



# CITY OF SALINAS

## TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

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**DATE:** MAY 14, 2026

**DEPARTMENT:** PUBLIC WORKS, TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION DIVISION

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**TITLE:** 2026 ENGINEERING AND TRAFFIC SURVEYS FOR SPEED LIMITS

### RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Staff requests that the Commission review the 2026 Engineering and Traffic Surveys and recommend that the City Council adopt a Resolution approving the establishment of speed limits as recommended by the 2026 Engineering and Traffic Survey for Speed Limits Technical Report.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In California an Engineering and Traffic Survey (“E&TS”) is the tool used to establish a speed limit, surveys are updated every 5-7 years and may be extended up to 14 years. Normally the speed limit is set at the closest 5-mph increment of the 85th percentile speed calculated through the E&TS, but a single 5-mph reduction is permitted based on roadway conditions and constraints and an additional 5-mph reduction may be applied based on the consideration of “vulnerable roadway users” and the consideration of “safety corridors”, based on AB 43.

There are twelve (12) speed surveys that will expire in the second half of 2026. This report summarizes the proposed E&TS for the Commission to review and recommend to Council for adoption so that radar enforcement can continue.

### BACKGROUND:

The routine analysis and establishment of speed limits on roadways ensures compliance with the Uniform Vehicle Code (“UVC”) established by the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Laws and Ordinances.

#### *Engineering and Traffic Survey (Speed Survey) Process*

In California the use of Speed Surveys is defined by the California Vehicle Code (“CVC”) and the methodology is defined by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (“MUTCD”). To set a speed limit, staff use a standard “85th percentile” survey outlined in the MUTCD. These surveys measure how fast people naturally drive during normal traffic, then set the limit to closest 5-mph

mark of the speed used by 85% of those drivers. A further 5-mph reduction is permitted based on roadway conditions and constraints.

For example, a roadway segment with a measured 85th percentile speed of 37 mph may have a recommended speed limit of 35 mph. Per the CVC, a 5-mph reduction to 30 mph is justified when geometric constraints (horizontal or vertical curves) limit sight distance. Prior to Assembly Bill 43, if this same roadway segment were signed at 25 mph it would have been considered a “speed trap”. Under CVC 40802, a “speed trap” is created if a speed survey is missing or if the limit is set lower than the 85th percentile. In these cases, police are legally prohibited from using radar to issue tickets on that roadway segment.

California Assembly Bill 43 (AB 43) signed in 2021, gives local agencies more power to set speed limits based on safety goals rather than just the “speed trap” rules. If a required traffic survey shows a limit is still unsafe, an agency can reduce the speed limit by an additional 5 mph in two cases: designation of a safety corridor or if the road is adjacent to a high pedestrian activity area, specifically a facility that may attract more vulnerable groups like children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities and the unhoused. Based on the MUTCD, a “safety corridor” is officially defined as a segment within the top 20% of the city’s network for crashes<sup>1</sup>, or any road where these vulnerable groups are present within 1320 feet (1/4 mile).

### *Salinas Engineering and Traffic Surveys*

Following recent speed surveys, staff recommends the retention of the current posted speed limit for eight (8) segments. Additionally, staff recommends reducing the posted speed limit of three (3) segments, Towt Street, John Street, and Freedom Parkway and increasing the posted speed limit of one (1) segment, Sconberg Parkway.

The measured 85th percentile speed on Towt Street is 32 mph. While standard speed survey procedures allow for the speed limit adjustment to be rounded to 30 mph. Staff recommends applying a 5-mph reduction based on safety to set the new speed limit at 25 mph.

The measured 85th percentile speed on John Street, between Wood St and E Alisal St, is 38 mph. Following standard speed survey procedures, the speed limit would be set at 40 mph. Staff recommends applying the 5-mph reduction based on safety and also applying an additional 5-mph reduction (AB 43) given proximity to two existing schools and high pedestrian activity. The recommended speed limit is 30 mph.

Similarly, Freedom Parkway has a measured 85th percentile speed of 38 mph, the rounded measured speed limit would be 40 mph. Staff recommends applying a 5-mph safety reduction to set the speed limit at 35 mph, allowed by MUTCD and also applying the 5-mph reduction allowed by AB 43. Freedom Parkway is located along the northeasterly side of Monte Bella Elementary School and Monte Bella Community Park and has bike lane facilities which encourage vulnerable roadway users to the street. Staff recommends a speed limit of 30 mph for Freedom Parkway.

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<sup>1</sup> On September 14, 2021, through Resolution No. 22184, City Council approved the Vision Zero Action Plan which identified the corridors and intersections with the most collisions.

Additionally, the radar speed survey conducted for Sconberg Parkway measured the 85th percentile speed at 43 mph, the rounded speed limit would be 45 mph. Applying the 5-mph safety reduction would result in a speed limit of 40 mph. However, due to the proximity of Bardin Elementary School and bike lane facilities on Sconberg Parkway, a 35 mph speed limit is recommended by staff. See Table 1 for speed survey findings.

**Table 1: 2026 Speed Survey Study Findings**

Street Segment	Speed Survey Study Limits	Posted Speed Limit		AB43 Study Methodology Used
		Existing	Proposed	
Chaparral Street	North Main Street to Natividad Road	25	25	No
Towt Street	East Alisal Street to Garner Avenue	30	25	No
Post Drive	Calle del Adobe to North Davis Road	30	30	No
Monterey Street	West Market Street to John Street	25	25	No
Terven Avenue	South Sanborn Road to Airport Boulevard	25	25	No
Hansen Street	Airport Boulevard to Harkins Road	30	30	No
John Street	Wood Street to East Alisal Street	35	30	Yes
Freedom Parkway	Williams Road to Sconberg Parkway	35	30	Yes
Sconberg Parkway	Alisal Road to Freedom Parkway	25	35	Yes
North Davis Road	Larkin Street to Westridge Parkway	35	35	No
Alisal Street	Capitol Street to Front Street	25	25	No
Towt Street	Garner Avenue to Freedom Parkway	25	25	No

CEQA CONSIDERATION:

**Not a Project.** The City of Salinas has determined that the proposed action is not a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378). In addition, CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 includes the general rule that CEQA applies only to activities which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. Because the proposed action and this matter have no potential to cause any effect on the environment, or because it falls within a category of activities excluded as projects pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378, this matter is not a project. Because the matter does not cause a direct or foreseeable indirect physical change on or in the environment, this matter is not a project. Any subsequent discretionary projects resulting from this action will be assessed for CEQA applicability.

STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

The establishment of legitimate speed limits support the City Council's goal of "Public Safety".

DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION:

The Public Works Department staff survey, recommend, monitor, and install posted speed limits. Established speed zones allow the Salinas Police Department to enforce posted speed limits. Public Works provides the Police Department and the Traffic Court with updates and changes to the established speed zones for proper enforcement.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

Installation and replacement of speed limit signs is estimated at approximately \$5,000. Sufficient funding is available in CIP 9162.

<b>Fund</b>	<b>General Ledger Number (Operating/CIP)</b>	<b>General Ledger Account Name</b>	<b>Remaining Budget Appropriation</b>	<b>Amount Requested</b>
2401	50.9162-62.6400	Supplies & Materials Traffic & Safety Supplies	\$26,272	\$5,000

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment 1: 2026 Engineering and Traffic Survey for Speed Limits Technical Report
- Attachment 2: FHWA Functional Classifications Map
- Attachment 3: Speed Limit Informational Brochure