

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY BOARD
STAFF REPORT
July 18, 2024

SUBJECT

Assembly Bill 43 (AB 43) and Assembly Bill 1938 (AB 1938) - Speed Limits

ISSUE

Staff will present information on speed limit modifications.

STAFF PRESENTER

Rob Sprinkle, Deputy Director Traffic Engineering

RECOMMENDATION

This is for Board information.

BACKGROUND

AB 43 is an assembly bill that has gone into enactment as of July 1, 2024 and provides greater flexibility in establishing speed limits in California. AB 1938 is a bill that clarifies in further detail the intent of AB 43 and provides specific limits within the California Vehicle Code on how the rules of AB 43 can be implemented.

AB 43 states the following (summarized):

- Revise traffic survey procedures to require bicycle/pedestrian safety consideration and develop a survey guidance on this safety topic.
- Allow state and local agencies to post speed limits below 25 mph when supported by a traffic survey.
- Increase reduction allowance for posted speed limits to allow greater deviations from the 85th percentile speed by including criteria for a statewide definition of High Injury Networks (HIN), criteria for areas adjacent to land uses and types of roadways that have high concentrations of vulnerable road users.
- Add business activity district as an additional class of location eligible for a prima facie speed limit and include statewide definition to include urban villages, neighborhood downtowns, and other business-oriented locations.
- Revise requirements related to posting prima facie speed limits in school zones to allow speed limit as low as 15 mph without requiring a traffic survey.
- Allow for a traffic survey to retain the existing speed limit (or revert to one determined in a prior traffic survey) unless a registered engineer determines that significant design changes have been made to the roadway since completion of the last traffic survey with the specific intent of increasing the safe operating speed. It extends the maximum length of time an engineering and traffic survey may be used from 10 to 14 years.
- Consolidate and clarify statutory sections related to speed setting methodology.

AB 1938 does the following (summarized):

- Makes technical, clarifying changes to existing law (AB 43 provisions) on how speed limits are set. It clarifies the circumstances where and how much a local authority may lower the speed limit below that indicated by an Engineering and Traffic Survey (ETS).

- AB 1938 simply codifies the preexisting authority on setting speed limits and clarifies that the additional authority granted by AB 43 was meant to supplement, not supplant, that authority.
- AB 1938 clarifies the intent of AB 43 was to lower speed limits by not more than 12.4 miles per hour from what would have resulted from an ETS.

ANALYSIS

In June of 2023, Council approved speed limit modifications in the downtown business district as allowed by the provisions in the CA MUTCD and AB 43. Speed limits were reduced on 17 segments including First Street, Second Street, Fourth Street, Fifth Street, Sixth Street, Seventh Street, Beaver Street, B Street, D Street, Humboldt Street, Mendocino Avenue, Orchard Street, Wilson Street, and Santa Rosa Avenue. The speed limits reductions included reducing some speed limits from 25 mph to 20 mph and from 30 mph to 25 mph.

The Traffic Engineering Division has reviewed 82 segments outside of the downtown business district for speed limit reductions. The first group of segments being prepared for Council approval will focus on streets identified on the High Injury Network (HIN). These streets include but are not limited to sections of: Bennett Valley Road, Dutton Avenue, E Street, Guerneville Road, Marlow Road, Mendocino Avenue, Montgomery Drive, West Ninth Street, Occidental Road, Pacific Avenue, Petaluma Hill Road, Piner Road, Range Avenue, Santa Rosa Avenue, Sonoma Avenue, Stony Point Road, and West Third Street.

In each of these streets, Traffic Engineering will be proposing to Council that the posted speed limits will be reduced by 5 mph.

RECOMMENDATION

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