PROJECT REPORT

Community Corners – A Practitioner’s Guide
Report details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report prepared for:</th>
<th>Road Safety Trust</th>
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<tr>
<td>Megha Gupta (Project Manager)</td>
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1 Introduction - How to deliver a community led, street furniture based, traffic calming project

Community Corners involve the use of street furniture such as street planters, picnic benches and painting patterns on the residential streets to change the 'feel' of a street from one of a well-defined highway designed primarily for cars, to an environment shared by road users and the community and where families live, children play and people move around and socialise. The planters also create barriers to the line of sight of drivers as well as physical obstructions which narrow the road, thus encouraging drivers to slow down.

The aim of this document is to give a high level step by step guide on the practicalities of delivering this type of project for people interested in pursuing such a project. A full report is available here: https://trl.co.uk/community-corners.

PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU MUST HAVE LOCAL AUTHORITY APPROVAL AND BACKING BEFORE COMMENCING SUCH A PROJECT AND OFFICERS FROM THE COUNCIL MUST BE CONSULTED WITH AT EACH STAGE OF THE PROCESS OUTLINED IN THIS DOCUMENT.

1.1 Permission and Funding

Permission for any scheme must be sought from the Local Highway Authority who is responsible for what can and cannot be placed on local residential roads.

Possible funding sources could be:

- Road Safety funding organisations.
- Active Travel funding organisations.
- Local Authorities.
- Residential or local business organisations.
- Street furniture organisations that may offer donations or cut price street furniture to help.

2 Recruit Streets to participate

2.1 Designing Campaign Material

Campaign Material will consist of two main components:

i. The Flyer

The purpose of designing a flyer is to spread the word around the community regarding the scheme and get nominations from enthusiastic residents for their respective streets. A sample flyer is attached in Annex 1.

ii. The Street Nomination Survey Form

A link and QR Code for the street nomination survey form should be in the flyer. This survey form will provide an idea to the organization leading the scheme about the nature of the
street. Broadly, the information to be sought from the survey form should be able to answer the following:

- **Section I – Information about the street**
  - Name of the street;
  - Postcode;
  - Residents’ perception on issues regarding traffic on their street;
  - Type of parking on the street;
  - Cycle lanes present, if any;
  - Speed limit on the street; and
  - Any collisions on the street that the resident making the application might be aware of.

- **Section II – Information about the resident submitting the application**
  - Name, Contact Details;
  - Whether they would be able to lead and devote time and energy to the project by engaging their neighbours and organizing consultation meetings on their streets;
  - If they felt their neighbours would be supportive; and
  - If there was any neighbourhood action group already in place.

A sample nomination survey form is attached in Annex 2.

### 2.2 Campaign for Street Recruitment

A street recruitment campaign can be run via:

1. **Social Media** – These days there are several groups who promote liveable streets, walking, sustainability, etc. on Facebook. The idea is to share information on such groups to receive nominations from enthusiastic residents who are already involved in some way to promote sustainable transport in their town/city or street.

2. **Local Authority Highways Department and Road Safety team, Local Police road safety lead** – Often various departments in councils receive requests from residents about certain issues related to traffic on their streets and these departments in the council can recommend streets which they feel could benefit from an intervention like Community Corners.

3. **Local Councillors** – Likewise, local councillors are in regular contact with residents and are aware if certain residents are trying to address issues related to perceived high speeds on their streets.

4. **Local Cycling/ Walking/ Active Travel/ Playing out organisations.**

The target for street recruitment should be to recruit three times as many streets as being aimed for; this is based on the fact that some streets will be unsuitable for such a project as Community Corners.
2.3 Shortlisting Process

After receiving nominations from streets, the organizer should undertake a shortlisting process in order to identify streets which could potentially benefit from an intervention like Community Corners. Various parameters which should be considered for shortlisting may include (note that this is a suggestive list; parameters may vary based on the context):

- Streets falling under any Traffic Scheme Area.
- Street characteristics which may encourage speeding, rat running such as a street parallel to a major street with high traffic levels, traffic lights, pedestrian crossings or a street connecting two major streets that represents a perceived short cut.
- Other street characteristics, for example, type of parking permitted, land use along the street, presence of cycle lanes, etc.
  - Characteristics such as the type of parking permitted on the street – streets with dense on-street parking on both sides of the road, or without driveways would be lower in priority.
  - Streets with commercial units or shops have been excluded in previous projects.
  - Streets with cycle lanes were excluded from previous projects as planters would have blocked cycle lanes.
- Streets part of residential parking zones (RPZ) should also be excluded. Planters taking up a parking space within an RPZ would reduce revenue for the Council parking department, presenting an additional barrier to scheme success or cost to scheme delivery.
- Reported Personal Injury Collision rates on the streets.

2.4 Consultation Process

2.4.1 Initial Induction Session

The aim behind running an initial induction session is not only to make the residents more aware about what the scheme would look like; but also to stress the involvement level of the residents; how difficult the process could be, how much time will be required, and that this could involve disagreement with other residents on the street. The expectation regarding what will be possible and what will not, should be set as well. Residents often want schemes that the Council cannot agree to such as fake grass on the carriageway, 3-D painting of holes in the carriageway, or arch style trellising to limit vehicle height.

This initial induction session could see many dropouts from streets, as residents may not have enough time to provide support; or some residents might feel that they will not be able to gather enough support required for the scheme. It should not be underestimated how challenging gaining community support is for residents to see the scheme through from start to finish. Highly committed people within the street and willing leaders will be required in order to ensure success for the scheme.
2.4.2 Consultation

Facilitate consultation meetings on each street. The community should organise and get as many residents there as possible (use a local church hall, community hall or school). This should include, as a minimum, every household on the street leafleted (for template, see Annex 3), plus any posters that can be put up in windows along the street and in the immediate areas inviting residents to the consultation.

At the meeting, the community leader should make the introduction; the scheme organiser should explain the project and help facilitate the discussion. The scheme should be promoted as a trial, for example it could be installed for three months and monitored. This should help more residents accept the scheme.

It is recommended that a majority voting rule be used e.g. if at the end of the meeting, over 50% of residents want to proceed with trial then the scheme should proceed to the next stage.

A template for common objections received from residents and how to address these has been provided in Annex 4.

2.4.3 Set up residents constituted groups

Setting up a residents constituted group is of strategic importance. The constituted group will have a signed constitution committing to take care of the planters. The group will also have a bank account where money should be transferred by the organizer from the funding source to purchase planters, plants, soil, paints, etc. This will ensure a sense of ownership for these by the community. A template constitution for the constituted group is provided in Annex 5 for reference.

Once a scheme has been designed in principle, all design elements and positions of the planters and any other elements to be introduced on the public highway must be agreed by the Local Highway Authority. Once approval has been received then installation day can be planned.

2.4.4 Plan installation day

- In the consultation meetings, the residents should agree on a date (make this late spring/ early summer to avoid holidays).
- Advertise the date early (through social media such as a Facebook post and, as a minimum, leaflet the entire street and put up a few posters in windows in the immediate affected area).
- Request a Road Closure with the Local Authority’s Highways Department. This is a legal necessity and may require up to 8 weeks’ notice. There may well be a cost associated with this).
- Get the final design sign off from Council. Requirements for signing off such a scheme should be discussed with the council in advance. In general, there should be a road plan, with locations marked for planters and painted patterns. There should be a detailed cross section of the road, where the planter is proposed to be placed, highlighting road width, planter width and road width remaining for traffic to pass.
through. The Council should be made aware of the specifications of planters, types of plants being bought for these planters; specifications for the road paints, etc.

- Once the design has been signed off, order all the furniture, plants, soil, paint, painting equipment, signage etc. to ensure delivery on time. Consider where to store anything that may arrive early. See Annex 6 for minimum standards for various furniture and paints as indication of rules which will need to be followed, but please note that individual Local Highway Authorities may have different specifications.

- Design any carriageway painting schemes; perhaps create templates from cardboard, which would make it easier to paint on the installation day.

- Undertake baseline monitoring of speeds and traffic volume (local authority road safety team/ police may have speed radar guns which can be used). Measure at peak and off peak, week and weekends ideally. Templates for survey forms are provided in Annex 7 and Annex 8. Please ensure that Police/ Local Highway Authority guidance is received and approval given for these counts.

- Understand road closure procedures and legal ramifications.

### 2.4.5 Installation Day

An installation day on each of the streets should start early in order to ensure everything finishes in time and there is still time for the paint to dry. The day should start with a briefing session focused on safety for the residents. This briefing session should focus on warning the residents about potential risks of working in the carriageway and while handling heavy planters and road paints. Residents can then be divided into groups responsible for installing planters, putting in the soil and plants and road painting. The constituted group should try to have as many residents as possible to help (Planters can be heavy, and painting takes time). Painting should be started straight away (the drying time is the thing that will delay road re-opening) by one team, while the other teams can install planters, then soil and compost and then plants.

**During/ Post installation conflict**

Previous experience has indicated that some residents/ drivers will have not paid attention until the street furniture is installed and then may object to the scheme. They may make inaccurate claims on safety/ speed/ parking issues.

A possible way to deal with this is to listen, take feedback on board, and answer objectively. Ensure individuals feel listened to (this will help de-escalate conflict). Make changes where possible if you can compromise without lessening the scheme’s effectiveness materially. Be ready to be assertive through reminding individuals the scheme is a trial, and a final decision will be taken at the end pending results on impact and final resident feedback. It is a majority based decision. If individuals are exhibiting threatening behaviour, move away from the situation and call the police.

**Follow up evaluation.**

Three months after the scheme has been installed, measure traffic speed and volume again. Try to do it at the same times, days and weather conditions as the first measurements to allow a fair comparison. Do a pre and post comparison (has there been any difference?).
Arrange a follow up meeting for the street. Present the results, and facilitate a further discussion on whether the scheme has worked, and if the design is right/ needs adjustment. Go to a majority vote following discussion and either remove the scheme, adjust or keep based on results and in consultation with the Local Highway Authority.

Share

Share your results with the Council’s road safety department, charities and other organisations interested in improving the road environment for all. It is only through the sharing of where these things have worked, that other communities become empowered to improve their streets too.

3 Challenges and timeframe

3.1 Challenges when implementing Community Corners

Throughout the process of developing a Community Corners scheme there are likely to be a number of challenges that will need to be overcome to ensure successful delivery. One of the biggest challenges likely to be encountered is gaining the support of the residents, all of whom are likely to have varied thoughts and ideas. Managing subsequent changes in resident opinions after installation of the scheme could also be challenging. Throughout the project good communication is required and it will be necessary to listen and take on board all comments received and respond in a clear and objective manner.

Another potential challenge to the successful implementation of the scheme could be the weather on the proposed installation day. It can be difficult to arrange installation days where residents can attend and participate, this can be greatly affected if, on the day, inclement weather results in the inability to complete installation, especially the road painting elements. Poor weather conditions may result in abandoning the installation day, potentially resulting in significant delay while a new day is set where all residents can attend. This will require reapplication for road closures and regular communication will be required to ensure resident support and attendance on the rescheduled installation day.

3.2 Timescales for implementing Community Corners schemes

The possible timescales for the estimated duration of a Community Corner scheme is detailed in Table 1. This details the main tasks involved from initial set-up of the campaign through to the installation day and details the duration of each stage.

It should be remembered that on completion of the installation, a follow-on evaluation period is required which has not been included in Table 1. The duration is also dependent on timely responses from residents and the Local Authority being available to provide required assurances.
Table 1: Community corner scheme timeframe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Anticipated duration</th>
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<tr>
<td>Recruitment campaign design</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign for street recruitment</td>
<td>6 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortlisting process</td>
<td>1 week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial induction session</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set up residents constituted groups</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheme design</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council permissions</td>
<td>3 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan installation day</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Installation Day</td>
<td>1 week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annexes

Annex 1: Campaign Flyer

Funding available for safer, quieter Bristol streets

TRL have funding available for four streets to design Community Corners within Bristol. Slow and reduce traffic on your street:

- Install planters and trees on the road
- Design street seating areas for rest, relaxation, play and dinners together.
- Paint permanent murals on roads to remind drivers kids live here
- Create street parties to bring your street together to redesign your road

What you need:

2 residents willing to spend time engaging neighbours, creating a residents group, and facilitating meetings. Re-designing a street will be challenging but rewarding

Apply for funding here:
http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/7KP6/
Annex 2: Community Corners – Street Nomination Form

1. Nomination for Community Corners

Thank you for deciding to nominate your street for the Community Corners scheme. We would like to know about your street and understand issues on your street in order to design Community Corners which would help in making your street safer and quieter. There are a total of 15 questions and it shouldn’t take more than 15-20 minutes of your time. Please note that all data is confidential and will only be used for the purposes of this project and will not be shared with any third parties for any reason.

2. Information about the Street

Please explain, in a few brief sentences why you think your street is the right street for Community Corners.

Name of your Street *

Postcode *

Are there any issues on your Street regarding traffic that you and your local community would like to resolve?

What type of Parking is permitted on your Street?

- On-street, Resident Permit Holder Parking Only
- On-Street Resident Permit Holder as well as Pay & Display
- Off-Street Parking only
- Other (please specify):

Please describe any issues regarding Parking on your Street.
Are there cycle tracks present on your Street? *
- Yes, both sides of the Street
- Yes, only on one side
- No

What is the speed limit on your Street?
- 20 mph
- 30 mph
- > 30 mph
- Unsure

Have you observed drivers speeding in your Street?
- Yes, frequently
- Yes, but rarely
- No

Have there been any accidents on your Street in the last year that you are aware of?
- Yes
- No
- Unsure

3. More Information about You

This information is required in order to have a point of contact for the shortlisting process. TRL will not share your personal details with any other 3rd parties.

Your Name *

Contact Details (Email Address & Phone Number) *
In thinking about the residents of your street, do you think there will be significant support, resistance or apathy towards a Community Corners scheme? Please explain.

Delivering Community Corners can take time. You’ll need to engage your neighbours, hold a couple of residents meetings, attend a workshop with us and lead the installation one weekend with help from your neighbours. Do you have the time and energy to take this one, or if not, do you have a named person or person(s) who would?

Please list other residents who will support you/the lead in delivering Community Corners.
Dear neighbour, a number of residents have raised concerns about traffic speeds. They're concerned about the safety of the children on our road. We’ve come across some funding which may enable some changes to slow traffic down. Could you join us at 7pm on the 18th of December to chat about how we could improve our road together?

If the majority of residents would like to make some changes, then we’d seek to try to do so over the next couple of months.

Look forward to seeing you, best wishes, Fellow neighbours.
Annex 4: Guidance Documents for each street – Overcoming objections

A.1.1.1 Overcoming objections

The key action in overcoming objections is to ensure the objector feels listened to and understood. The best way of doing this is to

- Listen patiently, don’t interrupt, and show you’re engaged.
- Ask questions to further your understanding of what they’re concerned about.
- Repeat back in your own words what you think they’re saying.

Once you’ve spent enough time (usually indicated by the person calming down, relaxing and opening to conversation) listening, then you’re ready to persuade.

- Start persuading by acknowledging the person’s worry, and that you do or have shared this concern too so you looked into it more.
- Note that nothing has been decided, and that this is community led meaning changes will only be made if residents want them. Re-assure that nothing will be forced on the residents. This step is about listening.
- Use soft tones, quietly spoken.
- Outline, gently what you’ve found regarding the objection.
- Ask the person how they’re feeling now.

The person will probably still have some reservation. You can acknowledge this, and use it to ask them to come along to the meeting, as we really want to make this a decision by the residents for the residents.

Specific objections:

- “We don’t want change/ why should we allow this/ what right do you have?”.

Whether change happens or doesn’t, there will be a group of people unhappy. We need to acknowledge different opinions, listen to everyone, and then go with what the majority of residents would like.

- There aren’t enough parking spaces

We were worried about that too, so we checked. We did parking spaces counts x times this week and found x, y, z so actually we think it will be OK.

- It won’t work

I thought the same, but there are schemes in Bristol which seem to have been really effective in reducing speeds. One in Stonebridge Park reduced speeds from 38mph to 23mph on average and stopped really massive trucks using the road as a shortcut.

- It’s dangerous

It’s been shown to reduce speeds, and is no different to a parked vehicle on the road in terms of being a physical barrier something could crash into. They’re appropriately signed at night so they glow brightly in headlights.

- It will attract drug-users/ alcoholics/ teenagers/ homeless

That hasn’t been the case in other community corners thus far.
- No-one will sit in it

That may be true, though the purpose is the change the feel of the street for drivers. There is one corner in Stonebridge Park in Bristol which families regularly sit in to eat together with neighbours, and another is used by an elderly resident to sit and rest on her daily walk.

- Fire engines won’t get through

The measurements are specifically set out to ensure fire engines get through no problem.

- Delivery trucks won’t get through

Normal trucks (Bin Lorry size or less) will have no issue. It would be good to deter over-sized artic lorries from coming down the street though?

- You can’t put it outside my house, it’s my parking space.

We will seek to put it in places where it’s wanted, so if you don’t that’s OK, we’ll do our best to avoid that.
Annex 5: Guidance Documents for each street – Constitution of the Resident Group

Constitution of the (Name of the Resident Group)

1. Name
   The name of the group shall be “(enter name of the group)”

2. Aim
   To continuously improve the quality of (enter name of the street) (“the street”) for residents, specifically with reference to benefits for the health, well-being, happiness and social cohesion of the street’s residents.

3. Objectives
   The group will fulfil the aim by:
   - Working together as residents regardless of age, length of residency in the street, ethnic origin, ability, sex, belief or political affiliation recognising the value of our many differences.
   - Involving local people in improving the street.
   - To carry out and promote both physical improvements to the street, and events within the street by working with statutory and non-statutory agencies.
   - To raise funds and receive contributions where appropriate to finance the work.
   - To publicise and promote the work where this contributes to the group’s overarching aim.
   - Open bank accounts.
   - Make rules and standing orders for categories of members and their rights.
   - Take out insurance as necessary and appropriate.
   - Organise meetings, training courses and events as necessary to support the improvement of the street.
   - Work with similar groups and exchange information and advice with them.
   - Take any action that is lawful, which would help it to fulfil its aims.

4. Membership
   (a) Membership of (enter name of the group) shall be open primarily to (street name) residents only, and by exception to anyone who is interested in helping the group to achieve its aim and willing to abide by the rules of the group. Exceptions will be considered by the management committee on a case by case basis.
   (b) Every member shall have one vote at general meetings.
   (c) The Management Committee shall have the power to refuse membership to an applicant, where it is considered such membership would be detrimental to the aims, purposes or activities of the group.
   (d) Registration and termination of membership.
• Any member of the association may resign his/her membership and any representative of a member organization or section may resign such position, by giving to the secretary of the association written notice to that effect.

• The Management Committee may, by resolution passed at a meeting thereof, terminate or suspend the membership of any member, if in its opinion his/her conduct is prejudicial to the interests and objects of the association, PROVIDED THAT the individual member or representative of the member organization (as the case may be) shall have the right to be heard by the General Committee before the final decision is made. There shall be a right of appeal to an independent arbitrator appointed by mutual agreement.

5. Management

(a) The (Name of the Group) Group shall be administered by a Management Committee of not less than three (3) people and not more than fifteen (15) members elected at the group's Annual General Meeting, Committee Members must be at least 18 years old.

(b) The officers of the Management Committee shall be:
   - The Chairperson
   - The Treasurer
   - The Secretary

and such other officers the group shall deem necessary at the meeting.

(c) The Management Committee shall meet at least twice a year.

(d) At least three (3) Management Committee members must be present for the Management Committee meeting to take place.

(e) Voting at Management Committee meetings shall be by show of hands on a majority basis. If there is a tied vote then the chairperson shall have a second vote.

(f) Power to set up sub-groups and working parties as deemed necessary who shall be accountable to the committee.

6. Finance

(a) Any money obtained by the group shall be used only for the group.

(b) Any bank accounts opened for the group shall be in the name of the group.

(c) Any cheque issued shall be signed by at least two nominated signatures.

(d) The Management Committee will ensure that the group stays within the budget.

7. Committee Meetings

(a) The committee shall meet at least two (2) times each year.

(b) The quorum for a meeting shall be three (3).

(c) The committee shall be accountable to the members at all times.

(d) All meetings must be minuted and available to any interested party.
All committee members shall be given at least seven (7) days’ notice of a meeting unless it is deemed an emergency meeting.

8. Annual General Meeting

(a) The (Name of the Group) Group shall hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) at not more than 15 month intervals.

(b) Where possible members shall be notified personally, otherwise notice will be deemed served by advertising the meetings in at least five public places giving at least 14 days’ notice of the AGM.

(c) The business of the AGM shall include:
   • Receiving a report from the Chairperson of the group’s activities over the year.
   • Receiving a report and presentation of the last financial year’s accounts from the Treasurer on the finances of the group.
   • Electing a new Management Committee and considering any other matter as may be appropriate at such a meeting.

(d) The quorum for Annual General Meeting shall be at least eight (8) persons of which no more than three (3) shall be committee members.

9. Alteration of the Constitution

(a) Proposals for amendments to this constitution, or dissolution (see Clause 11) must be delivered to the secretary in writing. The secretary in conjunction with all other officers shall then decide on the date of a forum meeting to discuss such proposals, giving at least four weeks (28 days) clear notice.

(b) Any changes to this constitution must be agreed by at least two thirds of those members present and voting at any general meeting.

10. Dissolution

The group may be wound up at any time if agreed by two thirds of those members present and voting at any general meeting. Any assets shall be returned to their providers, if they require it, or shall be passed to another group with similar aims.

11. Adoption of the Constitution

This constitution was adopted by the members present at the AGM held on:

(Date)

Signed:

(Chair)
Annex 6: Material Specification

Planter Specification
The planter specifications as provided by Broxap are:

- Timber planters, in European redwood
- 1500mm x 1500mm x 750mm high
- Complete with base
- Geotextile membrane
- Free standing

Reflectors Specification
The reflectors were procured from Nibra Signs Pvt. Ltd. These were 3 mm Traffic Grade Aluminium Composite Signs – 500 x 300 mm – with holes drilled for fixing.

Road Paint Specification
The road paint procured from Adbruf ltd. was Colourplus, Slip Resistant Coloured Coating. The technical specifications for road paint as provided by Adbruf are:
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<th>Technical</th>
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<td>Flash Point (closed cup)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spread Rate (Roller)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spread Rate (Spray)</td>
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<td>Open to Traffic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skid Resistance Value (SRV)</td>
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## Annex 7: Sample Format for recording Traffic Speed

### Traffic Speed Survey (Before / After Installation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Street</th>
<th>Day / Date (of Day)</th>
<th>Time of Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Vehicle Class</th>
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<td>Morning</td>
<td>8:00 - 8:15</td>
<td>Car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>8:00</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8:15 - 8:30</td>
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<td>8:30 - 8:45</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8:45 - 9:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Annex 8: Sample Format for recording Traffic Volume

## Traffic Volume Count Survey Format (Before / After Installation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day / Date</th>
<th>Time of Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Vehicle Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 1</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>8:00 - 8:15</td>
<td>Car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8:15 - 8:30</td>
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<td>8:30 - 8:45</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8:45 - 9:00</td>
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<td>9:00 - 9:15</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9:45 - 10:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>