avoid the adjoining busy major roads. This is discouraged by the City.



EXISTING CONDITIONS (Continued)

J. Pedestrian/Bicycle movements:

1. There are extensive amounts of pedestrians and bicycle activity throughout the neighborhood.



EXISTING CONDITIONS (Continued)

K. Community opportunities:

1. There are several community events taking place regularly that involve the whole neighborhood.



TRAFFIC AND MOTOR VEHICLES

Gainesville Code of ordinances

Article II – Section 26-27 Speed Limits

The City manager may also designate reduced speed limits where he/she deems it necessary.

Year 2015 Florida Statutes – Motor Vehicles

316.189 – Establishment of municipal speed zones

With respect to residence districts, a municipality may set a maximum speed limit of 20-25 miles per hour on local streets and highways after an investigation determines that such a limit is reasonable.



NEIGHBORHOOD SPEED LIMIT EVALUATION

The following are findings per several field observations and data collection, the opportunity to use all National, State and City motor vehicle and pedestrian guidelines/standards and professional engineering judgment for speed limit posting within the Porter's Neighborhood.

Field observations - This is a well established and livable neighborhood with local roadways in a simple grid pattern. Proper traffic calming devices have been installed and appear to be effective. Roadway and sidewalk improvements are clearly being used as designed and now provide safe neighborhood connectivity. Overall, the neighborhood appears to be cohesive and guarded from vehicle speeding due to the grid system and the new improvements.

National, State and City regulations – Although the neighborhood roadway posted speed limits follow National, State and City guidelines, **this review has found sub-standard roadway conditions.** As illustrated under the existing condition sections, sub-standard roadways typically advocate a reduction in the current posted speed limits.

Recommendation – The current posted speed limit of 25 miles per hour appears to be effective and accepted on S.W. 5th Avenue and S.W. 3rd Street which are standard applied roadways. However, the internal grid system roadways are primarily sub-standard and should be considered for a reduction in the posted speed limit to 20 miles per hour. Although, there are substandard roadways within the neighborhood, it would not be financially feasible to make all necessary improvements.

To eliminate sign pollution in this historic neighborhood, consideration should be given for speed limit notifications via an area-wide type of entrance speed limit signage.

