CITY OF SALINAS
TRAFFIC & TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

DATE: **JULY 10, 2025**

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

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TITLE: **2025 ENGINEERING AND TRAFFIC SURVEYS FOR SPEED LIMITS**

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

The Traffic and Transportation Commission is to receive and provide feedback on the 2025 Engineering and Traffic Surveys and motion to recommend City Council receive the 2025 Engineering and Traffic Surveys and approve a Resolution adopting the establishment of speed limits as recommended by the 2025 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. Speed limits set further below this practice create a "speed trap" that results in the removal of the ability for law enforcement to enforce the roadway with radar per the California Vehicle Code (CVC 40802). This practice changed in July 2024 based on California Assembly Bill 43 - Traffic Safety (AB 43) allowing speed limits establishment to also consider "vulnerable roadway users" and "safety corridors".

There are nineteen (19) speed surveys that are expired within the first half of 2025. This report summarizes the proposed E&TS that staff recommends the Commission to consider to recommend 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 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 resulting on the roadway being 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 not permitted.

California Assembly Bill 43 - Traffic Safety (AB 43) 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. If a local agency, after completing an E&TS finds that the speed limit is still more than reasonable or safe, the local agency is allowed to further reduce the speed limit by 5 mph if the portion of the roadway has been designated as a safety corridor or if it is adjacent to a land or facility that generates a high concentration of bicyclists and pedestrians, especially those from vulnerable groups such as children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and the unhoused. A safety corridor is defined by the MUTCD as a roadway segment with an overall roadway network where the highest number of serious injury and fatality crashes occur and as the portion of the highway where one or more of any of the generations are present within 1320 feet (1/4 mile).

Salinas Engineering and Traffic Surveys

After conducting speed surveys, staff recommends retention of the current speed limit for seventeen (17) segments, application of AB 43 to one segment, and reduction of the current speed limit for two segments.

Staff measured the 85th percentile speed on Linwood Drive at 34 mph. Following the standard speed survey procedure, a rounding to the nearest 5-mph increment of the 85th percentile speed and a 5-mph reduction would result in a speed limit of 30 mph. Given that Linwood Drive is adjacent to El Gabilan Elementary School with a high density of children, an additional 5-mph reduction is recommended in accordance with AB 43. See Table 1: 2025 Speed Survey Study Findings.

Table 1: 2025 Engineering & Traffic Survey (Speed Survey) Study Findings

Street Segment	Speed Survey Study Limits	Posted Speed Limit		AB43 Study Methodology Used
		Existing	Proposed	
Abbott Street	South Sanborn Road to Harkins Road	40	40	-
Airport Boulevard	Skyway Boulevard to Hansen Street	45	40	-
Casentini Street*	North Main Street to Rico Street	35	30	-
Constitution Boulevard	Independence Boulevard to East Boronda Road	40	40	-
East Romie Lane	Riker Street to Abbott Street	30	30	-
Natividad Road	East Laurel Drive to East Bernal Drive	40	40	-
Linwood Drive*	East Laurel Drive to East Alvin Drive	25	25	X
San Juan Grade Road	North Main Street to Russell Road	45	45	-
Navajo Drive	Adams Street to North Main Street	25	25	-
Villa Street	West Market Street to Central Avenue	25	25	-
Maple Street	South Main Street to Abbott Street	25	25	-
Clay Street	Iverson Street to South Main Street	25	25	-
Lincoln Avenue	West Market Street to Clay Street	25	25	-
Salinas Street	West Market Street to Clay Street	25	25	-
Pajaro Street	East Market Street to East Blanco Road	25	25	-
Hebbron Avenue	East Market Street to John Street	25	25	-
Tyler Street	East Laurel Drive to Iris Drive	25	25	-
Los Palos Drive	San Miguel Avenue to Abbott Street	25	25	-
East Rossi Street*	North Main Street to Sherwood Drive	25	25	-

Blue highlighted are segments where speed limit reductions are proposed.
** Existing speed traps.*

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

Under California law, arbitrarily posting slower speed limit signs is not permitted and 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 AB 43, allows for further speed reductions following additional study to determine if vulnerable roadway users may benefit from the establishment of safety corridors by the City Council.

Staff recommends that the Traffic and Transportation Commission forward a recommendation to City Council to receive the 2025 Engineering and Traffic Survey and adopt a Resolution establishing speed limits in accordance with the requirements of the CVC.

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, 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 zones for proper enforcement.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

Replacement of signage for the two roadway segments to change speed limit signs is estimated at approximately $5,000. Sufficient funding is available in the CIP 9162.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: 2025 Engineering and Traffic Survey for Speed Limits Technical Report
Attachment 2: FHWA Functional Classification Maps
Attachment 3: Speed Limit Informational Brochure