

Memorandum

To: Mayor Nelson and Members of the City Council

From: Daniel R. Buchholtz, MMC, Administrator, Clerk/Treasurer

Date: October 6, 2021

Subject: Speed limit discussion

Councilmember Dircks requested a discussion of speed limits be included on the October work session agenda. She has received inquiries from residents about lowering speed limits in certain neighborhoods.

In May 2019, Governor Walz signed into law a bill passed by the Minnesota State Legislature granting cities the authority to set speed limits on streets they control. This went into effect August 1, 2019.

Full language of this provision is shown below:

Minnesota Statutes, Section 169.14

Subd. 5h. Speed limits on city streets. A city may establish speed limits for city streets under the city's jurisdiction other than the limits provided in subdivision 2 without conducting an engineering and traffic investigation. This subdivision does not apply to town roads, county highways, or trunk highways in the city. A city that establishes speed limits pursuant to this section must implement speed limit changes in a consistent and understandable manner. The city must erect appropriate signs to display the speed limit. A city that uses the authority under this subdivision must develop procedures to set speed limits based on the city's safety, engineering, and traffic analysis. At a minimum, the safety, engineering, and traffic analysis must consider national urban speed limit guidance and studies, local traffic crashes, and methods to effectively communicate the change to the public.

The current speed limit on all streets owned by the City of Spring Lake Park is 30 miles per hour, which is the statutory urban speed limit set by the Minnesota State Legislature prior to the adoption of M.S. 169.14, subd. 5h.

Councilmember Dircks has done some research on this topic – identifying cities that have had this conversation already. Those cities, and a list of web links to those cities, is attached to this memorandum.

City staff has had a preliminary conversation on this topic. It appears to be relatively easy to lower speed limits from 30mph to 25mph under the new 2019 law. M.S. 169.14, subd 2(a)(1) permits a 25 miles per hour speed limit on residential roadways if adopted by the city council. Residential roadways are defined as a city street that is either (1) less than one-half mile in total length or (2) in an area zoned exclusively for housing that is not a collector or arterial street. This definition would cover the vast majority of the city streets within the city.

The cost of replacing all of the City's speed limit signs would be approximately \$3,000-\$4,000.

If the City Council wishes to transition to a lower 20 miles per hour speed limit, a speed limit study would need to be conducted by the City Engineer in accordance with M.S. 169.14, subd. 5. The cost of the speed study would be approximately \$25,000, in addition to the purchase of new speed limit signs.

City staff believes that lowering speed limits will create an expectation from residents that the City step up speed enforcement across the City. With the current staffing level of the Police Department, an enforcement push will not be possible. Speed limit changes could create confusion amongst drivers in the City, especially if our neighboring cities do not change their residential speed limit. Finally, there were only 30 accident last year on streets within the City's full control, with only one accident involving a personal injury. This metric does not support lowering speed limits.

Benefits of lowering speed limits in the City include reduced likelihood of being involved in an automobile crash and decreased severity of injuries sustained by all road users in a crash. This is especially true for pedestrians: 13% of pedestrians will die or suffer a severe injury if hit by a vehicle at 20 miles per hour wile that is 40% at 30 miles per hour and 73% at 40 miles per hour.

All of the states surrounding Minnesota have a 25 mile per hour urban speed limit.

I have attached the document "City Limits: Setting Safe Speed Limits on Urban Streets" to assist with your discussion.

Councilmember Dircks wanted a discussion on this item to determine direction from the City Council on how to address residents who ask about a speed limit change. Staff does not believe there is a case to make this change at this time.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at 763-784-6491.

Cities who have implemented lower speeds:

Minneapolis (20 mph): https://www.minneapolismn.gov/government/programs-initiatives/visionzero/speed-limits/

Saint Paul (20 mph): https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/public-works/traffic-lighting/speed-limits

Mahtomedi (20 mph):

https://www.ci.mahtomedi.mn.us/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=180#:~:text=The%20City%20of%20Mahtomedi %20recently,be%20reduced%20to%2025%20MPH.

Edina (25 mph): https://www.edinamn.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=1635

St. Louis Park (20 mph): https://www.stlouispark.org/government/departments-divisions/engineering/speed-limits

Rochester (25 mph): https://www.rochestermn.gov/Home/Components/News/News/8245/

Falcon Heights (20 mph): https://www.falconheights.org/government/public-safety/20mph-residential-speed-limit

Saint Anthony Village (25 mph): https://www.savmn.com/461/Speed-Limits

<u>Cities considering lower speeds:</u>

Golden Valley: https://www.goldenvalleymn.gov/streets/speedlimits.php

Cities with statements on their website about keeping 30 mph speed limit:

Woodbury:

https://www.woodburymn.gov/departments/engineering/traffic and signals/speed limits.php

Fridley: https://www.ci.fridley.mn.us/650/Speed-Limits-on-Roadways

Oak Grove: https://www.ci.oak-grove.mn.us/index.asp?SEC=B56646EB-B88C-4142-9090-EA2DED9B8523&DE=86119DAA-EF58-4E14-BD40-0D6100DD742F

Burnsville: https://www.burnsvillemn.gov/1954/Neighborhood-Traffic

Plymouth: https://www.plymouthmn.gov/departments/public-works/engineering/traffic-control-

requests?locale=en

Minnetonka: https://www.minnetonkamn.gov/services/streets-and-sidewalks

Minnetonka studied but did not implement:

https://www.minnetonkamn.gov/Home/ShowDocument?id=7682

<u>Lessons learned/counterpoint/etc.</u>:

Implementation is important: https://myvillager.com/2021/06/23/the-illogic-of-saint-pauls-lower-speed-limit/

Crystal, MN Speed perception video:

http://crystal.hosted.civiclive.com/resident/public_works/transportation_information

FWHA Safe systems information: https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/systemic/

Analysis of the difference between 20 mph and 30 mph: https://streets.mn/2015/04/02/the-critical-ten/

LRRB studying these changes and developing guidance:

https://researchprojects.dot.state.mn.us/projectpages/pages/IrrbProjectDetails.jsf;jsessionid=53A66B3 E0A48548BA7D78E6D219138EB?id=25209&type=CONTRACT&jftfdi=&jffi=IrrbProjectDetails%3Fid%3D25 209%26type%3DCONTRACT

https://researchprojects.dot.state.mn.us/projectpages/pages/lrrbProjectDetails.jsf?id=23866&type=CO NTRACT&jftfdi=&jffi=lrrbProjectDetails%3Fid%3D23866%26type%3DCONTRACT

Studies on speed limits and crash severity: https://clients.bolton-menk.com/mnspeedlimitvision/research/