

## **ALL-WAY STOP SIGNS – NOT A TRAFFIC CALMING TOOL!**

All-way or 4-way stop signs are usually not an appropriate traffic calming tool on neighborhood streets. Citizens frequently request all-way stop signs at a neighborhood intersection to slow cars down and make the intersection safer. However, all-way stops that are placed in appropriate locations do little to slow traffic and can actually make the intersection less safe.

Places where all-way stops are appropriate:

- High Volume of Cars (200-300 vehicles per hour for 8-hours on each of the intersecting streets)
- High Number of Accidents (5 or more reported crashes in a 12-month period)
- No Visibility (driver, after stopping, can't see conflicting traffic unless the cross-traffic stops)
- Balanced volumes (each of the intersecting streets must have about the same volume of cars)

In most other cases, 4-way stops are not appropriate because:

**Drivers Won't Stop** - Unneeded stop signs are frequently ignored. Drivers on the major street either roll through or run through the stop sign because, in their experience, there is little cross-traffic. This puts pedestrians and cross-traffic at risk. Safety Harbor residents frequently complain that drivers do not come to a complete stop at 4-way stop signs. If you observe motorists at many 4-way stops, you would find that nearly half of the drivers fail to make the required stop.

**Stop Signs Don't Slow Speeds** -- Numerous studies nation-wide have shown that speeds within a block of the stop sign are largely unaffected by the stop. Naturally, motorists have to slow down when approaching a stop sign. But, they often speed up quickly after the stop to make up for lost time. Overall speeding is not reduced by the stop sign. Tests that other municipalities have conducted shown that traffic calming devices such as speed humps are much more effective at slowing speeds over a stretch of roadway.

**Stops Increase Noise and Pollution** -- Stopping and starting cause increased tire and engine noise. Residents living near the stop will experience an increase in traffic noise. Stopping and idling at unwarranted stop signs also increase automobile exhaust and fuel consumption unnecessarily.

The installation of any stop sign must meet the “Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices” (MUTCD) standards.