

CITY OF TULSA  
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT  
TRAFFIC OPERATIONS SECTION  
October 1, 1992

POLICY ON RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC CONTROL

0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The traffic control needs in residential neighborhoods are significantly different than those in other areas of the city and on the arterial streets which crisscross our community. The primary traffic concerns articulated by residents and neighborhood associations throughout the city are to discourage outside traffic from cutting through the neighborhood and to discourage all traffic, residents and nonresidents alike, from traveling at excessive speeds.
- 2 Obviously speed limit signs alone do not eliminate speeding, and the level of enforcement required to control the problem is no longer possible.
- 3 Many things are being tried by cities around the country including CHILDREN PLAYING signs, speed bumps, signs warning of enforcement methods and consequences, roadway constrictions, traffic barriers and diverters, rumble strips, neighborhood education programs, and STOP signs.

The Federal Highway Administration's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices sets forth the basic principles that govern the design and usage of traffic control devices for all public streets and highways. Traffic control devices include all signs, signals, markings, and devices used to regulate, warn, or guide traffic. This manual specifically indicates the types of conditions under which STOP signs are recommended. It strongly discourages the use of STOP signs for speed control.

Experience has shown that when STOP signs are installed in an obvious attempt to control speeding by imposing delay on all traffic, the vast majority of drivers will slow to a "rolling stop", but that an occasional driver will flagrantly run the STOP sign either as an intentional act or because they do not notice the sign in a somewhat unexpected location. The reduced hazard hoped for by slowing traffic is offset to a degree by the hazard caused when a driver unexpectedly violates a STOP sign which other drivers and pedestrians assume they will obey.

Requiring vehicles to stop more frequently than necessary has the side effect of increasing exhaust emissions and noise. A vehicle traveling at a uniform speed produces less noise and air pollution than one which must brake to a stop and then accelerate to its original speed.

After considering the costs and impacts of the various methods which have been tried around the country, it is our conclusion that a judicious use of STOP signs to discourage speeding and cut through traffic is reasonable and appropriate in our residential neighborhoods. We acknowledge that the desire to move traffic efficiently is not the only factor to be considered when dealing with residential neighborhood traffic control.

The objective of this policy is to allow the use of STOP signs at reasonable spacings along collector and cut through type streets which tend to have the most troublesome speeding problems. This policy deliberately prevents the widespread proliferation of multi-way STOP signs throughout our neighborhoods on short, local side streets. It also deliberately prevents an excessive number of interruptions to the collector streets over which many residents travel several times each day.

## 2.0 STOP SIGN POLICY

In neighborhoods with grid street patterns reversing the direction of existing 2-way STOP signs at selected locations will be considered in order to interrupt excessively long, unbroken segments. A fairly uniform interruption to both north-south and east-west streets will be the goal. In these areas multi-way STOP sign locations will be the exception rather than the rule.

- 2.2 STOP signs will be installed at intersections only. No midblock STOP signs will be installed under any condition regardless of the lengths of the blocks.

STOP signs will be placed in proper relationship to the physical intersection regardless of the aesthetic impact on the abutting property.

The weekday traffic volume must exceed 500 vehicles per day at the midpoint of the street segment being considered for interruption.

- 2.5 Speed studies must show that more than 10% of the vehicles are exceeding the posted speed limit by more than 5 miles per hour.

The addition of STOP signs to discourage speeding and cut through traffic shall desirably break the street into approximately 0.25 mile segments (1300'). No segment shorter than 1000' shall be created under any circumstances.

Streets which may cut through residential areas but which are obviously designed to carry significant amounts of non-neighborhood traffic will not be interrupted by STOP signs. These streets typically have STOP signs on all entering side streets and are striped with a centerline.

When a street segment is requested to be interrupted with STOP signs for the purposes described in this policy, the evaluation process will consist of the following steps:

- a. Review the physical features of the requested street segment to determine the length of the segment and the presence or absence of candidate intersections which meet the spacing requirements of this policy.
- b. Count the traffic volume and record traffic speeds at the approximate midpoint of the street segment to determine if the threshold values are met.
- c. Once the candidate locations are confirmed the requesting individual or group will be asked to provide a petition indicating a desire to in fact have STOP signs installed at the specified intersections in an attempt to discourage speeding and cut through traffic. The petition is to be targeted only to those households whose homes front the street segment being considered for interruption. At least 50 percent of the fronting households must indicate their desire for the STOP signs or the signs will not be installed.

### 3.0 CHILDREN PLAYING SIGN POLICY

CHILDREN PLAYING signs will not be used in the City of Tulsa. There is no evidence that these signs have any affect on traffic speeds or on the behavior of those individuals who drive most recklessly through residential neighborhoods. They warn of a universal hazard which is self-evident in any residential area in the city. The existence of CHILDREN PLAYING signs on one block, or one street, or in one neighborhood certainly would not mean that the hazard exists only where signed. The signs may in fact only give parents and children a false sense of security in regard to being in or near the street. We do not desire to fill our neighborhoods with signs of considerable cost and doubtful value.

#### 4.0 SPEED LIMIT 25 SIGN POLICY

- 4.1 SPEED LIMIT 25 signs will normally be provided at every major entry point to a neighborhood where traffic leaves the arterial street and enters the residential area. This sign is to serve as a reminder of the prevailing residential speed limit.

SPEED LIMIT 25 signs will not normally be installed at interior locations within a neighborhood unless the street serves as a collector or cut through street and extra reminders of the speed limit seem advisable.

#### 5.0 SPEED BUMP POLICY

Speed bumps will not be used on public, dedicated streets in the City of Tulsa. Speed bumps create a new and different type of hazard in an attempt to reduce the potential hazard caused by excessive speeding. They can cause drivers to lose control and vehicles to leave the roadway. They cause serious problems for emergency vehicles and motorcycles. They can create a serious liability problem for the city if used on public streets.

#### 6.0 RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN

A determined effort will continue to be made in cooperation with the Tulsa Metropolitan Area Planning Commission to achieve street layout and design features in newly developing residential areas which will avoid recreating some of the problem type streets which we have in a number of existing neighborhoods. Our goal is to work for reasonable solutions to the traffic problems in existing neighborhoods while we strive to make our future neighborhoods less susceptible to speeding and cut through traffic.

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