

CITY OF WATSONVILLE

Public Works & Utilities

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Can we have stop signs placed at intersections in our neighborhood to reduce speeding?

Adding a stop sign may not be the best solution. In fact, you may be surprised to learn, adding stop signs can sometimes make the problem worse. Here is why:

Stop signs don't always slow traffic

Strange as it may seem, 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—actually increasing peak speeds and potentially making neighborhoods more dangerous.

Installing stop signs can do more harm than good

Too many stop signs may also actually discourage good driving habits. Studies have shown that if stop signs are overused or are located where they don't seem to be necessary, some drivers become careless about stopping at them. This can be especially dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists who may have a false sense of safety from the existence of a stop sign.

Other Solutions

Fortunately, there are other ways to encourage traffic to slow down. Sometimes even a simple neighborhood awareness program can be effective.