

Legislation Text

File #: 19-691, **Version:** 1

Presenter/Contact
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SUBJECT:

Approval of the second and final reading of an ordinance to raise the speed limit on Walnut Avenue between Landa Street and Business IH-35 to 35 mph.

BACKGROUND / RATIONALE:

Council Districts: 1, 3, and 6

City Council unanimously approved the first reading of an ordinance to raise the speed limit on Walnut Avenue between Landa Street and Business IH-35 to 35 mph on August 26, 2019.

Engineering staff has received numerous requests to raise the speed limit on Walnut Avenue between Landa Street and IH-35 from the existing posted 30 mph. Walnut Avenue is classified as a principal arterial on the city's thoroughfare plan and the requested section varies between a four-lane divided roadway and a five-lane undivided roadway.

Speed limits on Texas roads, including city streets, are set by statute in Section 545.352 of the Texas Transportation Code. The current speed limit on most city residential streets is 30 mph. The statute includes the following prima facie speed limits:

- Street in Urban District - 30 mph
- Alley in Urban District - 15 mph

Speed limits are set to inform motorists of appropriate driving speeds under favorable conditions. Regardless of the posted speed limit some drivers will operate at speeds where they feel comfortable, given the design of the road and development/activity along the roadside. The overall goal of setting the speed limit is almost always to increase safety within the context of retaining reasonable mobility for motorists.

Speed studies were conducted in two locations on Walnut Avenue in January 2019: between Cross Street and Lee Street and between Creek Drive and Landa Street in January 2019. Previously, traffic speed and volume data were collected on Walnut Avenue between Cross Street and Lee Street and between Eikel Street and Landa Street in December 2014. The results of these speed studies are shown in the attached traffic study summary.

In addition to data collection, the roadside environment and crash history were studied. There are two at-grade railroad crossings in this portion of Walnut Avenue that are part of the New Braunfels quiet zone. The traffic crash data for the previous three years showed that there were 69 reported crashes

for this section of Walnut Avenue, with 17 listing speed as a factor.

The New Braunfels Police Department reviewed this request for an increased speed limit, and recommended that the speed limit on Walnut Avenue between Landa Street and Business IH-35 be raised to 35 mph. Their recommendation included retaining the existing 30 mph speed limit on Walnut Avenue between Business IH-35 and IH-35.

Prior to this meeting, notices were mailed to property owners on Walnut Avenue between Katy Street and Business IH-35 because these properties may require backing maneuvers onto Walnut Avenue.

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

Envision New Braunfels Strategy 7: Connect All: Action 7.22: Adopt a Complete Streets policy to ensure ease of access for all people and all transportation modes.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Traffic control signs cost approximately \$150 each. Sufficient funding is available in the FY18-19 approved street and drainage budget.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

This request was considered and unanimously approved by the Transportation and Traffic Advisory Board at their meeting on June 13, 2019.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends increasing the posted speed limit on Walnut Avenue between Landa Street and Business IH-35 to 35 mph and that the speed limit between Business IH-35 and IH-35 be retained at 30 mph.