

A statement from Public Works to help address concerns with the removal of stop signs on 14th Ave:

14th Ave is the primary east-west route on the north end of town and carries the fifth highest traffic volume in the City's street network, only lower than Highways 212, 81, 20, and 19th St East. The three main factors for this change are; pedestrian safety, 14th Ave traffic volumes & capacity, and intersection performance.

Pedestrian Safety:

The newly installed Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons (RRFBs) provide safe and effective notice to vehicles when pedestrians are crossing the street. These are high-intensity rapid flashing lights, in-lieu of the less-appropriate 4-way stop for pedestrian safety at this intersection. When activated, the RRFBs provide clear awareness to the drivers that they must yield to a pedestrian that is presently crossing the intersection. The stop condition only tells a driver they must stop, without calling any attention to the presence of a pedestrian. Pedestrian safety is a primary consideration near a school, and we are responsible with balancing it with traffic volumes in a way that is most effective. The RRFBs accomplish this.

Traffic Volumes and Street Capacity:

14th Ave is one of only two streets in our entire network that are rated at 80 to 100% for its volume-to-capacity ratio. This is at peak hours when traffic can be backed up for blocks on 14th. What that means is that the lane configuration and intersection control are less than optimal to allow for appropriate traffic flow.

Our traffic studies show that the stop condition at Maple is the main reason for capacity issues on 14th. This is partly due to stopping around 8 to 10 vehicles on 14th for every one vehicle on Maple. They also show that by 2030, those conditions continue to worsen to above-capacity thresholds, compounding the backup even further during peak hours. Removal of the stop condition, along with the future addition of turn lanes, will improve the volume-to-capacity ratio to an acceptable level through 2040.

Intersection Rating:

Intersections are rated by their "level of service" (LOS). This provides a "grading" for the intersection (A through F) on how it performs in allowing traffic to flow safely while minimizing backup. As-is, this intersection is projected to be rated LOS D by 2030 and LOS F by 2040. This means that without the RRFBs, stop sign removals, and future addition of turn lanes, the traffic flow into and through this intersection dramatically worsens to unacceptable levels. With these improvements, we are able to sustain a LOS B through 2040. While Maple provides a logical point of access to 14th, the alternative routes of 16th Ave to Hwy 81 and 2nd St should also be considered to help maximize traffic flow through this area.

The Traffic Safety Team will continue to monitor these improvements, making any necessary adjustments along the way, not only at this intersection but also all along 14th Ave. As always, we ask that all drivers have patience and abide by the new signage and pay close attention as people adjust to the change.