

Seminary Road and N. Quaker Lane Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What are the safety concerns on Seminary Road and N. Quaker Lane?**
 - a. Excessive speeds – 85th percentile speeds are about 43 mph on both Seminary Road and N. Quaker Lane – too fast for neighborhood streets
 - i. Speeds of 25 mph significantly reduce the risk of crashes and the risk serious injury to pedestrians if a crash occurs, compared to higher speeds¹
 - ii. 25 mph is the commonly-used speed limit for neighborhood streets in Alexandria.
 - b. Walking safety
 - i. People are afraid to walk on sidewalks next to high speed traffic
 - ii. Crossing four lanes of traffic e.g. to/from schools and bus stops is hazardous
 - iii. Parents will not allow their children to walk or bike to school
 - c. A high rate of crashes – more than 60 reported crashes over a 5 year period on each street
 - i. Residents have noted additional speeding-related crashes, such as “curb jumping” not included in police reports.
 - d. Entry /exit risks - People are afraid to enter/exit side streets (including 17 intersections without traffic signals), and driveways (about 50 driveways on each street)
 - i. More than 325 households are directly impacted by the excessive speeds, including 225 homes on cul-de-sacs where the only access is via an un-signalized intersection on either Seminary Road or N. Quaker Lane.
2. **What are your goals?** To make Seminary Road and N. Quaker Lane safe for all, safe for people to cross and walk along these streets, to bike on these streets, and to drive.
3. **Won't 25 mph speed limits make congestion worse?** Seminary Road and N. Quaker Lane both experience back-ups during rush hours, caused by throughput limitations at intersections and other chokepoints, such as the ramp to Telegraph Road from Duke Street. The extent of these back-ups will not be impacted by 25 mph speed limits between intersections.
4. **Are you concerned about traffic volume?** Yes, but we have prioritized safety as our primary focus. Efforts aimed at volume reduction on just one or two streets would have a negative impact on other streets and neighborhoods, a consequence the group wants to avoid.

¹ The risk of severe injury to a pedestrian struck by a vehicle increases from 25% at 23 mph to 50% at 31 mph, and increases to 75% at 39 mph. AAA - Foundation for Traffic Safety, “Impact Speed and a Pedestrian’s Risk of Severe Injury or Death”, by Tefft, Brian C., Senior Research Associate, 2011¹.

5. **Won't lowering speeds just create more traffic and lengthen the time we are in traffic?**
- a. Lowering speeds increases safety for all, both by lowering risk of a crash and by reducing severity of a crash if one occurs.
 - i. It will also be a safer for people who walk to cross and walk along these streets.
 - ii. It will be safer for people who drive to get in and out of driveways and to access Seminary Road and Quaker Lane at un-signalized intersections.
 - b. Travel time impacts are minimal compared to the safety benefits accrued.
 - i. Driving 25 mph vs. 35 mph would lengthen travel times by less than a minute, i.e. by 54 seconds on N. Quaker Lane (from Duke Street to King Street), and by 58 seconds on Seminary Road (from Kenmore Avenue to N. Quaker Lane).
 - ii. These increases are small compared to several minutes of delays caused by other factors such as rush hour traffic volumes.
6. **Won't lowering speed limits divert traffic to other neighborhoods?**
- a. During non-rush hours, distance determines the preferred routes, since the travel time impacts of 25 mph are extremely small over the short distances involved.
 - b. During rush hours, traffic volume determines preferred routes. See attached illustrations.
7. **Are there examples where lowering speed limits has been demonstrated to lower vehicle speeds or reduce crash rates?** Here are conclusions from Federal research on these questions:
- a. Lowering speed limits *alone* has little impact on speeds. Lowering speed limits reduces speeds only when accompanied by other measures, such as engineering changes and/ or education and enforcement.²
 - b. Lower speed limits can reduce the number and severity of crashes, but only if speeds are reduced. "Crash-incidence or crash severity, or both measures, generally decline whenever speed limits have been reduced."³

² Parker (1997) Effects of Raising and Lowering Speed Limits, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Report, [FHWA-RD-97-084, January 1997](#)

³ Synthesis of Safety Research Related to Speed and Speed Management, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Report, [FHWA-RD-98-154, July 1998](#)