Wylie City Council
AGENInA REPORT

Department: Public Works   **Account Code:**

Prepared By: Tim Porter

Subject

Consider, and act upon, Ordinance No. 2021-07 amending Article IV (Speed) of Section 110-133 (School Zones) of the Wylie Code of Ordinances, establishing a school zone for certain streets; establishing prima facie maximum speed limits during school hours in such zone; removing the school zone for certain street(s); providing for the installation of signs and markings; regulating vehicular and pedestrian traffic; providing for a penalty for the violation of this ordinance, providing for repealing, savings and severability clauses; and providing for an effective date of this ordinance.

Recommendation

A motion to approve Ordinance No. 2021-07 amending Article IV (Speed) of Section 110-133 (School Zones) of the Wylie Code of Ordinances, establishing a school zone for certain streets; establishing prima facie maximum speed limits during school hours in such zone; removing the school zone for certain street(s); providing for the installation of signs and markings; regulating vehicular and pedestrian traffic; providing for a penalty for the violation of this ordinance, providing for repealing, savings and severability clauses; and providing for an effective date of this ordinance.

Discussion

In 2020, Lee Engineering, LLC performed a review for the City of Wylie of existing reduced speed school zones at sixteen (16) Wylie ISD campuses. For two of the campuses, Draper Intermediate School and Cooper Junior High School, an inventory had been performed previously in 2018. For the other fourteen (14) campuses, a site visit was performed at each school to inventory existing signage and to find the limits of existing reduced speed school zones, as well as make recommendations to update zone lengths, crosswalk details, and school zone signage, where appropriate. Proposed recommendations were based on engineering judgment informed by the following guiding principles:

- Pedestrian crossing activity should be the primary basis for reduced speed school zones. However, irregular traffic and pedestrian movements must also be considered when children are being dropped off and picked up from school. (Source: "Procedures for Establishing Speed Zones", TxDOT.)
- School speed limits should be installed based on the posted speed limit. (Source: "Speeds in School Zones", FHWA/TX-09/0-5470-1.)
- A statewide survey of city and school district police officers indicated that over 85% of the officers agreed the posted speed limit with "End School Zone" plaque improved compliance. (Source: "Speeds in School Zones", FHWA/TX-09/0-5470-1.)
- Operating speeds increase as the distance from the beginning of the school zone increases. For every quarter mile (1,320 feet) of school zone length, speeds can be expected to increase almost 2.5 mph. Studies have shown that compliance is highest in the first 350 feet of a school zone. By limiting the reduced speed school zone to 400 feet maximum, compliance to the 20-mph speed limit should be higher. (Source: "Speeds in School Zones", FHWA/TX-09/0-5470-1.)

The attached letter from Lee Engineering, LLC offers figures for all WISD existing and proposed school zones. Some school zone lengths were shortened or eliminated due to the lack of pedestrian demand crossing the street (as indicated by traffic counts or attendance boundaries). Traffic counts were evaluated at ten (10) intersections with uncontrolled approaches having the potential for pedestrian crossings, six (6) of these were collected as part of the 2018 study for the City of Wylie and Wylie ISD, and four (4) as part of this study. Recommended lengths for reduced speed school zones have been minimized in order to encourage driver compliance.

Staff recommends approval of the proposed amendments to Article IV (Speed) of Section 110-133 (School Zones) of the Wylie Code of Ordinances that reflect recommendations from the 2020 Lee Engineering, LLC Letter. We will continue to monitor these areas to determine if any future adjustments need to be made.