


## COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

	Number:	<b>20-342</b>	Meeting:	<b>August 3, 2020</b>
	Agenda Item:	<b>37</b>	Roll Call:	<b>20-1244</b>
	Submitted by:	<b>Steven L. Naber, P.E., City Engineer</b>		

### AGENDA HEADING:

Amending Chapter 114 of the Municipal Code to reduce the speed limit on Franklin Avenue between Beaver Avenue and Merle Hay Road to 25 miles per hour (mph).

### SYNOPSIS:

The proposed traffic regulation changes the speed limit on Franklin Avenue between Beaver Avenue and Merle Hay Road from 30 mph to 25 mph at City Council direction. Staff does not recommend the speed limit change as the data collected under the existing geometric conditions and roadway environment indicates a 30 mph speed limit is consistent with the 85th percentile speeds along the corridor.

### FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: Minor costs for sign installations.

Funding Source: 2020-2021 Operating Budget, page 77 Engineering Department Traffic and Transportation—Sign, Painting, Signal and Lighting, EG062080

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- At the July 13, 2020 council meeting, City Council directed staff to begin the process to reduce the speed limit on Franklin Avenue between 48th Street and Merle Hay Road.
- The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) requires that an engineering study that includes the analysis of the speed of free-flow vehicles be used to set speed limits. The MUTCD is adopted for use of streets and highways in Iowa by Iowa Code.
- Residents spoke at the City Council meeting in favor of the speed reduction, citing compliance with the City's transportation master plan, MoveDSM. MoveDSM is a planning document and not an engineering study to affect change in a street's posted speed limits. Such an engineering study, as defined by the MUTCD, must include "comprehensive analysis and evaluation of available pertinent information" of the conditions on a street. Detailed data, such as speed data, was not collected or evaluated in the development of MoveDSM. MoveDSM provides guidelines for design criteria such as speed limits. As stated in Move DSM, "MoveDSM is not a rigid plan and does not dictate design solutions."

- The City's current process for establishing or modifying a speed limit begins with an engineering study of the corridor which includes collection of speed data including the 85th percentile speed, the speed at which 85 percent of the vehicles are driving at or below. Staff collected this data and found the 85th percentile speed on Franklin Avenue between 48th Street and Merle Hay Road is 34 mph. The 85th percentile speed on Franklin Avenue between 48th Street and Beaver Avenue is 30 mph. Based on this data, the appropriate speed limit for both sections of Franklin Avenue is 30 mph.
- Staff also reviewed other evaluation methods for setting speed limits including USLIMITS2 and the Credible Urban Speed Zone model. These methods include evaluation of the free-flow speed as well as crash experience, street characteristics, street context, and street user. The current speed limit of 30 mph was found to be appropriate by these methods.
- Staff does not recommend that the speed limit on Franklin Avenue be changed at this time. The engineering studies conducted indicate that the appropriate speed limit for this corridor is 30 mph. The speed limit of 30 mph on Franklin Avenue between 48th Street and Merle Hay Road is four (4) miles per hour below the 85th percentile speed of 34 mph. Studies have shown that reducing the speed limit more than five (5) miles per hour below the 85th percentile speed reduces the free-flow speed by less than one (1) percent. Lowering the speed limit does not mean that travel speeds will lower. An engineering study should be performed when proposed geometric changes are completed before a speed limit change is considered.
- Reducing the speed limit could result in motorists beginning to pass slower moving vehicles along this section of roadway.
- Per City Council direction, this traffic regulation change is being brought forth for Council consideration. The following code changes will change the speed limit on Franklin Avenue between Beaver Avenue and Merle Hay Road to 25 mph.



Sec. 114-1318. Franklin Avenue.

Franklin Avenue, from Thirty-fourth Street to ~~Sixty-third Street~~ Beaver Avenue, 30 miles per hour.

Franklin Avenue, from Merle Hay Road to Sixty-third Street, 30 miles per hour.

**PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):**

Date: July 13, 2020

Roll Call Number: [20-1169](#)

Action: [On](#) Franklin Avenue Resurfacing from 48th Street to Merle Hay Road: Resolution approving plans, specifications, form of contract documents, engineer's estimate, receive and file bids and designating the lowest responsible bidder as InRoads, LLC (Joseph J. Manatt, Manager), \$1,548,220.35. ([Council Communication No. 20-296](#)) Moved by Gray to adopt; direct the City Manager to begin the process to designate a 25-mph maximum speed limit on Franklin Avenue from 48th Street to Merle Hay Road, as called for in MoveDSM and add Franklin Avenue from Merle Hay to 63rd Street to the list to be considered if the City receives CARES infrastructure funds. Motion Carried 7-0.

**BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S): NONE**

**ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS: NONE**

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