

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

Agenda Date: 12/01/08
Reviewed by: BP

SUBJECT: First Reading of Ordinance No. 08-012 amending Section 9-1.4 (b) and (c) of the Municipal Code to decrease the speed limit on Cleveland Avenue and Eastshore Frontage Road and add “(a.k.a. Eastshore Highway)” after Eastshore Frontage Road”

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TRAFFIC AND SAFETY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Approve Ordinance No. 08-012 for First Reading to amend the Albany Municipal Code, Section 9-1.4 (b) and (c) to: 1) Decrease the speed limit on Cleveland Avenue and Eastshore Frontage Road from 35 mph to 25 mph; and 2) add (a.k.a. Eastshore Highway) following Eastshore Frontage Road.

BACKGROUND

The California Vehicle Code (CVC), Section 40802(a) requires that every jurisdiction conduct an engineering and traffic survey every five years with the purpose of establishing and enforcing speed limits for selected streets within the jurisdiction.

An Engineering and Traffic Survey has an established methodology that must be followed in order for the study to be valid. These processes are spelled out in the 2006 CVC, Division 11, Chapter 7 and in the 2006 California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). The Engineering Traffic Survey must consider the prevailing speeds, collision records, pedestrian and bicycle activity, and roadway traffic and conditions not readily apparent to the driver. In addition, a field review must be conducted, which in combination with the statistical data and collision history of a particular roadway segment is used to determine a safe and reasonable speed limit.

Prevailing Speeds

The statistical factors used to analyze the data collected include information on the 85th, 50th, and 15th Percentile Speed, the 10-mph Pace, and the Percent of Vehicles in Pace Speed. The definition for each of these is attached. Of note is the 85th Percentile, which is defined as “that speed at or below which 85 percent of the traffic is moving.”

Collision History

Collision information available over the past four years is collected to determine the “collision rate” for each roadway segment being evaluated. For this study, collisions from January 1, 2002 to December 31, 2005 were used. Collision information is obtained from the California Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS). The collision rate is estimated using the total number of collisions over the 4-year period being analyzed, and the Average Daily Traffic on the roadway segment. The collision rate is the total number of collisions per million miles traveled on a particular roadway segment. Expected collision rates (ECR) are based on comparisons of each collision rate with the data listed in the 2004 Collision Data on California State Highways, which lists those rates by roadway type (2 lanes, four lanes undivided, 4 lanes divided).

DISCUSSION

The Engineering and Traffic Survey Volume for Speed Limits for the City of Albany was completed by Kimley Horn and Associates in February 2008. Two recommendations stemmed from this study:

- Downgrading the speed limit on Cleveland Avenue from 35 mph to 25 mph from the Contra Costa County limit line southerly to a point nine hundred feet (900’) northerly of the northerly line of Washington Avenue.
- Downgrading the speed limit on Eastshore Highway from 35 mph to 25 mph.

The reasons for these recommendations are described below for each roadway:

Cleveland Avenue

Exhibit B shows the survey results and a description of the physical characteristics of Cleveland Avenue. The 85th Percentile speed is 31.3 mph, which suggests 30 mph. However, while the Expected Collision Rate for this roadway segment is 1.67, the data shows that the collision rate for Cleveland Avenue is 5.614 - which is much higher than expected. For this reason, the traffic engineer recommends lowering the speed limit to 25 mph on this roadway. The speed limit in the City of Richmond segment of this roadway is 30 mph. Nonetheless, a higher than normal accident rate exists along the Albany segment.

Eastshore Frontage Road

Exhibit C shows the survey results and a description of the physical characteristics of Eastshore Frontage Road. The 85th Percentile is 30.8, which suggests a speed of 30 mph, the data shows that the 10 mph pace measure ranges from 20 to 29 mph. Because the speed limit should typically fall within this range, the study recommends downgrading the 85th percentile speed 5 mph to 25 mph. The speed limit for this segment of roadway in the City of Berkeley is also 25 mph.

The Albany Police Department and the Traffic and Safety Commission support the implementation of these changes as recommended in the Engineering and Traffic Survey Study for Speed Limits. Because these speed limits are explicitly stated in the Albany Municipal Code, an amendment to the Code is necessary. The language change is shown below and is reflected in the Ordinance amendment:

Section 9-1.4 Speed Limits on Frontage Roads

- b. *Cleveland Avenue.* The prima facie speed limit on Cleveland Avenue from the Contra Costa County line southerly to a point nine hundred (900') feet northerly of the northerly line of Washington Avenue, is hereby fixed at twenty-five (25) miles per hour.
- c. *Eastshore Frontage Road (a.k.a., Eastshore Highway).* The prima facie speed limit on the Eastshore Frontage Road from the Berkeley City limits to the end of the Eastshore Frontage Road, is hereby fixed at twenty-five (25) miles per hour.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

Driving at lower speeds reduces emissions of particle matter and other pollutants into the environment. In addition, lower speeds are safer for pedestrians and bicyclists and for other vehicles as well. The goal of reducing the speed on Cleveland Avenue is to reduce the accident rate on this roadway. The goal of reducing the speed on Eastshore Highway is to follow the natural tendency of traffic speed on this roadway and to create a safer environment for pedestrians and bicyclists.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

With the proposed change, the Police Department can enforce the new speed limit on these roadway segments and issue citations for violators. The cost of signage is negligible.

Attachments:

Ordinance No. 08-012

Exhibit A – Section 9-1.4 of the Albany Municipal Code

Exhibit B – Cleveland Avenue excerpt from Engineering and Traffic Survey - 2008

Exhibit C – Eastshore Highway excerpt from Engineering and Traffic Survey - 2008

Definitions (excerpt from Traffic Survey)