

FOREST HOME TRAFFIC CALMING PLAN

FINAL REPORT

Prepared by

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in association with the

FOREST HOME IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

TRAFFIC CALMING COMMITTEE

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank the members of the Forest Home Traffic Calming Committee for the truly outstanding work that they have done:

Mike Koplinka-Loehr, Chair
Robby Aceto
Nancy Brack*
Bruce Brittain
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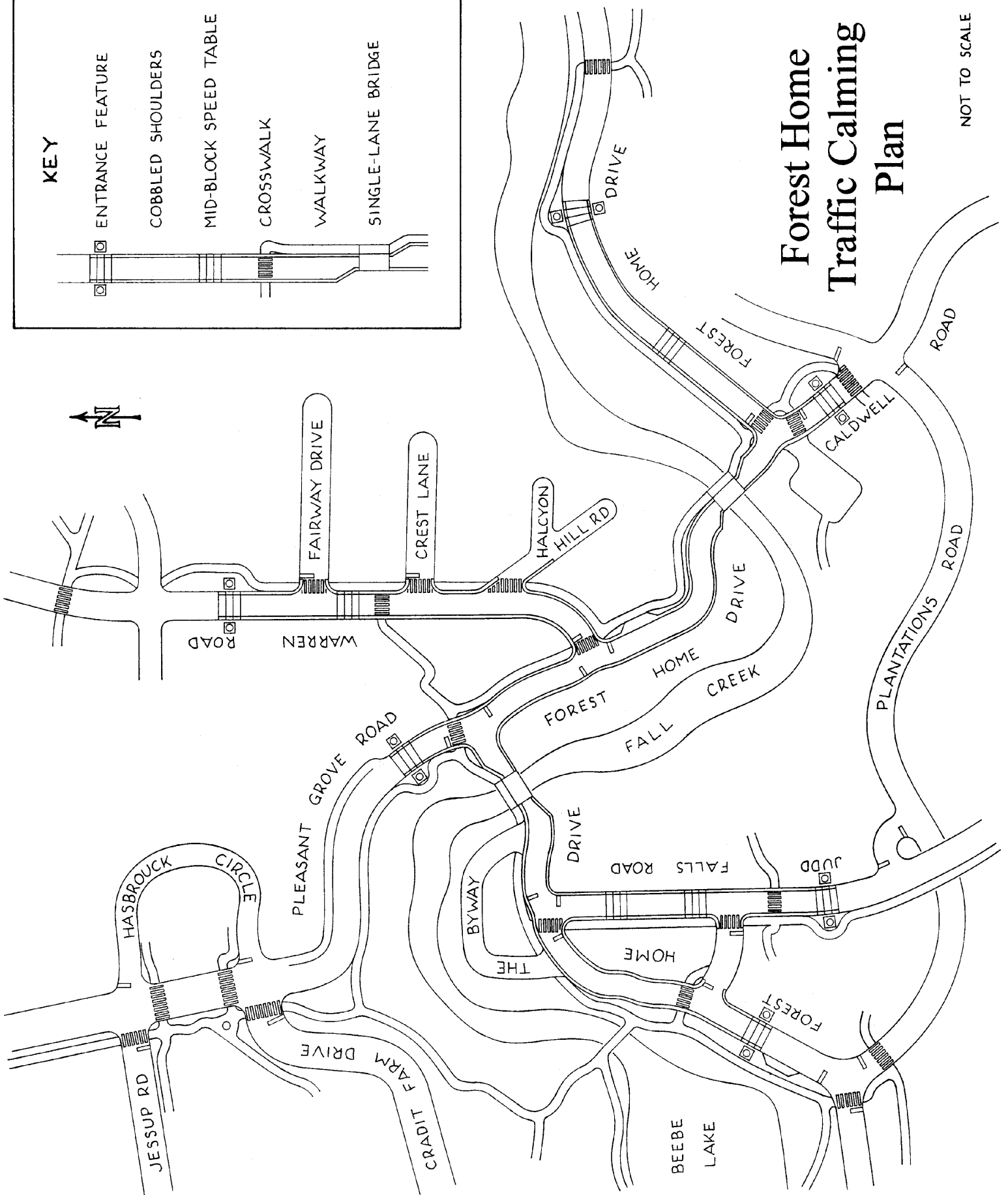
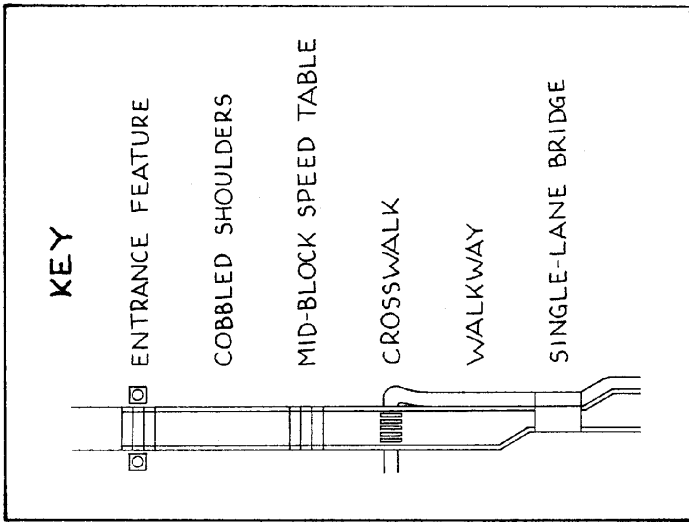
* Former Member of the Traffic Calming Committee

** Former Chair of the Traffic Calming Committee

It would be most appropriate to single out, for special mention, Bruce and Doug Brittain, who have produced, in our opinion, the most extraordinary level of volunteer design contribution that we have encountered on any project with which we have been associated.

We would also like to thank all of the many stakeholders who shared their thoughts and thereby helped to make this a better plan. Special thanks go to the Cornell Plantations and the Robert Trent Jones Golf Course at Cornell, for their kind offers to allow pedestrian facilities on their properties.

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Forest Home Traffic Calming Plan

NOT TO SCALE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Glatting Jackson Kercher Anglin Lopez Rinehart, Inc. (Glatting Jackson) was retained by Historic Ithaca, Inc. on behalf of the Forest Home Improvement Association to develop a Traffic Calming / Traffic Management Plan for the hamlet of Forest Home. Traffic calming is a means of redesigning roads in order to reduce vehicle speeds and increase driver attentiveness, thereby improving pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular safety, and creating a more livable residential environment.

Development patterns in the Ithaca area, combined with the layout of the regional road network, have conspired to funnel large volumes of traffic through the hamlet of Forest Home. The resulting traffic impacts have become detrimental to the neighborhood. Forest Home's compact and cohesive character, its historic significance, and its contrast to the surrounding area, all argue strongly for traffic calming of the hamlet. From the outset, the intent of this Traffic Calming Plan has been not only to improve safety and livability by calming traffic, but also to provide continuous pedestrian facilities, improve streetscape aesthetics, enhance community identity, and complement Forest Home's historic character.

Development of this Plan involved three trips to the Ithaca area, consultations with all affected stakeholder groups, public meetings and open workshops, on-site inspections, data collection and analysis, extensive surveying and mapping of the community, exploration of numerous alternatives, and countless communications with the Traffic Calming Committee. This lengthy and interactive process has allowed us to craft a Plan truly "with" the greater community, rather than merely "for" the community. The result is a thorough and detailed Plan which satisfies the major objectives, while respecting the needs and legitimate concerns of all affected parties.

This Plan's recommendations are to:

- Preserve and augment the community's existing traffic calming features (single-lane bridges, roadside vegetation, meandering roadway alignments, etc.).
- Maintain two-way traffic flow on all roads and bridges in Forest Home.
- Reduce the speed limit within Forest Home to 25 mph, the lowest allowed by NYS law.
- Create gateway entrance/exit features at all six community entrances, to reduce vehicle speeds and to delineate the traffic-calmed zone. Each entrance is marked by gothic lamp posts on both sides of the road, mounted on low stone pedestals. Speed of traffic is controlled by an accompanying vertical deflection in the roadway surface (speed table).
- Construct mid-block speed tables where needed to control vehicle speeds on long, straight sections of road (Forest Home Drive, Judd Falls Road, Warren Road).
- Limit pavement width to 18 ft, the current width of Forest Home's narrowest major through roads. Pavement width will flare at intersections as necessary in order to facilitate vehicle turning movements.

- Reduce the size of major intersections to the minimum required to still allow buses and occasional trucks to pass through.
- Install cobbled shoulder band, 12 - 18 in wide, along all major through roads. Supplement with vertical granite curbing at entrances, intersections, and where needed to direct surface drainage or to protect side paths.
- Plant vegetation (grass, bushes, trees) as close to road edge as possible, in order to reduce apparent road width, to improve the pedestrian environment, and to beautify the community.
- Improve the quality, continuity and connectivity of the entire pedestrian network by providing new or improved 3 - 4 ft wide side paths along all major streets, connecting to existing pedestrian facilities at Forest Home's boundaries.
- Shift road centerline where necessary, in order to make room for adjacent side path.
- Provide for a community-wide side path winter maintenance program.
- Create conspicuous crosswalks at pedestrian crossings.
- Have bicycles ride on traffic-calmed streets within Forest Home, allow bicycles to use side paths as climbing lanes on hills (if desired).
- Provide pedestrian-oriented lighting along side paths throughout the neighborhood.

The effects of this Traffic Calming Plan should be quite profound. The gateway entrances will alert drivers to the community boundaries, and will slow them as they enter. The redesigned streetscapes and the modest roadway dimensions, in scale with the community, will encourage drivers to remain on their best behavior until they have left the hamlet.

The lower vehicle speeds will be appreciated particularly by bicyclists, who will be able to more comfortably ride in the traffic stream. Pedestrians will also benefit from the lower vehicle speeds, as well as from the separation from traffic provided by the cobbled shoulder buffer. By tying in to existing pedestrian facilities at the periphery of the hamlet, the new continuous side path network will be useful for many members of the greater Ithaca area, not only for local residents. Forest Home residents will welcome all of these benefits, as well as the renewed sense of community brought about by the implementation of this Traffic Calming Plan.

Preservation of the neighborhood's physical assets is a priority, not only the historical aspects, but also the existing landscaping that does so much to define Forest Home's character. Mobility of the general public will also be preserved. In addition to meeting the needs of residents and commuters, this Plan has been developed with an eye toward feasibility of construction and economy of operation.

We trust that this Forest Home Traffic Calming Plan will provide useful guidance, and that the redesigned streetscapes will produce benefits for decades to come.

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