

THE PROBLEM . . .

Concerns about speeding in residential areas are a natural result of the dual role that neighborhood streets play in carrying motor vehicles as well as pedestrians and bicyclists.

Unfortunately, all too often, speed limits are artificially lowered and unwarranted stop signs installed with the notion of reducing excessive vehicle speeds.

THE TRUTH IS . . .

that the installation of unwarranted stop signs or artificially low speed limits will not reduce excessive speeding. It will, instead, provide a false sense of security to pedestrians and motorists increasing the potential for accidents.

This two page pamphlet provides some truths about speeding in residential areas. In fact, when Police do set up speed traps in residential neighborhoods the majority of those stopped for speeding live in that very neighborhood.

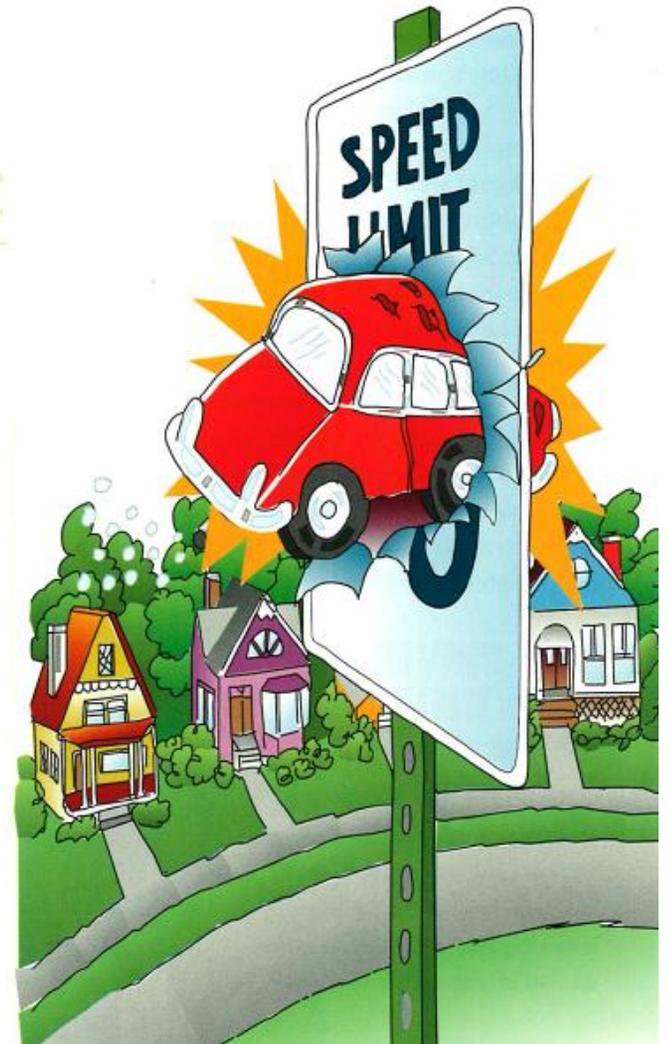
For more information or a copy of a recent research study on Management of Vehicle Speeds on Residential Streets, contact:

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Printed on recycled paper.

THE TRUTH

...about speeding in residential areas



WILL STOP SIGNS SLOW TRAFFIC?

Local and national data conclude that stop signs do not reduce speeds beyond a 150–200 foot radius. Motorists often increase speed beyond this point with the notion of “making up for lost time”, and if unwarranted, more drivers will deliberately ignore stop signs or perform “rolling” stops. The bottom line is that unwarranted stop signs can instill a false sense of security, especially among neighborhood children, and often increase actual accident experience.

Since multi-way stops are intended to provide safe and adequate gaps for vehicles to enter an intersection (when volumes on intersecting streets are in the range of 2500 to 4000 vehicles per day) they are rarely necessary in residential areas. Multi-way stop signs may also be warranted when line-of-sight distance on the street is less than desirable or when pedestrian crossing volumes are high.

WILL DRIVERS REDUCE THEIR SPEED IF SPEED LIMITS ARE LOWERED?

Before and after studies from Illinois and across the country, have concluded that artificially lowering speed limits has generally no effect on the speed at which



motorists will actually drive, while making traffic law violators out of even the most careful drivers.

Repeatedly, speed studies indicate that most motorists (85%) will drive at a speed which is safe and reasonable. The modern practice of setting speed limits at this level has been shown in nationwide studies to result in the lowest level of accident experience.

COULD SPEED LIMITS BE ENFORCED MORE RIGOROUSLY?

Unfortunately, the traditional police/radar gun approach is manpower intensive and costly. Community budgets limit the number of streets that can be routinely and effectively monitored by police departments.

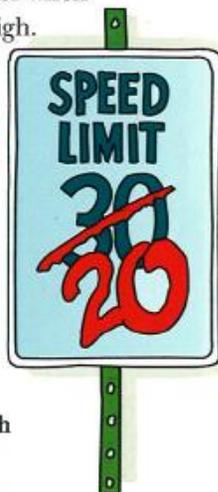
In order to avoid spreading police enforcement too thinly, the municipality and residents must

cooperate to



identify and prioritize the most serious speeding problems.

Remember, however, that because of equipment tolerances and other factors, most police departments will target speed violations at a minimum of 5 mph above the posted speed limit. 100% compliance with speed limits is not a realistic goal.



WHAT CAN BE DONE?

- Municipalities are studying *new technologies*, like photographic radar, to increase the effectiveness of speed enforcement at an acceptable cost to taxpayers.
- Governmental agencies with adequate resources can *reduce arterial highway congestion*, which can help reduce the use of neighborhood streets.
- Successful communities have also discouraged excessive speeding by *eliminating “cut through”* opportunities in new subdivision layouts. It may be possible to incorporate similar speed reduction concepts in the rehabilitation of existing streets.

- *Residents can help* by becoming better judges of what constitutes “reasonable speed”.

Judging vehicle speed is very difficult to do for a stationary observer. To become a better judge of vehicle speed, ask a friend or family member to drive at the posted speed limit to provide an example of how legal vehicles should look and sound.

If, after becoming a better judge of vehicle speeds, you still have concerns about speeding, contact your community police or engineering department explaining the problem. Note the location and hours when speeding appears most prevalent. Municipal staff may then perform studies to determine the extent to which speed limit violations are occurring and examine possible solutions.