



# AGENDA REPORT

**Department:** Engineering & Public Works  
**Prepared by:** Stephen Manganiello, Director of Public Works/City Engineer  
**Meeting Date:** Tuesday, November 19, 2024  
**Approved by:** Benjamin A. Martinez, City Manager

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**SUBJECT:**

Introduction and First Reading of the Ordinance Establishing Speed Limits Based on Engineering and Traffic Surveys

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Introduce Ordinance by First Reading, entitled, "Ordinance of the City Council of the City of National City, California, Establishing Speed Limits on Portions of Sweetwater Road Based on Engineering and Traffic Surveys and Authorizing the Director of Public Works to Post Speed Limit Signs Consistent with the Recommendations of the Engineering and Traffic Surveys."

**BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE PRIOR ACTION:**

Not Applicable.

**EXPLANATION:**

Section 22357 of the State of California Vehicle Code (CVC) permits local authorities to establish speed limits greater than the prima facie speed limit of 25 miles per hour (mph) when, on the basis of an engineering and traffic survey (E&TS), the local authority determines that a speed greater than 25 mph would facilitate the orderly movement of vehicular traffic and would be reasonable and safe. Section 627 of the CVC and Section 2B.13 of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA-MUTCD) outline the following criteria to be considered as part of conducting an E&TS:

- 1) Prevailing speeds as determined by traffic engineering measurements.
- 2) Accident Records.
- 3) Highway, traffic, and roadside conditions not readily apparent to the driver.
- 4) Residential Density.
- 5) Safety of bicyclists and pedestrians, with increased consideration for vulnerable pedestrian groups including children, seniors, persons with disabilities, users of personal assistive mobility devices, and the unhoused.

The process begins with establishing speed zones to protect the public from the unreasonable behavior of reckless, unreliable, or otherwise dangerous drivers. Speed zones are also established to advise drivers of road conditions or hazards that may not be readily apparent to a reasonable driver. For that reason, a field review of related road/traffic variables is conducted which considers the analytical data and accident history of a particular roadway segment to determine a safe and reasonable speed limit. Next the criteria listed above in combination with other factors such as 85th percentile speed, pace, and incremental changes in speeds from one zone to the next, are analyzed using the methodologies established in the CVC and CA-MUTCD to recommend speed limits.

The CVC and CA-MUTCD recommend establishing speed limits at or near the 85th percentile speed, which is defined as the speed at or below which 85 percent of traffic is moving during free-flow conditions. Speed limits may, however, be established below the 85th percentile speed (within specified thresholds) if conditions are met for criteria 2) through 5) above. Speed limits established on this basis conform to the consensus of those who drive on the roadways as to what speed is reasonable and safe, and are not dependent on the judgment of one or a few individuals.

State Assembly Bills (AB) 43 and 1938, which went into effect on January 1, 2022 and January 1, 2023, respectively, provide local agencies greater flexibility in setting and reducing speed limits. For example, local agencies may establish a speed limit of 20 mph or 25 mph if criteria is met for defining a “business activity district”. The legislation required updates to the CVC and CA-MUTCD, the last of which was made available to the public in March 2023.

In 2022, the National City Engineering & Public Works Department authorized STC Traffic (through an “On-Call” Professional Engineering Services contract) to conduct new E&TS for all Arterial and Collector roadways identified in the National City General Plan Circulation Element. In 2023, STC Traffic completed the E&TS for 105 individual roadway segments in accordance with the procedures established by Section 2B.13 of the CA-MUTCD and consistent with all applicable provisions of the CVC. On December 5, 2023, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 2023-2025 establishing speed limits for all 105 individual roadway segments based on the E&TS.

Based on recent traffic collisions and requests received from the public regarding speeding on Sweetwater Road east of I-805, staff asked STC Traffic to re-evaluate the traffic data to determine if reductions to the posted speed limits are warranted. The following justifications have been presented to reduce the posted speed limit from 45 MPH to 40 MPH on Sweetwater Road between I-805 and Plaza Bonita Road:

“When the nearest 5 mph increment of the 85th-percentile speed would require a rounding down, the speed may be reduced by 5 mph from the nearest 5 mph increment of the 85th-percentile speed (CVC 22358.6(b); CAMUTCD Section 2B.13, Standard 12a, Option 1) - CVC 627(c)(2); CA-MUTCD Section 2B.13, Option 29B (safety of bicyclists and pedestrians, vulnerable pedestrian groups – bus stop and no sidewalk).”

A copy of the E&TS certification summary sheets are attached as Exhibit A.

**FINANCIAL STATEMENT:**

Funding to replace the existing speed limit signs is available through the Engineering & Public Works Streets Division Maintenance & Operations budget for traffic signs.

**RELATED CITY COUNCIL 2020-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:**

Public Safety

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:**

This is not a project under CEQA and is therefore not subject to environmental review. CCR15378; PRC 21065.

**PUBLIC NOTIFICATION:**

The Agenda Report was posted within 72 hours of the meeting date and time in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act.

**ORDINANCE:**

First Reading

**EXHIBITS:**

Exhibit A – E&TS Certification Sheets

Exhibit B – Ordinance