

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: MICHAEL VANMIDDE, ASSOCIATE TRAFFIC ENGINEER
TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
SUBJECT: SPEED LIMITS ON SONOMA AVENUE, THOMAS LAKE HARRIS
DRIVE, AND WEST STEELE LANE

AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Transportation and Public Works Department that the Council, by resolution, establish a speed limit of 25 miles per hour on Sonoma Avenue from South A Street to Santa Rosa Avenue, establish a speed limit of 30 miles per hour on Thomas Lake Harris Drive from Fountaingrove Parkway (west) to Fountaingrove Parkway (east), and establish a speed limit of 30 miles per hour on West Steele Lane from Coffey Lane to Guerneville Road.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This item is establishing a 25 miles per hour speed limit on Sonoma Avenue from South A Street to Santa Rosa Avenue, raising the speed limit from 25 miles per hour to 30 miles per hour on Thomas Lake Harris Drive from Fountaingrove Parkway (west) to Fountaingrove Parkway (east), and lowering the speed limit from 35 miles per hour to 30 miles per hour on West Steele Lane from Coffey Lane to Guerneville Road.

BACKGROUND

The basic intent of speed zoning is to influence drivers to operate at or near the same speed, thus reducing conflicts created by differentials in operating speeds. The California Vehicle Code reflects the viewpoint that speed zoning should be based on traffic conditions and natural driving behavior.

The Basic Speed Law states, "No person shall drive a vehicle upon a highway at a speed greater than is reasonable or prudent having due regard for weather, visibility, the traffic on, and the surface and width of, the highway, and in no event at a speed which endangers the safety of persons or property" (California Vehicle Code Section 22350). The law is founded on the belief that most motorists are able to modify their driving behavior properly, as long as they are aware of the conditions around them.

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California Vehicle Code Sections 22357 and 22358 permit local authorities to set intermediate speed limits between 25 miles per hour and 65 miles per hour on the basis of an engineering and traffic survey. These intermediate speed limits must be posted to clearly define the limits of the zone and the prima facie speed established.

Section 40802 of the California Vehicle Code permits the use of radar for speed enforcement where the speed limit is justified by an engineering and traffic survey.

An engineering and traffic survey is defined in California Vehicle Code Section 627 as “a survey of highway and traffic conditions in accordance with methods determined by the Department of Transportation for use by state and local authorities.” An engineering and traffic survey shall include consideration of prevailing speeds, as determined by traffic engineering measurements, accident records, as well as highway, traffic, and roadside conditions not readily apparent to a driver. Local authorities may also consider residential density and pedestrian and bicyclist safety when conducting an engineering and traffic survey.

The California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices provides the methodology for conducting an engineering and traffic survey. Speeds are established at the nearest 5-mile-per-hour increment of the 85th-percentile speed of free-flowing traffic, which is defined as that speed at or below which 85% of the traffic is moving. Other factors to be considered include collision history, roadway design speed, safe stopping distance, superelevation, shoulder conditions, profile conditions, intersection spacing and offsets, commercial driveway characteristics and pedestrian traffic in the roadway without sidewalks. The posted speed may be reduced by 5 miles per hour from the nearest 85th-percentile speed where engineering study indicates the need for a reduction in speed to match existing conditions with the traffic safety needs of the community.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

On October 3, 1989, the City Council, by Resolution 19640 established a speed limit of 35 mph on West Steele Lane between Coffey Lane and Guerneville Road.

ANALYSIS

Sonoma Avenue is classified as a minor arterial street on the latest Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Functional Classification System map. Thomas Lake Harris Drive is classified as a local street on the latest Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Functional Classification System Map. West Steele Lane is classified as a major collector street on the latest Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Functional Classification System map. As such, when speed limits are established on these streets with an engineering and traffic survey, radar speed enforcement can be used.

The following gives a summary of the engineering and traffic survey results:

Sonoma Avenue between South A Street and Santa Rosa Avenue

Existing Speed Limit:	Not Posted
85th-percentile speed:	29 mph
50th-percentile speed:	26 mph
Number of lanes:	2 travel lanes
Daily traffic volume:	772 vehicles per day
Area Type:	Residential, Commercial
Special Circumstances:	Sonoma Avenue is located in a residence district as defined in Section 515 of the California Vehicle Code. There are residential driveways which require vehicles to back into the segment. The west end of the segment is in a school zone.
Proposed Speed Limit:	25 mph
Comments:	Sonoma Avenue is a two-lane residential. There has not previously been a radar enforceable speed limit on this segment. The speed limit was reduced from the nearest 5 mph increment of the 85th percentile speed in accordance with California Vehicle Code Section 627, and Section 2B.13 of the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

Thomas Lake Harris Drive from Fountaingrove Parkway (west) and Fountaingrove Parkway (east)

Existing Speed Limit:	25 mph
85th-percentile speed:	33 mph
50th-percentile speed:	29 mph
Number of lanes:	2 travel lanes
Daily traffic volume:	1,995 vehicles per day
Area Type:	Residential
Special Circumstances:	Thomas Lake Harris Drive has intersecting streets with limited sight distance due to geometric constraints. Parsons Drive is located in a residence district as defined in Section 515 of the California Vehicle Code. There are residential driveways which require vehicles to back into the segment.
Proposed Speed Limit:	30 mph
Comments:	The previously posted speed limit was not supported by an engineering and traffic survey and was not radar enforceable. The speed limit was reduced from the nearest 5 mph increment of the 85th percentile speed in accordance with California Vehicle Code Section 627, and Section 2B.13 of the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

West Steele Lane between Coffey Lane and Guerneville Road

Existing Speed Limit:	35 mph
85th-percentile speed:	37 mph
50th-percentile speed:	32 mph
Number of lanes:	2 travel lanes
Daily traffic volume:	9,906 vehicles per day
Area Type:	Commercial, Residential
Special Circumstances:	West Steele Lane is located in a residence district as defined in section 515 of the California Vehicle Code.
Proposed Speed Limit:	30 mph
Comments:	West Steele Lane is a two-lane collector street. The collision rate is significantly higher than the collision rate for similar streets in Santa Rosa. The speed limit was reduced from the nearest 5 mph increment of the 85th percentile speed in accordance with California Vehicle Code Section 627, and Section 2B.13 of the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

FISCAL IMPACT

Approval of this action does not have a fiscal impact on the General Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The proposed action is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) and 15378 in that there is no possibility that the implementation of this action may have significant effects on the environment, and that no further environmental review is required.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable.

NOTIFICATION

Not applicable.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Vicinity Maps
- Resolution

CONTACT

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