

RULES & GOVERNMENT

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations, or policies proposed before a local state or federal government body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, existing state law requires local traffic engineers to rely on the 85th percentile rule to establish speed limits. The speed limit should be set to the speed that separates the bottom 85% of vehicle speeds from the top 15%. The 85th percentile is slightly greater than a speed that is one standard deviation above the mean of a normal distribution; and

WHEREAS, a review of available speed studies, from the National Cooperative Highway Research Program, demonstrates that the posted speed limit is almost always set well below the 85th-percentile speed by as much as 8 to 12 mph. This tends to be a result of resistance to higher limits, in addition to statutory restrictions on jurisdictions from posting higher limits; and

WHEREAS, experience has shown that speed limits set arbitrarily below the reasonable and prudent speed perceived by the public are difficult to enforce, produce noncompliance, encourage disrespect for the law, create unnecessary antagonism toward law enforcement officers and divert traffic; and

WHEREAS, the Los Angeles Department of Transportation has recently proposed 20 speed limit increases for the Valley. Although these speed limit increases have sparked debate amongst several communities, LADOT is abiding by California law, and in order for the Los Angeles Police Department to use radar enforcement, local speed limits must be set based on the 85th percentile mark; and

WHEREAS, the State of California is considering revising how speed limits are to be established. The proposed modification would allow local municipalities a "soft floor", providing a mechanism for setting legal and radar enforceable speed limits at lower than the 50 percentile, simply by documenting the mitigating conditions and justification for the lower speed; and

WHEREAS, this revision would allow local traffic engineers and transportation authorities to develop and make use of more tools for traffic calming and enforcement. Speed limits for streets would then be customized to the unique and varying traffic conditions of a particular street;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that by the adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles, hereby includes in its 2009-2010 State Legislative Program SUPPORT of the "soft floor" approach to setting speed limits which would give local jurisdictions more authority over placing speed limits.

PRESENTED BY _____


DENNIS ZINE
Councilmember, 3rd District

SECONDED BY _____



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