Stop Signs

The City of Des Moines uses various means to control traffic at intersections including traffic signals, traffic circles, roundabouts, Yield signs, and Stop signs. Some low-volume intersections are simply controlled by the Rules of the Road. The City follows the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control (MUTCD) to determine the appropriate traffic control device to use at intersections.

One or Two Way Stop Control
An intersection is considered for Stop sign control on the minor street when:

- There are more than 6,000 vehicles per day that travel on the major street OR
- Sight distance is restricted at the intersection OR
- There is a history of crashes at the intersection that could be corrected by a Stop sign on the minor street

All Way Stop Control
An intersection is considered for Stop sign control on all approaches when:

- There are more than 300 vehicles per hour that travel on the major street for at least 8 hours of the day and there are more than 200 vehicles/pedestrians/bicycles per hour that travel on the minor street for the same 8 hours OR
- Sight distance is restricted at the intersection OR
- There is a history of crashes at the intersection that could be corrected by a Stop sign on all of the approaches OR
- There are large volumes of pedestrians crossing an intersection

Stop Signs and Traffic Calming
The City of Des Moines does not use Stop signs for speed control for several reasons including:

- The MUTCD states that Stop signs should not be used for speed control
- Stop signs placed that do not meet the above requirements might work to stop or slow traffic when first installed, but after time some drivers will start to ignore or look past these signs when there isn't an adequate amount of traffic on the intersecting street to get their attention
- Some drivers will speed up between Stop signs trying to make up time that was lost by stopping
- Pedestrians crossing the street could have a false sense of security and could be in danger from drivers ignoring or looking past the Stop sign
- The additional stopping / slowing of vehicles results in increased noise and vehicle emissions at intersections

Contact the Traffic & Transportation Division for more information on Traffic Calming strategies.

If you have questions on Stop Signs in Des Moines, contact the