

**CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Date: September 19, 2022
Reviewed by: NA

SUBJECT: First Reading of Ordinance No. 2022-06 to Amend Albany Municipal Code Section 9-1.3 to Reduce Speed Limit on Solano Avenue

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SUMMARY

The action before the City Council is the first reading of Ordinance No. 2022-06, amending Section 9-1.3 of the Municipal Code to reduce the speed limit along the Solano Avenue commercial district from 25 miles per hour to 20 miles per hour.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Council introduce and waive first reading of Ordinance No. 2022-06 to amend Albany Municipal Code Section 9-1.3 to establish a 20 miles per hour speed limit on Solano Avenue between Madison Street and the eastern city limits.

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

That the Council adopt an ordinance establishing a 20 miles per hour speed limit for Solano Avenue.

BACKGROUND

Assembly Bill 43 (AB 43) was signed into law on October 8, 2021, amending various sections of California Vehicle Code related to speed limits and traffic safety.

At the October 28, 2021 Transportation Commission meeting, the Commission received a presentation on changes relevant for the City of Albany and asked staff to return with a plan on how to proceed with the implementation of reduced speed limits on Solano Avenue.

At the February 24, 2022 Transportation Commission meeting, the Commission discussed the potential for a lowered speed limit on Solano Avenue, reviewed traffic survey data, and recommended the proposal be brought to the City Council in conjunction with proposed revisions to the parklet program.

DISCUSSION

Higher vehicle speeds increase a driver's reaction time, braking distance, and risk of fatality in a collision with a pedestrian.

Solano Avenue is a commercial area with both high pedestrian and vehicle volumes. Collisions on Solano Avenue accounted for over 30% of severe and fatal collisions in Albany as well as over 30% of injury collisions involving a pedestrian, second only to San Pablo Avenue.

The California Vehicle Code regulates the setting of speed limits on city streets. Changes to the California Vehicle Code by AB 43 included allowing a 20 miles per hour (mph) speed limit in “business activity districts” if the current speed limit is 25 mph. These are defined in Vehicle Code section 22358.9 as streets with no more than 4 lanes and a maximum posted 25 miles per hour prima facie speed limit immediately prior to and after the business activity district, if establishing a 20 miles per hours speed limit, and at least 3 of the following:

- At least 50% of property along the street is retail or dining, opening to sidewalks
- On-street parking
- Stop signs and lights no more than 600 ft apart
- Crosswalks with no signal or stop sign

Based on staff analysis, Solano Avenue between Madison Street and Tulare Avenue meets 3 of the 4 criteria which include at least 50% of property along the street is retail or dining, opening to sidewalks; on-street parking; and crosswalks with no signal or stop sign. Therefore, it qualifies as a business activity district, which would allow the City to lower the speed limit from 25 mph to 20.

Speed limit signs will need to be posted to advise drivers of the speed limit and make the new limit enforceable. Posting 20 mph speed signs is not expected to significantly change motorist behavior as a stand-alone measure. In conjunction with the increased street activity associated with the outdoor dining installations and future striping and physical changes to the roadway identified in the Solano Complete Streets Study, lowering the speed limit on Solano Avenue will reinforce slower driving speeds that improve safety of all roadway users in the Solano Avenue business corridor.

SUSTAINABILITY/SOCIAL EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

SUSTAINABILITY: Improving roadway safety for vulnerable users helps achieve active transportation goals and reduction in single-use vehicle emissions.

SOCIAL EQUITY: Reduced vehicle speeds on Solano Avenue would provide safety benefits for vulnerable roadway users and improve access for those without motor vehicles.

CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE

Goal 1 Objective 3 of the Strategic Plan is to promote active transportation and safety. The primary benefit for the 20 mph reduced speed limit is to improve safety by reducing the risk of severe injury for cyclists and pedestrians in a collision with a motor vehicle.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Installation of 8-9 speed limit signs will cost approximately \$5,000 in equipment and labor.

Attachments

1. Ordinance No. 2022-06