



## Speed Humps Calm Traffic, But Stir Outrage



Tribune photo by SCOTT ISKOWITZ  
Cars slow down as they drive over speed humps on Crenshaw Lake Road in Lutz.  
By RICH SHOPES | The Tampa Tribune  
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LUTZ --Stephen Kline is so frustrated with [speed humps](#) he put a sign in his front yard condemning them and asking drivers to complain to Hillsborough County Commission Chairman Ken Hagan.

"If I have a heart attack and die because the ambulance was delayed getting to me, my wife already has instructions to sue the county," said Kline, who also created an anti-speed hump citizens group and a Web site, [www.lutzcarr.com](http://www.lutzcarr.com).

Kline's efforts, which have drawn shrugs from officials, typify what's happening in many neighborhoods locally and across the country as residents and local governments grapple with traffic safety, motorist convenience and homeowners' desires to slow traffic. Even local governments sometimes disagree on the value of speed humps.

Hillsborough County has more than 1,000 of them; the city of Tampa doesn't have exact figures, but the number inside city limits is closer to 100.

Kline says the humps delay emergency vehicles, [damage cars](#) - he has three Corvettes, including one with a bent frame from a hump - and are a general nuisance, especially at rush hour.

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n this leafy suburb, the speed humps are unavoidable. Crenshaw Lake Road and Crystal Lake Road have a dozen between them, installed a year and half ago after residents complained about speeders. About 6,000 drivers a day use those roads.

As often happens with speed humps everywhere, it's tough to make everyone happy, even though campaigning for the traffic-calming devices generally requires getting most neighbors to sign a petition asking for them.

That lack of unanimity is evidenced in Lutz, where 18 months after residents successfully petitioned for the humps, a couple dozen of their neighbors have logged onto Kline's Web site and joined his 2-week-old Citizens Against Road Restrictions.

"They're so horrendous. There's no way to crawl over them so they don't knock your teeth out," said Ruth Bruzel, who lives in nearby Cheval and drives [a Lexus](#) LS 430.

Eric Frantz says he doesn't have a problem with speed humps in general, but he's against having them on connector streets such as Crenshaw Lake and Crystal Lake.

"This isn't a neighborhood with children playing in the street. These have always been through streets," Frantz said.

Naturally, not everyone shares that view.

Anthony Mooney, who lives on Crenshaw Lake, said he signed a petition a few years ago calling for speed humps to slow speeders. Joggers and bikers use the road, as do folks retrieving their mail, he said.

"I'm not happy with what they're trying to do," Mooney said of the effort to get rid of the humps. "Maybe they can hand us all checkered flags and we can wave them as we go get our mail."

David Carrow, another Crenshaw Lake homeowner, said the humps make the road safer. "This is a racetrack," he said. "Thank God they put them in."

Kline and other hump opponents might have an ally in Hillsborough County Fire Rescue.

Fire rescue spokesman Ray Yeakley said the department doesn't oppose the humps but it isn't thrilled with them, especially on roads frequented by fire-rescue vehicles.

About a year ago, a firetruck broke a rear axle crossing a hump on Crenshaw Lake Road. That wouldn't happen now because firefighters are familiar with the humps there, he said.

"We understand they serve a purpose and force drivers to slow down, but at the same time, as with every situation like that, it becomes a burden and that is an increase in response time," Yeakley said.

Response times can increase 10-15 seconds per hump. Citizens are told to consider that when weighing whether to pursue the humps, he said.

Tampa Fire Rescue is even less supportive of the speed humps, saying they lead to slow response times and damage equipment.

Hillsborough County has about 1,200 humps. It's unclear how many are in Tampa. Traffic Analysis Supervisor

William Porth said 64 sites in the city have speed humps, but each site might have one or more humps.

Kline's goal is to pressure officials to remove the humps on Crenshaw Lake and Crystal Lake roads.

Unlike Tampa, Hillsborough has a process by which humps can be removed, but it can't be initiated until three years after the humps were installed.

Kline wants to appeal directly to officials to accelerate that timetable and bypass the usual process, which includes a petition drive, traffic studies and consultations with police and fire-rescue. That can drag on for a year, and for Kline, that's too long.

"You go drive them. If you have to drive them every day, your temper's going to go up," Kline said.