

NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC CONCERNS

Neighborhood traffic concerns mainly arise from drivers speeding or disregarding other safe-driving practices. Safety of children is a primary concern. The solution to such concerns often rests primarily in the hands of the neighborhood residents. Residents and frequent guests in an area are often the source of most poor driving. This is simply because residents make up the vast majority of the drivers on local streets and residents are familiar with the streets and assume they know what conditions will be present as they drive in the area. Construction workers in subdivisions are also a source of poor driving and concerns about their driving should be addressed with the developer and/or home builders in the subdivision. Drivers unfamiliar with an area often drive more slowly in order to read house numbers and street name signs and to identify turns needed to reach their destination.

What Can Residents Do to Improve Traffic Safety?

Pay attention and drive carefully.

Obey traffic laws.

Set a good example and remind your guests and neighbors to do the same.

Remind residents at your Neighborhood Watch and Homeowners Association meetings to use caution when driving through the neighborhood.

Residents can also assist in promoting traffic safety by reporting stolen or vandalized signs, potholes, and debris in the street or other concerns.

Another extremely important effort of area residents is to educate children regarding proper traffic safety. In particular, children should not be allowed to play in or near the street. Residents can also assist in improving traffic safety by improving driver visibility. For example, Bushes and trees near intersections should be kept trimmed in order that cars approaching the intersection can be seen by other drivers.

Fences and other objects should also be located so that the vision of drivers is not unreasonably restricted.

Vans or other vehicles should be parked so that they do not restrict visibility.

If you notice visibility problems at intersections or other areas on the street, please notify us and we will work with the specific home owner to address the problem.

We have a lot of small children in our neighborhood, can we get a Children At Play sign?

Residents sometimes request Children at Play signs as a means to deal with speeding concerns on residential streets. Such signs actually have a negative effect on safety. Children at Play signs do not have a significant impact on the speeds at which drivers travel. In most cases, the sign does not give the driver any information that was not already known. Most excessive speeding in neighborhoods is by residents who have seen the streets many times and already know that children may be present. However, since parents believe such signs have an effect on drivers, they tend to be much less cautious about keeping children out of the street. Some parents may even misinterpret the sign to indicate that the street is now a safe place to play.

The Children at Play sign is also no longer an approved sign in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and the Texas Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (TMUTCD). All signs installed on public roadways have to comply with these standard manuals. The Children at Play sign was specifically removed from the Manuals after research showed its detrimental impact on safety.

How can we address speeding problems in our neighborhood?

We can address speeding problems in several ways. The first step is to establish that there is indeed a speeding problem. The Engineering Division first collects speed and volume data to ascertain that speeding does exist and if there is cut-through traffic in the neighborhood. Once we establish the nature of the problem, we have several ways to address the issues.

Ask the Police Department to install radar police trailers to educate motorists on the speeds that they are traveling at relative to the speed limit.

Identify high volume and high speed times and inform the Police Department so that they can provide selective enforcement.

The Police Department may be contacted on 936-522-3320 concerning neighborhood traffic problems.

Encourage the establishment of a neighborhood watch to educate and inform the neighborhood of the speeding issues.

Will Stop signs and Speed Bumps help?

Speed bumps (or humps) do reduce speeds on residential streets. However the negatives outweigh the benefits. Speed humps typically increase road noise, especially in front of the homes they are installed on. Emergency response is negatively affected, especially if a fire truck or emergency vehicle has to negotiate a series of humps to get to their destination. Speed humps are typically accompanied by a number of warnings signs creating a negative impact on aesthetics. Vehicles sometimes try to avoid the humps by driving around them on to residents' yards. Residents have complained about lowered property values as prospective home buyers think that there is a serious safety problem on the street. Other cities have installed speed humps on a large scale followed by a program to remove the humps due to citizen complaints. Based on the experience of a number of other cities and our own research, we have decided that speed humps would not be a good solution to address speeding issues.

Stop signs are not an effective tool for solving neighborhood speeding problems. First, this is not an appropriate use of the signs as prescribed by the MUTCD. Second, research has shown that motorists often speed up in between the signs. Third, installing stop signs for the sole purpose of slowing people down results in a lot of people rolling through the stop signs and this create a general disrespect for all stop signs in the area. In addition, although the stop signs are intended for a few people that may be speeding at certain times of the day, the large majority of the remaining residents have to unnecessarily stop each time they go through these intersections, 24 hours a day,

seven days a week. The final problem with inappropriate stop signs is pollution. Each time a vehicle stops, it adds pollutants to the environment. Unnecessary stop signs only add to this already poor air quality. The City recognizes that stop signs in residential neighborhoods may be needed when traffic volumes warrant them. We can certainly check to see if a specific intersection in your neighborhood qualifies for an all-way stop based on these criteria.