CITY OF SALINAS
COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: **NOVEMBER 7, 2023**

DEPARTMENT: **PUBLIC WORKS**

FROM: **DAVID JACOBS, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR**

THRU: **ADRIANA ROBLES, CITY ENGINEER**

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TITLE: **2023 ENGINEERING AND TRAFFIC SURVEYS FOR SPEED LIMITS**

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

A motion to approve a Resolution to establish speed limits as recommended by the 2023 Engineering and Traffic Survey for speed limits.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In California, an Engineering & Traffic Survey (ET&S) is the tool used to establish a speed limit with surveys updated every 10 years. Normally the speed limit is set at the closest 5-mph increment of the 85th percentile speed calculated through the ET&S but a single 5-MPH reduction is permitted based on roadway conditions and constraints. Speed limits set further below this practice create a Speed Trap that results in the inability of law enforcement to enforce the roadway with radar per the California Vehicle Code (CVC).

This practice will change starting in July 2024 based on California Assembly Bill 43 - Traffic Safety (AB43) allowing speed limits establishment to also consider "Vulnerable Roadway Users" and "Safety Corridors" defined by a local agency. In essence, the new practice eliminates the current Speed Trap rule allowing agencies to establish speed limits based on policy direction.

In Salinas there are twenty-four (24) Speed Surveys that will expire by or within the first half of 2024. This report summarizes the proposed speed limits for twenty-one (21) street segments and identifies three (3) roadway segments that staff recommends be restudied in the second half of 2024 following the implementation of AB43.

BACKGROUND:

The regular 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.

Current Engineering & Traffic Survey (Speed Survey) Process

In California, the use of Speed Surveys is defined by the California Vehicle Code (CVC) and the methodology process defined by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Speed Surveys are currently established using the 85th Percentile Method defined within the MUTCD and involves taking an indiscriminate sample data set during normal traffic conditions to calculate the 85th percentile speed of the roadway and then setting the speed limit to the closest 5-mph increment of the calculated 85th percentile speed. A further 5-mph reduction is permitted based on roadway conditions and constraints. The CVC further clarifies that if a valid Speed Survey is not available or if a speed limit is set below that practice that a Speed Trap is established (CVC 40802) limiting the use of radar enforcement on that roadway segment.

For example, a roadway segment with a measured 85th percentile speed of 37 mph would be rounded down to have a recommended speed limit of 35 mph. A 5-mph reduction to 30 mph is permitted based on geometric constraints such as horizontal or vertical curves that limit roadway visibility or non-visible constraints such as the roadway serving as a suggested route to school or a portion of an identified bicycle network resulting in a higher-than-normal pedestrian or bicycle activity. If this same roadway segment were signed at 25 mph, it would be considered a Speed Trap and radar enforcement would not be admissible.

Future Engineering & Traffic Survey Process

California Assembly Bill 43 - Traffic Safety (AB43) approved on September 9, 2021, and signed into law by Governor Newsom on October 8, 2021 removes the current Speed Trap limitation by allowing local agencies to set speed limits based on policy direction. Future Speed Surveys can take into consideration vulnerable roadway users (i.e., students, disabled, bicyclists) into consideration to allow lower speed limits than that calculated by the 85th Percentile Method. The establishment of a Safety Corridor by the local agency is required to allow for the reduced speed limit to take effect.

Pending Engineering & Traffic Surveys

Public Works staff identified twenty-four (24) roadway segments that are set to expire in 2023 or will expire within the first half of 2024. Public Works staff conducted new speed surveys for these roadway segments using the current 85th Percentile Method defined by the MUTCD and required by the CVC.

Of the 24 roadway segments studied, three (3) segments are proposed for a speed limit reduction and retention of the current speed limits is recommended for the other twenty-one (21) segments. See Table 1: 2023 Speed Survey Study Findings.

No speed limit increases are proposed as part of this study. Staff recommends three (3) segments for re-analysis in 2024 following implementation of AB 43 as State Law otherwise the street segments would result in an increase in the recommended posted speed limit. No radar enforcement within these segments will be allowed until the street segments are restudied in the Fall 2024.

Table 1: 2023 Engineering & Traffic Survey (Speed Survey) Study Findings

Street Segment	Speed Survey Study Limits	Speed Limit		Future AB43 Study Methodology Required
		Existing	Proposed	
East Bernal Drive	North Main Street to Sherwood Drive	35	35	
Harden Parkway	North Main Street to El Dorado Drive	35	35	
Independence Boulevard	Constitution Boulevard to East Boronda Road	30	30	
Riker Street	West Alisal Street to West Blanco Road	25	25	
West Alisal Street	College Drive to Capitol Street	30	30	
Larkin Street	North Davis Road to Rico Street	25	25	
East Laurel Drive	North Sanborn Road to Williams Road	30	30	
North Main Street	Boronda Road to Russell Road	35	35	
East Market Street	Monterey Street to North Sanborn Road	35	30	
Maryal Drive	East Laurel Drive to Bernal Drive	*25/35	35	
Rider Avenue	Freedom Parkway to East Boronda Road	30	30	
North Sanborn Road	Del Monte Avenue to East Boronda Road	35	35	
North Sanborn Road	Del Monte Avenue to East Laurel Drive	*25/30	30	
North/South Sanborn Road	East Laurel Drive to U.S. HWY 101	35	30	
Sherwood Drive	East Market Street to East Bernal Drive	40	40	X
West Acacia Street	South Davis Road to West Alisal Street	30	30	
East Boronda Road	Constitution Boulevard to Williams Road	45	45	
North Davis Road	Westridge Parkway to Boronda Road	*35/45	35	
Front Street	East Market Street to John Street	30	30	
East Laurel Drive	North Main Street to Natividad Road	35	35	
Skyway Boulevard	Airport Boulevard to East Alisal Street	35	35	X
Work Street	East Alisal Street to South Sanborn Road	35	35	X
Garner Avenue	Rider Avenue to Williams Road	25	25	
Rico Street	Larkin Street to Rossi Street	25	25	

Blue Highlighted are segments where speed limit reductions are proposed.
**Segment contained two different speed limits.*

Why not keep the existing speed limit signs arbitrarily low to slow the speed of traffic?

Under current CA State Law it is not permitted to set arbitrarily low speed limits that do not align with measured speed limits. This results in Speed Traps that limit the use of radar enforcement by law enforcement which in turn may result in higher vehicle speeds. Following implementation of AB43 further reductions in roadway speed limits will be permitted following additional study to determine if vulnerable roadway users may benefit from the establishment of Safety Corridors by the City Council.

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

The recommendation for the establishment of the 2023 Engineering and Traffic Survey for speed limits was presented to the Traffic and Transportation Commission at its October 12, 2023 meeting. The Commission voted (5-0) to recommend City Council to approve a Resolution to establish the 2023 Engineering and Traffic Survey for speed limits.

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 survey, recommend and monitor 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 limits for proper enforcement.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

The City must replace or install existing speed limit signage and update school zone signage on the three (3) changing roadway segments. Additionally, some speed zones are missing required speed limit signs which need to be installed. The estimated labor and material cost to replace and install missing signs is $30,000, if performed by the City's job order contractor. Funding is

available and appropriated in 5800.50.9162.

ATTACHMENTS:

Resolution
Attachment 1: 2023 Engineering and Traffic Survey for Speed Limits Technical Report
Attachment 2: FHWA Functional Classification Maps
Attachment 3: Speed Limit Informational Brochure