

Safe Park Zones



CREATING SAFE PARK ZONES FOR COMMUNITIES IN ILLINOIS



ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION
ALLIANCE

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Acknowledgements

ABOUT THE CONSULTANTS

The mission of Active Transportation Alliance is to make bicycling, walking, and public transit so safe, convenient, and fun that we will achieve a significant shift from environmentally harmful, sedentary travel to clean, active travel. We advocate for transportation that encourages and promotes safety, physical activity, health, recreation, social interaction, equity, environmental stewardship, and resource conservation.

We are both Chicagoland's voice for better biking, walking and transit and a premier consultancy. Our staff includes specialists who work with communities throughout the region to develop plans, policies, and education programs based on national best practices. When you partner with us on projects, you not only get the best results possible, but you also support our mission to improve active transportation throughout the region.

The Active Transportation Alliance Project Team:

Dan Persky - Director of Policy and Planning

Amanda Woodall - Policy Manager

Jason Jenkins - Education Specialist

For technical assistance developing your policy, implementation strategies, and training, please contact us.

Active Transportation Alliance

9 W. Hubbard St., Ste. 402

Chicago, IL 60654-6545

312.427.3325 main number

312.427.4907 fax

www.activetrans.org

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Public parks are essential destinations for physical activity, but the transportation environment in many communities *limits access* to local parks.

Transportation impacts human health and the quality of life in every community. Biking, walking, and other modes of active transportation are the simplest ways for people to get the activity they need to boost physical and mental health, and to prevent obesity and related conditions, such as heart disease and diabetes. However, many physical and social barriers to walking and bicycling exist in communities across Illinois. One of the most prevalent of these barriers is insufficient traffic safety. When parks are more accessible, more people use them for activity.

One way to boost access is to improve traffic safety and pedestrian facilities around parks. The State of Illinois has provided a powerful new means for municipalities to do this: the establishment of Safe Park Zones. Similar to School Zones, these are sections of roadway near parks where speed limits are lowered, and fines for traffic infractions are raised. Routine enforcement spreads awareness about safety, and revenue from fines can be used to fund pedestrian facility improvements. [See page 5 for the full text of Illinois Safe Park Zones Law.]

The Safe Park Zones Guide was created to help communities through the successful implementation of municipal Safe Park Zones. In this guide you will find resources for developing a local policy, Illinois requirements regarding signage, and strategies for public outreach and involvement. The steps to effectively establish and implement Safe Park Zones can be found in this guide as follows:

STEP 1 Adopting an Ordinance

STEP 2 Establishing a Funding Stream

STEP 3 Installing Signs

STEP 4 Educating the Public and Building Support



PHOTO: Vival Greens

Text for Relevant Illinois Statute

In 2006, the Illinois General Assembly enacted Public Act 94-808, amending the Illinois Vehicle Code and making Illinois the first state to provide legal protection for Safe Park Zones. Below is an excerpt of the relevant section of the Illinois Vehicle Code, which may serve as the basis for the establishment of Safe Park Zones within your community.

Illinois State Vehicle Code

(625 ILCS 5/11-605.3)

Sec. 11-605.3. Special traffic protections while passing parks and recreation facilities and areas.

(a) As used in this Section:

(1) “Park district” means the following entities:

(A) any park district organized under the Park District Code;

(B) any park district organized under the Chicago Park District Act; and

(C) any municipality, county, forest district, school district, township, or other unit of local government that operates a public recreation department or public recreation facilities that has recreation facilities that are not on land owned by any park district listed in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of this subdivision (a)(1).

(2) “Park zone” means the recreation facilities and areas on any land owned or operated by a park district that are used for recreational purposes, including but not limited to: parks; playgrounds; swimming pools; hiking trails; bicycle paths; picnic areas; roads and streets; and parking lots.

(3) “Park zone street” means that portion of any street or intersection under the control of a local unit of government, adjacent to a park zone, where the local unit of government has, by ordinance or resolution, designated and approved the street or intersection as a park zone street. If, before the effective date of this amendatory Act of the 94th General Assembly, a street already had a posted speed limit lower than 20 miles per hour, then the lower limit may be used for that park zone street.

(4) “Safety purposes” means the costs associated with: park zone safety education; the purchase, installation, and maintenance of signs, roadway painting, and caution lights mounted on park zone signs; and any other expense associated with park zones and park zone streets.

(b) On any day when children are present and within 50 feet of motorized traffic, a person may not drive a motor vehicle at a speed in excess of 20 miles per hour or any lower posted speed while traveling on a park zone street that has been designated for the posted reduced speed.

(c) On any day when children are present and within 50 feet of motorized traffic, any driver traveling on a park zone street who fails to come to a complete stop at a stop sign or red light, including a driver who fails to come to a complete stop at a red light before turning right onto a park zone street, is in violation of this Section.

(d) This Section does not apply unless appropriate signs are posted upon park zone streets maintained by the Department or by the unit of local government in which the park zone is located. With regard to the special speed limit on park zone streets, the signs must give proper due warning that a park zone is being approached and must indicate the maximum speed limit on the park zone street.

(e) A first violation of this Section is a petty offense with a minimum fine of \$250. A second or subsequent violation of this Section is a petty offense with a minimum fine of \$500.

(f) When a fine for a violation of this Section is imposed, the person who violates this Section shall be charged an additional \$50, to be paid to the park district for safety purposes.

(g) The Department shall, within 6 months of the effective date of this amendatory Act of the 94th General Assembly, design a set of standardized traffic signs for park zones and park zone streets, including but not limited to: “park zone”, “park zone speed limit”, and “warning: approaching a park zone”. The design of these signs shall be made available to all units of local government or manufacturers at no charge, except for reproduction and postage.

(Source: P.A. 94-808, eff. 5-26-06.)

The first step in establishing and enforcing Safe Park Zones is to draft and adopt a municipal ordinance.

The language of these ordinances varies depending on whether or not a community is established as a home rule authority. Municipalities with home rule authority may choose to draft and adopt a version of the ordinance that varies from the state statute with regards to fine structure and application of monies collected so as to allow more flexibility. See samples below.

Sample #1: Ordinance for Non-Home Rule Authorities

In this example, the municipality simply designates the street segments upon which it is establishing Safe Park Zones and then applies the state law as defined in the Illinois Compiled Statutes.

[MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER AND SECTION]

For the purposes of this section and 625 ILCS 5/11-605.3, the following streets are designated park zone streets with maximum speed limit of 20 miles per hour when children are present. The penalties for violation of speed limits, stop signs, and traffic control devices shall be issued in accordance with 625 ILCS 5/11-605.3

[Insert list of street segments]

Sample #2: Ordinance for Home Rule Authorities

In lieu of adopting the ILVC Safe Park Zones statute, some municipalities with home rule authority may simply lower speed limits to 20 MPH on their selected park zone streets, using the approved IDOT park zone signs. Citations issued in this scenario would be standard speeding violations. While this strategy will not generate specific funds for safety improvements, it will still lower speeds, raise awareness, and increase safety around parks.

[INSERT MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER AND SECTION] PARK ZONE STREETS AND SPEED LIMITS

A. As used in this section “Park Zone Street” means any portion of any street or intersection adjacent to or within a Park Zone that has been established as a Park Zone Street in Section D of this ordinance where appropriate signs have are posted by the [Municipality].

B. Between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., Monday thru Sunday, no person shall drive a motor vehicle at a speed in excess of twenty (20) miles per hour, or any lower posted speed limit, while traveling on a Park Zone Street.

C. This Section does not apply unless appropriate signs are posted upon Park Zone Streets maintained by the Department or by the unit of local government in which the park zone is located.

D. For purposes of this chapter the following streets are designated Park Zone Streets:

[Insert list of street segments]

STEP 2 ESTABLISHING A FUNDING STREAM

Municipalities will need to establish a funding stream to ensure that monies collected from Safe Parks Zone violations are routed to the appropriate park districts for use in improving safety around the parks.

Agencies should partner to establish goals and ensure that fees are used for appropriate safety improvements, as prescribed by the language of the ordinance.

Municipalities that adopt a version of the ordinance under home rule authority and who adjudicate their own traffic violations will need to establish a funding stream in accordance with their own municipal rules and regulations.

Municipalities in which traffic violations are adjudicated by

the Circuit Court of Cook County can expect revenues to be disbursed as follows: Whenever a police officer issues a ticket for a violation under the state law (625 ILCS 5/11-605.3), and the traffic court assesses the fee, the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court will deposit the money into a disbursement “fund” where funds will accumulate prior to periodic disbursements to the municipality that issued the ticket. Note, this only applies to the “additional \$50.00” referenced in subsection (f) of the Illinois Vehicle Code.

Additional questions about collection and disbursement of funds from the Circuit Court of Cook County should be directed to: General Counsel, Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, (312) 603-6946

STEP 3 INSTALLING SIGNS

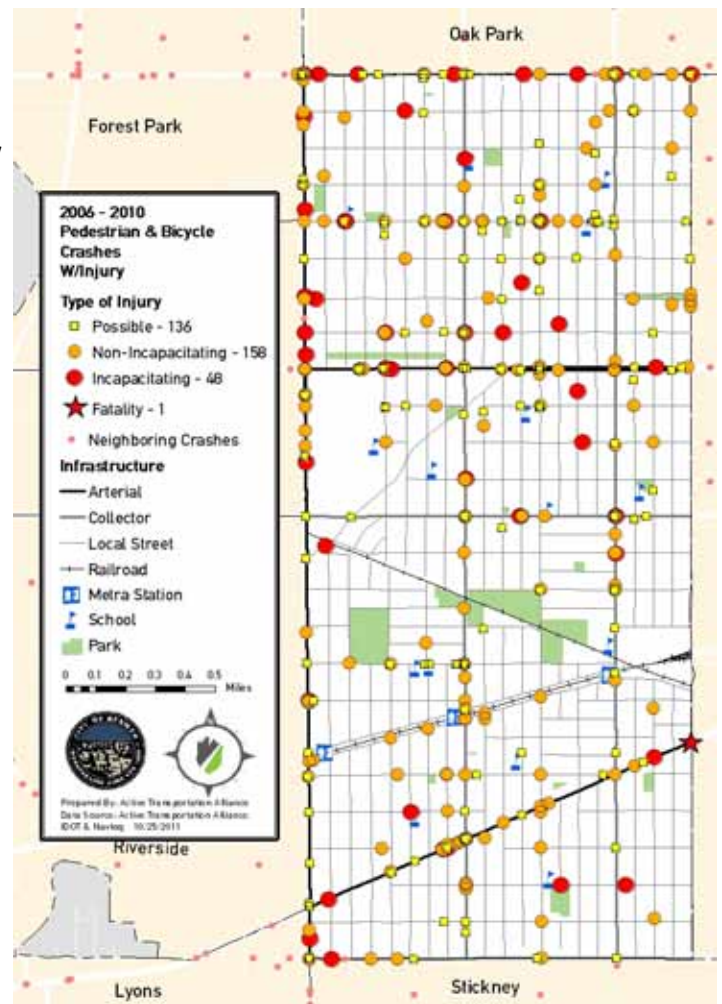
When a Safe Park Zone speed limit is established, Illinois state law requires the adopting municipality or park district to install certain signage assemblies in a specific order before the Safe Park Zone penalties for speeding and traffic signal violations can be legally enforced.

Funding

Some communities may not have the resources to sign all their Safe Park Zone streets at the time of their establishment under local ordinance. However, accumulation of revenue from Safe Park Zone traffic fines may be used to purchase and install signs for those areas incrementally over a number of years. When this is the case, it is recommended that communities analyze pedestrian and bicycle crash data as well as police records of traffic violations issued in order to select priority streets for signage.



PHOTO: Safe Routes to School



One way to prioritize locations for Safe Park Zones is to map and analyze bicycle and pedestrian crash data for hot spots.

PHOTO: Active Transportation Alliance

Signage Placement Guidelines

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) requires the installation of signage in a specific sequence in order to designate a Safe Park Zone. The “Safe Park Zones Signage Placement” illustration on page 19 demonstrates an overview of placement requirements.

Each section of roadway designated as a Safe Park Zone will require a **PARK ZONE, W15-I100 sign** (Figure A, pg 12 in Safe Park Zone Signage section) to be installed in advance of the Safe Park Zone street segment to inform road users that they are approaching a Safe Park Zone.

Following this, a **SPEED ZONE AHEAD** assembly, also in advance of the zone is required. This assembly shall consist of a fluorescent yellow-green **W3-5 sign** (Fig. B, pg 13) or **W3-5a sign** (Fig. C, pg 14) with the **W15-I100p plaque** (Fig. D, pg 15) mounted beneath.

Finally, at the entrance to the new speed zone itself the **PARK ZONE SPEED LIMIT WHEN CHILDREN ARE PRESENT, R2-I108** (Fig. E, pg 16) assembly shall be used. Within the Safe Park Zone street segment, there is no minimum requirement for spacing of additional speed

limit signs, but IDOT recommends approximately every two to four blocks (650 – 1,300 feet).

The location and spacing of the **PARK ZONE** sign approaching the Safe Park Zone, in relation to the **SPEED ZONE AHEAD** assembly, should be based on engineering judgment, but IDOT recommends spacing of at least 100 feet between signs. The **PARK ZONE SPEED LIMIT WHEN CHILDREN ARE PRESENT** assembly must always be installed at the exact boundaries of where the speed limit is in effect. For more information on national minimum standards for the placement of warning signs, see Table 2C-4 of the National Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. These values can be adjusted so that proposed signs do not interfere with driveways, entrances, etc.

(Excerpted From) Illinois Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

SECTION 2B.I70 (ILLINOIS) PARK ZONE SPEED LIMIT SIGNS

Support: Section 5/11-605.3 of the Illinois Vehicle Code allows local agencies to establish Park Zones and Park Zone Speed Limits by ordinance or resolution on streets and highways under their jurisdictions which abut parks.

Standard: The **PARK ZONE SPEED LIMIT 20 WHEN CHILDREN ARE PRESENT** sign (R2 I108) shall be used by local agencies in establishing park zone speed limits authorized by Section 5/11-605.3 of the Illinois Vehicle Code (see also Sec. 2C.30 (Illinois)). The R2-I108 sign shall not be used on roadways under the jurisdiction of the Illinois Department of Transportation.

Guidance: Any municipality or park district requesting to establish a park zone or park zone speed limit on streets and highways not under their jurisdiction should consult with the agency having jurisdiction over those roads.

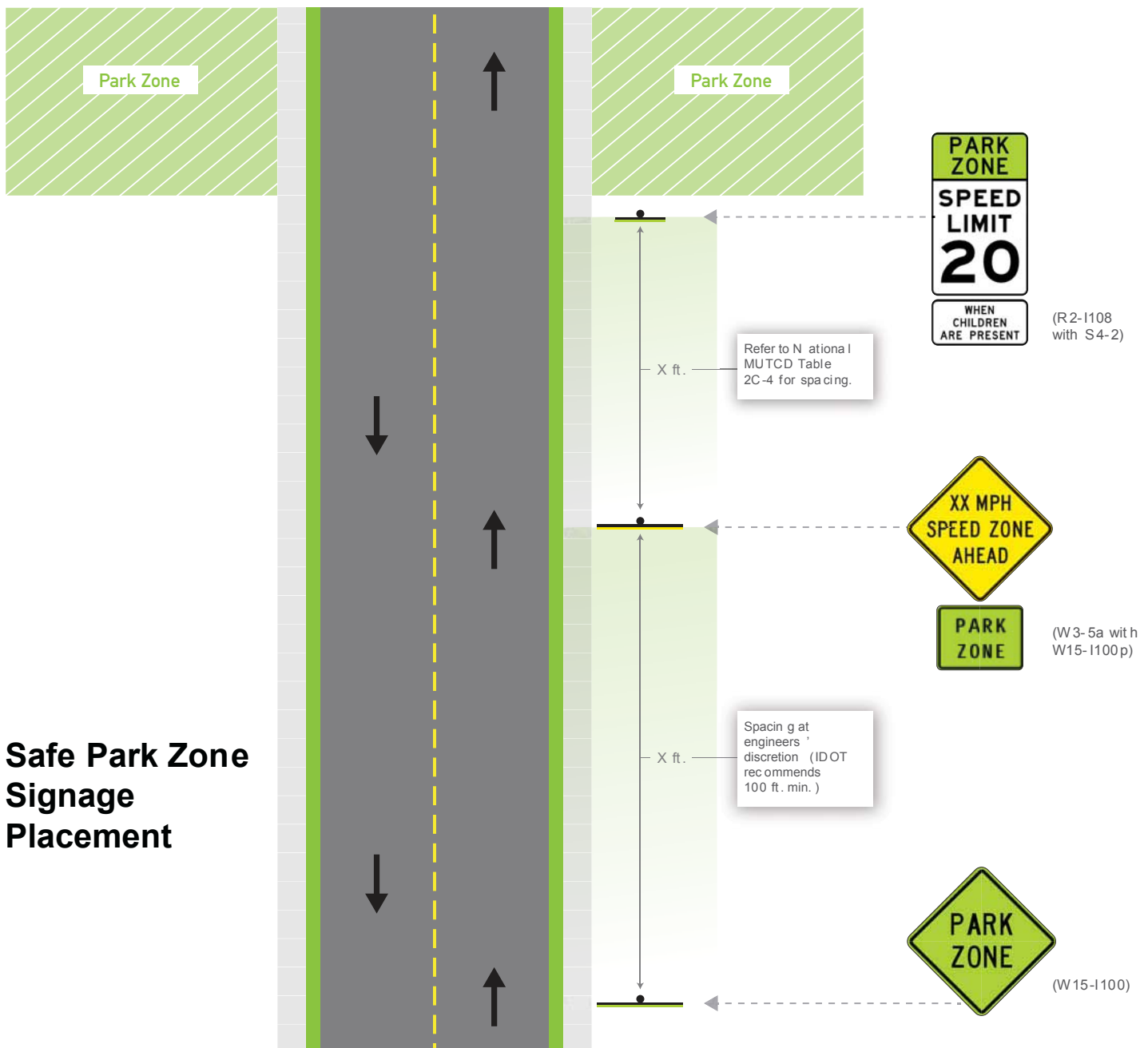
Option: If the local ordinance or resolution establishing a Park Zone Speed limit includes the hours the limit is in effect, the hours may be included on the lower portion of the **PARK ZONE SPEED LIMIT** sign (R2-I108) such as “8 AM - 8 PM WHEN CHILDREN ARE PRESENT.”

Signage Placement Guidelines (cont.)

SECTION 2C.I70 (ILLINOIS) PARK ZONE SIGN (W15-I100)

Standard: A Park Zone (W15-I100) sign shall be used by local agencies to inform road users of a park zone. It shall be located in advance of any Reduced Speed Limit Ahead (W3-5, W3-5a) sign in advance of a park zone (see Sec. 2C.38).

Option: The sign may also be used alone in advance of park zones which have been established by local agencies but where park zone speed limits have not been established. It may also be used alone on streets and highways under the jurisdiction of the Illinois Department of Transportation which abut parks where local agencies have established park zones along their abutting streets.



STEP 4 EDUCATE THE PUBLIC AND BUILD SUPPORT

An education campaign should be undertaken to build public support for the law and to inform and educate the public, community organizations, law enforcement, and the courts about the new laws, their importance, and the expected outcomes.

• Phase 1: Building Consensus

BEGIN by connecting with stakeholders in order to build community support and provide political cover for the municipal government and law enforcement agencies tasked with enforcing the new law.

MAKE AN EFFORT to build a consensus of support for the new Safe Park Zones by doing outreach with local community groups, churches, and youth and senior citizen service providers who use the affected areas around the park.

ESTABLISH a partnership between these groups and the park district, municipality, and law enforcement. It may be useful to create a document that expresses the combined community support for the law to be endorsed by all the above-mentioned parties for use in future media and outreach efforts.

• Phase 2: Educating Law Enforcement

Law enforcement is a key player in informing and educating the public about the new Safe Park Zones.

To this end, make sure that law enforcement officers are trained and educated about the new law, the location of the Safe Park Zones, and how to issue tickets for these violations, and make sure that law enforcement activities are incorporated into public education efforts.

Also provide officers with talking points for how to respond to public concerns and questions about the law. These talking points should focus on the safety of vulnerable road users and parks as priority destinations for children and families who are biking and walking.

Also remind officers the Safe Park Zone speed limit is in effect “when children are present” within 50 feet of the roadway, providing them with flexibility of enforcement.



Build community support by connecting with stakeholders, conducting outreach with local community and establishing a partnerships.

PHOTO: Climate Action Programme



A strong commitment to enforcement is the key to effective Safe Park Zones.

PHOTO: National Center for Safe Routes to School

Educate the Public and Build Support



Hold highly publicized education and enforcement events conducted by local law enforcement.

PHOTO: National Center for Safe Routes to School



Media and enforcement events can serve as opportunities to educate the public about the new law and to create awareness about pedestrian safety.

PHOTO: Streets Blog

• Phase 3: Educate and Inform the Public

Provide the public with information about the new laws before issuing citations. At minimum, issue a press release about the new law, its purpose, and the locations of the Safe Park Zones. Announcements and information about the Safe Park Zone law should also be posted on the municipal, police, and park district websites, as well as on any social networking sites for all of the above-listed agencies.

Another great way to kick off the new initiative is to hold highly publicized education and enforcement events conducted by local law enforcement. These events will provide motorists with information about the new law before routine enforcement begins. Be sure to conduct events on a day when children are in and around the park. At these events, officers should:

- Place a sign in advance of the park zone indicating that a Safe Park Zones speed limit education and enforcement event is in effect.
- Stop all motorists violating the new 20 mph speed zone or disobeying traffic signals or signs within the zones.
- Focus on issuing warnings, informing motorists of the new law and its purpose. Distribute safety literature to violators. Citations should only be issued for serious infractions at the officers' discretion.

Approach these events as opportunities to educate the public about the new law and to create awareness about pedestrian safety. Ensuring media coverage is a great way of garnering more public awareness. With television coverage, safety messages can reach millions throughout the region.

• Phase 4: Educate the Judges

The courts will need to uphold the fines in order for the law to be as effective as possible. Make sure that judges who will be hearing these cases are contacted by the appropriate agencies to inform them of the new law, its purpose, and importance. Provide these judges with the document of support referenced in Step 1 "Building Consensus" as a way of encouraging judges to uphold the new law and impose the full fines.

• Phase 5: Routine Enforcement

After an appropriate education and awareness campaign period has been completed, officers should switch from education mode to routine enforcement, issuing tickets for violations.

Figure A: Park Zone, W15-I100 Sign

ILLINOIS STANDARD W15-I100



COLOR

LEGEND AND BORDER
BACKGROUND

BLACK
YELLOW/GREEN

NON-REFLECTORIZED
REFLECTORIZED

SIGN SIZE	DIMENSIONS						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
30 X 30	30.00	2.25	16.90	16.60	12.40	6.00	3.00
36 X 36	36.00	2.25	22.50	22.10	15.40	8.00	2.20

SIGN SIZE	SERIES BY LINE		MARGIN	BORDER
	1	2		
30 X 30	6C	6C	0.625	0.875
36 X 36	8C	8C	0.625	0.875

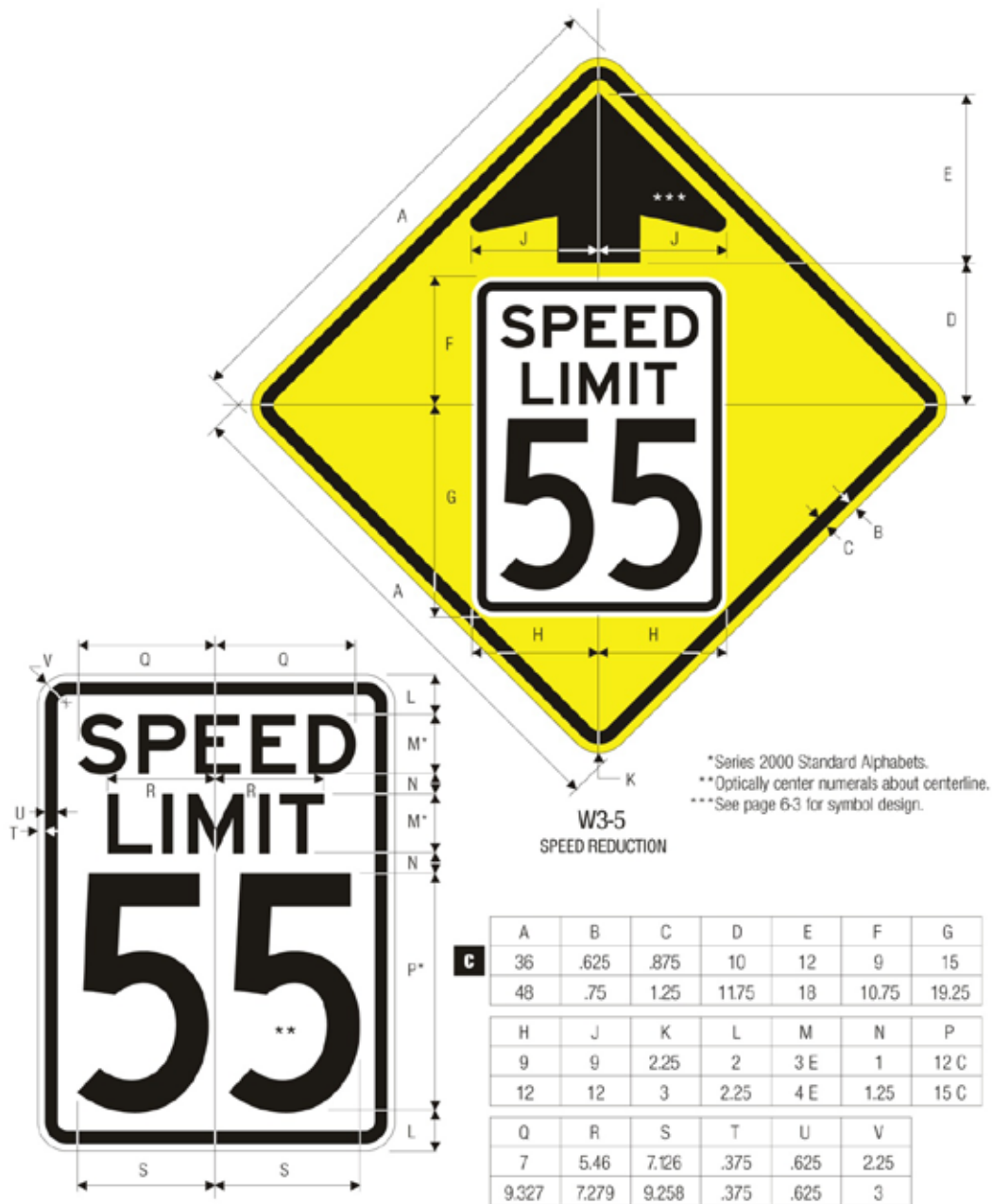
All dimensions in inches.

Sign not to scale.

SIGN: Illinois Manual on Uniform
Traffic Control Devices

SAFE PARK ZONE SIGNAGE

Figure B: Speed Zone Ahead W3-5 Sign



WARNING SIGN COLORS:

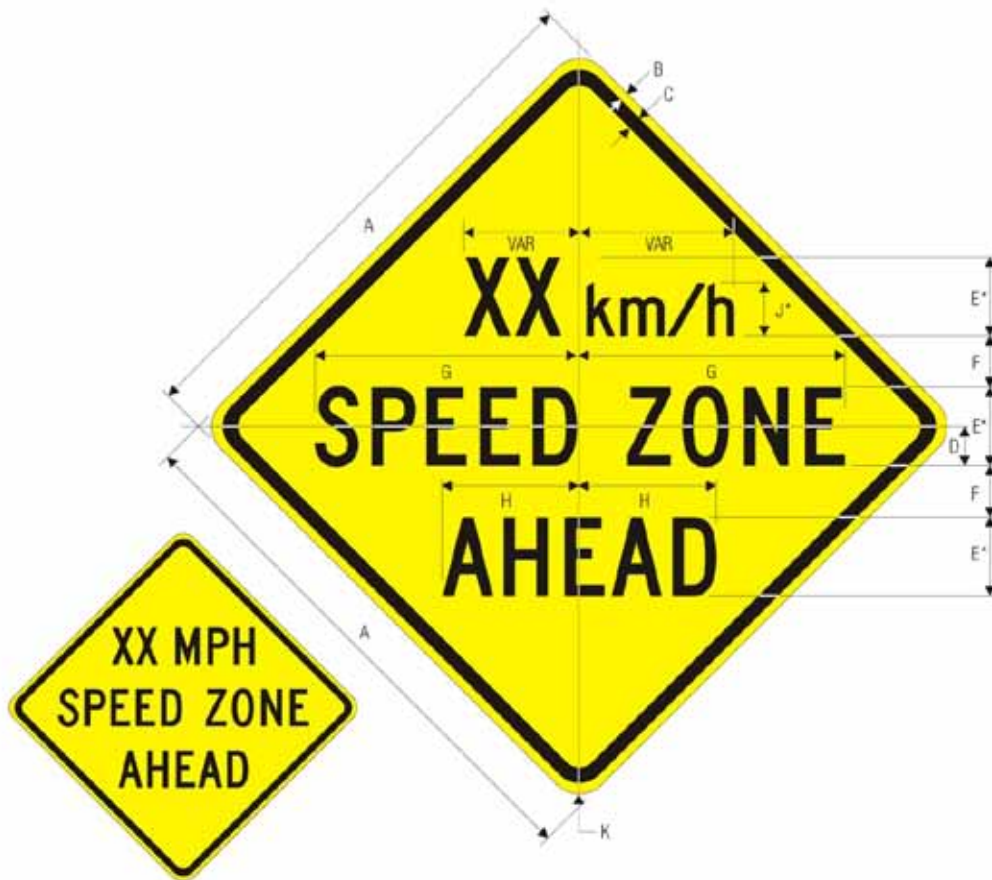
- BORDER & ARROW — BLACK
- SYMBOL — SEE R2-1
- BACKGROUND — YELLOW (RETROREFLECTIVE)

TTC COLORS:

- BORDER & ARROW — BLACK
- SYMBOL — SEE R2-1
- BACKGROUND — ORANGE (RETROREFLECTIVE)

SAFE PARK ZONE SIGNAGE

Figure C: Speed Zone Ahead W3a-5 Sign



W3-5a
SPEED REDUCTION (ENGLISH)

W3-5a
SPEED REDUCTION (METRIC)

*Series 2000 Standard Alphabets.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	J	K
	30	.5	.75	2	4 C	3	13.5	6.985	2.7 C	1.875
C	36	.625	.875	2.5	5 C	3.625	16.892	8.726	3.4 C	2.25
	48	.75	1.25	3.5	7 C	4.625	23.657	12.209	4.7 C	3
	60	.75	1.25	4	8 C	6	27.019	13.944	5.4 C	3

WARNING SIGN COLORS:
LEGEND — BLACK
BACKGROUND— YELLOW (RETROREFLECTIVE)

TTC SIGN COLORS:
LEGEND — BLACK
BACKGROUND— ORANGE (RETROREFLECTIVE)

SAFE PARK ZONE SIGNAGE

Figure D: Park Zone, W15-I100p Sign



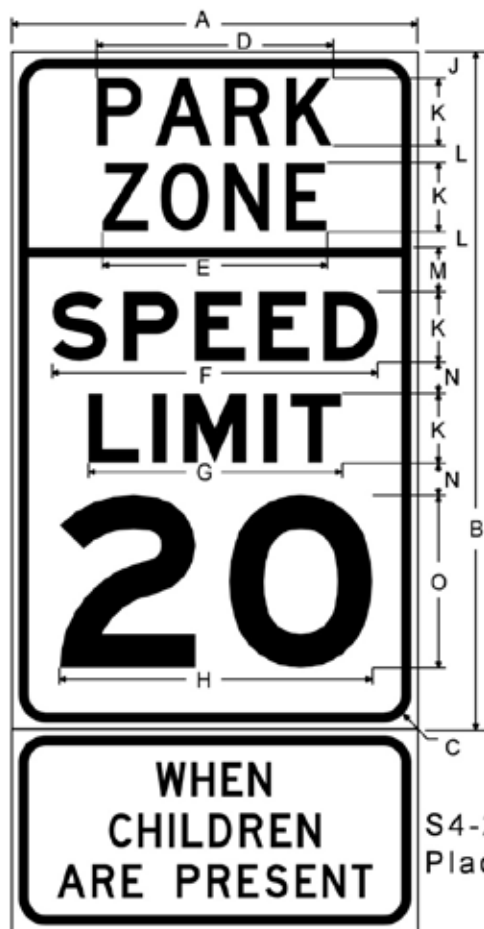
W15-I100p;

1.5" Radius, 0.6" Border, 0.4" Indent, Black on Bright yellow green;

"PARK" D; "ZONE" D;

Figure E: Park Zone Speed Limit When Children Are Present

ILLINOIS STANDARD R2-I108



Federal Standard S4-2 shall be used on lower portion of sign. If local ordinance or resolution includes hours those may be included as well and placed on lower portion. Example: (8 AM - 8 PM)

S4-2 Placement Shown

COLOR	LEGEND AND BORDER	BLACK	NON-REFLECTORIZED
	BACKGROUND (TOP)	YELLOW/GREEN	REFLECTORIZED
	BACKGROUND (BOTTOM)	WHITE	REFLECTORIZED

SIGN SIZE	DIMENSIONS													
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	J	K	L	M	N	O
24 X 42	24.00	42.00	1.50	14.00	13.20	19.20	15.00	18.40	1.90	4.00	1.00	3.60	2.00	10.00
36 X 60	36.00	60.00	3.00	20.80	19.80	28.80	22.40	27.40	2.30	6.00	1.50	4.00	3.00	15.00

SIGN SIZE	SERIES BY LINE					MARGIN	BORDER
	1	2	3	4	5		
24 X 42	4D	4D	4E	4E	10E	0.375	0.625
36 X 60	6D	6D	6E	6E	15E	0.625	0.875

All dimensions in inches. Sign not to scale.

SIGN: Illinois Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

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ACTIVE
TRANSPORTATION
ALLIANCE

9 West Hubbard Street
Suite 402
Chicago, IL 60654-6545

T 312.427.3325
F 312.427.4907
info@activetrans.org
www.activetrans.org