

TRAFFIC AND SAFETY INFORMATIONAL SERIES

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION #13

Why Can't Stop Signs Be Placed at Intersections to Reduce Speeding along My Street?

A common and very understandable complaint from people in residential areas is that vehicles are speeding through their neighborhoods. These residents often ask that more stop signs be installed to address the problem. However, adding stop signs may not be the best solution. In fact, doing so can sometimes make the problem worse.

Stop signs don't always slow traffic

Though it may seem counterintuitive, installing stop signs may not result in reduced traffic speeds. Studies have shown that stop signs are not effective at controlling drivers' speeds between intersections. In fact, motorists sometimes drive even faster between stop signs to make up for time "lost" while stopped, which actually increases peak speeds and potentially makes neighborhoods more dangerous.

Installing stop signs can sometimes do more harm than good

Too many stop signs may discourage good driving habits. Studies have shown that if stop signs are overused within an area or are located where they do not seem necessary, some drivers may become careless about obeying them. This can be especially dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists, who may have a false sense of safety from the presence of stop signs.

Other solutions

Fortunately, there are other ways to encourage traffic to slow down, such as the use of traffic calming measures. Sometimes even a simple neighborhood awareness program about the dangers of speeding can be effective.

For more information

For more information, please contact _____.