

Legislation Text

File #: 19-573, Version: 1

Presenter/Contact
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SUBJECT:

Approval of the first reading of an ordinance amending Section 126-146 (a) and adding Section 126-147 of the City of New Braunfels Code of Ordinances to revise the school speed zones on FM 1101.

BACKGROUND / RATIONALE:

Council District: 5

With the completion of roadway improvements on FM 1101 by TxDOT and review of the school speed zone ordinances in the City of New Braunfels Code of Ordinances, staff identified that the school speed zone signs posted on FM 1101 were not consistent with the location written in the code. There are three schools along FM 1101: Canyon Middle, Freiheit Elementary, and Canyon High School. School speed zone signs are posted for separate school speed zones at each of these schools, but existing code shows one school speed zone that covers all three of the schools.

A school zone is a section of roadway adjacent to a school or a school crosswalk where signs designating a school are present. A school speed zone is a special reduced speed zone for schools allowed by ordinance and defined by school speed signs. Ideally, school speed zones should be kept short to enhance driver compliance. School speed zones are intended for pedestrian safety and not to facilitate vehicle movements.

Based on the guidance provided in the TMUTCD, the existing posted school speed zones are the most appropriate for the three schools along FM 1101 and the current code should be rewritten to reflect the posted signs.

The current ordinance states that the speed limit on FM 1101 is 45 mph and 35 mph during times when the school zone flashing lights are operating; however, the posted speed limit outside of school zone times for the zones at Canyon Middle and Freiheit Elementary is 55 mph. Because TxDOT sets the speed limits on the state system (which includes Farm to Market roads like FM 1101), city staff spoke with TxDOT about this discrepancy. TxDOT provided the results of a speed survey that was completed in October 2007 that listed a speed limit of 45 mph in the area of the Canyon High School speed zone and a speed limit of 55 mph at the speed zones for Canyon Middle and Freiheit Elementary schools. The speeds shown on this survey were adopted in an ordinance by the New Braunfels City Council in 2008 but were not reflected in the ordinance for the school speed zones on FM 1101 that was adopted by City Council in 2011.

The city has requested that TxDOT complete another speed survey on FM 1101 between SH 46 and Creekside Way due to roadway and sidewalk improvements and the increased development along

FM 1101 since 2007. Once this study is complete, city staff will make any necessary updates to this ordinance to reflect the results.

The current school speed zone times for all three zones are 7:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. If the proposed amendment to the school speed zone is approved, city staff will work with the administration at each school to set appropriate school speed zone times for each campus.

ADDRESSES A NEED/ISSUE IN A CITY PLAN OR COUNCIL PRIORITY:

Envision New Braunfels Strategy 7: Connect All: Action 7.58: Develop a survey/study to evaluate the signage of the city streets, Downtown traffic circle, county roads and Interstate Highway 35, including wayfinding, street names, and regulatory signage. Within the next three years. Based on the recommendations from the study, begin implementation of approved changes.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Transportation and Traffic Advisory Board unanimously approved a recommendation to City Council amending Section 126-146 (a) and adding Section 126-147 of the City of New Braunfels Code of Ordinances to revise the school speed zones on FM 1101 at their meeting on July 11, 2019.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends revising the city ordinance for the school speed zones on FM 1101 to reflect the speed zones that are currently posted.