



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: PUBLIC WORKS

File #: 24-316

Board Meeting Date: 5/7/2024

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Ann M. Stillman, Director of Public Works

Subject: Amendment to County of San Mateo Ordinance Code to Include 15 and 20 Miles Per Hour Speed Limits

RECOMMENDATION:

Introduction of an ordinance amending Section 7.04.010 of Chapter 7.04 of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code for Prima Facie Speed Limits to include 15 and 20 miles per hour speed limits and waive the reading of the ordinance in its entirety.

BACKGROUND:

San Mateo County Ordinance Code Section 7.04.010 Prima Facie Speed Limits include vehicle speed limits of 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55 or 60 miles per hour (mph).

The San Mateo County Office of Education's Safe Routes to School Program (Program) focuses on encouraging and enabling students to walk and bicycle to school by implementing projects and activities that improve their health, well-being, and safety. In June 2022, the Program developed the San Mateo County Safe Routes to School strategy which found that motor vehicle speeds are the primary determining factor in the safety of all roadway users, especially for students walking. It further identified the establishment of Slow Speed School Zones as a high-priority recommendation to improve safety near schools.

The California Vehicle Code (CVC) governs how speed limits are established and grants local jurisdictions the authority to establish speed limits. CVC Section 22358.4 allows local jurisdictions to determine and declare a prima facie speed limit of 15 mph and 20 mph, whichever is justified as the appropriate speed limit based on an Engineering and Traffic Survey (E&TS).

The CVC also allows speed limits to be implemented in the following manner near schools:

- 15 mph school zones contiguous to the school and within 500 feet of a school boundary; and
- 25 mph school zones between 500 feet and 1000 feet from a school boundary

Furthermore, the CVC defines the criteria that must be satisfied for these speed limits to be implemented near schools:

1. No more than two through traffic lanes
2. A posted speed limit of 30 mph or lower
3. Within a residence district (as defined by the CVC); and
4. Contiguous to a school

Pursuant to the CVC sections cited above, implementation of new speed limits requires a combination of an E&TS, adoption of an ordinance or resolution by this Board, and installation of appropriate signage. The reduced speed limits are in effect while children are present.

DISCUSSION:

The Department of Public Works (Department) recommends amending Chapter 7.04.010 of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code for Prima Facie Speed Limits to include 15 and 20 miles per hour.

If the ordinance is amended, the Department would utilize a consultant to conduct a School Zone Study (Study) in the unincorporated areas of the County. The consultant's tasks would include developing a plan to identify qualified school zones in these areas, determine criteria for prioritizing implementation of any proposed changes, and deliver a final Study report. Staff anticipates that the Study will take 9 to 12 months to complete.

The consultant will evaluate each school in the unincorporated area of the County and will review existing studies and plans such as the County's Active Transportation Plan and Safe Routes to School Reports. The consultant will determine whether County and/or neighboring cities' streets are eligible for revised speed limits and will assess efforts needed by the County to coordinate with neighboring agencies, schools, and school districts.

Future implementation of any 15 or 20 mph speed limits on County maintained roads would require additional action by the Board; however, amending the Ordinance is a necessary preliminary step in this process.

County Attorney has reviewed and approved the amended Ordinance as to form.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Introduction and eventual adoption of the Ordinance has no fiscal impact. Approximately \$400,000 will be needed for the Study, and the Department has identified **Measure A** Funds (Half Cent Transportation) as an appropriate funding source for this purpose.

There is no impact to the General Fund.