

Behind The City Scene

Seemingly within minutes of being sworn in I started to understandably receive requests for help with violations of traffic laws. I learned that there were approximately 50 active pending requests for targeted enforcement. I was able to obtain some assistance but clearly many individuals and neighborhoods remained disappointed.



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However this article discusses a different aspect of traffic regulation. Traffic Engineers frequently refer to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. It is promulgated by a Federal Alphabet Soup agency. We can obtain our very own copy for about \$80. I tried to Google the number of pages but could not find it. My recollection is that it is something like 600 pages.

Whenever an elected official requests the installation of new traffic control devices (TCD) the response is invariably that, "The Manual does not allow it!" The standard response is that the installation of a "non-warranted" TCD would subject the City to liability. This effectively stops any elected official's activity because most elected officials don't have the background to question this false assertion. However a couple of important things need to be said. It would not be good public policy to allow for the installation of signs whenever and wherever a Council Member directs them to be placed. I also do believe that the Manual has a lot of merit in the sense of not permitting blue stop signs or signals that are not immediately recognized.

A "warranted" TCD is the result of a Finding/Study by... you guessed it the Traffic Engineers. Because of my almost 30 years with the City I am aware of situations where political pressure has caused there to be action but it is very rare. Plus new Council Members are cowed by the assertion that the City could be sued. I recently asked the City Attorney to provide me with those lawsuits that resulted in liability where non-warranted signs were installed. The answer, as I already knew, was none. Adding to the challenge is the necessity of convincing a majority of Council to appropriate the hundreds of thousands of dollars for powered traffic signals.

Because of all of the above the City Administration has and continues to hold a very strong hand of cards over any Council Member who individually tries to obtain a new TCD. As I have said on many occasions we currently have a weak Mayor and Council and a very strong City Manager. All of the above confirms that fact. Right now the City Administration is vigorously fighting another Ward Council Member's efforts to have 4 stop signs installed at a very dangerous intersection.

An advertisement for Chambers Wine & Liquor. At the top left is a circular logo with 'WINE' at the top, 'Chambers' in the center, and 'LIQUOR' at the bottom. To the right of the logo, the text reads: 'Low Prices. Big Selection. Friendly Service. 15260 East Iliff Avenue Aurora, Colorado 80014 303-751-6935 www.chamberswineandliquor.com'. Below this is a banner that says 'Aurora's Largest Liquor Store'. The main body of the ad is a white box with a green border containing the text: 'Wine :: Beer :: Liquor Lowest Prices In Aurora!'. Below this are four bullet points: '» Delivery Available!', '» BIG SALES Every Week', '» Save Even More With Our Buyer's Club', and '» Check Out Our Web Site For Great Specials And Coupons!'. Underneath the bullet points are the hours: 'HOURS: Monday-Thursday: 9am-10pm Friday-Saturday: 9am-11pm Sunday: 10am-6pm'. At the bottom of the white box, it says 'Over 15,000 square feet and 8,000 different products to choose from!' and 'Chambers Wine & Liquor' in green text.

Prime Time