

To: Hillsborough Board of Commissioners

## Improving Safety on Rainey Avenue

### Introduction

Recognizing the invaluable assets that make the Fairview Community vibrant and thriving, it is essential to ensure pedestrian safety and preserve the quality of life that the residents cherish. Implementing traffic calming measures on Rainey Ave. will help reduce speeding and create a safer environment for pedestrians.

Rainey Avenue is a centrally-located residential collector street in Fairview. The street is owned and maintained by the Town of Hillsborough. The street is a primary area of concern among residents. Over the past several months our UNC Food, Fitness and Opportunity Research Collaborative (UNC FFORC) team and the Fairview Community Watch (FCW) has worked extensively with community members, researchers, and stakeholders to identify the challenges and opportunities for traffic calming initiatives to enhance safety, livability, and connectivity within the neighborhood. These community workshops explored various initiatives and collected valuable data.

This memo proposes immediate, short term actions for improving safety on Rainey Avenue, including:

- Installing a multi-way stop on Rainey Ave. and Torain,
- Installing a digital radar speed sign, and
- Installing traffic calming measures such as speed bumps along high speed points.

### Process

Since 2021, UNC FFORC and FCW have conducted numerous community engagement sessions with Fairview residents, local leaders, and stakeholders to understand traffic calming and pedestrian safety concerns in Fairview.

#### ***Activate! Fairview Active Living Plan (2021-2022)***

The Fairview Youth in Action has conducted numerous community -engaged sessions with Fairview residents, local leaders, and partners. The plan addresses several elements that work cumulatively to promote active communities. The initiative to improve safety on Fairview's streets aligns with goals outlined in the Walk and Bike sections of the *Activate* plan.

#### ***Community Workshops (2023-2024)***

To assess the impact of the residents' concerns, the UNC FFORC team actively engaged with the community through a series of six interactive

workshops focused on traffic calming (see Appendix for an overview of each workshop). These workshops, conducted between February 2023 to May 2024, provided valuable insights and shaped our understanding of traffic-related challenges and potential solutions. Workshops were facilitated by our team members in English and Spanish.

These workshops served as a foundation for our data collection efforts and informed our subsequent decisions. By actively engaging residents, we aimed to create community-driven traffic calming initiatives.

### ***Previous Town of Hillsborough Interventions***

Several traffic calming initiatives have already been implemented to enhance road safety on Rainey Ave. One significant step is the speed study conducted to analyze speed patterns and identify if further interventions are needed (see Appendix). The data collected revealed that speeding remains a significant issue in the area.

Another measure includes the stripping of the center line on Rainey Ave. These steps are part of a broader effort to create safer streets. However, following the completion of these initiatives, speeding remains a significant issue in the area. This indicates the need for additional interventions to effectively address this ongoing problem.

### **Identified Challenges**

Through these engagement methods, the community identified several roadway challenges causing the area to feel unsafe for walking or rolling. Challenges included speeding, litter and unsafe walking conditions. Rainey Ave. has heavy pedestrian traffic due to its role in connecting important destinations such as Fairview Park, the Dorothy N. Johnson Community Center, U.S. 70, several local neighborhood streets, and two public transit stops. Safe accessibility to these spaces plays an essential role in enhancing the lives of residents and directly contributes to safer streets, especially areas with heavy pedestrian traffic. Challenges identified include:

- Speeding
- Street racing (primarily motorcycles)
- No current sidewalks on Rainey Ave.
- Excessive noise (primarily caused by motorcycles)
- Loose dogs
- Litter (dump sites along Northeast area)
- Inadequate street lighting

### **Priority Interventions for Action**

### **Short-Term Priorities**

- Install a multi-way stop (by placing stop signs with painted white stop bars) on Rainey Avenue and Torain Street.
- Install a digital radar speed sign on Rainey Ave.
- Install traffic calming measures, such as speed bumps or chicanes, along high speed points along Rainey Ave.

### **Long-Term Priorities**

- Install a sidewalk along Rainey Ave. connecting the Dorothy N. Johnson Community Center to the intersection at Torain Street and Rainey Ave.

### **Conclusion**

In summary, the traffic calming priorities outlined in this memo hold immense potential for reducing hazards and increasing active living in the Fairview Community. The priorities serve as multifaceted solutions. Working on the traffic calming priorities with the appropriate stakeholders will significantly reduce speeding and enhance pedestrian safety in the neighborhood. The residents and our research team are open to engaging in dialogue with stakeholders to foster collaboration, safety and proactive action. We urge the Town of Hillsborough to consider these priorities and are eager to work collaboratively with the Fairview Community Watch, community stakeholders and the FYIA to make these priorities a reality.

Respectfully Submitted

Judit Sarai Alvarado, UNC Food, Fitness, and Opportunity Research Collaborative (FFORC) & Fairview resident, Tulip Tree

Edith DeJesus-Sanchez, UNC Food, Fitness, and Opportunity Research Collaborative (FFORC) & Fairview resident, Tulip Tree

Jessica Colon-Diaz, UNC Food, Fitness, and Opportunity Research Collaborative (FFORC) & Fairview resident, Tulip Tree

Kevin Giff, UNC Food, Fitness, and Opportunity Research Collaborative (FFORC)

Faylor Riley, President, Fairview Community Watch, Thompson Ct.

Gaby Reyes, Vice President, Fairview Community Watch, Harper St.

## Appendices

### A. Proposed Safety Improvements on Rainey Ave



### B. Activate! Fairview Active Living Plan 2022-2027

In 2022, the youth participants in the Fairview Youth in Action program developed the *Fairview Active Living Plan 2022-2027* ("Activate"), a youth-driven, community-engaged plan that outlines goals and recommendations to make the Fairview neighborhood a healthier and more active place to live. Find the full report [online](#).

### C. Town of Hillsborough's Comprehensive Sustainability Plan

The initiative to improve safety on Fairview's streets also aligns with several key goals and priorities outlined in the Town of Hillsborough's Comprehensive Sustainability Plan. Key provisions of this plan include updating traffic-calming policies, prioritizing sidewalk and crosswalk improvements, and adding pedestrian and bicycle amenities. The plan also supports engaging with non-English-speaking residents, and promoting equitable community engagement.

### D. Community Workshop Overview

#	Date	Total Attendees	Topics Covered
1	Feb 28, 2023	18	-Overview of the root causes of traffic issues in the neighborhood -Identify high-traffic areas (Challenge Mapping) -Understand town limits + road type classification
2	Apr 11, 2023	14	-How to measure success in addressing the issues -Build consensus on prioritizing safety concerns -Develop a strategy (using SMART Goals)
3	May 9, 2023	9	-Discuss solutions that can address issues -Types of traffic calming measures -Timeline for potential approaches
4	Nov 14, 2023	20	-Review focus areas and traffic calming measures -Review road ownership and zoning- concerns -Narrowing down priorities
5	Apr 24, 2024	21	-Understand in-town and county services + rates -Overview of property tax comparison -Identify priorities for each focus area
6	May 22, 2024	14	-Review priorities identified -Get commitment from residents to be involved
7	Oct 16, 2024	10	-Review priorities and memo -Commitment for Town Board meeting





Making the Fairview Community  
a safer, healthier, fairer, and more enjoyable place to live

October 28, 2024

Mayor Mark Bell  
Board of Commissioners  
Town of Hillsborough  
P.O. Box 429  
Hillsborough, NC 27278

RE: Request for Traffic Calming on Rainey Ave.

Dear Mayor Bell and Members of the Board of Commissioners,

The Fairview Community Watch deeply appreciates the Town of Hillsborough's ongoing support of the Fairview community. Over the past several years, we've been diligently working toward making Fairview's longstanding vision of safe streets a reality. As traffic issues and speeding have persisted, **creating a safer environment for people walking, biking, or rolling has become a top priority for our community.** With this in mind, we write to you to express our enthusiastic support for the proposed traffic calming initiatives outlined in the attached memo, "*Improving Safety on Rainey Avenue.*"

Rainey Avenue, a centrally located, Town-owned street in Fairview, has been a major safety concern for the community due to excessive speeding, lack of sidewalks, and unsafe crossings. A 2023 speed study conducted by the Town of Hillsborough found that 85% of vehicles on Rainey Avenue were driving at 38-mph or more, far exceeding the 25-mph speed limit and well above the threshold for traffic calming measures. The street's role in connecting key destinations, such as Fairview Park, the Dorothy N. Johnson Community Center, and public transit stops, further make it an urgent and crucial area to address.

Since 2021, Fairview Community Watch members, with support of the UNC Food, Fitness, and Opportunity Research Collaborative (UNC FFORC), have been working closely with community members, researchers, and stakeholders to understand traffic calming and pedestrian safety concerns in the neighborhood. Over the course of seven community workshops held between February 2023 and October 2024, we gathered valuable insights and identified potential solutions to these challenges. This community-driven process aligns with the goals outlined in our *Activate! Fairview Active Living Plan (2022-2027)* and shows our commitment to making Fairview safer for all residents.

While we appreciate the Town's previous efforts to address speeding on Rainey Ave. — such as installing a yellow lane stripe and conducting a following speed study — data indicates that speeding remains a persistent problem. This ongoing issue makes it clear that additional interventions are needed to effectively improve pedestrian safety and overall livability in Fairview.

**The traffic calming measures proposed in the attached memo, including installing multi-way stop signs at Rainey Avenue and Torain Street, digital radar speed signs, and traffic calming measures such as speed bumps or chicanes, are immediate actions that will greatly enhance community safety. Additionally, the**



Making the Fairview Community  
a safer, healthier, fairer, and more enjoyable place to live

**long-term priority of installing a sidewalk along Rainey Ave. to connect the Dorothy Johnson Community Center to the intersection at Torain Street, will create safer walking conditions for all residents.**

In conclusion, the traffic calming priorities outlined hold immense potential for reducing hazards and increasing safety in the Fairview community. These solutions, developed in collaboration with community members and partners, will significantly enhance pedestrian safety and quality of life in the neighborhood. We urge the Town of Hillsborough to consider these priorities and are eager to work collaboratively with the Town to make these priorities a reality.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Faylor Riley".

Faylor Riley  
President  
Fairview Community Watch