

City Policy on Crosswalks

The City of Grand Junction follows the national guidelines outlined in the federal Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, ITE Alternative Treatments for At-Grade Pedestrian Crossings, and other references. An engineering study is normally completed prior to approving a marked crosswalk. Some of the typical items reviewed include;

- The number of pedestrians that will be served.
- The function of the roadway
- The volume and speed of vehicles
- The width of the roadway
- Both current and future predicted conditions
- The typical abilities of the pedestrians that would use the crosswalk. (e.g., age, disabilities, etc)

In addition, the following questions are addressed:

Will the proposed installation produce the desired results in terms of safety and mobility for both pedestrians and the drivers?

Will the proposed installation have credibility, acceptance, and compliance by pedestrians and drivers?



What
You
Need
To Know
About
Crosswalks



What is a Crosswalk

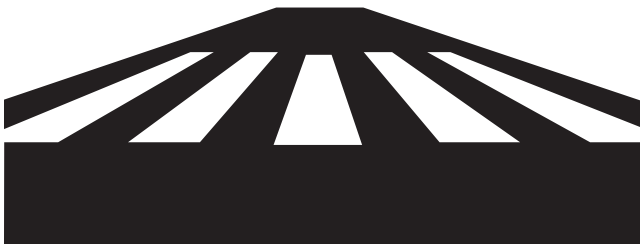
A crosswalk is an extension of the road, sidewalk, curb or edge of the shoulder at an intersection. Crosswalks can be either marked or unmarked. A marked crosswalk is any portion of the roadway outlined by white painted markings or a different texture of concrete, such as brick pavers, etc. These markings indicate that a portion of the roadway is designated for pedestrian travel.

The Law

Colorado law places the responsibility on drivers and pedestrians alike. A pedestrian may not step out in front of a vehicle that is close enough to be a hazard. However, a vehicle must yield the right-of-way to a pedestrian already crossing the street whether in a marked or unmarked crosswalk. A crosswalk legally exists across each leg of an intersection, even though it may not be marked.

Research

Research and experience has shown that painting stripes on roadways to designate crosswalks is not always the answer to pedestrian safety that many people think it is. Studies conducted on the relative safety of crosswalks support minimal installation of marked crosswalks.



Do Crosswalks Serve as a Reminder to Drivers to Slow Down and Watch for Pedestrians

This is a common assumption, but studies don't confirm the warning device theory. Drivers often can't see crosswalks at a safe stopping distance as well as pedestrians assume they can. Road alignment, irregularities in pavement, distance, and other variables (weather, glare, and adverse lighting conditions) all contribute to diminishing the driver's view. Meanwhile, the pedestrians' view of the same crosswalk is quite clear, and he or she may assume that the motorist can also see it clearly. Overconfidence is considered to be a major factor in a disproportionate share of accidents involving pedestrians in marked crosswalks. On rural or suburban roads, where pedestrian volumes are low, drivers seldom see pedestrians in marked crosswalks. With no people around, drivers see no reason to slow down or stop. It also follows that on less traveled roads, a pedestrian has many safe gaps in which to cross the street.

Where are Crosswalks Normally Marked

Crosswalks are marked at intersections where there is substantial conflict between vehicles and pedestrians movements, where significant pedestrian concentrations occur, where pedestrians could not otherwise recognize the proper place to cross, and where traffic movements are controlled. Examples of such locations are:

- Approved school crossings
- Signalized intersections
- All way stop controlled intersections

How Secure are you in a Crosswalk

People generally think of marked crosswalks as safety devices, and most jurisdictions give the pedestrian the right-of-way when walking in a crosswalk. However, there is evidence that many pedestrians feel overly secure when using a marked crosswalk. Feeling safe, they may aggressively enter crosswalks without proper consideration of approaching traffic in the mistaken belief that the motorist can and will stop for them. By contrast, a pedestrian using an unmarked crosswalk generally feels less secure and exercises more caution in waiting for safe gaps in traffic before crossing the roadway.

People on foot must always act defensively around traffic.

While marked crosswalks are effective for moving pedestrians through complex and confusing intersections, they should not be seen as safety devices on their own. Crosswalks are most effective in conjunction with signals and other traffic control devices.

Unjustified or poorly located marked crosswalks cause an increased expense to the taxpayers for installation and maintenance -- costs not justified through improved public safety. Such crosswalks may also increase the potential hazard to both pedestrians and motorists.

Marked crosswalks can be a useful traffic control device. However, it is important that they only be installed where the anticipated benefits clearly outweigh their associated risks.