



Traffic Study Summary



Date: November 18, 2025
Recommendation: Lower the speed limit in the residential area bounded by Wood Road, Walnut Avenue, and Loop 337 to 25 mph
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Background

An engineering study was completed to evaluate the appropriate speed limit in the residential area bounded by Wood Road, Walnut Avenue, and Loop 337. The study was completed after direction from City Council to lower the posted speed limit on Mission Drive from 30 mph to 25 mph during their August 25, 2025, meeting where a traffic calming plan was approved for Mission Drive. The change in the posted speed limit will result in different speed limits on the surrounding streets and impact uniformity of traffic signs and laws. Staff is recommending lowering the speed limit to 25 mph in the entire residential area bounded by Wood Road, Walnut Avenue, and Loop 337. The statutory maximum speed limit in the City of New Braunfels is 30 miles per hour (mph) except where otherwise established by ordinance and posted by official traffic signs. The city may alter speed limits based on the result of an engineering study.

The area bounded by Wood Road, Walnut Avenue, and Loop 337 is largely single-family residential, along with a church, school, and city park. Many of the streets have steep grades, making it popular for walkers and runners seeking incline training. There are no sidewalks on the streets other than the south side of Kerlick Lane and the New Braunfels Christian Academy frontage on Mission Hills Drive. Streets in the area are also commonly used as a cut-through route to avoid congestion at the intersections of Walnut Avenue and SH 46 and Walnut Avenue and Landa Street. The posted speed limit on the majority of the streets is 30 mph. A section of Laurel Lane, Encino Drive, and Balcones Avenue are currently posted at 25 mph which, along with a through-truck restriction, were installed as part of the Walnut Avenue reconstruction project in 2015. There is a school zone in the northwestern section of the area on Ridge Hill Drive, Mission Hills Drive, Kerlick Lane, and Timber Drive for the New Braunfels Christian Academy. During the active hours of the school zone, the speed limit is 20 mph. The study area including current speed limits and school zone are shown in Figure 1.

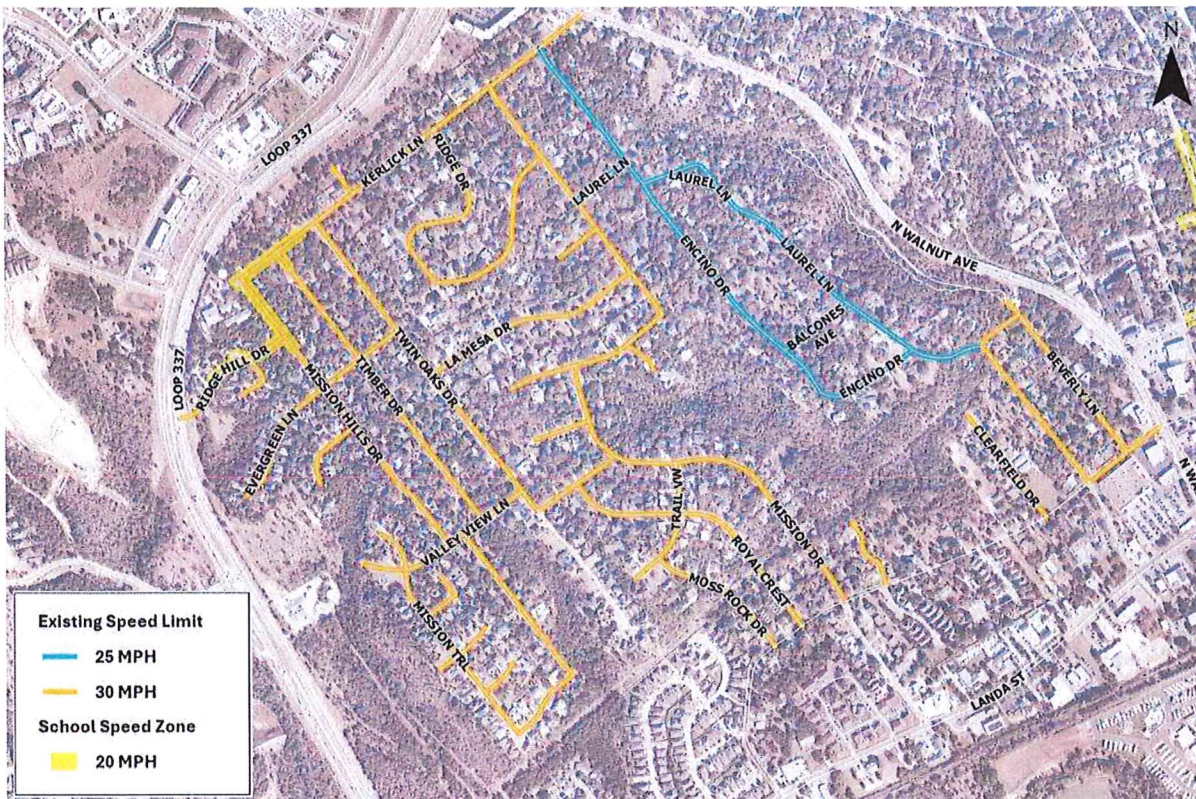


Figure 1. Street Area Layout

Guidance

Speed limits applicable to public streets are established:

- Statutorily- a maximum speed limit applicable to a particular class of road that is established by State law; or
- As altered speed zones - based on engineering studies.

Engineering studies for recommending speed limits utilized by the city's Transportation and Construction Services Department are based on the Texas Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (TMUTCD) and new speed limit setting guidance in the latest federal Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and Speed Limit Setting Handbook. The primary factors considered in the engineering study include:

- **Roadway environment** (such as roadside development, number and frequency of driveways and access points, and land use), functional classification, public transit volume and location or frequency of stops, parking practices, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities and activity;
- **Roadway characteristics** (such as lane widths, shoulder condition, grade, alignment, median type, and sight distance);
- **Geographic context** (such as urban district, rural town center, non-urbanized rural area, or suburban area) and multimodal trip generation;
- **Reported crash experience** for at least a 12-month period;

- **Speed distribution of free-flowing vehicles**, including the pace, median (50th-percentile), and 85th-percentile speeds;
- **Review of past speed studies** to identify any trends in operating speeds.

Other relevant factors may also be considered depending on the specific needs of the study approach and study area.

A city may declare a lower speed limit of not less than 25 miles per hour if the governing body determines that the prima facie speed limit on the streets is unreasonable or unsafe. By State Law, a traffic engineering study is required in order for a city to lower a speed limit below 25 mph.

Site Investigation

Site investigations and a traffic study were completed for the study area in Fall 2025 following the comprehensive traffic calming investigation for Mission Drive in 2024 and 2025. The goals of the study were to evaluate the need to lower the speed limit in the study area through site observations, traffic data collection and analysis, and evaluation of area and roadway characteristics. Every street in the study area provides direct access to multiple homes. Pedestrian and cyclist activity was frequently observed both for recreational purposes and for drop-off to and pick-up from New Braunfels Christian Academy. The newly opened Willard Canyon Trail off of Beverly Lane has contributed to an increase in pedestrian activity in the area as well.

Crash History

Traffic crash data for April 2022 through April 2025 was found through the Texas Department of Transportation's Crash Records Information System. There were six reported crashes in the study area during this time, none of which were reported as speed-related.

Data Collection

Traffic speed and volume data were collected in October 2025 for key locations in the study area to accompany the data collected on Mission Drive in March 2024. The data collection points were selected to represent multiple streets in the residential area that are likely to experience the highest amount of volume and speeds. The average daily traffic (ADT) and the pace, 50th percentile (median), and 85th percentile speeds for each collection point are documented in Table 1.

Table 1. Traffic Speed and Volume Data

Street	Limits	ADT (vpd)	Pace speed (mph)	50 th % speed (mph)	85 th % speed (mph)
Mission Dr	Laurel Ln and Laurel Cir	757	20-29	24	30
Mission Dr	Valley View Ln and Trail View	793	12-21	17	21
Mission Dr	Trail View and Wood Rd	941	25-34*	27	33
Kerlick Ln	Twin Oaks Dr and Ridge Dr	1,492	23-32	26	32
Mission Hills Dr	Ridge Hill Dr and Evergreen Ln	982	18-27	22	25
Ridge Hill Dr	Loop 337 to Mission Hills Dr	1,074	19-28	22	26
Timber Dr	Evergreen Ln and Valley View Ln	196	16-25	20	26
Twin Oaks Dr	Kerlick Ln and Evergreen Ln	438	19-28	23	29
Valley View Ln	Mission Hts and Royal Crest	841	13-22	18	24
La Mesa Dr	Twin Oaks Dr and Mission Dr	153	20-29	20	27

*Pace speed is derived from speed data binned in 5mph increments

Recommendation

Based on the site investigation and collected speed data, it is recommended that the regulatory speed limit be revised to 25 mph for the residential area bounded by Wood Road, Walnut Avenue, and Loop 337. Most of the streets have measured 85th percentile speeds between 25-30 mph, indicating the posted 30 mph speed limit is excessive. In addition, the direct residential driveway access and pedestrian activity around the homes and school in the area are conditions for which a 30-mph speed limit is not suitable. The median and pace speeds demonstrate that a 25-mph speed limit is in line with traffic speeds for the majority of vehicles traveling through the area. The 25-mph speed limit also provides consistency with the regulatory speed limits posted on Laurel Lane, Balcones Avenue, and Encino Drive.

Traffic data will be recollected after the 25-mph speed limit is implemented to determine if the speed limit reduction was impactful to vehicle speeds on streets where speeds regularly exceed 30 mph. The results of the impact will be used a pilot study to determine if implementing a reduced neighborhood speed limit will have an impact on reducing speeds, improving safety, and a consideration for other neighborhoods.