



Approved by City Manager:

**CITY of CALABASAS**  
**CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

---

**DATE:** AUGUST 25, 2008

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND COUNCILMEMBERS

**FROM:** MARC SEFERIAN P.E., T.E., SENIOR CIVIL ENGINEER *MS*  
ROBERT YALDA P.E., T.E, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR/CITY ENGINEER *RY*

**SUBJECT:** RECOMMENDATION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2008-1150 A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CALABASAS, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING AND ACCEPTING THE COMPLETED 2008 CITY-WIDE SPEED SURVEY AND AUTHORIZING THE UPDATE AND ENFORCEMENT OF THE PROPOSED POSTED SPEED CHANGES, ACCORDINGLY.

**MEETING DATE:** SEPTEMBER 10, 2008

---

**SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:**

The Traffic & Transportation Commission has reviewed the new Citywide Speed Survey and is respectfully submitting this document to the City Council for recommendation of approval through Resolution No. 2008-1150. This will ensure adequate and accurate speed enforcement by the Sheriff's Department, while enabling all issued citations to be upheld in a court of law. Therefore, it is recommended that the City Council adopt Resolution No. 2008-1150, approving the 2008 Citywide Speed Survey and allowing the city to determine prima facie speed limits on various streets, based on the findings of the survey.

**BACKGROUND:**

Speed surveys serve as a valuable information source in determining safe and reasonable speeds for local roads. Speed surveys not only compile data of the speed of vehicles on the road, but also take into account the volume of traffic on the road, and

accident rates. The findings from this data provide a long term view of trends and issues on surface streets.

A Citywide speed survey takes this one step further and looks at every major street within a city to provide information on the transportation network as a whole.

The Citywide Speed Survey was conducted by Mr. Kevin Mauch, using the city owned Golden Eagle handheld radar speed enforcement devices. The Survey is now completed and is ready for review by the Traffic & Transportation Commission.

A citywide speed survey is referred to as an *engineering and traffic survey* in Section 627 of the 2008 State of California Vehicle Code (CVC). The following excerpt from the CVC defines speed surveys and specifies their purpose and applications.

### Engineering and Traffic Survey

627.

- (a) "Engineering and traffic survey," as used in this code, means a survey of highway and traffic conditions in accordance with methods determined by the Department of Transportation for use by state and local authorities.
- (b) An engineering and traffic survey shall include, among other requirements deemed necessary by the department, consideration of all of the following:
  - (1) Prevailing speeds as determined by traffic engineering measurements.
  - (2) Accident records.
  - (3) Highway, traffic, and roadside conditions not readily apparent to the driver.
- (c) When conducting an engineering and traffic survey, local authorities, in addition to the factors set forth in paragraphs (1) to (3), inclusive, of subdivision (b) may consider all of the following:
  - (1) Residential density, if any of the following conditions exist on the particular portion of highway and the property contiguous thereto, other than a business district:
    - (A) Upon one side of the highway, within a distance of a quarter of a mile, the contiguous property fronting thereon is occupied by 13 or more separate dwelling houses or business structures.
    - (B) Upon both sides of the highway, collectively, within a distance of a quarter of a mile, the contiguous property fronting thereon is occupied by 16 or more separate dwelling houses or business structures.
    - (C) The portion of highway is longer than one-quarter of a mile but has the ratio of separate dwelling houses or business structures to the length of the highway described in either subparagraph (A) or (B).
  - (2) Pedestrian and bicyclist safety.

Citywide speed surveys serve another function. In order for law enforcement to use speed detection devices, such as speed radar; a current speed survey must be in place.

The speed survey presented here will serve to update the information concerning the streets of Calabasas, and allow law enforcement to use all of the tools available to them to enforce speed limits.

## **DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:**

### Prima Facie, Local Streets and Business Districts

The current speed survey will provide the evidence and rationale for most streets within Calabasas. Blanket prima facie speed limits are established by law and specify the speed limit within residential areas and business districts along local streets at 25 MPH. Local streets/roadways provide access to abutting residential properties and must meet the following conditions:

1. Roadway width of not more 40 feet;
2. Not more than one-half mile of uninterrupted length; and
3. Not more than one traffic lane in each direction.

Residential areas and business districts are defined in the California Vehicle Code as specific areas of minor local streets that meet specific minimum residential or commercial densities. A count of houses or businesses that face and have direct access on a street must be made to determine if an area can be considered a residential area (13 to 16 fronting homes within a quarter mile on a local street) or a business district (50% of local street frontage have businesses with driveways). The California Vehicle Code also states that the law does not require posting these local streets with prima facie 25 MPH limits because the aforementioned characteristics of a residential area or business district are readily apparent to a motorist. Therefore; prima facie 25 MPH speed limit can be enforced with radar units.

Arterial and collector streets are not considered local streets or roadways, therefore; state law automatically provides a speed limit of 55 MPH, unless otherwise modified downward due to an engineering and traffic survey. These "intermediate" speed limits range between 25 MPH to 55 MPH and must be posted to clearly define the limits of the zones for the established speeds.

### Existing Guidelines for Posting Speed Limits

California State law requires that the posting of speed limits be based on the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile of travel speeds for any street. The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed is defined as the speed at which 85% of the traffic is traveling at or below. Experience has shown that the

85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed is characteristic to safe and reliable driving and generally presents a reasonable speed limit.

In general, speed limits are set in increments of 5 MPH. Speed limits that are set above the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile tend to make very few additional drivers operate their vehicle within legal speed limits. On the other hand, speed limits that are set below the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile will tend to make a large number of drivers operate their vehicles at a speed above the legal limit.

For practical purposes and to conform to the 5 MPH increment, the numerical speed limit is usually at the 5 MPH increment directly above or below the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed. This numerical value is a realistic and enforceable speed limit that allows the law enforcement agencies to issue citations to reckless and/or unreliable drivers that do not conform to what the majority (85%) of drivers find reasonable.

If necessary, a traffic engineer can reduce the speed limit by an additional 5 MPH if there are conditions present that are not readily apparent to drivers. This allows a speed limit to be reduced from the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile by up to 10 MPH, when explained by a Traffic Engineer. Any adjustments beyond these parameters are much more difficult to defend.

#### Analysis and Review of City Streets

**The majority of the speed limits within the City will not change.** However, based upon the recent speed survey, there are a few street segments where speed limits will increase or decrease. The following paragraphs describe these changes:

##### Calabasas Hills Road between Lost Hills Road and Malibu Hills Road

###### Existing unsigned 55 MPH:

Currently this street has no signage; therefore the speed limit defaults to 55 MPH. The findings of the speed survey show that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile travels at 37.1 MPH. Furthermore, the geometric design of the roadway supports a speed limit of 35 MPH.

##### Calabasas Road between Civic Center Way and Commons Way

###### Existing 45 MPH:

The findings of the speed survey show that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile travels at 41.4 MPH. However, this stretch of Calabasas Road passes by the Civic Center and the Commons shopping center. These are very high traffic areas, leading into an area with multiple entranceways for local businesses. Also, Calabasas Road continues on to a commercial area with a Prima Facie limit of 25 MPH. With all of these considerations, it is recommended to lower the speed limit to 35 MPH to allow for consistency in speed along this corridor.

Las Virgenes Road between US101 and Agoura Road

Existing 45 MPH:

The findings of the speed survey show that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile travels at 41.6 MPH. This section of Las Virgenes has heavy driveway traffic use. This section is also heavily used by bicycle groups. A speed limit of 35 MPH is recommended to provide consistency along this corridor.

Las Virgenes Road between Agoura Hills and Country Creek Lane

Existing 45 MPH:

The findings of the speed survey show that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile travels at 41.5 MPH. This section of Las Virgenes lacks sidewalks and is heavily used by bicyclists. A speed limit of 40 MPH is recommended to provide consistency along this corridor.

Las Virgenes Road between Lost Hills Road and Meadow Creek Lane

Existing 50 MPH:

The findings of the speed survey show that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile travels at 49.0 MPH. There is no curb or sidewalk on the east side of the road. There is considerable pedestrian and bicycle traffic. A speed limit of 45 MPH is recommended to transition between adjoining segments and provides consistency along the corridor.

Malibu Hills Road between Agoura Hills Road and Lost Hills Road

Existing unsigned 55 MPH:

Currently this street has no signage; therefore the speed limit defaults to 55 MPH. The findings of the speed survey show that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile travels at 37.6 MPH. A speed limit of 35 MPH is recommended.

Mulholland between Mountain Park Drive and Dry Canyon Cold Creek Road

Existing 45 MPH:

The findings of the speed survey show that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile travels at 51.8 MPH. This segment has good sightlines, a low accident rate and no unexpected geometries. A speed limit of 50 MPH is supported by the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile.

Old Topanga Canyon Road between Bluebird Drive and Valmar Road

Existing 45 MPH:

The findings of the speed survey show that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile travels at 40.9 MPH. A speed limit of 40 MPH is recommended.

Park Capri between Park Sienna and Park Granada

Existing unsigned 55 MPH:

Currently this street has no signage; therefore the speed limit defaults to 55 MPH. The findings of the speed survey show that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile travels at 37.3 MPH. A speed limit of 35 MPH is recommended.

Parkway Calabasas between Calabasas Road and Park Granada

Existing 45 MPH:

The findings of the speed survey show that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile travels at 41.9 MPH. A speed limit of 40 MPH is recommended in order to provide consistency along this corridor. There is also considerable development along this corridor, and the addition of the new Civic Center has generated greater use of the area.

Thousand Oaks Boulevard between Las Virgenes Road and Ruthwood Drive

Existing – 40 MPH:

The findings of the speed survey show that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile travels at 35.4 MPH. A speed limit of 35 MPH is recommended.

**FISCAL IMPACT/SOURCE OF FUNDING:**

None.

**REQUESTED ACTION:**

Requesting the City Council to adopt Resolution No. 2008-1150, approving the 2008 Citywide Speed Survey and declaring prima facie speed limits on various streets within the City, pursuant to the 2008 Engineering and Traffic Survey, and the California Vehicle Code.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Attachment A: Executive Summary
- Attachment B: Applicable California Vehicle Code Sections, 2008 Edition
- Attachment C: Citywide Speed Survey
- Attachment D: List of Residential Streets
- Attachment E: Color-Keyed Map of Speed Limits
- Attachment F: List of Speed Limit Increases/Decreases
- Attachment G: Resolution No. 2008-1150