

# CITY OF LOS ANGELES

CALIFORNIA



**ERIC GARCETTI**  
MAYOR

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September 21, 2017

Coastal San Pedro Neighborhood Council  
Doug Epperhart, President  
1840 S Gaffey Street, Box 34  
San Pedro, CA 90731  
email: cspnclive@gmail.com

Dear Mr. Epperhart:

**RE: Proposed Speed Limits on Alma Street between 27<sup>th</sup> Street and 37<sup>th</sup> Street**

As part of Vision Zero, the City's commitment to safe streets, The Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) and the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) are working together to ensure that speed limits can be enforced citywide. We write to inform you that speed limits in your area are changing.

For LAPD to enforce speed limits on surface streets using radar, those streets must have had a traffic speed survey conducted by LADOT within the past seven years. If the speed survey expires, LAPD cannot enforce the speed limit using radar technology on that street. California law mandates that LADOT use the 85th-percentile rule, whereby the speed limit on a road reflects the speed of approximately 85 percent of the vehicles traveling on that road. That number is determined by surveying the speeds of at least 100 cars.

As a result, LADOT is recommending the following proposed speed limit revision so that radar/laser enforcement may be used:

**Revise the speed limit on Alma Street between 27<sup>th</sup> Street and 37<sup>th</sup> Street from 35 miles per hour to 30 miles per hour.**

Though counter-intuitive, these increases will allow LAPD to resume enforcing speeding laws. That enforcement will make L.A. streets safer. Speed is the most important factor when determining whether a person—pedestrian, cyclist, or passenger in another car—survives a car crash.

The establishment of speed limits can be an emotional issue and a rational, objective and defensible determination is necessary to maintain public confidence in the process. The role of

the Department of Transportation is to ensure that the process is objective, that the speed limit is enforceable and that the speed limit does not compromise traffic safety.

The process by which radar-enforceable speed limits are examined, recommended, and set is governed by California Vehicle Code Sections 40802 and 627. These sections are intended to prohibit "speed traps" on streets where radar enforcement is used. Speed traps are considered to be streets where speed limits are set arbitrarily low and electronic measuring devices are used. Unless this process is followed, radar enforcement cannot be used. Radar is deemed to be one of the most effective speed enforcement tools because of the ease in measuring speeds and the quality and accuracy of the data that is collected. The loss of the ability to use radar can severely limit enforcement efforts and compromise the defensibility of a citation.

Section 40802 requires that an engineering and traffic survey for a particular section of highway be conducted every seven years in order to justify enforcement of the speed limit by radar. The Police Department requests enforcement by radar and the Department of Transportation conducts a survey. The survey considers prevailing speeds, collision history and hidden conditions, as per Section 627 of the Vehicle Code. In the absence of any abnormal collision rate or hidden conditions, the recommended speed limit is set such that approximately 85 percent of motorists in free-flowing traffic are considered to be driving at a legal speed. California Vehicle Code Section 21400.(b) also allows local authorities to set the speed limit at the 85th percentile speed, rounded down to the nearest five miles per hour increment

The Vehicle Code is clear that a radar-enforceable speed limit does not affect the speed limit in school zones when children are present, which will remain at 25 miles per hour. The ability to use radar to enforce the 25 miles per hour speed limit in school zones is retained.

We are processing this proposed radar-enforced speed limit for consideration by the Transportation Commission, the Transportation Committee and the City Council. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Elizabeth Palarca of my staff via email at [elizabeth.palarca@lacity.org](mailto:elizabeth.palarca@lacity.org) or at (818) 374-4688.

Sincerely,



Brian Gallagher  
Principal Transportation Engineer  
District Operations Bureau

BRG:ep  
NC Alma St 27<sup>th</sup> st 37<sup>th</sup> st 17

C: Councilmember Joe Buscaino, 15th Council District, Attn: John Jones III  
LADOT Survey Section  
LADOT Southern District Office