



Transportation Services

DATE: June 2, 2014
TO: Honorable Mayor and Council
FROM: Cathy Colbath, Interim Executive Director, Transportation Services
THROUGH: Brenda S. Fischer, ICMA-CM, City Manager
SUBJECT: Flashing Intersections

At the April 1, 2014 council workshop meeting, a request was made to evaluate the possibility of an earlier start time for signalized intersections that go into “flash” mode. The city currently has 194 signalized intersections. Of those intersections, 96 have a programmed flash mode. Most of those begin flashing at midnight and end at 6:00 a.m. The request was to consider starting the flash operation at 10:00 p.m.

Traffic signals at some intersections go into programmed flash operation to allow more efficient movement of traffic during slower traffic times, such as late night/early morning. Signals for traffic on major streets will flash yellow, indicating to the driver that they can proceed through the intersection with caution. Conversely, the signal for the side street will flash red, telling the driver on the side street they can enter the intersection when it’s clear, after making a complete stop. This eliminates the need for drivers to wait at a red signal on a side street when there is no traffic approaching the intersection on the main arterial.

After initial research, it has been determined that any changes to signal programming will require a study at each intersection in order to evaluate safety criteria at the specific intersection location. This will involve significant staff time, as well as retaining a professional engineering consulting firm to assist in the study. Currently, no funds are budgeted for this project. Due to the lack of funds and staff time required, this request will not proceed for further evaluation at this time.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at ext 2941. Thank you.

cc: Brenda S. Fischer, City Manager
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Julie Frisoni, Assistant City Manager
Thomas Adkins, Assistant to the Mayor
Kristen Krey, Council Services Administrator
Amy Handlong, Assistant to the City Manager