



**REPORT to the LA MESA MOBILITY COMMISSION
From the DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS**

DATE: May 1, 2024

SUBJECT: SUPPORT AMENDING CHAPTER 12.64 OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE TO
DESIGNATE SPECIFIED STREET SEGMENTS AS SAFETY
CORRIDORS IN THE CITY OF LA MESA

ISSUING DEPT: Public Works

Issue:

Should the Mobility Commission recommend to the City Council to amend chapter 12.64 of the Municipal Code to designate specified street segments as Safety Corridors in the City of La Mesa?

Recommendation:

Recommend to the City Council amending chapter 12.64 of the Municipal Code designating specified street segments as Safety Corridors in the City of La Mesa.

Fiscal Impact:

The cost to change the both the speed limit signs and legends should be less than \$1,000 per location, and can be covered by the Public Works Traffic Operations maintenance budget (3107-6420).

City's Strategic Goals:

- Effective and efficient traffic circulation and transportation

Environmental Review:

This project is categorically exempt from the environmental review process under Section 15301 Class 1 (c) of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, which exempts projects which involve negligible or no expansion of existing highways and streets, sidewalks, gutters, bicycle and pedestrian trails, and similar facilities.

BACKGROUND:

The California State Legislature sets in place the regulations for California speed limits and the California Vehicle Code (CVC) places these regulations into language used primarily for enforcement purposes. Various jurisdictions have responsibility for roadways throughout California, including the responsibility to set speed limits on these roadways according to the

standards and procedures established by Caltrans. The guidelines from the 2014 California Manual for Setting Speed Limits published by Caltrans are used in this study. These guidelines help in establishing speed limits that are uniform throughout the state and avoid influence from political pressure or emotional perceptions. CVC Section 40802 requires that an Engineering and Traffic Survey (E&TS) for speed limits should be conducted at least once every 5, 7 or 10 years based on established criteria. Under current state statute provisions, state and local agencies re-evaluate non-statutory speed limits on their street segments that have undergone a significant change in roadway characteristics or surrounding land uses since the speed limits were last reviewed. Speed limits are established primarily for protecting the public from the behavior of reckless, unreliable, or dangerous drivers. Speed limits are generally established at or near the 85th percentile speed. The 85th percentile speed, also referred to as the critical speed, is defined as the speed at or below which 85 percent of traffic is moving in free flow conditions. Speed limits established on this basis conform to the consensus of those who drive on the roadways as to what speed is reasonable and safe under normal driving conditions.

The California Legislature passed AB43 in September 2021, which grants Caltrans and local authorities greater flexibility in setting speed limits based on recommendations the Zero Traffic Fatality Task Force (Task Force) made in January 2020. The provisions of the bill allows Caltrans and local authorities to further reduce the speed limit by an additional five miles per hour for either of the following reasons:

1. The portion of a roadway has been designated as a safety corridor. A local authority shall not deem more than one-fifth of their streets as safety corridors.
2. Or the portion of a roadway is adjacent to any land or facility that generates high concentrations of bicyclists or pedestrians, especially those from vulnerable groups such as children, seniors, persons with disabilities, and the unhoused.

DISCUSSION:

According to AB43, local authorities may not lower a speed limit as authorized by the statute until June 30, 2024 or until the Judicial Council has developed an online tool for adjudicating infraction violations statewide as specified in Article 7 (commencing with Section 68645) of Chapter 2 of Title 8 of the Government Code, whichever is sooner.

Portions of Lemon Avenue and Jackson Drive were selected as the first designated as safety corridors based on recent community input and interest and due to their proximity to schools and public parks, locations where additional reduction in the speed limit could better protect vulnerable road/pedestrian users like children. After this initial selection, Staff will be evaluating other locations in the city with similar conditions.

Staff recommends that City Council amend chapter 12.64 of the Municipal Code as follows:

- A. Remove the following portions of streets from section 12.64.010 of the La Mesa Municipal code:

Jackson Drive from Center Drive to Laird Street
Jackson Drive from Laird Street to the north city Limits

- B. Add section 12.64.025 – Decrease of state law maximum speed for a safety corridor.

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"It is hereby determined upon the basis of an engineering and traffic investigation that the speed permitted by state law for a designated safety corridor as applicable upon the following streets is greater than is reasonable or safe under the conditions found to exist upon such streets, and it is hereby declared that the prima facie speed limit shall be as herein set forth on those streets or parts of streets herein designated when signs are erected giving notice thereof:"

NAME OF STREET OR PORTION AFFECTED	DECLARED PRIMA FACIE SPEED LIMIT
Jackson Drive from Center Drive to Laird Street	35
Jackson Drive from Laird Street to the north city limit	35
Lemon Avenue from Garfield Street to Bancroft Drive	30


CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION:

Mobility Commission to recommend to City Council amending chapter 12.64 of the Municipal Code designating specified roadway segments as Safety Corridors in the City of La Mesa.

Respectfully submitted by:



Michael Throne
Director Public Works/City Engineer



Michael Kinnard
Engineering Project Manager

Attachments: A. Map