



City Council Report

Date: October 17, 2016
To: City Council
Through: Karolyn Kent, Assistant City Manager
From: Lenny Hulme, Transportation Department Director
Sabine Ellis, City Traffic Engineer
Subject: Speed Limit Change - Main Street from Country Club Drive to Centennial Way/Sirrine
Council District 4

Strategic Initiatives



Purpose and Recommendation

Recently, the Valley Metro light rail was extended through downtown Mesa. As part of this project, the Main Street cross section was reduced from two traffic lanes per direction and designated bike lanes to a single traffic lane per direction that is shared with bicyclists.

Based on the narrower cross section of Main Street and to promote a more bicycle and pedestrian friendly downtown area, staff recommends approving the ordinance for the speed limit decrease to 25 miles per hour (mph) on Main Street from Country Club Drive to Centennial Way/Sirrine. See attached figure for a location map.

Background

A 25 mph zone in downtown Mesa was first deliberated during the design phase of the Central Mesa light rail extension. At that time, it was decided to make no changes to the posted 30 mph speed limit until after the light rail was open and a speed study could be conducted.

Speed counts were taken on Main Street between Country Club Drive and Mesa Drive in February of this year. The results are as follows:

- Average speed between 22.1 mph and 25.3 mph
- 85th percentile speed between 28.0 mph and 31.9 mph
- Average volume approximately 11,000 vehicles per day

Discussion

With the extension of the light rail, downtown Mesa has seen an upsurge in pedestrian and bicycle activity. Even more so since April of this year when the Grid Bike Share system became available with 12 stations in Mesa. Several were installed along Main Street between Country Club Drive and Horne as well as other various destinations in the vicinity (e.g., Mesa Public Library, Mesa Convention Center). Per Mesa City Code Section 10-1-15, no person shall ride a bicycle, skateboard, motorized skateboard, or scooter upon a sidewalk within a Pedestrian Overlay Area (POA). The boundaries of the downtown POA are the east side of Country Club Drive to the west side of Centennial Way, the south side of 1st Street to the north side of 1st Avenue. Shared lane markings, also commonly referred to as sharrows, and “Bikes May Use Full Lane” signing have been installed on Main Street in downtown Mesa to create awareness that bicyclists have a legal right to occupy the travel lane as well as to educate bicyclists that they should cycle in the travel lane and not on the sidewalk where it is prohibited.

The currently posted speed limit on Main Street is 30 mph from Country Club Drive to Mesa Drive. Staff recommends decreasing the speed limit to 25 mph on Main Street from Country Club Drive to Centennial Way/Sirrine based on the limits of the POA where bicyclists have to share a traffic lane with vehicles as well as the similar land use, density, and high pedestrian activity along this corridor.

Speeds of 25 mph are covered in Section 10-4-7 of the Mesa City Code and do not require a listing of the specific street segment. Thus, the speed limit reduction to 25 mph is addressed by modification of the 30 mph segment in Section 10-4-6.

Alternatives

One alternative is to make no changes to the posted speed limit.

Coordination

The Transportation Advisory Board has reviewed the proposed speed limit change and concurred with the recommendation to decrease the speed limit at their May 17, 2016 meeting. This was also brought forward to the Downtown Coordination Group and Valley Metro and both were in agreement with the speed limit reduction.

Fiscal Impact

The fiscal impact of making the changes discussed in this report is estimated to be less than \$800, which would come from the existing traffic operations budget. No other fiscal impacts to the City of Mesa are anticipated. Valley Metro will handle the replacement of the speed limit signs for the trains.

Fiscal impact is not a consideration in making a recommendation in this instance.