



Agenda Item No. _____

File Code No. 530.05

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: August 9, 2011

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Transportation Division, Public Works Department

SUBJECT: Introduction Of Ordinance Establishing Prima Facie Speed Limits On Cota Street

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council introduce and subsequently adopt, by reading of title only, An Ordinance of the Council of the City of Santa Barbara Amending Chapter 10.60 of the Municipal Code by Revising Section 10.60.015, Establishing Prima Facie Speed Limits on Cota Street Between Santa Barbara Street and Alameda Padre Serra at 25 Miles Per Hour.

DISCUSSION:

The California Vehicle Code (CVC) Section 22352 establishes the prima facie speed limit in "business" and "residence" districts as 25 miles per hour (mph). However, CVC Section 40802, defining "Speed Traps," prohibits radar enforcement of excessive speed on non-local streets in business or residence districts unless the speed limit is justified by a current Engineering and Traffic Survey (Survey). Therefore, with the exception of park and school zones, roads that are in business or residence districts but are not defined as local streets in the California Road System Map, cannot be enforced using radar technology, unless the speed limit is established through a Survey.

A Survey must include consideration of prevailing speeds as determined by traffic engineering measurements, accident records, highway traffic, and roadside conditions not readily apparent to the driver. According to the California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices, the recommended speed limit should be established at the 5 mph increment closest to the 85th percentile speed (the speed that 85% of the drivers are traveling at or below). However, in matching the existing traffic safety needs of the community, engineering judgment may indicate the need for a reduction of 5 mph due to conditions not foreseen by the driver. Residential density and pedestrian and bicyclist safety may be considered to establish this reduction. Other considerations include conditions such as high collision rates and inadequate cross street visibility. This state-required methodology is based on the premise that a reasonable speed limit is one that conforms to the actual behavior of the majority of motorists, and that, by measuring

motorists' speeds, one will be able to select a speed limit that is both reasonable and effective.

Staff recently completed a survey on Cota Street between Santa Barbara Street and Alameda Padre Serra. The current speed limit is 30 mph. The 85th percentile on Cota Street between Santa Barbara Street and Milpas Street is 30 mph. The 85th percentile on Cota Street between Milpas Street and Alameda Padre Serra is 32 mph. The nearest five-mile increment for both segments of Cota Street is 30 mph. However, based on engineering judgment, taking into consideration the high number of collisions on Cota Street and the residential nature of the street between Milpas Street and Alameda Padre Serra, the recommended speed limit is 25 mph.

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SUBMITTED BY: Christine F. Andersen, Public Works Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office