



Board Agenda Item 54

DATE: February 22, 2022

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Steven E. White, Director
Department of Public Works and Planning

SUBJECT: Amendment of the Fresno County Ordinance Code to Modify the Chapter on Speed Limits

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Conduct second hearing on and adopt an Ordinance to amend Chapter 11.24 - Speed Limits of the Fresno County Ordinance Code, Sections 11.24.050 through 11.24.080, to reflect various changes to the Ordinance Code as a result of recent traffic studies; and waive the reading of the Ordinance in its entirety.

The recommended action pertains to 18 speed zones, or road locations, or portions of the road, defined by cross streets and/or the incorporated jurisdictional boundaries, within the boundary of Fresno County. Fifteen new speed zones were studied for an established speed limit and are proposed for adoption into the Ordinance. One existing speed zone was studied, will be separated into two existing speed zones, and will be removed from the Ordinance. The first of these two existing speed zones will have a speed limit that will decrease and is proposed for adoption into the Ordinance. The second of these two existing speed zones will have a speed limit that will remain unchanged and is proposed for adoption into the Ordinance. The Vicinity Maps display locations that are either a new speed zone, or a speed zone that was separated and removed, or a speed zone with a speed limit decrease, or a speed zone with a speed limit unchanged. The speed limits are intended to improve traffic safety and service to be consistent with existing conditions. This item pertains to speed zones in Districts 1 and 5.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

If the recommended action is not approved by your Board, the Speed Limits chapter of the Fresno County Ordinance Code will remain unchanged.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no Net County Cost associated with the recommended action. The estimated cost to install or replace speed limit signs is \$2,050 for materials and \$2,355 for labor and equipment for a total estimated cost of \$4,405. Sufficient appropriations and estimated revenues are included in the Department of Public Works and Planning - Roads Org 4510 FY 2021-22 Adopted Budget.

DISCUSSION:

On January 18, 2022, your Board conducted the first hearing to amend Sections 11.24.050 through 11.24.080 of Chapter 11.24 - Speed Limits of the Fresno County Ordinance Code, related to 18 speed zones.

The purpose of a speed limit is to regulate traffic so that reasonable driving speeds are maintained. National and State guidelines recommend speed limits be set so that the fifteenth percentile of the fastest motorists are subject to a citation with the burden to prove their driving was safe at the time of the citation. Arbitrarily low and restrictive limits set by local authorities on roads classified as County roads are defined in the California Vehicle Code (CVC), Section 40802 as speed traps, and are not enforceable by radar.

Section 22349 of the Speed Law chapter of the CVC states that the maximum speed limit of a two-lane undivided highway is 55 miles per hour (MPH); therefore, it is not included in the Speed Limits Ordinance.

Sections 22357 and 22358 of the CVC allow a local authority to determine, upon the basis of an Engineering and Traffic Survey (E&TS), a prima facie speed limit upon any street, other than a State highway, to facilitate the orderly movement of traffic that is reasonable and safe.

An E&TS is required as the basis for local authorities to establish speed limits higher or lower than those prescribed in the CVC. The E&TS includes radar measurements of operating speeds, analysis of accident records, and field reviews to inventory of road conditions and roadside conditions not readily apparent to drivers. The appropriate speed limit is recommended based upon analysis of the acquired data and actual road and traffic conditions. According to the CVC, only those prima facie speed limits based on an E&TS are enforceable by radar.

The public, other agencies or County staff initiate requests for changes to existing speed limits, which require an amendment to the Fresno County Ordinance Code, Sections 11.24.020 through 11.24.100 of Chapter 11.24 - Speed Limits.

Department staff proposed changes to the Speed Limits chapter of the Ordinance Code relating to 18 speed zones. The changes are summarized into the following three categories: (1) new speed zone, (2) separated and removed speed zone, (3) speed limit decrease, and (4) speed limit unchanged.

(1) New speed zone.

These zones are proposed for adoption into the Ordinance with a recently established speed limit, supported by the E&TS:

1. Armstrong Avenue from 1/2 mile south of Butler Avenue to Butler Avenue except that portion within the boundaries of the City of Fresno, will be 40 MPH. (District 5)
2. Armstrong Avenue from Appaloosa Avenue (southern intersection) to 3/4 miles north of Silaxo Road, will be 45 MPH. (District 5)
3. Armstrong Avenue from Butler Avenue to Kings Canyon Road except that portion within the boundaries of the City of Fresno, will be 40 MPH. (District 5)
4. Armstrong Avenue from Copper Avenue to Appaloosa Avenue (southern intersection), will be 50 MPH. (District 5)
5. Bretz Road from State Route 168 to Black Oak Way, will be 40 MPH. (District 5)
6. Fowler Avenue from Copper Avenue to Appaloosa Avenue, will be 35 MPH. (District 5)
7. Garfield Avenue from Barstow Avenue to Bullard Avenue except that portion within the boundaries of the City of Fresno, will be 45 MPH. (District 1)
8. Garfield Avenue from Shaw Avenue to Barstow Avenue except that portion within the boundaries of the City of Fresno, will be 45 MPH. (District 1)
9. Grantland Avenue from 1/2 mile south of Ashlan Avenue to Ashlan Avenue except that portion within the boundaries of the City of Fresno, will be 50 MPH. (District 1)
10. Grantland Avenue from 1/2 mile south of Shaw Avenue to Shaw Avenue except that portion within the boundaries of the City of Fresno, will be 50 MPH. (District 1)
11. Grantland Avenue from Shields Avenue to 1/2 mile north of Shields Avenue except that portion within the boundaries of the City of Fresno, will be 50 MPH. (District 1)
12. Locan Avenue from Clinton Avenue to Shields Avenue except that portion within the boundaries of the City of Fresno, will be 45 MPH. (District 5)

13. Olive Avenue from 1/2 mile west of Fowler Avenue to Fowler Avenue, will be 45 MPH. (District 5)
14. Olive Avenue from Clovis Avenue to 1/2 mile east of Clovis Avenue except that portion within the boundaries of the City of Fresno, will be 40 MPH. (District 5)
15. Olive Avenue from Fowler Avenue to Armstrong Avenue except that portion within the boundaries of the City of Fresno, will be 45 MPH. (District 5)

(2) Separated and removed speed zone.

This existing zone was reevaluated by the E&TS, and will be separated into two existing zones, and will be removed from the Ordinance:

1. Belmont Avenue from Marks Avenue to Blythe Avenue, 50 MPH. (District 1)

(3) Speed limit decrease.

This existing zone is the result of the reevaluation by the E&TS of the separated and removed existing zone (above) and is the first of the two existing zones due to the separation. This zone is proposed for adoption into the Ordinance with a speed limit decrease and a revised description due to a length decrease:

1. Belmont Avenue from Valentine Avenue to Marks Avenue except that portion within the boundaries of the City of Fresno, will decrease from 50 to 45 MPH. (District 1)

(4) Speed limit unchanged.

This existing zone is the result of the reevaluation by the E&TS of the separated and removed existing zone (above) and is the second of the two existing zones due to the separation. This zone is proposed for adoption into the Ordinance with a speed limit that will remain unchanged and a revised description due to a length decrease:

1. Belmont Avenue from Blythe Avenue to Valentine Avenue, 50 MPH. (District 1)

A notice that the Fresno County Speed Limits Ordinance is proposed for change was published on January 21, 2022 in the Fresno Business Journal. With your Board's approval, the Ordinance amendment will take effect 30 days after it is adopted and signs, where required, will be installed or replaced shortly thereafter.

OTHER REVIEWING AGENCIES:

The California Highway Patrol (CHP) provides traffic enforcement on Fresno County roads. The CHP was notified on December 3, 2021 for review of the proposed Ordinance amendment. Incorporated cities in Fresno County have jurisdiction of the roads within their boundaries. A road location that has joint jurisdiction between the County and a City is a boundary line street, and is known as a shared-jurisdiction location. The City of Fresno was notified on December 8, 2021 for review of the traffic studies involving the speed zones in the shared-jurisdiction locations within the City of Fresno. None of the notified agencies have objected to the changes.

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

BAI #5, January 18, 2022

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

Vicinity Maps
Speed Zone Ordinance

CAO ANALYST:

Ron Alexander