

**REVIEW CITY POLICY REGARDING NEIGHBORHOOD SPEEDING  
AND POSTING OF CHILDREN AT PLAY SIGNS**

**By: Steven Jankowski, Assistant City Engineer**

**Background:**

One of the more frequent requests that staff receives is for the posting of a Children at Play sign in a neighborhood where speeding has been identified as a problem. Because this is such a recurring request, this case is being prepared to review the rationale for the City's policy of not posting this particular sign and to present some more effective efforts in addressing citizen concerns with neighborhood speeding.

The Children at Play sign was once routinely posted in some communities as an attempt to warn motorists to be on watch for children playing in or near the street. This sign has been removed entirely from both the federal and state versions of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. This sign was deemed to be vague and confusing. While the actual intent was as explained above, parents of children in the vicinity of such a sign might interpret it to mean that it is safe for their children to play in the street because this sign has been posted. Studies have indicated that there is no measureable change in driver behavior in the vicinity of this sign. The intention of a black on yellow warning sign is to call attention to a condition which would be unexpected to an average driver; e.g. sharp curve, school crossing, railroad crossing, etc. It is intuitive to most drivers that a residential area will have some number of children adjacent. It is sometimes argued that a particular neighborhood has a large number of children, or very small children, and therefore posting this sign should be considered. Unfortunately, there is no agreement on what the criterion should be for a particular density. Additionally, if posted in one area it would be politically difficult to deny a request in another area based upon an arbitrary density.

Staff has the two suggestions for better addressing speed concerns within a neighborhood. Setting out the speed trailer serves to signal to motorists that there is a neighborhood concern over speed in the area. The majority of motorists are willing to abide with the posted limits and will slow down if their actual speed exceeds the limit. The speed trailer has the capabilities of gathering detailed traffic counts and speeds which can be reviewed to determine the severity of the problem. Often a vehicle traveling at a legal speed may be perceived as much faster to someone who is within a few feet of the vehicle.

A second option for addressing speed concerns is to work with the police department. This is particularly appropriate if there the speed greatly exceeds the limit. Usually such gross disrespect for the speed limit is limited to a few individual drivers. A description of the vehicle and the time it passes can greatly assist the police department to focus its limited patrol resources. Even a warning can substantially improve such a motorist's behavior.

**Financial:**

The cost of posting a single warning sign is approximately \$200. The typical warning sign has a useful life of 10 years. While a single individual sign is a relatively insignificant cost, the number of possible requests for this sign is difficult to predict. It could be anticipated that additional posting would generate additional requests.

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends no change in the existing policy for not posting Children at Play signs

**Action:**

Recommend to City Council that no change be made to the existing policy for not posting Children at play signs.

**Reviewed By:**

Director of Public Works/Principal City Engineer

City Engineer

Public Works Street Supervisor

Chief of Police

**PW: 05/18/10**

## **COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

### **Case #1: Public Works Site Inventory**

Planning Manager Miller reviewed the staff report.

The Committee discussed screening, using Class 5, tire storage/disposal, dumpster access, and organics.

### **Case #2: Update on 161<sup>st</sup> Avenue & Armstrong Blvd Pedestrian Crossing**

City Engineer Himmer reviewed the staff report.

Public Works Director Olson updated the Committee on recent conversations he has had regarding signage.

Councilmember McGlone believed on a high speed road whatever the City could do, would be good.

Councilmember Dehen stated increasing the sign by six inches was not worth the expense.

Chairperson Elvig stated because this was a busy road, it might be worth getting other resident support for increased site lines.

Motion by Councilmember McGlone, seconded by Councilmember Dehen, to recommend that the City Council allow staff to contact the owners to inquire about expanding the site triangles.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Elvig and Councilmembers McGlone and Dehen.  
Voting No: None.

### **Case #3: Review City Policy Regarding Neighborhood Speeding and Posting of Children at Play Signs**

Assistant City Engineer Jankowski reviewed the staff report.

Chairperson Elvig stated if there was a daycare in the neighborhood, the residents should police the situation.

Motion by Councilmember Dehen, seconded by Councilmember McGlone, to recommend that the City Council make no change in existing policy for not posting Children at play signs.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Elvig and Councilmembers Dehen and McGlone.  
Voting No: None.