



City of Huntington Beach

File #: 23-342

MEETING DATE: 5/2/2023

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

SUBMITTED TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

SUBMITTED BY: Al Zelinka, City Manager

VIA: Chau Vu, Acting Director of Public Works

PREPARED BY: Darren Sam, Senior Traffic Engineer

Subject:

Adopt Ordinance No. 4286 amending Huntington Beach Municipal Code Chapter 10.12 relating to speed limits

Approved for Introduction on 4/4/2023 - Vote: 7-0

Statement of Issue:

The California Vehicle Code requires periodic review and updating of posted speed limits on certain streets within the City to enable the Police Department to continue to use speed-measuring devices for enforcement. The recommended action establishes updated speed limits on 78 street segments. This includes retaining current posted speed limits on 70 street segments and posting speed limit reduction on eight street segments.

Financial Impact:

Funding for the implementation of the recommended speed limits is included in the FY 2022-23 Public Works Department operating budget.

Recommended Action:

Adopt Ordinance No. 4286 "An Ordinance of the City of Huntington Beach Amending Chapter 10.12.080 of the Huntington Beach Municipal Code Relating to Speed Limits."

Alternative Action(s):

Do not adopt Ordinance, and direct staff accordingly. If the proposed Ordinance is not adopted, the posted speed limit on the 78 street segments will not be enforceable using speed-measuring devices.

Analysis:

City staff has performed the required elements used to establish posted speed limits according to procedures adopted by the State of California, often referred to as an Engineering and Traffic Survey. All posted speed limits by local jurisdictions are required to conform to State Laws as enumerated in the California Vehicle Code and procedures adopted by the State in order to gain legal support for

enforcement of the posted speed limit. The evaluated elements used in the Engineering and Traffic Survey are:

- 1) Sample existing travel speeds at representative locations within the roadway segment.
- 2) Review accident history.
- 3) Review the street segment to identify roadway characteristics and conditions that may not be readily apparent to motorists.

Travel speed information is collected to establish a baseline speed limit for a roadway segment. Per California Standards for establishing speed limits, the posted speed limit shall be established at the nearest five mile per hour (5 mph) increment of the 85th percentile speed of free-flowing traffic except as shown in the options below:

1. The posted speed may be reduced by 5 mph from the nearest 5 mph increment of the 85th percentile speed of free flowing traffic. Written documentation is required of the conditions and justification for the lower speed limit.
2. For cases in which the nearest 5 mph increment of the 85th percentile would require 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.

Additionally, a recent provision in the California Vehicle code allows a local authority to retain the currently adopted speed limit or restore the immediately prior adopted speed limit after completing an Engineering and Traffic Survey. The local authority must find that after completing the Engineering and Traffic Survey the speed limit based on the survey results is still more than reasonable or safe.

Case law has shown that the courts will not support posted speed limits that appear to be arbitrary and without demonstrated technical support. To ensure consistency in establishing speed limits, the State has established specific procedures, requirements and standards for posting speed limits to be enforceable by speed-measuring devices.

Seventy-eight (78) street segments in the city were due for reevaluation. The segments are shown on the map in Attachment 3. Attachment 4 is a summary table listing the current, recommended, and 85th percentile speeds of the evaluated street segments. Based on the Engineering and Traffic Survey, 70 street segment posted speed limits are recommended to remain unchanged and eight (8) reduced by 5 mph from the current speed limit posting. The streets recommended for the 5 mph speed limit reduction are on Attachment 5. Attachment 5 contain the survey data sheets of the evaluation.

Staff identified roadway characteristics that may not be readily apparent to motorists in reducing the eight street segments by 5 mph and an additional 44 segments in order to apply the new law allowing existing speed limits to be retained if such conditions exist. Due to these conditions, posting near the 85th percentile speed may not be reasonable and prudent to facilitate the orderly flow of traffic and lower speed limits are recommended. Documentation was provided when the conditions and justification for the lower speed limit was applied and is included in Attachment 7.

Six street segments are shared roadways within the jurisdictions of Huntington Beach and either the City of Westminster or City of Fountain Valley and are on Attachment 6. For the shared street segments the practice is to adopt and post the same speed limit on the shared street segment for consistency and Vehicle Code compliance. City staff coordinates with staff from the other cities for the speed limit postings of the shared segments.

Environmental Status:

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5), administrative activities of governments that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment do not constitute a project.

Strategic Plan Goal:

Financial Sustainability, Public Safety or Other

Attachment(s):

1. Ordinance 4286, "An Ordinance of the City of Huntington Beach Amending Chapter 10.12.080 of the Huntington Beach Municipal Code Relating to Speed Limits"
2. Legislative Draft of Municipal Code Chapter 10.12.080
3. Map
4. Summary Table
5. Speed Limit Reduction Streets
6. Shared Streets
7. Survey Sheets
8. PowerPoint
9. 4/4 Supplemental Communication