Minneapolis Traffic and Parking Services

Fun Facts

Traffic and Parking Services provides services to support:

- 1,063 miles of roads – Lane markings, signing, crosswalks.
- 55 miles of parkways – Maintenance agreement with MPRB for signs, signals, markings, and lighting.
- 455 miles of alleys – Signs, alley speed humps.
- 330 vehicle bridges – Lighting, signs, markings.
- 17 parking ramps; 6 surface lots – Managed, maintained.
- 6,200 parking meters – Managed, maintained.
- 40,000 streetlights – Managed, maintained.
- 800 signalized intersections – Managed, maintained.
- 120,000 street signs – Managed, maintained.
- 1.75 miles of skyways; over 80 crossings – Managed, maintained.
- 55 miles of on-street bike paths – TPS managed.

Additional services provided by Traffic and Parking Services:

- 27 Critical Parking Areas serving over 5000 resident customers
- Neighborhood Traffic Calming program
- Development review – Travel Demand Management Plan
- Curb space Management
- Cordon Count
- School Pedestrian Safety program
- Crash database

Minneapolis School Pedestrian Safety Program

Introduction

Traffic and Parking Services developed the School Pedestrian Safety Program to improve the pedestrian safety environment at elementary schools, recognizing the additional safety measures needed to address the pedestrian safety of young schoolchildren.

Summary of School Review Process

1. Review the location history and identify area system characteristics.
2. Contact school principal.
3. Conduct am and pm field observations.
4. Draft report.
5. Share recommendations with school principal, MPS Transportation, ward council member, and the Traffic and Parking Services Division Director.
6. Implement

Action Examples

- 12 zebra crosswalks and 9 centerline pedestrian signs added at high volume, uncontrolled, school crossings.
- Double yellow centerline painted at two locations to prevent passing of vehicles stopped at school crossings
- Pedestrian-only phase added to traffic signal at one location to reduce turning vehicle conflicts
- Edge line striping
- Pedestrian countdown timers
- Modifications to bus staging and parent pick-up/drop-off areas
- Installation of bike racks

Timeline

2003 - Program Development Begins

2005 - First Review Completed

2005 - Successful First-Round Submittal for Federal Safe-Routes Funding

2006 - Successful Second-Round Submittal for Federal Safe-Routes Funding

2007 - To Date, 44 School Reviews Completed

Stop Signs

A stop sign is one of our most valuable and effective control devices when used at the right place and under the right conditions. It is intended to help drivers and pedestrians at an intersection decide who has the right-of-way.

The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) is a set of well-developed, federal and state recognized guidelines that help to indicate when such controls become necessary. These guidelines take into consideration, among other things, the probability of vehicles arriving at an intersection at the same time, the length of time traffic must wait to enter, traffic delays, and the availability of safe crossing opportunities.

Public understanding of the function of stop signs is one of the most critical elements in reducing speeding and traffic accidents.

Q: What is the purpose of a stop sign?

A: The stop sign is used to assign right of way at an intersection to ensure that traffic flows smoothly and predictably.

Q: Will a stop sign reduce speeding in my neighborhood?

A: Because a stop sign is used to assign right of way at an intersection, it is not an effective means to control speeding. Research shows that where stop signs are installed as “deterrents” or “speed breakers,” there are high incidences of intentional violations.

When vehicles must stop, the speed reduction is only near the stop sign, and drivers tend to speed up between stop sign controlled intersections. When not required to stop by cross street traffic, only 5 to 20% of all drivers come to a complete stop, 40 to 60% will come to a rolling stop below 5 mph, and 20 to 4O% will pass through at higher speeds. Signs placed on major and collector streets for the purpose of speed reduction are the most flagrantly violated.

Stop signs are not warranted in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) as an effective measure to reduce speeding.

Q: Will increasing the use of stop signs in my neighborhood, better control traffic?

A: As with any traffic control device, overuse of stop signs will cause many drivers to ignore them, creating a more hazardous situation, especially in low volume areas, such as residential neighborhoods.

Because a stop sign causes a substantial inconvenience to motorists, it should be used only where needed. Studies have shown that, sometimes, after installing a stop sign there is an increase in rear-end collisions. In addition, the stop sign may cause such an inconvenience that traffic detours through residential streets, parking lots, etc.

A little known fact is that the “stop and go traffic” resulting from the placement of stop signs will increase carbon dioxide emissions, thereby further impacting the air quality in your area. There is a noticeable noise increase near a stop sign from acceleration and braking. Additionally, deceleration, idling, and acceleration of vehicles increases fuel consumption.

Q: How can I get a stop sign on my street?

Stop Signs

A: The Traffic and Parking Services Division evaluates an intersection, following State and Federal guidelines, to ensure uniformity in traffic control. The survey includes reviewing the following criteria outlined in the MUTCD:

- Vehicle and pedestrian volumes
- Traffic speeds
- Visibility (sight distance) at the intersection, i.e., trees, shrubbery, hills, and curves
- Accident history

Experience has shown that improving the intersection visibility by prohibiting parking near the intersection or removing other sight distance obstructions, is often more effective in reducing traffic accidents.

Q: What are the uses for multi-way and two-way stop signs?

A: Ordinarily, a multi-way stop sign should be used only where the volume of traffic is nearly equal on both intersecting roads. In situations where the volume is extremely heavy, a traffic light is more effective. In addition, a multi-way stop sign is often used at an intersection where signals are urgently needed, but have not yet been installed. The multi-way sign can be installed quickly to control traffic while arrangements are being made for the signal installations.

Two-way stop control is used in areas where one street has a much higher traffic volume than the street it intersects. A two-way stop may be suitable under the following circumstances:

- Where one street is a major street
- Where sight distances approaching the intersection are substandard and traffic approaching under the general rules for uncontrolled intersections would run a strong risk of being involved in collisions
- Where a crash pattern exists that could be corrected by right-of-way controls, yet conditions do not require traffic on both streets to stop.