

GUIDELINES FOR REGULATORY SPEED ZONES ON NEW, MAJOR THOROUGHFARE CONSTRUCTION

Introduction: The Texas Transportation Code specifies that a posted speed limit on a county road may be established through the authority of the County government, based on the results of an engineering and traffic investigation. The engineering study and procedure to establish a speed limit is based on the actual speed of vehicles, the basic speed law which is founded on the belief that the majority of motorists are willing to modify their driving properly as long as they are aware of the conditions around them. To assess the reasonable and prudent speed, engineering analysts collect sample speeds of existing traffic, review existing conditions, and recommend posted speeds.

The following procedure will allow appropriate considerations for interim speed limits on newly constructed or improved roadways.

C.I.P PROJECTS:

DESIGN. The engineering consultant should put on plans, where speed limit signing is indicated, “XX” (in place of numbers) for the posted speed with a note:

“Speed to be determined by the engineer-of-record, with the concurrence of the Harris County Public Infrastructure Department, Architecture and Engineering Division, Traffic Engineering Group, and Precinct representatives, in a written recommendation pursuant to a road test.”

CONSTRUCTION. A road test should be conducted by the engineer-of-record with HCPID-Traffic Engineering Group concurrence when the road is in the final phase (or final 7 days) of construction, but prior to placement of signing and/or final inspection, if possible. A documented interim speed limit recommendation should be given to the contractor to post prior to opening the road to traffic. The preconstruction or existing posted speed limit on an existing roadway can be considered as the interim speed limit after widening, if the posted speed limit is 45-mph or higher.

HCPID-Traffic Engineering Group should be forwarded a signed copy of the engineer’s road test documentation, and recommended interim speed limit.

The agreed upon speed limit will be added to the existing database of speed studies on Harris County roadways, as an interim speed limit. The documented road test received by HCPID-Traffic Engineering Group will also initiate placement of the new roadway section as a project for a full speed limit study within 1 year after substantial completion.

PERMIT REGULATIONS

Developer's Projects.

DESIGN. All subdivision local or collector streets are prima facie 30-mph speed limit. However, when designing thoroughfares or principal thoroughfares within the developers projects, the engineering consultant should put on plans where speed limit signing is indicated, "XX" (instead of numbers) for the posted speed, with the note:

"Speed to be determined by the engineer-of-record, with the concurrence of the Harris County Public Infrastructure Department, Architecture and Engineering Division, Traffic Engineering Group, and Precinct representatives, in a written recommendation, pursuant to a road test."

CONSTRUCTION. When the road is in the final phase of construction, but prior to placement of signing and/or as-built inspection by HCPID-Permits Group, a road test should be conducted by the engineer-of-record with a HCPID-Traffic Engineering Group representative present. A documented interim speed limit recommendation should be given to the contractor to post before as-built inspection. If the road test is not completed before the initial acceptance inspection, it will be placed on the punch list. HCPID, Traffic Engineering Group should appear on the 'Report Distribution' section of the Permit Group – Field Operations' Subdivision Inspection form to assure that a review and signage plan by the HCPID, Traffic Engineering Group has been completed.

The documented road test received by HCPID-Traffic Engineering Group will initiate placement of the project on a database list for a follow-up engineering study after Bond Cancellation by Harris County. HCPID-Traffic Engineering Group should be forwarded a signed copy of the engineer's road test documentation, and recommended interim speed limit. It will be added to the existing database of speed studies on Harris County roadways as an interim speed limit, until the final study is completed.