

Transportation Engineering:

Traffic Sign Obstacle Course

THE CHALLENGE

Follow the directions on signs and other traffic control devices to get through the obstacle course and end up at school.

GRADE LEVEL

Young elementary.

ACTIVITY DURATION

Approximately 5 to 10 minute introduction, 15 to 20 minutes of creative play.

MATERIALS

- One or more large pieces of flat cardboard for drawing street network
- Permanent markers to draw street network on cardboard
- Signs and traffic control devices printed out on heavy paper for posting along your street network (see attached for some examples)
- Popsicle sticks or wooden clothespins to use as sign posts (you can also lay them flat)
- Toy car, truck, bike, or other mode of transportation that might be used on a roadway

SET UP

This activity requires a flat surface like a low table or floor. Prior to engaging the students, create/print the signs and traffic control devices and prepare the “roadway” by drawing a simple roadway network on the flat cardboard. Have a single beginning and ending point to the road network, with the beginning being “home” and the ending being “school.”

ACTIVITY

Provide a brief introduction to signs and simple traffic control devices like traffic signals and yellow beacons (flashing lights). Explain how signs and other things along the street tell the road user what they need to do (slow down, stop, look out for animals or other things along the road). Show the signs and devices you have created and ask the students what they think they mean.

Place your signs and other traffic control devices along the road network. Give the students a chance to share about a time that they've seen signs or other traffic control devices along the street. What was going on there and what did the road users do?

Now that the stage has been set, tell the students that they will have a chance to pretend that they are the vehicle on your play



Grades
K-2



20 - 30
minutes



Signs and other traffic control devices are placed to promote safe travel. Young students can learn and act out what these signs tell road users to do.

roadway network. Have them stand up and pretend that they are about to drive a car, ride a bike, etc. Take your toy vehicle and begin to slowly drive it down your street network. When you come to a sign or traffic control device, ask the students what they are supposed to do and have them act that out. Proceed along your network from “home” to “school” with the students acting out all of the sign instructions along the way.

WRAP-UP

Give students the opportunity to talk about other signs they see on the road and what they mean. Questions you could ask include: What might happen if a road user didn't follow the sign's instructions? What might happen if too many signs were close together? What might happen if a sign isn't far enough away from a hazard to warn roadway users?

ALTERNATIVE ART ACTIVITY

This activity can also be done as an artistic craft on craft paper or cardboard. In this case, cut out different sign shapes from craft paper or cardboard. Draw the sign outlines (as applicable) and text or shapes on the signs (for example: railway crossing, school zone, etc.) Discuss how [the color of a sign](#), as well as [the shape of a sign](#), may signify its meaning.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

This activity is simple and appropriate for younger children. The environment should be relaxed and allow for the students to express themselves, practice sharing their thoughts in a group setting, and learn through play.

Example Signs



Stop Sign

Tells drivers to stop and wait until they can continue safely.
Used at intersections or driveways.



Do Not Enter Sign

Tells drivers to not enter from this direction.
Used at intersections, driveways, or exit ramps where traffic is one way.



Pedestrian Sign

Tells drivers pedestrians may be crossing ahead.
Used in advance of crosswalks.



Speed Limit Sign

Tells drivers the legal maximum speed for the road.
Used after intersections and when speed limit changes.



Bicycles May Use Full Lane Sign

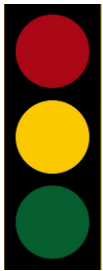
Tells drivers to use caution as bicyclists may ride on the road.
Used on roads where there may not be a bicycle path or sidewalk.



School Bus Stop Ahead Sign

Tells drivers school buses may be stopped and pedestrians may be crossing ahead.
Used in advance of school bus stops.

Example Traffic Control Devices



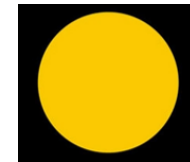
Traffic Signal

Used at intersections to guide traffic in a safe and orderly manner.



Flashing Red Signal

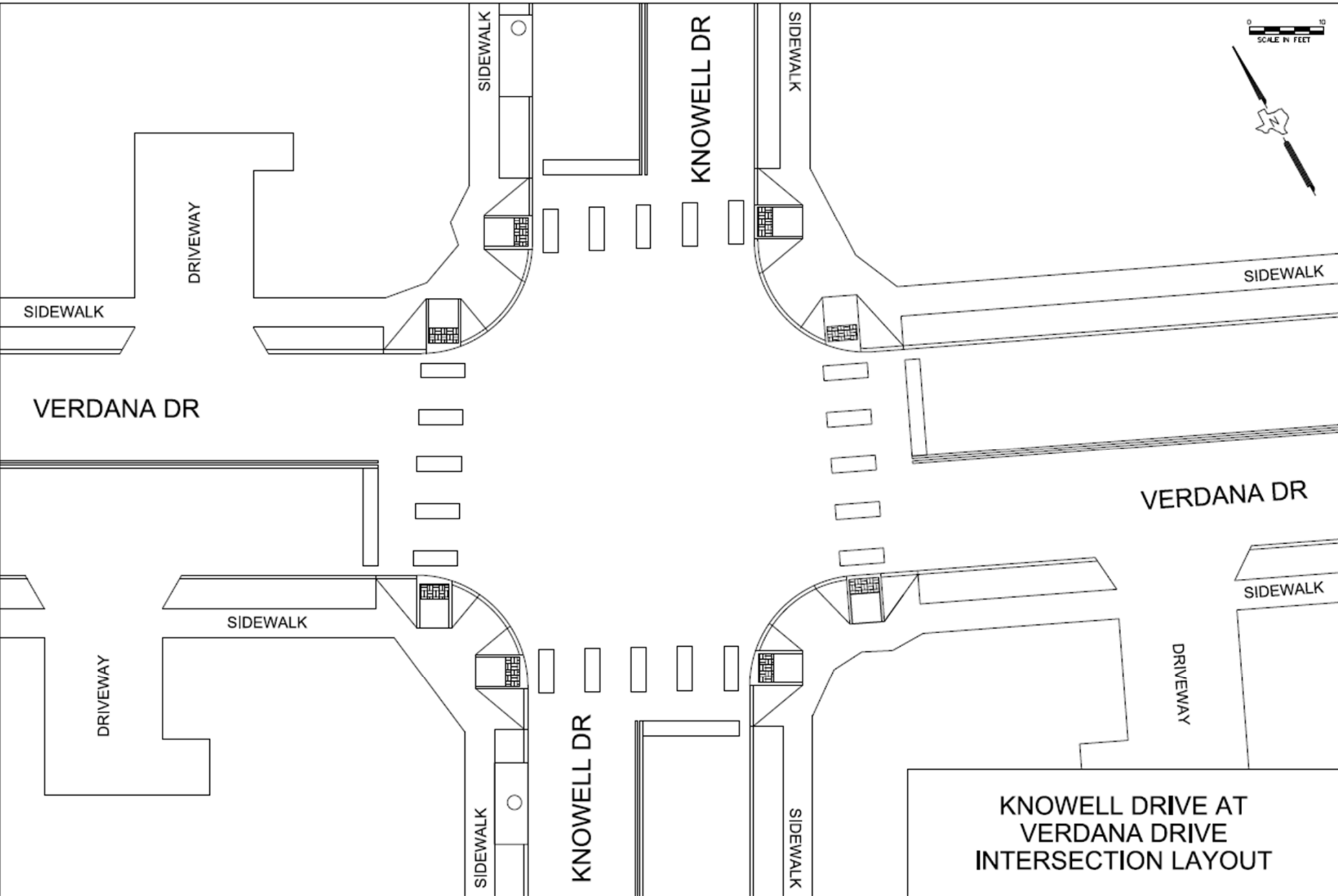
Used at intersections and acts the same as a stop sign.



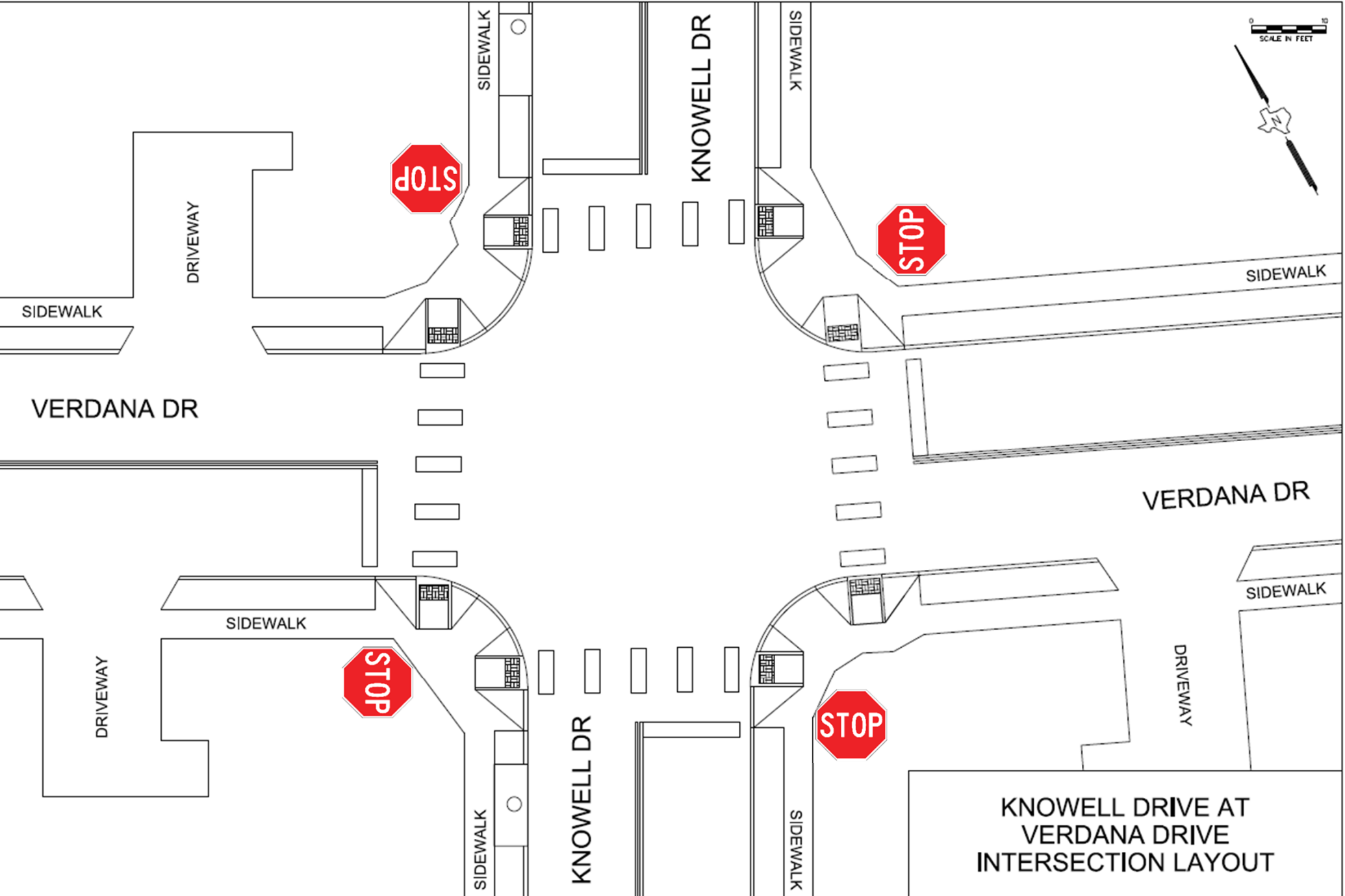
Flashing Yellow Signal

Used at intersections and tells drivers to proceed with caution.

Example Neighborhood Intersection



Example Stop Signs



STOP

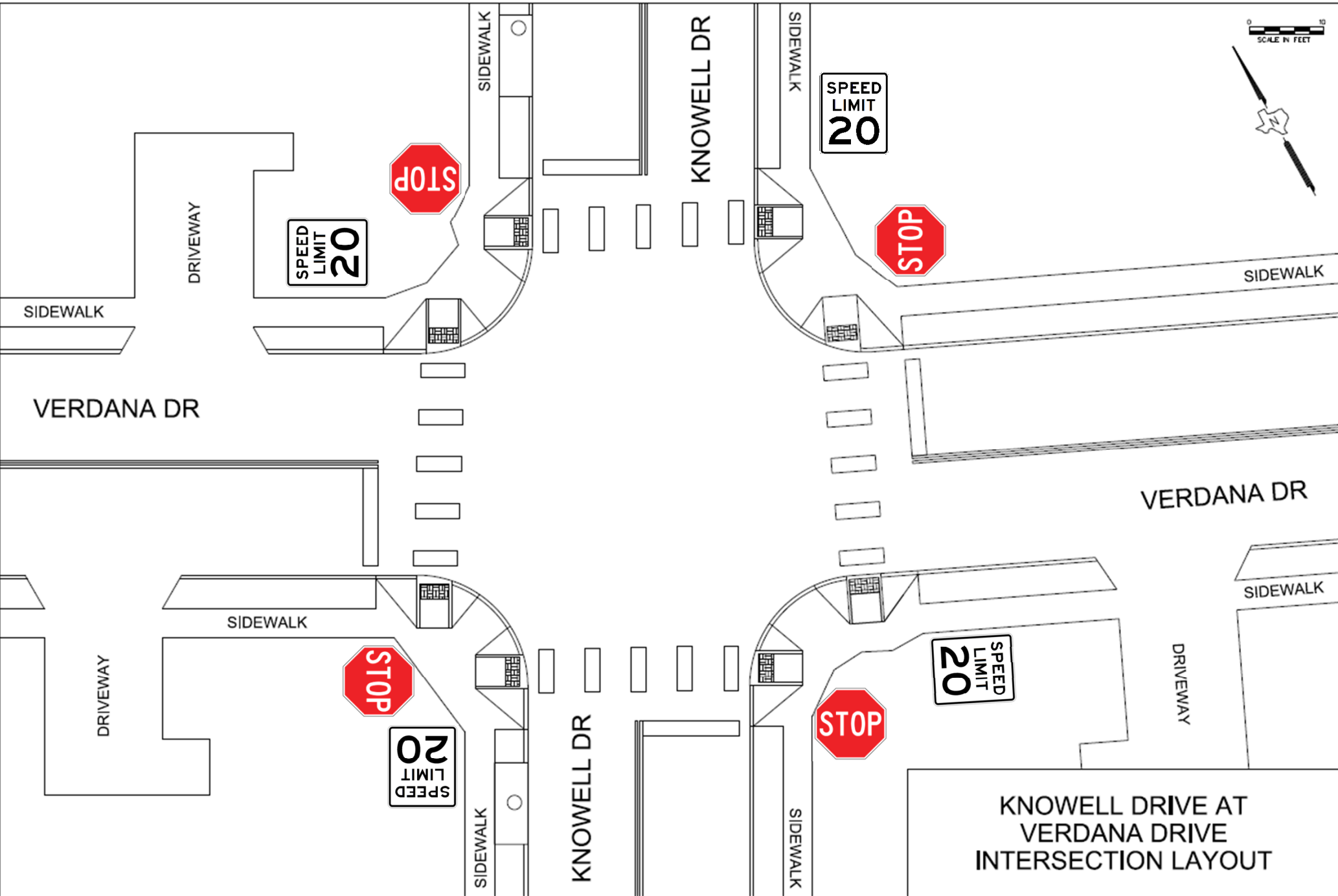
STOP

STOP

STOP

KNOWELL DRIVE AT
VERDANA DRIVE
INTERSECTION LAYOUT

Example Speed Limit Signs



Example Pedestrian Signs

