



CITY OF SALINAS

TRAFFIC & TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

DATE: NOVEMBER 8, 2018

DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC WORKS, TRANSPORTATION & TRAFFIC DIVISION

FROM: ANDREW EASTERLING, TRAFFIC ENGINEER

TITLE: 2018 ENGINEERING AND TRAFFIC SURVEY FOR SPEED LIMITS

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend that the Traffic and Transportation Commission receive the 2018 Engineering and Traffic Survey; and recommend that the City Council and establish proposed speed limits in accordance with the California Vehicle Code.

BACKGROUND:

In California, speed limits for most roadways are established by prescribed procedures in accordance with the California Vehicle Code (CVC) and the California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CAMUTCD). The CVC requires that an Engineering and Traffic Survey (E&TS) be conducted every five years to justify a posted speed limit. Section 40802 of the CVC specifies the time periods within which speed surveys must be performed if the use of radar is to be employed to enforce speed limits. If the E&TS are more than 5 years old, the speed zone is considered a “speed trap” under CVC 40802 and courts may reject evidence of speeding obtained through radar or other electronic devices. E&TS may be up to 7 years old if conditions under CVC 40802(c) (1) related to enforcement officer training and equipment certification have been met. If an E&TS is not performed within the required time frame, posted speed limits are no longer valid and cannot be enforced properly, which allow for vehicular speeds to gradually rise on given roadway. Local roads with specific characteristics as classified by the Federal Highway Administration (Attachment 2), do not require E&TS and a 25 mph prima facie speed limit is considered legitimate. Local roads provide direct access to adjacent lands and to higher-level streets such as collectors or arterial streets. Local roads do not carry through traffic movement within the transportation network.

The CAMUTCD process of establishing a speed zone is built around a spot speed survey that typically consists of measuring speeds with a radar gun or other electronic device of motor vehicles traveling at free-flow speeds. Measured speeds create a data set and the most relevant data point is the 85th percentile speed. The 85th percentile speed is the speed at or below which 85 percent of motor vehicles travel. The 85th percentile is the maximum speed that the majority of drivers who drive a roadway consider reasonable and safe. As a result, posted speeds are a reflection of

the speed that most drivers deem to be safe, as opposed to a minority of drivers who do not drive in a reasonable manner.

According to the CAMUTCD Section 2B.13 Paragraph 12a, the posted speed limit “shall be established at the nearest 5-mph increment of the 85th percentile speed of free-flowing traffic.” For example, a segment with a measured 85th percentile speed of 37 mph would be rounded-down to have a posted speed limit of 35 mph. While another segment with a measured 85th percentile speed of 33 mph would be rounded-up to have a posted speed limit of 35 mph. The CAMUTCD allows the posted speed limit to be decreased by no more than 5 mph from a rounded speed, using one of two options described below that depend on whether the 85th percentile speed has been rounded down or up. There are no provisions for increasing the speed limit above the nearest 5-mph increment of the 85th percentile speed.

CAMUTCD option 1 is found in Section 2B.13 which states: “The posted speed may be reduced by 5 mph from the nearest 5-mph increment of the 85th percentile speed, in compliance with CVC Sections 627 and 22358.5.” The cited CVC Section 627 defines an E&TS that is required to consider prevailing speeds, accident records, and conditions not readily apparent to the driver, and optionally consider residential density as well as pedestrian and bicycle safety.

CAMUTCD option 2, found in Section 2B.13, states: “For cases in which the nearest 5-mph increment of the 85th percentile speed would require a rounding up, then the speed limit may be rounded down to the nearest 5-mph increment below the 85th percentile speed, if no further reduction is used.” An Option 2 round-down, which became available when CVC Section 21400(b) went into effect January 1, 2012, requires no engineering and traffic survey to post the speed limit sign. The E&TS is required nevertheless, however, to allow radar or similar devices to be used for enforcement.

Using these standards, Public Works staff identified fifty-four (54) roadway segments where the posted speed limit has expired or scheduled to expire in 2018. Public works staff prepared The 2018 Engineering and Traffic Survey for Speed Limits Technical Report (Attachment 1), which details the methodology and findings of the speed survey. The report details the CVC regulations and CAMUTCD policies. Of the fifty-four (54) roadway segments twelve (12) are increasing and five are decreasing, thirty-seven (37) segments posted speed limits will remain the same. All other roadway segments not evaluated in the 2018 E&TS will remain the same. All existing speed limits within school zones contained within these segments will remain the same. To reinforce speed messages at school zones, new 25 mph school zone signs will be posted on segments where speed limits are proposed to increase from 25 mph zones. The following table summarizes the existing speed limits and E&TS finds for the new speed limits. Highlighted are those street segments where speed limits are required to increase in accordance with the MUTCD.

Street Segment	Limits	Existing	New
Abbott Street	Harkins Rd to City Limits	45	45
Adams Street	Laurel Dr to Osage Dr	25	25
East Alisal Street	Sanborn Road to Williams Road/John Street	35	30
East Alisal Street	Front St to Sanborn Rd	35	30
West Alisal Street	College Dr to Blanco Rd	35	35
East Alvin Drive	N Main St to Natividad Rd	35	35
West Alvin Drive	Cherokee Dr to N Main St	35	35
Bardin Road	E Alisal St to Williams Rd	35	35
Beacon Hill Drive	Constitution Blvd to Constitution Blvd	25	30
Bernal Drive	N Main St to Sherwood Dr	35	40
West Blanco Road	S Main St to City Limits	45	45
East Boronda Road	N Main St to Natividad Rd	45	45
East Boronda Road	Natividad Rd to Constitution	45	45
Casentini Street	N Main St to Rico St	25	35
Central Avenue	Villa St to Davis Rd	35	31
Central Avenue	Villa St to Lincoln Ave	25	25
Chaparral Street	North Main Street to Maryal Drive	25	30
Constitution Boulevard	Independence Blvd to Laurel Dr	45	45
Davis Road	Rossi St to Larkin St	45	45
Del Monte Ave	Rider Ave to Williams Rd	25	25
Freedom Parkway	Constitution Blvd to Williams Rd	35	35
Harden Parkway	McKinnon St to N Main St	35	35
Harkins Road	Abbott St to City Limits	35	35
Independence Boulevard	Constitution Blvd to Provincetown Dr	35	30
East Market Street	North Sanborn Road to Williams Road	25	30
McKinnon Street	Boronda Rd to Alvin Dr	35	35
Nantucket Boulevard	Independence Blvd to Constitution	35	35
Romie Lane	California St to Abbott St	35	35
Sanborn Road	Work St to Abbott St	45	45
West Alisal Street	Capitol St & Amherst Dr	25	30
Iris Drive	Main St to Tyler St	25	25
East Laurel Drive	Natividad Rd to Sanborn Rd	45	45
East Laurel Drive	N Sanborn Rd & Williams Rd	25	30
West Laurel Drive	Davis Rd to N Main St	35	35
North Main Street	Boronda Rd to Bolivar St	35	35
Maryal Drive	Laurel Dr to Bernal Dr	25	35
Rider Avenue	Freedom Pkwy & Boronda Road	25	30
Rossi Street	N Davis Rd to N Main St	40	40
North Sanborn Road	Del Monte Ave & E Laurel Dr	25	30
Sherwood Drive	E Market St & US HWY 101	35	40
Acacia Street, West	Davis Rd & W Alisal St	25	30
Acacia Street, West	Iverson St to W Alisal St	25	25
East Alisal Street	Williams Rd to Bardin Rd	35	35
Davis Road	Westridge Way to Boronda Rd	45	45
Natividad Road	E Laurel Dr to Boronda Rd	45	40
Acacia Street, West	Iverson St to S Main St	25	25
Arcadia Street	Natividad Rd to El Dorado Dr	25	25
El Dorado Drive	E Alvin Dr to Boronda Rd	25	25

Garner Avenue	Rider Ave to Sanborn Rd	25	25
Garner Avenue	Sanborn Rd to Williams Rd	25	30
East Laurel Drive	Maryal Dr to N Main St	35	35
Rider Avenue	Del Monter Ave to Freedom Pkwy	25	25
Rider Avenue	Del Monter Ave to Gee St	25	25
San Miguel Avenue	Pajaro Street to San Mateo Dr	25	25

Highlighted are segments where speed limits are proposed to increase.

Enforcement

It is important to note that the CAMUTCD process is required in order to be able to conduct speed enforcement by radar. Otherwise, speeding citations cannot be justified in court. In other words, citations or speed tickets based on unsubstantiated speed limits will be dismissed, if challenged. This affects the effectiveness of speed enforcement. Typically, officers are unlikely to enforce if their citations cannot be justified by speed limits. However, without routine enforcement vehicular speeds tend to gradually increase.

Several roadway segments where new speed limits are proposed are also planned for roadway improvements that may change speeds. For example, West Alisal Street between Capitol St and Amherst Drive is planned for a complete streets project, with a lane reductions in each direction with a two-way left turn lane. Maryal Drive between Laurel and Bernal Drive is part of a Safe Routes to School project and is planned for restriping. Chaparral Street between North Main St and Maryal Drive is the process of supporting a neighborhood traffic calming plan. Public works staff will perform a new Engineering and Traffic Survey on each roadway after project implementation to re-establish the appropriate posted speeds. Until these projects are completed, legitimate speed zones must be established in order to enforce speeding.

CEQA CONSIDERATION:

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 strategic plan "Safe, Livable Community."

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 zones for proper enforcement.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

The estimated labor and material cost to replace existing speed limit signage and school zone signage on the seventeen (17) roadway segments is \$31,000. Sufficient funding is available in the CIP 9162, which funds the replacement of regulatory signs to meet national retroreflectivity standards.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: 2018 Engineering and Traffic Survey for Speed Limits Technical Report
Attachment 2: FHWA Functional Classification Maps