

City of Sacramento

Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title: Vision Zero Implementation: Reducing School Zone Speed Limits
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Title:
Vision Zero Implementation: Reducing School Zone Speed Limits

File ID: 2019-00707

Location: Citywide

Recommendation:

Adopt a Resolution: 1) approving the reduction of speed limits on various streets within 500 feet of qualified schools; and 2) establishing a 15 miles per hour (mph) school zone speed limit for future qualified street segments.

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Presenter: None

Attachments:

- 1-Description/Analysis
- 2-Resolution
- 3-Exhibit A (Summary Table of Speed Limit Recommendations)
- 4-Exhibit B (Assembly Bill No. 321 and California Vehicle Code Sections 22358.4 as amended)

Description/Analysis

Issue Detail: Recent reports (California Office of Traffic Safety 2016 Collision Rankings) found that the City of Sacramento has the highest rate of traffic-related fatalities of any city in California. The Vision Zero Action Plan identified high speeds as one of the major causes of traffic-related injuries and fatalities. Implementation of the Vision Zero Action Plan includes a variety of actions, including addressing speeds through enforcement and traffic improvements.

California Vehicle Code (CVC) 22358.4b(1) grants authority to local jurisdictions to establish a 15 miles per hour (mph) speed zone around qualified schools when children are present. The City of Sacramento was the worst city in California for speed related traffic fatalities and for collisions in which a pedestrian under the age of 15 was killed or severely injured in 2016. The ability to establish 15 mph speed zones can help address community and parent concerns about vehicle speeds around schools, particularly during the busy pickup and drop-off times and to enhance the safety of children walking and biking to school. If a vehicle is in a collision with a child, a slower speed collision will generally result in a less severe injury or the avoidance of death. Department of Public Works staff have developed an approach to establish 15 mph school zone speed limits in the vicinity of 115 schools throughout the city that meet the following requirements outlined in the California Vehicle Code:

- Located on a residential street
- Maximum posted speed limit of 30 mph or less
- Maximum of two through vehicle travel lanes

The establishment of 15 mph school zone speed limits in the vicinity of all qualified schools represents an opportunity to consistently apply reduced speed zones, improving safety conditions for students biking, walking, taking transit and getting rides to school. Additionally, this provides the opportunity to educate students, parents and community members about the impacts of driving at unsafe speeds, especially in school zones.

Policy Considerations: The recommended actions are consistent with the Vision Zero Action Plan adopted by City Council on August 14, 2018. Additionally, the recommendation supports the Sacramento 2035 General Plan policies, including:

M 1.2.1 Multimodal Choices. The City shall develop an integrated, multimodal transportation system that improves the attractiveness of walking, bicycling, and riding transit over time to increase travel choices and aid in achieving a more balanced transportation system and reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

M 1.2.4 Multimodal Access. The City shall facilitate the provision of multimodal access to activity centers such as commercial centers and corridors, employment centers, transit stops/stations, airports, schools, parks, recreation areas, medical centers, and tourist attractions.

M 1.3.4 Barrier Removal for Accessibility. The City shall remove barriers, where feasible, to allow people of all abilities to move freely and efficiently throughout the city. (MPSP/SO)

M 2.1.6 Pedestrian Awareness Education. The City shall continue pedestrian safety outreach to the public through the City's website and develop partnerships with local organizations to develop educational materials and programs that promote pedestrian awareness. (IGC/PI)

M 4.2.1 Accommodate All Users. The City shall ensure that all new roadway projects and any reconstruction projects designate sufficient travel space for all users including bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, and motorists except where pedestrians and bicyclists are prohibited by law from using a given facility. (MPSP)

M 4.2.2 Pedestrian and Bicycle-Friendly Streets. In areas with high levels of pedestrian activity (e.g., employment centers, residential areas, mixed-use areas, schools), the City shall ensure that all street projects support pedestrian and bicycle travel. Improvements may include narrow lanes, target speeds less than 35 miles per hour, sidewalk widths consistent with the Pedestrian Master Plan, street trees, high-visibility pedestrian crossings, and bikeways (e.g. Class II and Class III bike lanes, bicycle boulevards, separated bicycle lanes and/or parallel multiuse pathways). (MPSP)

M4.3.2 Traffic Calming Measures. Consistent with the Roadway Network and Street Typology policies in this General Plan and Goal M 4.3, the City shall use traffic calming measures to reduce vehicle speeds and volumes while also encouraging walking and bicycling.

Economic Impacts: None

Environmental Considerations:

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): The Community Development Department's Environmental Planning Services Manager has reviewed the proposed action and determined that this project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Class 1, Section 15301(c) of the CEQA Guidelines. Projects exempted under Class 1, Section 15301(c), consist of the operation, repair, or minor alteration of existing highways, streets, sidewalks, gutters, bicycle and pedestrian trails, and similar facilities involving negligible or no expansion of use.

Sustainability: The recommended actions supports the Climate Action Plan goal to create a connected multi-modal transportation network that increases the use of sustainable modes of transportation (e.g., walking, biking, transit) and reduces dependence on automobiles.

Rationale for Recommendation: The establishment of 15 mph on eligible school area streets

addresses speed reduction throughout the City which represents the City's commitment to Vision Zero and Traffic Safety. One of the biggest drivers for traffic related fatalities and serious injuries is speeding, with pedestrians, bicyclists and children are among the most vulnerable road users. These recommendations are consistent with the law set in place by Assembly Bill 321 and consistent with the guidance of the California Vehicle Code.

Financial Considerations: Establishment of the 15 mph school zone speed limit on all qualified school area streets will require the manufacturing and installation of 368 School Zone Speed limit signs to be installed at 124 locations. The work will be completed by the Department of Public Works, Traffic Signs and Markings Section.

The estimated cost to establish the school zone speed limits on all qualified school area streets is \$63,000. There is sufficient funding within the Vision Zero Safety Program (S15184100) to cover these costs and complete the remaining program requirements.

Background: On January 1, 2008, California Assembly Bill (AB) 321 was enacted allowing local jurisdictions - through an ordinance or resolution - to extend the 25 mph prima facie speed limit in school zones from 500 feet to 1,000 feet from the school grounds and to reduce the speed limit to 15 or 20 mph up to 500 feet from the school grounds, under certain conditions. One of the intentions of the new law was to enhance the safety of children walking and bicycling to school. If a vehicle is in a collision with a child, a slower speed will generally result in a less severe injury or the avoidance of a death.

California Vehicle Code (CVC) Section 22358.4 addresses the decrease of local speed limits near schools. According to CVC Section 22358.4, a local authority may determine upon the basis of an engineering and traffic survey that that the prima facie speed limit of 25 mph is more than is reasonable or safe. The local authority may by ordinance or resolution declare a prima facie speed limit of 20 or 15 mph within 500 feet from, or passing, school grounds that are not separated from the roadway with a fence, gate, or other physical barrier while the grounds are in use by children and the road is posted with a school speed zone sign.

According to CVC Section 22358.4, when determining the need to lower the prima facie speed limit, the local authority shall take the provisions of CVC Section 627 into consideration. These provisions require consideration of prevailing traffic speeds, surrounding residential density, and pedestrian and bicyclist safety.

California's new reduced or extended school zone speed limits can be applicable on streets that meet the following conditions:

- 1) Within a residential district that has a posted speed limit no greater than 30 mph, and
- 2) No more than a total of two through lanes of traffic.

The Department of Public Works staff identified 225 street segments that qualify for reduced speed limits. Surveys were conducted between January and April 2019 to assess the speed and volume of each segment of roadway consistent with the provisions of CVC Section 627. Exhibit A lists the schools and street segments.

In 1999 the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration published a “Literature Review on Vehicle Travel Speeds and Pedestrian Injuries.” According to this study, fatality and serious injury rates increase substantially when travel speeds rise. For example, for children ages 14 or less, 20.2 percent suffer fatal or serious injuries when struck by a vehicle traveling 1-20 mph, while 32.8 percent are killed or seriously injured when hit by a vehicle traveling 21-25 mph.

Establishment of 15 mph reduced speed zones, instead of 20 mph reduced speed zones, is recommended due to the potential for fewer severe injury or fatal collisions with the use of a lower speed limit, as shown in the previously discussed research.

Based on the background information presented herein, staff recommends that the City Council adopt a Resolution approving the reduction of speed limits in the school zones as listed in Exhibit A.