



STAFF REPORT

AGENDA ITEM NO: 6.c – California Dr.
25 MPH Limit

MEETING DATE: November 14, 2019

To: Traffic Safety and Parking Commission

Date: November 14, 2019

From: Andrew Wong, Senior Engineer – (650) 558-7230

Subject: California Drive 25 MPH Speed Limit

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission review and support the recommendation to reduce the speed limit along California Drive from Oak Grove Avenue to Peninsula Avenue to 25 MPH.

BACKGROUND

The California Drive Roundabout project was completed this past spring. The project has significantly improved pedestrian access and safety along California Drive, while reducing the number of potential conflicts for all modes of transportation. Staff continues to monitor the intersection and make small changes to further enhance the safety, including enhancing the pedestrian Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB), installation of driver feedback signs, changeable message signs, and implementation of a pilot program with a 25 MPH speed limit on the California Drive approaches to the roundabout.

The roundabout was designed with a 15 MPH advisory speed limit. This advisory speed limit was in place to prepare vehicles approaching the roundabout to yield to pedestrians near the crosswalks and vehicles already in the roundabout. Staff observed that not all vehicles were entering the roundabout at the posted advisory 15 MPH speed limit, which contributed to some vehicles already in the roundabout stopping to avoid a potential collision.

Per the City's Municipal Code (BMC), the portion of California Drive from Oak Grove Avenue to Burlingame Avenue has a posted speed limit of 35 MPH, while the posted speed limit from Burlingame Avenue to Peninsula Avenue is 30 MPH. Part of the reason for some vehicles not complying with the 15 MPH advisory speed can be attributed to the rapid deceleration from 35 MPH to 15 MPH in a relatively short distance. Although changeable message signs have been deployed to warn drivers to reduce their speed, the 25 MPH signs were installed on a pilot basis to improve the deceleration transition.

DISCUSSION

The requirements for posting speed limits are found in the California Vehicle Code (CVC) Division 11, "Rules of the Road." For this specific situation, the requirements can be found in CVC Section 22352, for the 25 MPH limit, where the conditions necessary to qualify for these 'default' speed limits are described. The 25 MPH speed limit applies to streets located within 1) business districts, 2)

residence districts, 3) near schools, or 4) senior centers. The 25 MPH speed limits are commonly signed in residence districts for the benefit of the residents, and occasionally in downtown business areas.

California Drive between Oak Grove Avenue and Bellevue Avenue-Lorton Avenue in the City of Burlingame meets one of the four conditions for the prima facie 25 MPH speed limit, the 'business district' condition. The definition of business district is provided in CVC Division 1, Words and Phrases Defined, Sections 235 and 240, as follows:

235. A "business district" is that portion of a highway and the property contiguous thereto (a) upon one side of which highway, for a distance of 600 feet, 50 percent or more of the contiguous property fronting thereon is occupied by buildings in use for business, or (b) upon both sides of which highway, collectively, for a distance of 300 feet, 50 percent or more of the contiguous property fronting thereon is so occupied. A business district may be longer than the distances specified in this section if the above ratio of buildings in use for business to the length of the highway exists.

240. In determining whether a highway is within a business or residence district, the following limitations shall apply and shall qualify the definitions in Sections 235 and 515: (a) No building shall be regarded unless its entrance faces the highway and the front of the building is within 75 feet of the roadway. (b) Where a highway is physically divided into two or more roadways only those buildings facing each roadway separately shall be regarded for the purpose of determining whether the roadway is within a district. (c) All churches, apartments, hotels, multiple dwelling houses, clubs, and public buildings, other than schools, shall be deemed to be business structures. (d) A highway or portion of a highway shall not be deemed to be within a district regardless of the number of buildings upon the contiguous property if there is no right of access to the highway by vehicles from the contiguous property.

Being within a business district, California Drive from Oak Grove Avenue to Peninsula Avenue meets one of the criteria for a 25 MPH default speed limit, so it qualifies to post and radar enforce this speed accordingly. However, California Drive between Oak Grove Avenue and Bellevue Avenue-Lorton Avenue appears as a major arterial on the California Road System (CRS) map, so under the statutes of CVC Section 40802, it would constitute a speed trap if this 25 MPH speed limit were enforced with radar equipment. Conversely, if the City were to use radar for speed enforcement, the City would need to post a speed limit based on an Engineering and Traffic Survey. Without radar to enforce this segment of California Drive, enforcement would need to occur using alternative approved methods.

Should the TSPC support the recommendation to reduce the speed limit along California Drive from Oak Grove Avenue to Peninsula Avenue to 25 MPH, staff is recommending modifying two chapters of the BMC. The roadway segment of California Drive between Peninsula Avenue and Burlingame Avenue would need to be removed from Chapter 13.24.015 (Thirty miles-per-hour), while Chapter 13.24.010 (Thirty-five miles-per-hour) would need to be revised to show "California Drive between Oak Grove Avenue and Murchison Drive" instead of "California Drive between Burlingame Avenue and Murchison Drive."

Subsequent steps to formalize the above changes in the BMC include presenting a staff report to City Council for introduction and adoption of the revised ordinances.