



# Issues Briefing

**Issues Briefing #: NCB 25-217**

**Requester: Councilmember Ford**

**Date Requested: September 15, 2025**

## ISSUE

A motion was made by Councilmember Ford, seconded by Councilmember Teter, to direct staff to conduct a speed study on Highway 2 to determine if the speed limit can be increased to 55 miles per hour. VOTE: 8- Aye, 1- Absent (Madera)

This Issues Briefing summarizes engineering, code, and safety considerations related to requests to modify the existing speed limits along the Highway 2 corridor. The corridor currently includes posted speeds of 35 mph and 45 mph depending on the segment.

## CONTEXT

### **Engineering Considerations**

When Highway 2 was conveyed from CDOT to the City of Commerce City, it was no longer classified as a State Highway with the associated highway speed limit of 55 mph. Highway 2 now falls within the City's jurisdiction and is governed by the City's standards for Principal Arterial Roadways. The City's Engineering Standards define a Principal Arterial Roadway as a facility designed to carry intra-city and inter-community connections at moderate speeds. Speeds posted beyond 45 mph would not fit within this definition of moderate speeds.

Based on what City Staff has been able to determine, the most recent Highway 2 improvements were intended to increase roadway capacity as well as improve traffic operations and safety along Highway 2. The design speed used in the design process for the Highway 2 improvements was 50 mph. The posted speed limit is typically set five (5) to ten (10) mph below the roadway's design speed. In this case, the posted speed limit is set at 45 mph, or five (5) miles below the design speed.

The design speed for the Highway 2 improvements was held at 50 mph and the roadway's horizontal and vertical design elements were designed to this speed. If the posted speed limit were to be increased, then some

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roadway vertical curves would no longer meet American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials standards for sight distance.

In this scenario, vehicles traveling more than the roadway design speed (50 mph) may not have enough time to react and stop before they can see a car or object in the roadway. Also, of significant importance, the roadside clear zone was designed for 50 mph. The clear zone is the distance/area off the roadway that an errant driver can stop or regain vehicle control without conflict. The streetlights along Hwy 2 will be in the clear zone if the speed limit is raised.

Within this context and in consideration of the Highway 2 geometric design parameters (including auxiliary lane requirements, taper lengths, yield conditions, lack of a median island and other factors) it was determined during the design process that 45 mph is the appropriate maximum posted speed.

### **Code Considerations**

Highway 2 is classified as a Principal Arterial roadway in the updated Transportation Master Plan. The City's Engineering Standards specify the posted speed limit on a principal arterial will be 45 mph, subject to reduction. Speed limits on Principal Arterials are posted to this standard unless there is an engineering/safety concern that would justify deviating from this.

For the section of Highway 2 to the south of Rosemary/Quebec posted at 35 mph, there are several buildings that are very close to edge of travelled way that impact the roadside clear zone on the east side of the roadway.

### **Speed Study Considerations**

Speed data can be collected. However, it will not be used to set the posted speed in this corridor because the design speed and clear zone

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constraints are the primary governing factors. Any data collected will be shared with Commerce City Police Department to support enforcement strategies.

### OBSERVATIONS

#### **Recommended Action**

Based on the roadway's geometric design, engineering standards, safety constraints, and City code requirements, Public Works recommends:

- Maintaining the existing 45 mph posted speed in the northern segments of Highway 2.
- Maintaining the existing 35 mph posted speed between Quebec and 72nd due to clear zone and roadside safety concerns.

### CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, staff recommends maintaining the current posted speed along the entire Highway 2 corridor. An increase in the speed limit would depart from adopted standards form speed limit by roadway classification, and a decrease

### NEXT STEPS

#### Council

- Formal direction in a motion to proceed with Issue.
- Approval of resolution to award and negotiate contract after competitive bidding process.
- The work associated with the recommended action would be complete would likely be complete in late summer or early fall.