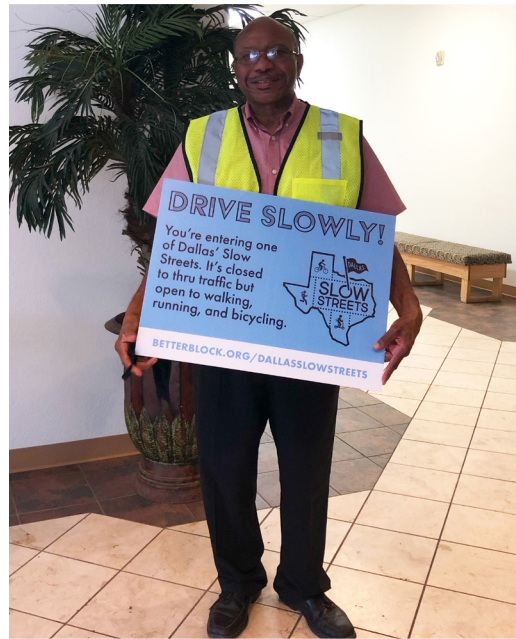




IMPACT REPORT



**COALITION FOR
A NEW DALLAS**



ONE NIGHT, DURING OUR DALLAS SLOW STREETS PROGRAM, WE MET A LITTLE GUY WHO HAD JUST TURNED 4. HE WAS RIDING HIS BIKE UP AND DOWN ONE OF OUR NEWLY CREATED SLOW STREETS WITH HIS TWO LITTLE BROTHERS AND NIECE.

WE COMMENTED ON HOW IMPRESSIVE HIS BICYCLING SKILLS WERE, AND HIS DAD SAID, "OH, WELL, THAT'S A BALANCE BIKE. HE'S JUST LEARNING. HE'LL GRADUATE TO TRAINING WHEELS SOON. BUT HE COULDN'T EVEN DO THIS A MONTH AGO. HE'S AUTISTIC."

WE KNOW SLOW STREETS INITIATIVES WON'T CHANGE THE WORLD. BUT THEY CAN BRING A LITTLE JOY TO IT. THAT LITTLE BOY PROBABLY WON'T REMEMBER MUCH ABOUT COVID-19. BUT HE WILL REMEMBER LEARNING TO RIDE A BIKE.

WE'RE PROUD TO HAVE PARTNERED WITH THE CITY OF DALLAS, COALITION FOR A NEW DALLAS, BIKEDFW, AND AMANDA POPKEN DEVELOPMENT TO BRING THIS PROGRAM TO OUR CITY.

IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES, WE ANALYZE WHAT STREETS WERE PART OF THE PROGRAM, LET NEIGHBORS TALK ABOUT WHAT WORKED (OR DIDN'T), AND PROVIDE OUR SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT STEPS.



WHAT WAS DALLAS SLOW STREETS?

Throughout COVID-19, vehicular traffic reduced, while the need for spaces for people increased. With the Dallas Slow Streets pilot program, we worked to give neighborhoods a chance to slow down the streets in their communities by shutting them to thru traffic and opening them to activities such as walking, running, and bicycling while maintaining safe social distancing.

The program was a pilot to allow some low-traffic streets in neighborhoods to be closed for 30 days during the COVID-19 pandemic, while staying open to local traffic and emergency vehicles.

The pilot program was open to 10 neighborhoods in Dallas, and was based on a first-come, first-approved approach. Each street needed a Block Captain, who had to garner and prove support of 25% of their neighbors, put together a design, and apply through the City of Dallas. Once approved, the Better Block Foundation worked with the Block Captains on next steps regarding materials.

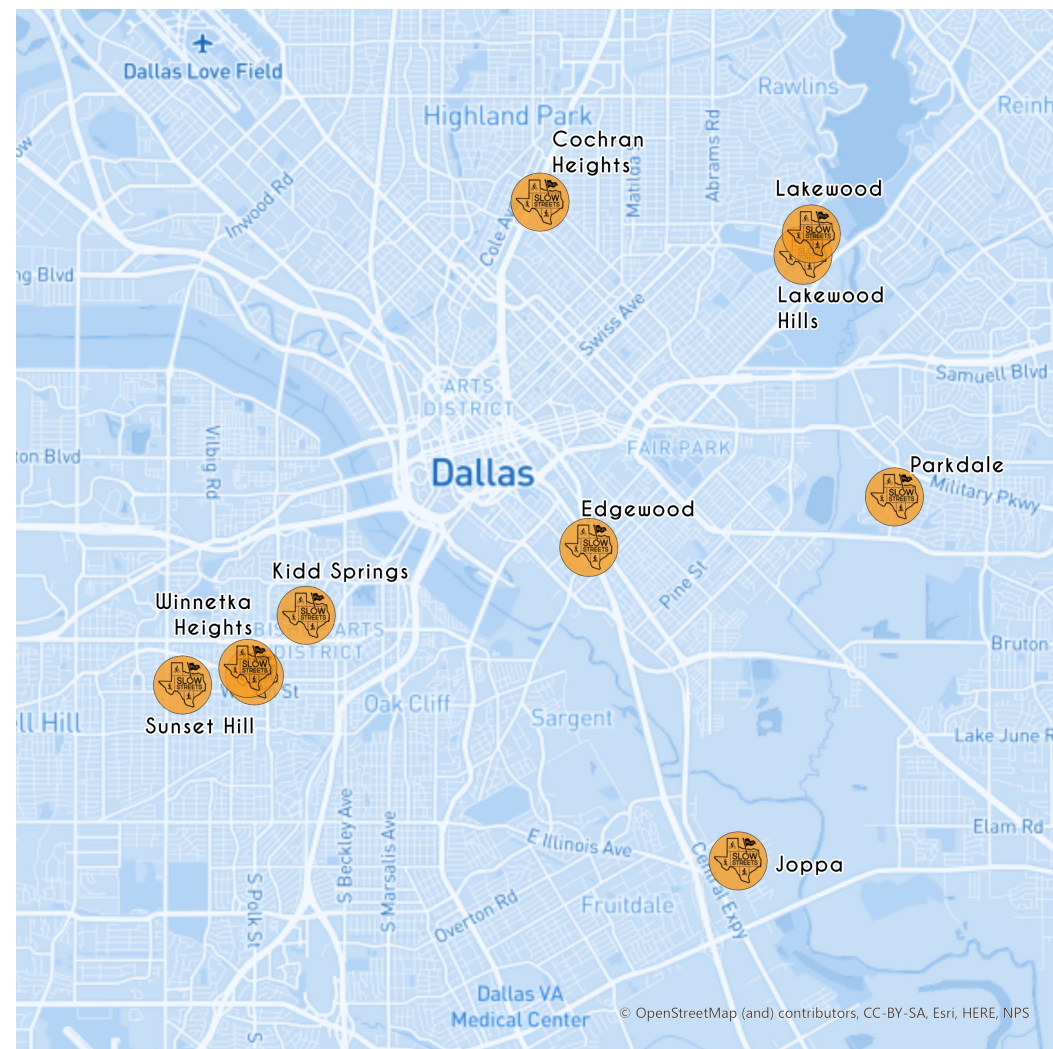
The materials were pretty simple: two barricades on either end of the street, two Local Traffic Only signs, a couple stencils, a few safety vests, and some paint. And while it wasn't that much to look at, the impact was pretty profoundly felt.

THE 10 SLOW STREETS

It was important that for this program, neighbors chose to participate rather than us selecting who got to participate. Thus, we opened the program up to the city as a whole, and asked, “Who’s interested?”

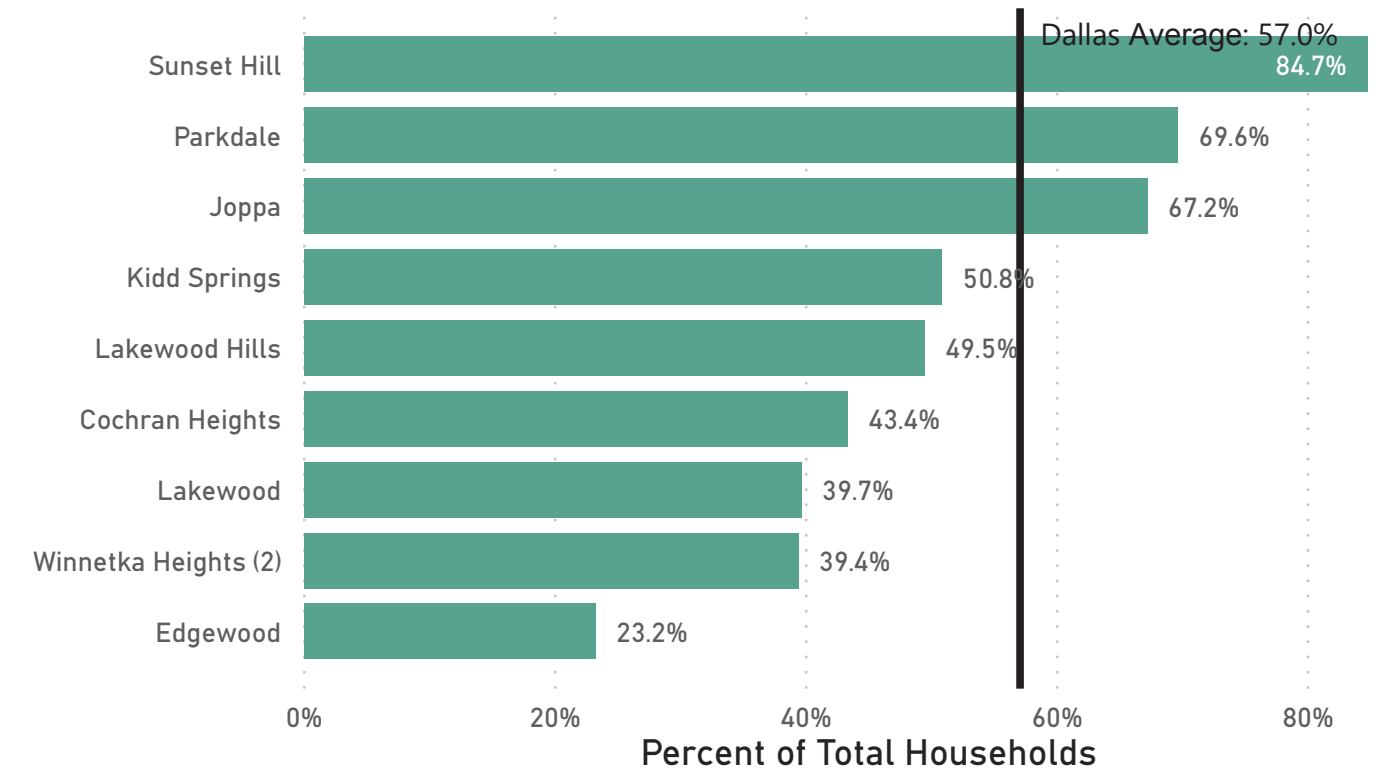
Immediately, we got applications from North Oak Cliff. So many, in fact, that we became a bit concerned the program would be an Oak Cliff-only initiative. But, soon, applications began pouring in from around the city.

Here, we take a look at where Dallas Slow Streets took place, and analyze the demographics of those streets.



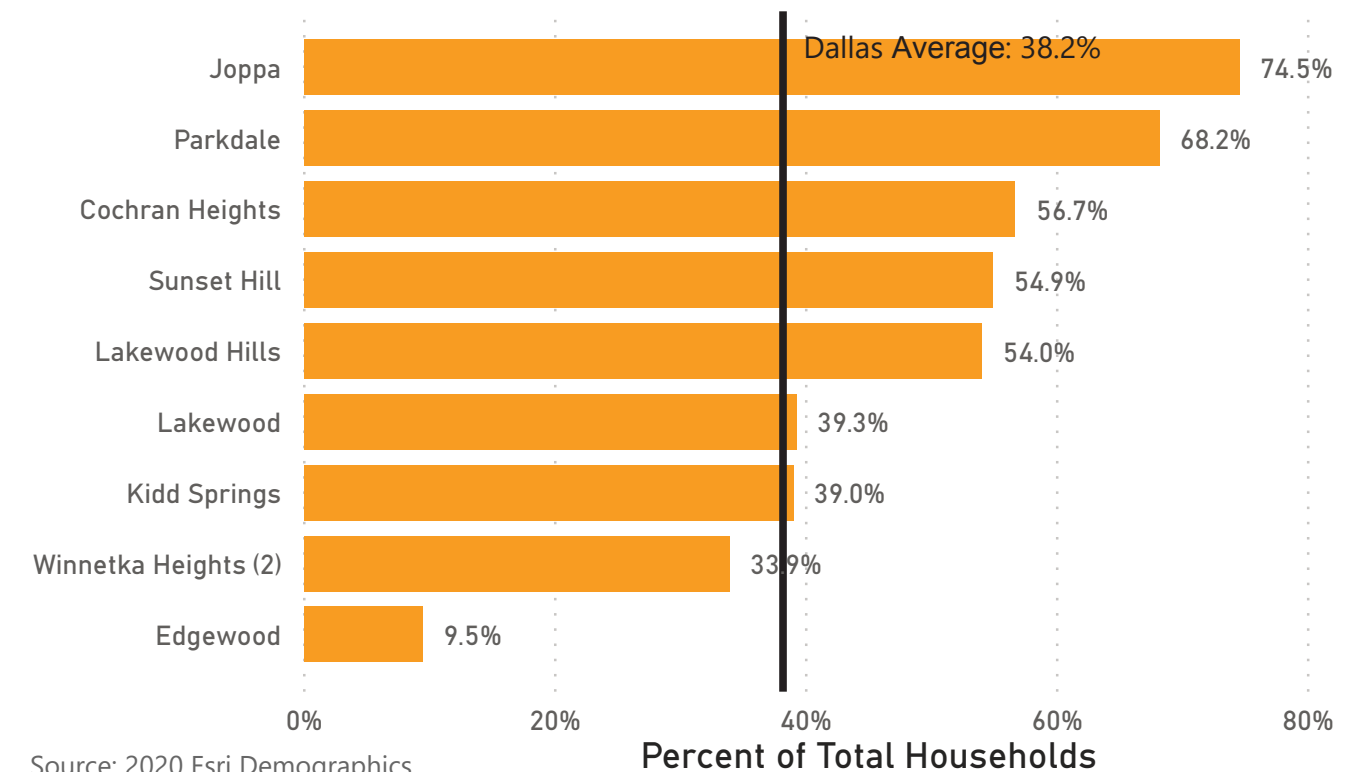
Data represents the demographics for the U.S. Census block group in which each Slow Street is located. Neighborhood names are used as a reference; data does not represent the demographics of the entire neighborhood, only the areas around the Slow Streets blocks.

Slow Streets Family Households



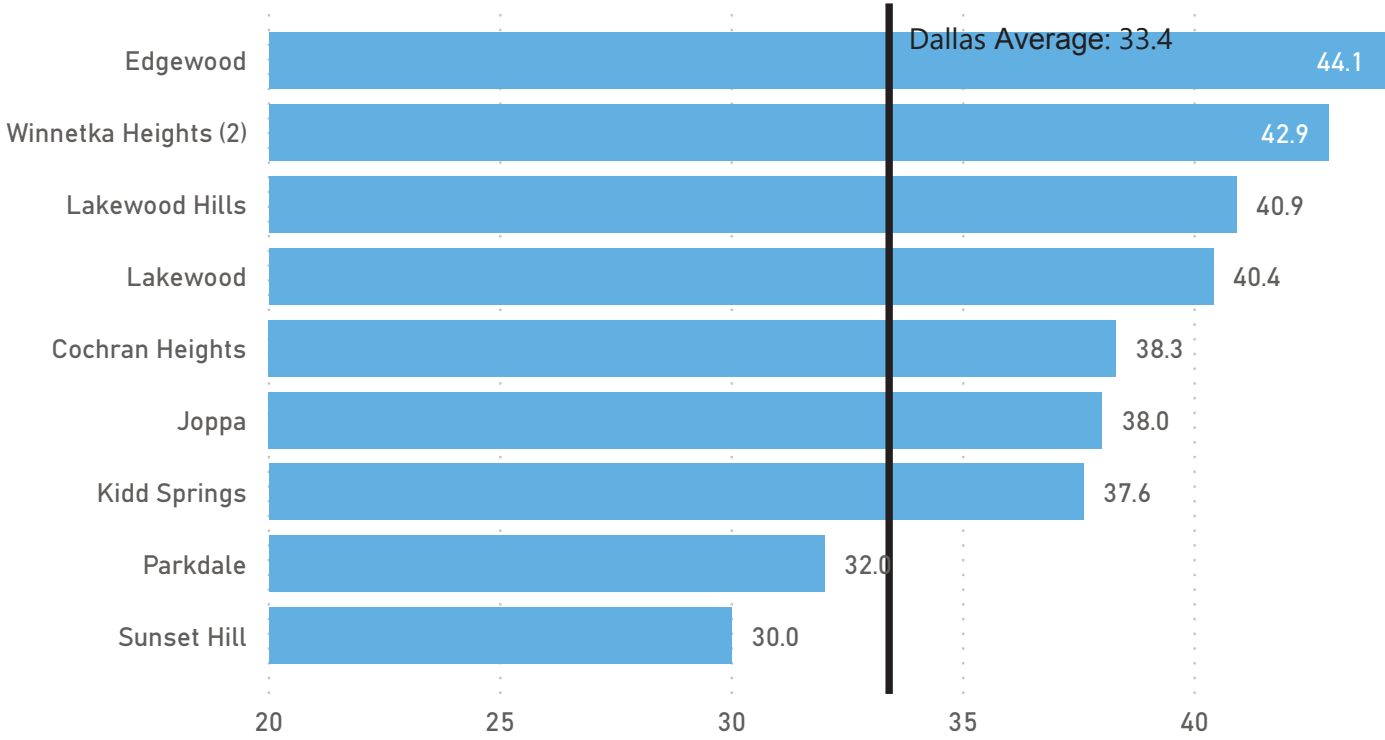
Source: 2020 Esri Demographics

Slow Streets Owner-Occupied Households



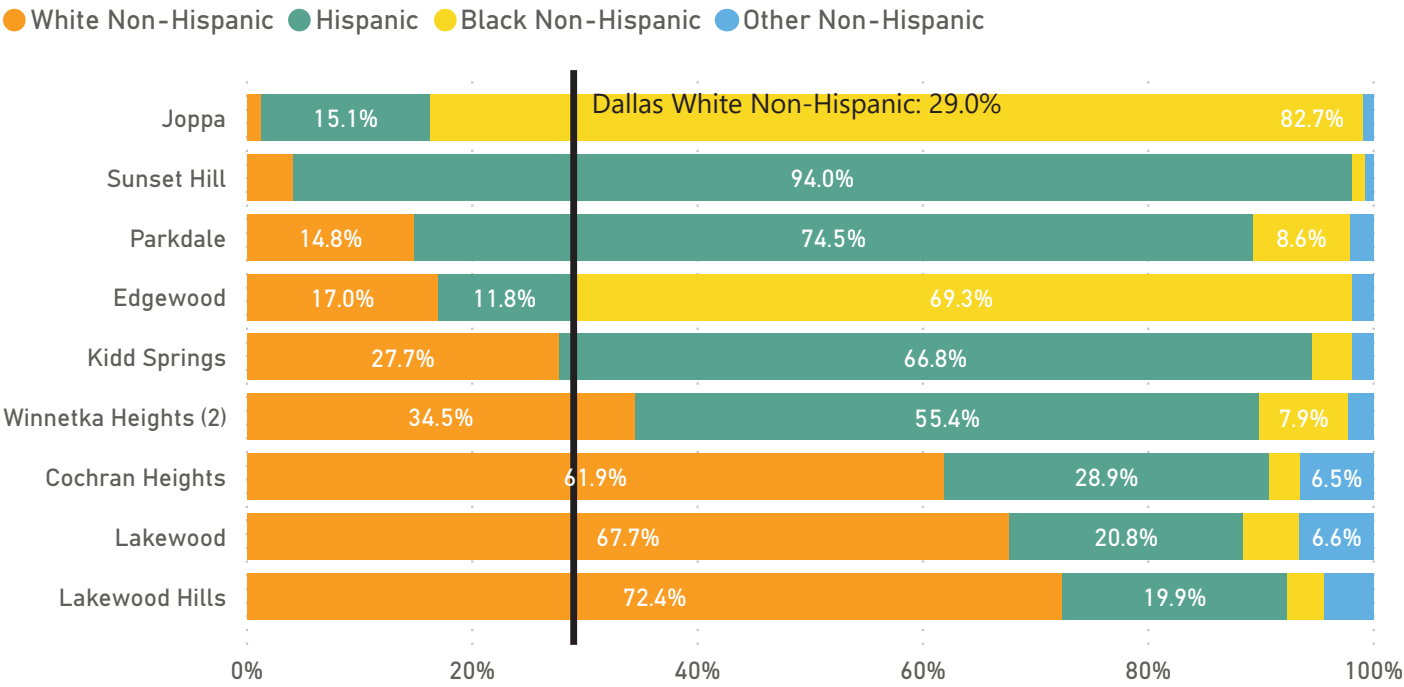
Source: 2020 Esri Demographics

Slow Streets Median Age



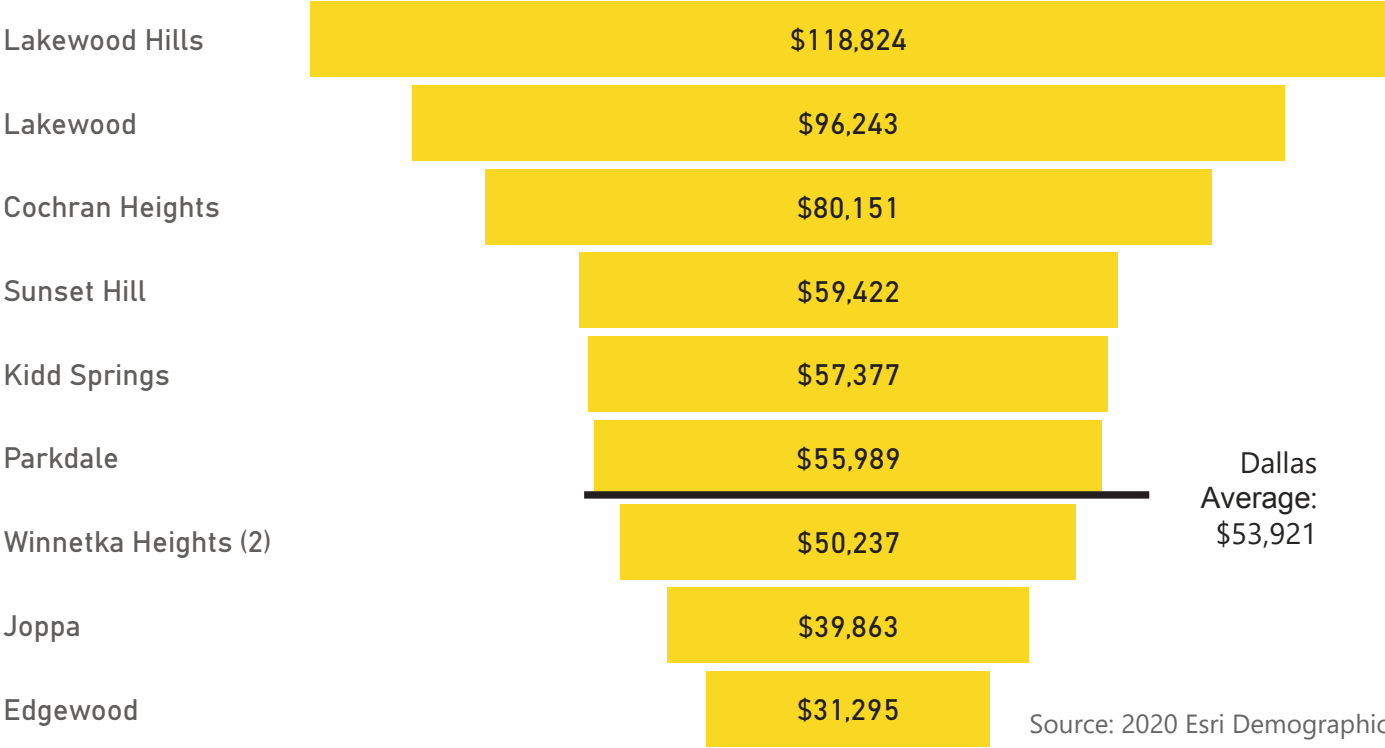
Source: 2020 Esri Demographics

Slow Streets Race / Ethnicity



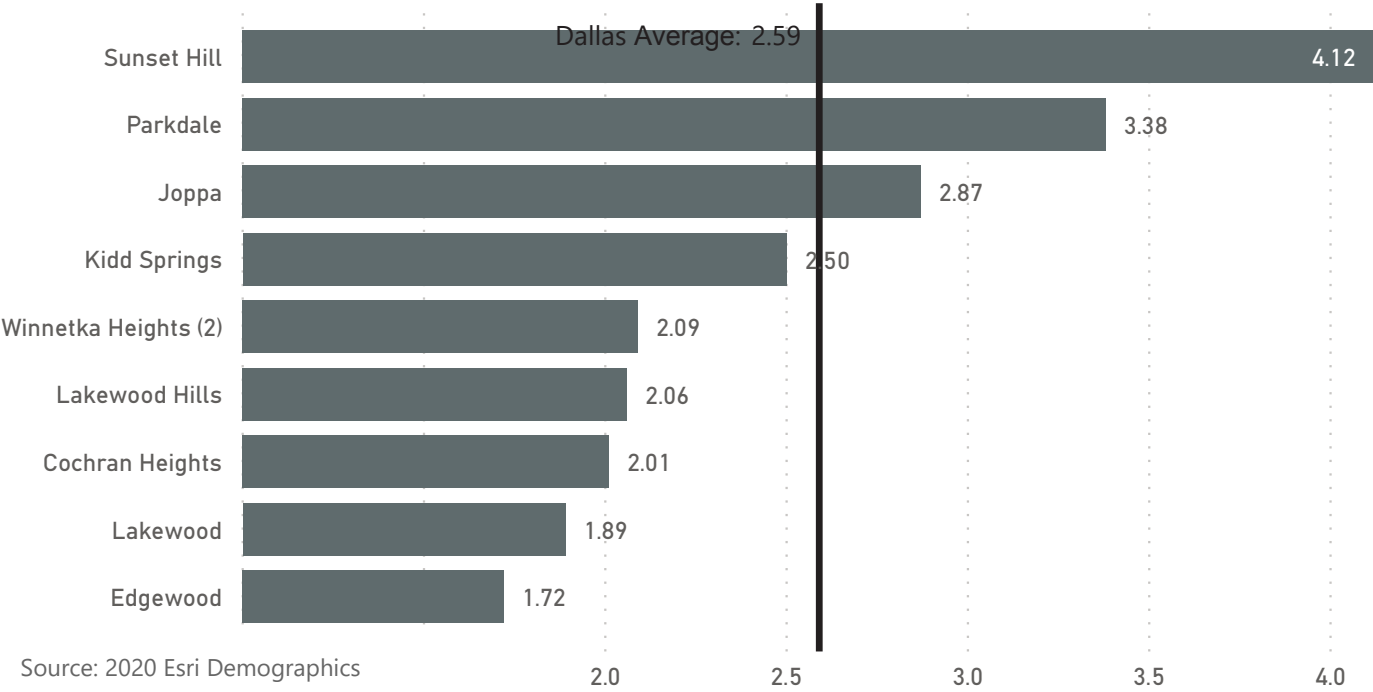
Source: 2018 Esri Demographics (block groups);2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates (Dallas)

Slow Streets Median Household Income



Source: 2020 Esri Demographics

Slow Streets Average Household Size



Source: 2020 Esri Demographics

THE RESULTS

Of course, these streets are more than data. They are our neighbors. And they all have stories. We asked the 10 streets to share their observations and pictures with us.

These first two pages represent observations gathered on one street DURING the program and then AFTER. Neighbors sat on their front steps for an hour at a time and observed traffic, marking whether they thought the vehicles were local or not and how fast they were going. Based on this data, we can conclude that the Slow Streets program did indeed reduce thru traffic.

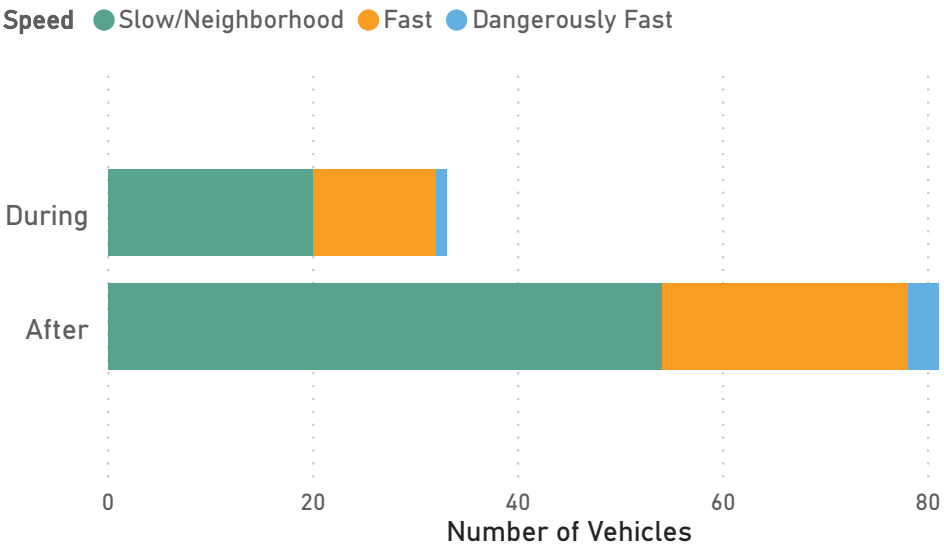
The next two pages are excerpts taken from a survey we sent to each of the streets. The excerpts are in response to questions about the neighbors’ experience with the Slow Streets program.

We also received two emails from residents who felt the program was unfair because they did not get it on their street (they did not apply) and were concerned they’d receive more traffic and one call from a neighbor who said she didn’t hear about the program.

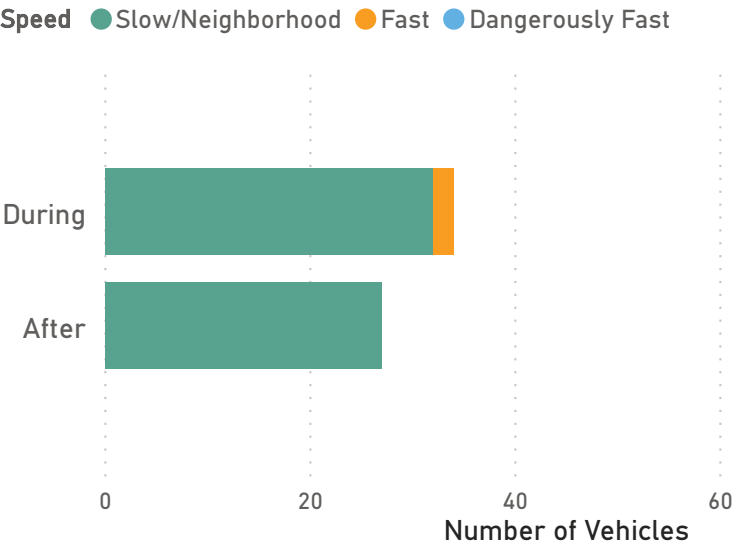
Slow Streets Impact on Traffic

A Neighborhood’s Observations During & After Pilot Program

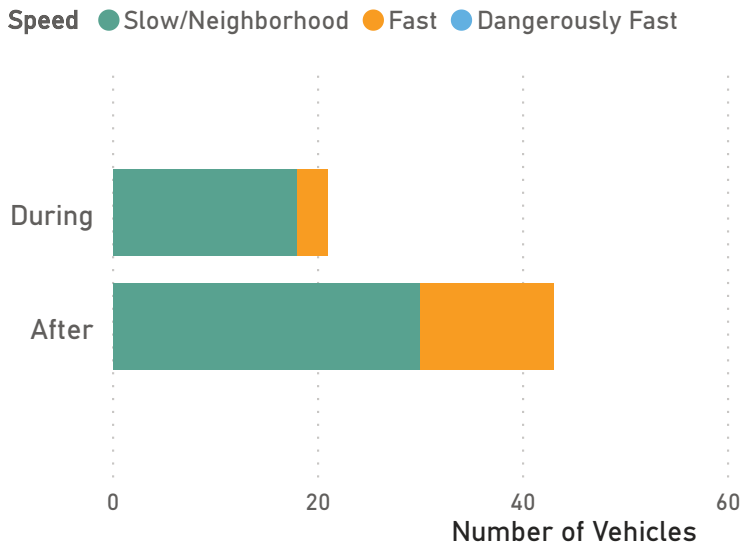
Morning Thru Traffic



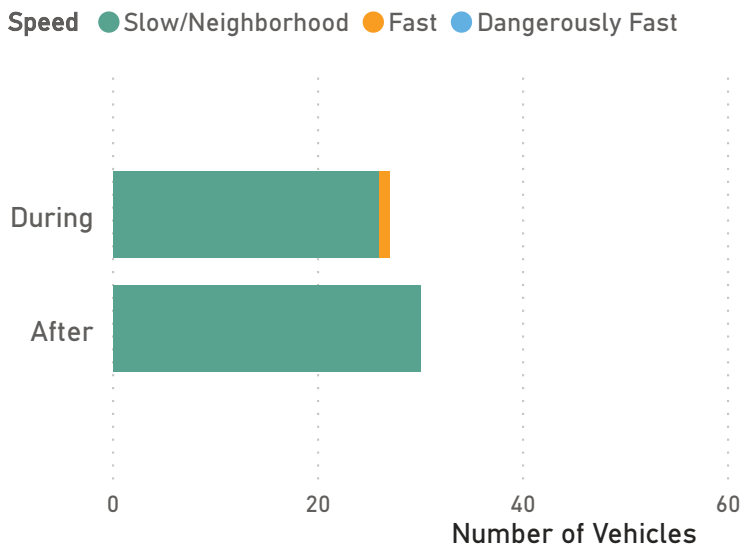
Morning Residential Traffic



Evening Thru Traffic



Evening Residential Traffic



“I WISH EVERYONE COULD DO THIS!”

“IT BROUGHT US TO OUR FRONT YARD AND BETTER CONNECTED TO NEIGHBORS!”

“MY FAMILY AND NEIGHBORS HAVE A LOT OF LITTLE KIDS. THIS TOOK STEETS BACK TO WHERE THEY SHOULD BE - A PLACE FOR COMMUNITY, NOT A RACE TRACK FOR THRU TRAFFICS AVOIDING LIGHTS AT POLK AND 10TH.”

“The street became more welcoming for residents of other blocks and other neighborhoods. All of Oak Cliff should be like this!”

“WE ARE A STRONG AND DIVERSE COMMUNITY. WE ALL HAVE CHILDREN OR ANIMALS THAT REQUIRE SAFETY MEASURES, AND FOR 30 DAYS, WE HAD PEACE OF MIND.”

“The project delivered! Our residential street was quieter and safer. It allowed us to use the expanded space and interact with neighbors from appropriate distances.”

“Our block has several families with young children who love to ride their bikes. The Slow Streets trial greatly reduced the number of cars that use our street as nothing more than a short-cut. Our block is very tight-knit and keeping our kids and neighbors safe is extremely important to each and every one of us. I would love to make the Slow Streets program a permanent fixture for” our street.

“At first, we anecdotally noted that vehicle traffic was both down in terms of volume as well as speed. Following this, several neighbors took a measured approach to recording vehicle count and speed. From this, we were able to definitively determine that the slow speed initiative successfully reduced traffic on our block.”

SPEEDS WERE GREATLY REDUCED THANKS TO THE PROGRAM.

“OUR NEIGHBORS WITH SMALL CHILDREN ENJOYED THIS AND ALSO IDENTIFIED MUCH NEEDED MAINTENANCE SHORTFALLS ON THIS PARTICULAR BLOCK.”

“We need an answer to make our streets safer. This program, although temporarily, increased safety on our block. By reducing vehicle count as well as vehicle speed, our block was better able to connect with each other and allowed a safe space to play or exercise.”

“We are a neighborhood full of children who need safe places to play - slow streets extended the front yard area and allowed parents and children to stay connected and active. Mental health of all was improved as children's laughter filled the air while parents and grandparents had happy hour time. Please extend the program so when the brutal heat of July and August pass we may all be able to play outside together safely.”

“GREAT CONCEPT, BUT WITHOUT ENFORCEMENT MECHANISMS OR MORE FOLLOW-THROUGH/SUPPORT FROM THE CITY, THE CONCEPT DEVOLVED OVER THE THIRTY DAY TRIAL PERIOD.”

“Initial impact was substantial; however, as time passed, cars began to simply ignore the barricades and drive around. By the time the program ended, it was as though there weren't even barricades. Our road was blocked with one barricade on each end in order to facilitate thru traffic in both directions; however, with hindsight, a complete blockage of one end of the street was likely needed.”

“When drivers would cut through or ignore barricades, they were often faced with less traffic or cars parked on the street and would therefore drive even faster than usual.”

“Overall, the inability to enforce any elements of the “slow street” really hindered our ability to fully enjoy. Our street was situated ideally to serve as a socially distant gathering place with a local restaurant/bar on the corner; however, the constant bad behavior by drivers with no recourse pushed pedestrians away.”

“SOME WERE CONCERNED IT WOULD PUSH MORE TRAFFIC TO OTHER STREETS, NO IDEA IF THAT HAPPENED. SOMETIMES IT WAS ALMOST AS IF THE BARRIERS MADE THE DRIVER MAD; AND THEREFORE, THEY SPED UP DOWN THE STREET BECAUSE THEY WERE IRRITATED.”

“THIS PROGRAM WAS A SUCCESS. HOW DO WE WORK TO RETAIN SOME OF THESE BENEFITS ON A MORE PERMANENT BASIS? HOW DO WE LOOK TO EXPAND THIS SUCCESS TO OTHER BLOCKS?”

“GREAT CONCEPT WITH MANY LESSONS LEARNED. ON A SECOND RUN, I WOULD BE LESS WORRIED ABOUT PUSHBACK FROM A SMALL MINORITY OF NEIGHBORS CONCERNED ABOUT TRAFFIC FLOW AND RE-WORK THE DESIGN TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE AT PREVENTING FLOW-THROUGH TRAFFIC.”



RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, the program was a success for the 10 streets. Not everything was perfect, but that’s generally the case with a pilot. At the Better Block Foundation, we listen, test, listen again, and then make recommendations. These are our recommendations.

Extend the Program

We believe there is a benefit to neighbors in this type of program, especially during the pandemic. We know that there are obviously budget and capacity issues to make this happen, but we still believe in a future adaptation of the program.

More Diversity in Neighborhood Selection

If the program were extended, we would want to ensure that there is a better representation of the City as a whole in the streets that participate in the program. We would work to ensure that there is a bit more distribution.

The first round of Dallas Slow Streets was ideal for neighborhood blocks with single-family houses. Unfortunately, that meant that most streets with apartment buildings were not able to apply. If the program were to be extended, we would want to find a way to be more inclusive of different households—single family, multifamily, and everything beyond and in-between.

Work on Permanency

Many of the neighbors we worked with have good ideas on how to make elements of the program more permanent. It is up to the city to work with these neighbors to identify good next steps, but one in particular we think would be smart is to look at the Neighborhood Greenway program in Portland.

Restore (and Increase) the Budget for Bike Lanes in Dallas

The proposed budget for bike lanes in Dallas was cut in half, from \$1 million to \$500,000. Even at \$1 million, we are not able to achieve half the things we should in our city regarding bike lanes. But it’s at least a start. At \$500,00, there’s little that can be done. Giving people space to be outside and maintain safe social distances has been imperative to people’s mental and physical health during the pandemic. Through this, more and more people have discovered the joy of bicycles. Let’s give them the space they deserve.



THE PARTNERS

THE BETTER BLOCK FOUNDATION PARTNERED WITH SEVERAL LOCAL PARTNERS TO BRING DALLAS SLOW STREETS TO LIFE.

First, thanks to Councilman Chad West for continuing to believe in the idea and for finding ways to make it happen. Another thanks to the City of Dallas’ Public Works Department, which handled the permitting and street designs. Special thanks to Director Robert Perez and Ali Hatefi for helping create and implement the process.

A huge thanks to the Coalition for a New Dallas for not only funding this pilot, but for continuing to push our city to think about ways to make Dallas a bit more walkable and bikeable.

A thanks to our partners at BikeDFW and Amanda Popken Development for helping organize, spread the word, and test the concept.

And, most importantly, a huge thank you to the 10 Block Captains who signed up for the pilot, provided feedback, and shared their stories: Amanda Cone, Jody Bland, Diana Torres Rivera, Eliseo Ruiz, Rob Shearer, Alexa Taylor, Shelley Broyles, Jose Rivera, Donald Wesson, and Shalondria Galimonde.

And, lastly, a special thanks to Kansas City, Missouri’s Public Works Department for the inspiration; Ellen Soward for the graphics for this report; and Morganne Stewart for the design.

