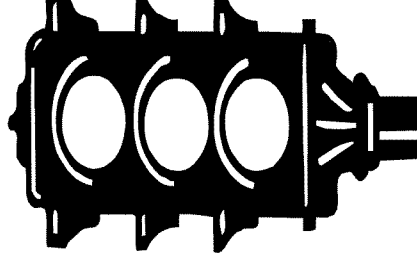


signal controller, signal heads, poles and supports, vehicle detectors, wiring, minor sidewalk enhancements and mounted/hanging traffic signs. Sometimes, street widening is required.

The traffic signal controller is the "brain" which regulates the light indications. It is located in a large metal cabinet near the intersection. The controller is a microcomputer which regulates the signal timings based on messages received from the loop detectors in the travel lanes. The controller can be programmed to support timing plans which can be synchronized with other traffic signals to help traffic move in the most efficient manner.

In compliance with the AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, those needing special assistance to read this publication should contact the Building Division at (805) 449-2500. Notification will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to the information in this publication.

Traffic Signals



City of Thousand Oaks
Public Works Department



Informative Facts

City of Thousand Oaks
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How are traffic signals prioritized?

The City of Thousand Oaks follows sound traffic engineering guidelines established by the State of California and reviews intersections every two years to determine if a traffic signal is warranted. Intersections which meet State criteria are prioritized after carefully considering traffic volume, accident history, delay, and other factors. Between three and five new traffic signals are installed annually within our City. Concerned residents may contact the Traffic Engineering Division for the priority ranking of a particular intersection.

What should I do if I approach a traffic signal that is inoperative or flashing red in all directions?

An inoperative or “dark” traffic signal usually indicates the electrical power at the intersection is temporarily interrupted. The California Vehicle Code requires all vehicles to stop at a dark intersection and proceed when it is safe. When two vehicles approach an intersection from different roadways at the same time, the driver on the left shall yield the right-of-way to the vehicle on the right. At T-intersections, the driver from the terminating road shall yield the right-of-way to any vehicle on the continuing road.

A flashing red traffic signal usually indicates the controller unit has been manually keyed to enter the flashing red mode, or the computer controller senses a malfunction within the system. In this case, the same right-of-way rules apply as with a “dark” traffic signal.

How does a pedestrian signal work? What should I do when “don’t walk” appears before I’ve completed crossing the street?

Pedestrian crosswalks are provided at most signalized intersections to assist pedestrians across the street. Pedestrians should not cross where signs read “NO PED CROSSING”.

Since traffic signals are timed for vehicles, pedestrian buttons must be pushed to activate a pedestrian crosswalk display. The green time for vehicles may not give a pedestrian sufficient time to cross the street. Activating a pedestrian crosswalk extends the time the light stays green.

How do vehicle detectors at signalized intersections register the presence of a vehicle?

In the City of Thousand Oaks, intersections are equipped with “inductive loop detectors” which are wire loops embedded into the pavement which carry a small, predetermined electrical current. The metal properties of passing vehicles change the frequency of the electric current, thus, sending a message to the intersection controller computer that a vehicle is either passing over it or is present.

Why do some traffic signals have left-turn arrows while others do not?

Left-turn arrows at intersections make turning left convenient for motorists, they can improve efficiency and decrease congestion. However, careful consideration is given when installing left-turn arrows since they can reduce

the available green time for other movements. In general, left-turn arrows are used for the following conditions:

- To mitigate a high accident location.
- Where there is excessive delay for left-turners while waiting for a gap to occur.
- Where dual left-turn lanes are required.
- Where sight distance is impaired due to a vertical or horizontal curve.
- Where a high percentage of buses or trucks are turning left. They require longer gaps in traffic before turning.

When I am the only car at the intersection, why does it seem like I have to wait forever before the signal changes to green?

Most of the signals on major streets in the City of Thousand Oaks are coordinated together to move traffic in the most efficient manner possible. Because of this coordination, it is possible that arterial traffic is not visible to a motorist waiting to enter from a side street. Thousand Oaks Boulevard, Moorpark Road and Lynn Road are primary arterials in Thousand Oaks and utilize this system. Benefits of a coordinated system are reduced fuel consumption and vehicle emissions as well as a reduction in overall delay. Once motorists enter the main street traffic from the side street, they will find that the coordinated signals will make up for the initial time spent waiting.

What does it cost to install at traffic signal?

Costs range between \$100,000 and \$150,000 to install a traffic signal. This includes designing the signal layout, the traffic