



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR

July 18, 2006

To: Honorable Mayor and
Members of the City Council

From:  Phil Kamlarz, City Manager

Submitted by: Claudette Ford, Acting Director, Public Works

Subject: Speed Limit Reductions on Claremont Avenue and Eastshore Highway

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt first reading of an Ordinance amending Berkeley Municipal Code (BMC) Section 14.24.150, Prima facie speed limit on Frontage Road, and BMC Section 14.24.220, Prima facie speed limit on Claremont Avenue, to reduce the speed limit on Frontage Road between Hearst Avenue and Gilman Street from 40mph to 35mph and on Claremont Avenue between Ashby Avenue and the Oakland city limit from 30mph to 25mph.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Fabrication and installation of the new signs are estimated to cost approximately \$3,000, and will be done by City staff. Funds are available in Measure B Local Streets and Roads Fund 391 (Budget Code 391-4960-431-1101).

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The Transportation Division conducted speed studies along these two collector streets in response to numerous complaints from residents and businesses about speeding traffic on Claremont Avenue and on Eastshore Highway. The Berkeley Police Department were also in need of updated speed surveys for these two streets.

The results of these surveys for the section of Claremont Avenue south of Ashby Avenue indicate that the posted speed limit should be reduced from 30mph to 25mph to enhance public safety. This speed limit reduction will have the added benefit of modifying the speed of traffic as it approaches the John Muir school zone near Hazel Street.

The survey results also indicated that the currently posted 40mph speed limit on the section of Eastshore Highway between Hearst Avenue and Gilman Street is excessive and cannot be justified. Analysis indicates that the posted speed limit should be 35mph. This reduced speed limit is more appropriate for the adjacent land use and operational characteristics on this road, and should improve safety for the employees and patrons of the area.

BACKGROUND

The portion of Claremont Avenue south of Ashby Avenue is a 4-lane collector street with

parking allowed on both sides within the 56-foot curb-to-curb width. The street gradually slopes downward to the west from Ashby Avenue. Existing traffic control includes a traffic signal at The Uplands, enforced school zones in the vicinity of Hazel/Claremont Crescent and Woolsey Street, and a posted 30mph speed limit.

The portion of Eastshore Highway between Hearst Avenue and Gilman Street is a 2-lane collector street with parking allowed only on the east side. Existing traffic controls include stop controls at Gilman and at Hearst.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Speed radar studies and resulting 85th percentile speed profiles are the legal and accepted traffic engineering methodology used to determine the posted speed limit along a section of a roadway. The results of these studies are summarized in the following table:

| LOCATION | 85TH Percentile Speed | Speed Reduction Consideration/ MPH * | Recommended Posted Speed Limit |
|------------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| Claremont NB** near Alcatraz | 31 MPH | 5 | 25 MPH |
| Claremont SB** near Alcatraz | 29 MPH | 5 | 25 MPH |
| Eastshore Highway NB near Cedar | 37 MPH | 6 | 35 MPH |
| Eastshore Highway SB near Cedar | 39 MPH | 6 | 35 MPH |
| Eastshore Highway NB near Virginia | 43 MPH | 6 | 35 MPH |
| Eastshore Highway SB near Virginia | 44 MPH | 6 | 35 MPH |

* Factors that are used in determining speed reduction include:

- 1) Collision data, 2) Unforeseen conditions (Geometry), 3) Residential density, 4) Pedestrian safety, and 5) Bicycle safety

** NB = Northbound; SB = Southbound

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

The other basic option is to leave the existing speed limits unchanged, in which case motorists are very likely to drive faster than the appropriate level of speed commensurate with the local conditions of these two roadways.

CONTACT PERSON

Hamid Mostowfi, Supervising Traffic Engineer, Transportation, 981-6403

Attachments:

- 1: Ordinance

ORDINANCE NO. -N.S.

AMENDING BERKELEY MUNICIPAL CODE SECTION 14.24.150, PRIMA FACIE SPEED LIMIT ON FRONTAGE ROAD, AND SECTION 14.24.220, PRIMA FACIE SPEED LIMIT ON CLAREMONT AVENUE, TO REDUCE SPEED LIMITS

BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of Berkeley as follows:

Section 1. That Berkeley Municipal Code Section 14.24.150 is amended to read as follows:

Section 14.24.150 Prima facie speed limit on frontage road

A prima facie speed limit of ~~forty~~thirty-five miles per hour is established on the westerly frontage road of the Eastshore Highway from Hearst Avenue to Gilman Street.

Section 2. That Berkeley Municipal Code Section 14.24.220 is amended to read as follows:

Section 14.24.220 Prima facie speed limit on Claremont Avenue

A prima facie speed limit of ~~thirty~~twenty-five miles per hour is established on Claremont Avenue between Ashby Avenue and Alcatraz Avenue/Oakland City limit.

Section 3. Copies of this Ordinance shall be posted for two days prior to adoption in the display case located near the walkway in front of Old City Hall, 2134 Martin Luther King Jr. Way. Within 15 days of adoption, copies of this Ordinance shall be filed at each branch of the Berkeley Public Library and the title shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation.