



FAQ SHEET - TRAFFIC SPEEDS AND VEHICLE COUNTS

OVERVIEW:

The Town of Mosman Park considers road safety to be extremely important, and is working to always improve its management through implementing sound policy, constructive assessments, and best practice on the way it monitors and acts on the information gained from conducting traffic counts on the roads throughout the Town.

1. What are traffic counters and what do they do?

Traffic counters are small boxes which are linked to thin black tubes that stretch across the roadway. These black tubes are spaced a certain distance apart from one another and use air pressure to register when a tyre runs over them – counting as a ‘hit’. From these ‘hits’, a special software program takes the information and interprets it a number of ways to develop special reports for use by the Town’s engineers.

2. What information does it register?

Using the ‘hits’, the software times how long a wheel takes to hit the first tube, then the second tube and how many hits occur immediately after this. Motor vehicles are separated by the number of axles, and the distance between these axles, into ‘classes’. This means the counters and software are able to tell if the vehicle is a motorcycle, bus, car or a car with a trailer. This same information is used to calculate the vehicle’s speed, and depending upon which tube the vehicle hits first, this will determine its direction of travel.

3. Why do traffic counts?

The Town attempts to undertake traffic counts on a scheduled basis, budget permitting. This is to ensure the Town’s road network is being used efficiently and safely, allowing the Town to have valid information at any given time. This means that the Town can be proactive when dealing with issues such as speeding vehicles or the number of vehicles using a street, by producing evidence and allowing the Town to compare similar streets to one another, rather than relying solely on community feedback, which may or may not be passed on to the Town. Traffic counts are also usually taken before or after changes are made to nearby land, such as large housing or shopping developments, or changes to the road itself, such as introducing speed humps, which may affect traffic speeds and volumes.

4. How long do the traffic counters remain in place?

The counters will remain in place for a period of approximately one week, however should the counters be damaged during this time this will further delay the process, and they will need to be re-installed for a further week.

5. You say you have traffic data and there isn't an issue, but I have seen people speeding!

The Town takes road safety and speeding very seriously, and is why a pro-active approach is taken. The traffic counts undertaken by the Town are done according to recognised industry standards and are always audited to ensure the information is valid. These counts are as good as a person being on the street around the clock with a radar gun recording the type, speed and time of a passing vehicle! The readings recorded are then examined to see if speeds and volumes are within the recommended range for that particular road and situation in the first instance. If they are of a concern or are recorded as being outside the recommended range, the information is compared to similar roads nearby to determine where the areas where attention and funding should be focused. For example, Street A may have speeds of 62km/hr in a 50 Zone, but Street B also has 62km/hr speeds *and* twice as many vehicles as Street A - and in this scenario, Street B would be a higher priority.

6. What are these 'ranges' for roads?

Volume is determined by the 'Main Roads W.A. Functional Road Hierarchy' which has differing criteria for roads, from access roads catering for under 3000 Vehicles Per Day [VPD], up to primary distributor roads with fewer than 15,000 VPD. Counts that are above or below the allowable limits for each type of road may require re-classification to fall in line with how they are used, built and perceived by the public - or physical upgrades to cater for more or less traffic.

In terms of speed, the Town focuses on the '85th percentile' speed of the vehicles using the road. This speed is at or below 85% of all the registered speeds that vehicles are recorded to be travelling at, under free-flowing conditions. This is a nationally-recognised method of assessing traffic speeds. While this figure tends to be higher than the posted speed limit, it is often considered to be the speed at which a 'reasonable person' would be travelling on that road. There may be cause for concern when this figure is calculated to be approximately more than 10 km/hr over the speed limit.

While it is important to remember that no speed over the limit is acceptable, it is impossible to have every driver travel at the exact limit, and there will be degrees over and under the limit- and it is this degree of variation from the recommended speed that the Town seeks to pro-actively reduce.

7. Can the speed limit be changed?

In Western Australia, the speed limits for all public roads are controlled and maintained by Main Roads Western Australia [MRWA]. For the speed limit to change, up or down, an application needs to be made to MRWA with supporting evidence, investigation, considered impacts, and justification. Typically the speeds adhere to strict rules and changes outside these parameters are made only in exceptional circumstances. As you can appreciate, such a process is lengthy, but with support and proper evidence, is a worthwhile undertaking to improve safety.

8. Can I have access to the traffic count data collected?

Where available, the Town is able to release the following information on request:

- Volumes in average weekday traffic [or VPD],
- 85th percentile speeds,
- Morning and afternoon peak periods, and volumes during those times.

It should be noted, however, that this information is contextual and these figures are influenced by many other factors, such as weather [rainfall], special events [festivals nearby], building works and so forth.

The Town of Mosman Park is committed to recording and monitoring this data, in the interests of optimising pedestrian and road-user safety throughout Mosman Park.

More Information?

If you would like further information, please contact the Town of Mosman Parks Technical Service Department on **9383 6600** or email admin@mosmanpark.wa.gov.au