

City of Manitowoc Policy for Regulating Intersections

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a consistent, transparent, and data-informed framework for determining when additional traffic controls or road signs are warranted or pedestrian crossing markings or warning signs are necessary within the City. This policy is intended to describe the process used and the information used in determining the City's decision to recommend or not recommend such requests, and to promote public safety, efficient traffic flow, and equitable decision-making while complying with Wisconsin statutes and WisDOT standards.

AUTHORITY

This policy is adopted pursuant to the City's authority under Wisconsin law to regulate traffic and maintain public streets in the interest of public safety and welfare, including but not limited to:

- Wis. Stat. § 349.02 and § 349.06 (authority of local authorities to regulate traffic)
- Wis. Stat. § 346.02(1) (uniform traffic laws)
- Wis. Stat. § 349.065 (authority to place and maintain traffic control devices)

All traffic control devices and pedestrian crossing devices or markings shall conform to the Wisconsin Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (Wisconsin MUTCD), as adopted and administered by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT).

INITIATION OF REVIEW AND GUIDING FACTORS

A review may be initiated by the Director of Public Works, a Standing Committee of the City or the Mayor. Citizens may request that a review be initiated by completing the Road Sign/Pedestrian Crossing Request Form found on the City of Manitowoc's website.

Once initiated, City staff shall evaluate the need for traffic controls using the factors below. No single factor is determinative; the totality of circumstances and professional engineering judgment shall guide recommendations.

1. Population Density of the Area

Consideration shall be given to:

- Residential density within the vicinity of the intersection
- Presence of multifamily or high-occupancy housing
- Anticipated pedestrian activity associated with population concentration

Higher population density areas may warrant greater emphasis on pedestrian safety, consistent

with WisDOT's complete streets principles.

2. Land Use and Area Context

The predominant surrounding land use shall be evaluated, including:

- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional or mixed-use

Special consideration shall be given to land uses that generate significant pedestrian, bicycle, turning, or truck traffic.

3. Length of Continued Uncontrolled Travel

Staff shall assess the length of uninterrupted roadway segments leading to the intersection, including:

- Distance between existing traffic control devices
- Driver expectancy
- Potential for speed buildup

Long uninterrupted segments may increase operating speeds and crash severity, supporting additional controls or traffic calming consistent with WisDOT traffic calming guidance.

4. Presence of Schools, Parks, and Sensitive Uses

The presence and proximity of the following shall be evaluated:

- Public or private schools
- Parks, playgrounds, and recreational facilities
- Childcare facilities
- Senior housing or facilities

Consistent with Wisconsin MUTCD guidance, lower thresholds for control may be appropriate near locations serving vulnerable road users.

5. Traffic Volumes and Counts

Traffic data shall be collected or reviewed, as appropriate, including:

- Average Daily Traffic (ADT)
- Peak-hour volumes
- Turning movement counts

Traffic volumes may be compared to Wisconsin MUTCD warrants for stop and yield control, while recognizing that warrants are guidance and not absolute requirements.

In general, a stop sign installation may be recommended if the following warrants are met:

A. Accidents

- a. Five (5) or more reported accidents occur within a twelve (12) month period which would likely have been avoided by the installation of an all-way stop.
- b. Three (3) or more reported accidents occur within a twelve-month period or five (5) or more reported accidents occur within a twenty-four (24) month period that would likely have been avoided by the installation of a two-way stop.

B. Minimum Traffic Volumes and Speed

- a. A stop sign is warranted if the number of vehicles entering the intersection from all approaches averages at least three hundred (300) vehicles per hour for any eight (8) hours of an average day, and;
- b. The combined vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian volume from the minor street averages at least two hundred (200) units per hour for the Same eight (8) hours.

C. Visibility

- a. A stop sign is warranted where visibility is limited at the minor street approach causing motorists to reduce speed.
- b. The minimum sight distance shall be maintained based on the roadway speed and the criteria described in the latest edition of the AASHTO publication “A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets.”

6. Crash History and Safety Data

Crash data for a minimum of the most recent 12-24 months may be reviewed, including:

- Number of reported crashes
- Crash types and contributing factors
- Severity (property damage, injury, fatality)
- Patterns suggesting right-of-way or visibility issues

Crash analysis shall align with WisDOT crash reporting and evaluation practices.

7. Speed Limits and Operating Speeds

Evaluation shall include:

- Posted speed limits established under Wis. Stat. § 346.57 and related provisions
- Observed operating speeds, if available
- Speed differential between intersecting streets

Higher speeds or substantial speed differentials may support the need for additional positive control.

8. City Maintenance and Operations Considerations

City operational factors may be considered, including:

- Snow and ice control operations
- Sign and pavement marking visibility
- Roadway geometry affecting plowing or drainage

Maintenance considerations alone shall not justify additional controls but may support them when combined with other safety factors.

9. Street Width and Cross-Section

Evaluation shall include:

- Pavement width and number of lanes
- Presence of on-street parking, bicycle lanes, or shoulders

Wider streets may encourage higher operating speeds and reduced yielding behavior.

10. Sight Distance and Visibility

Sight distance shall be evaluated in accordance with accepted engineering standards, including:

- Horizontal and vertical alignment
- Obstructions such as vegetation, structures, or parked vehicles

- Seasonal visibility conditions

Restricted sight distance may justify additional control or physical improvements.

11. Pedestrian and Bicycle Activity

Observed or anticipated pedestrian and bicycle activity shall be considered, including:

- Sidewalk connectivity
- Bicycle routes or shared-use paths
- Proximity to transit stops
- Congruence with preexisting pedestrian accommodations

This factor aligns with WisDOT multimodal and complete streets policies.

13. Cost

Consideration will also be given to the availability of funds for the requested project.

RECOMMENDATION

After review the staff recommendation shall be reported to the authority that initiated the request. If an affirmative outcome was decided, staff will either make the change or, if required, forward the recommendation to the Public Safety Committee for its review. A negative determination by staff will terminate the request and close the issue.

Should a requestor believe a mistake has been made, he or she may appeal to the Chair of the Public Safety Committee and ask that the item be placed on the Chair's Agenda. The Chair shall review staff's decision on the item before determining whether the item should be placed on an Agenda.

City of Manitowoc Road Sign/Pedestrian Crossing Request Form

In accordance with the City of Manitowoc's adopted Policy for Regulating Intersections, citizens interested in requesting the installation of such an item shall complete and submit this form to the Department of Public Works. After receiving the completed form, staff will review the proposed sign/marketing request consistent with the City's policy. Completed forms shall be submitted to:

City of Manitowoc
Department of Public Works
900 Quay Street
Manitowoc, WI 54220

Please attach additional sheets containing pictures, maps, or additional text if the space provided is insufficient.

1. Requestor's Information:

- a. Name: _____
- b. Address: _____
- c. Phone: _____
- d. Email: _____

2. Location of the Traffic or Crossing Concern _____

3. Describe the nature of the traffic or crossing problem that is of concern (if possible, please provide pictures and map): _____

4. Why do you feel a sign/crossing marking will resolve the traffic concern: _____

5. Are there any facilities, such as churches, schools, businesses, etc. near this location that generate a high concentration of vehicle and / or pedestrian traffic? _____
