

Staff Report

File #: 21-50

Version: 2

Date: 4/12/2021

Item #:

TO: Mayor and City Council
THROUGH: Steve Powers, City Manager
FROM: Peter Fernandez, PE, Public Works Director

SUBJECT:

Review of the Oregon Department of Transportation speed studies on 17th Street and on 45th Street NE.

Ward(s): 1, 2, 5, 6

Councilor(s): Stapleton, Andersen, Gonzalez, Hoy

Neighborhood(s): SESNA, NEN, Lansing, ELNA, NOLA

Result Area(s): Welcoming and Livable Community

ISSUE:

Shall Council:

1. Reject the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) recommendation to increase the speed limit on 17th Street SE between Mission Street SE and State Street NE from 25 mph to 30 mph and take no further action,
2. Direct staff to request a hearing before the Oregon Speed Zone Review Panel to appeal ODOT's recommendation to maintain the 30 mph speed limit on 17th Street NE between State Street NE and Silverton Road NE, with the City recommending instead that the speed limit be lowered to 25 mph, and
3. Concur with the ODOT recommendation to reduce the speed limit on 45th Street NE between Center Street NE and Sunnyview Road NE from 35 mph to 30 mph?

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends Council:

1. Reject the ODOT recommendation to increase the speed limit on 17th Street SE between Mission Street SE and State Street NE from 25 mph to 30 mph and take no further action,

2. Direct staff to request a hearing before the Oregon Speed Zone Review Panel to appeal ODOT's recommendation to maintain the 30 mph speed limit on 17th Street NE between State Street NE and Silverton Road NE, with the City recommending instead that the speed limit be lowered to 25 mph, and
3. Concur with the ODOT recommendation to reduce the speed limit on 45th Street NE between Center Street NE and Sunnyview Road NE from 35 mph to 30 mph.

SUMMARY:

At its January 27, 2020, meeting, City Council directed staff to initiate two speed limit reviews at: 17th Street SE/NE between Mission Street SE and Silverton Road NE; and at 45th Street NE between Center Street NE and Sunnyview Road NE. The speed limit reviews were conducted by ODOT and contained the following recommendations:

Increase the existing 25 mph speed limit on 17th Street SE from Mission Street SE to State Street NE to 30 mph.

Retain the existing 30 mph speed limit on 17th Street NE from State Street NE to Silverton Road NE.

Lower the existing 35 mph speed limit on 45th Street NE from Center Street NE to Sunnyview Road NE to 30 mph.

At its March 8, 2021, meeting City Council tabled the staff report (Attachment 1) and its recommendations. Council directed staff to consult with Councilors Hoy, Stapleton, and Andersen and return to Council with an updated set of recommendations. Public Works staff developed the recommendations listed in this staff report.

The basis for the staff recommendations are as follows:

17th Street SE (Mission Street to State Street). This portion of 17th Street SE was originally posted at 25 mph by the City decades ago when it was a dead end, local residential street. While ODOT recommends increasing the speed limit to 30 mph, it is staff's understanding that Council's rejection of the recommendation will suffice to maintain the existing speed limit. ODOT will not object to the City taking no action on the ODOT recommendation by retaining the current 25 mph speed limit.

17th Street NE (from State Street to Silverton Road). The City's appeal to reduce the speed limit from the existing 30 mph to 25 mph will be based upon the adjacent land uses (predominant residential), State Fair ground activities, primary bike crossing corridors, high pedestrian activities (number of pedestrian median island crossings), proximity to two elementary schools, and the high number of crashes on the roadway.

45th Street NE (from Center Street NE to Sunnyview Road NE). ODOT recommends lowering the existing 35 mph speed limit to 30 mph.

Staff shared the recommendations with the Councilors who concurred with them.

If Council approves staff recommendations, staff will inform ODOT of the City's intent to appeal the recommended speed zone on 17th Street NE. ODOT will set a hearing before the Oregon Speed Zone Review Panel. The appeal process will provide ODOT staff with the opportunity to present the findings of their speed limit studies. City staff will present information recommending the lower speed limit. The Oregon Speed Zone Review Panel will make the final decision on the speed limit.

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

1. 17th Street is an improved minor arterial street. The posted speed limit varies, with 25 mph posted between Mission Street SE and State Street NE, and 30 mph posted between State Street NE and Sunnyview Road NE. The 25 mph speed limit posting was not established by ODOT but by the City. When that section of 17th Street was first posted 25 mph, it was a local dead end street that did not connect between Mission Street SE and State Street. (At the time, there was no bridge on 17th Street over Mill Race). The 30 mph speed limit on 17th between Mission Street SE and State Street was established by ODOT in 1967.
2. 45th Street NE is an improved collector street. The posted speed limit is 35 mph, which was established by ODOT in 1977.
3. Effective May 1, 2020, the process ODOT uses for conducting speed zone investigations and determining recommendations has been revised. There are a number of factors considered when conducting a speed zone study, including traffic volumes, crash history, roadway geometry, roadside development and density, and vehicle speeds. The biggest change in the process is the consideration of the 50th percentile speed verses using the 85th percentile speed as was in the earlier process. Studies suggested posting speeds near the 85th percentile speed (the speed at or below which 85 percent of the vehicles are traveling) minimizes crash occurrences and provides better driver compliance. Recent studies suggest that posting speeds near the 50th percentile speed is more applicable for urban higher density areas.
4. The Oregon Speed Zone Review Panel includes a representative each from a City, a County, the Oregon State Police, ODOT Traffic Safety Committee, and ODOT. The Speed Zone Review Panel meets when there are several appeal requests. It may be several months before our appeal is scheduled.

BACKGROUND:

The Oregon Department of Transportation has authority to set speed zones on all roads in Oregon

that do not meet statutory standards (Oregon Vehicle Code 811.105, ORS 811.111, and ORS 810.200). Oregon Administrative Rules (734-020-0015) establishes the process for designating speed zones on public roads.

Following the January 27, 2020, Council Meeting, staff submitted a request to ODOT to conduct an engineering study on 17th Street SE/NE and on 45th Street NE to determine if the existing speed limits should be reduced. At its March 8, 2021, meeting Council directed staff to return to Council with an updated set of recommendations.

Robert D. Chandler, PhD, PE
Assistant Public Works Director

Attachments:

1. March 8, 2021, Council Staff Report