

Adopted by the Chapel Hill Town Council: 04/24/89

Page 1 of 3

TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL  
POLICY FOR PLACEMENT OF STOP SIGNS  
AND ASSIGNMENT OF SPEED LIMITS

**OBJECTIVE:** It is the policy of the Town of Chapel Hill to install stop signs and assign speed limits that will promote the safe, efficient, and orderly movement of vehicles throughout the Town while preserving existing residential neighborhoods and providing safe and accessible means for pedestrian movement adjacent to and across Town streets.

**GUIDELINES:** The following guidelines shall be considered when evaluating placement of stop signs and assignment of speed limits on Town streets. In general, the Town of Chapel Hill places signs of all types in accordance with the recommendations of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways (M.U.T.C.D.), published by the U.S. Department of Transportation. This policy includes the general M.U.T.C.D. recommendations and supplements them with more specific guidelines directed to situations expected to arise in Chapel Hill.

STOP SIGNS

Stop sign(s) may be warranted at an intersection where one or more of the following conditions exist:

1. Intersection of less important road with a main road where application of the normal right-of-way rule is unduly hazardous.
2. Intersection of a minor street entering a through highway or street.
3. Unsignalized intersection in a signalized area.
4. Intersection where a combination of high speed, restricted sight distance, and serious accident record indicates a need for control by stop sign(s).
5. Intersection which intercepts identified pedestrian route(s) carrying significant pedestrian volume.
6. Intersection on a street without curbs or sidewalks when such streets are carrying traffic volume significantly above that for which the street was designed.
7. Intersection with existing irregular stop sign placement, where additional sign(s) would improve safety.

- 8. Unsigned intersection within an existing series of intersections with stop signs.
- 9. Where the interest of public safety dictates.
- 10. Intersection of two collector streets that provide primary service to an area and carry nearly equal traffic volumes, which makes clear assignment of right-of-way difficult.
- 11. Intersection adjacent to facilities such as parks, pools, schools, or other facilities which significantly increase and concentrate pedestrian and vehicular traffic in a localized area.
- 12. Intersection within a specific street network that carries through traffic on a route which is less desirable than on an alternative route or designated thoroughfare.

Stop sign installation will normally not be recommended in the following situations:

- 1. At mid-block locations.
- 2. Solely for the purpose of controlling vehicular speeds.
- 3. At locations where a stop would create a high likelihood of rear-end collisions.
- 4. On major arterials or thoroughfares.
- 5. At locations where yield signs will provide adequate control without requiring full stops.
- 6. At railroad crossings.

Stop sign installations will be evaluated by Town engineering staff and judged in accordance with these guidelines to avoid potentially detrimental use of this highly restrictive traffic control measure. Evaluations will consider alternatives to stop sign installations which may include construction of sidewalks, improvement of sight distance, construction or improvement of alternative traffic routes, or other site-specific improvements in lieu of stop sign placement.

SPEED LIMITS

In general, speed limits will be assigned on the basis of street classification as follows:

|                                 |           |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Local.....                      | 25 mph    |
| Collector .....                 | 25-35 mph |
| Arterial (Major and Minor)..... | 45 mph    |

Changes in existing speed limits and/or posting of speed limits other than those generally recommended by street classification will be considered in situations where:

1. Changes in use of property adjacent to a street creates changed speed limit conditions.
2. Changes in vehicular or pedestrian traffic patterns on a given street creates changed speed limit conditions.
3. The proximity or locations of parks, pools, schools, driveways or other facilities increases and concentrates vehicular and pedestrian traffic on a given street or streets.
4. Street design will not accommodate the speed limit normally recommended, or the posted speed limit.
5. Changes will create a more uniform, continuous speed limit throughout a defined travel corridor.

Speed limits below 25 mph will not be considered on public streets with the exception of special zones such as schools or hospitals.

Speed limits will be evaluated by Town engineering staff to create conditions where the Town street system can be utilized efficiently and safely at speeds that can be adequately enforced. Evaluations will include review of alternatives to speed limit changes which may include street improvements, construction of alternative routes, control of access, or other site-specific improvements in lieu of speed limit changes.