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LA City Council Supports Legislation to Give Cities More Flexibility in Setting Speed Limits

Los Angeles, CA (July 1, 2021)

The Los Angeles City Council adopted a Resolution this week to support CA State Assembly Bill 43 which would grant municipalities greater control in setting speed limits on streets. Currently, the California Vehicle Code (CVC) requires cities to conduct regular speed surveys to set and enforce speed limits which are determined by the 85th percentile of driver speeds recorded in the survey. In practice, this results in streets where speed limits regularly increase with every survey cycle regardless of local safety concerns.

With speed being the primary factor in determining the severity of a crash, AB 43 gives cities an opportunity to save hundreds of lives. A person struck by a vehicle going 35 mph has a 68% chance of survival. The survival rate plummets to 35% if the vehicle is going 40 mph. Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, Los Angeles experienced an epidemic of speeding on streets resulting in a similar number of fatal and severe injury crashes in 2020 compared to prior years despite a significant decline in overall traffic volumes. This trend disproportionately impacted low-income communities in Los Angeles.

“How we set speed limits within Los Angeles is a matter of life and death,” said LADOT General Manager Seleta Reynolds. “Current law forces cities to raise speed limits based on how fast drivers can go in cars that are larger and faster than ever before. We urge the California legislature to pass AB43 so that we can set speed limits in a common-sense way that will end the cycle of ever-increasing speeds and ever-increasing loss of life.”

Sadly, this week the City Council also approved the raising of speed limits for segments of Olympic Blvd and Overland Blvd in Council District 5. The intersection of Olympic and Overland was the location of a fatal collision involving a speeding vehicle in February of this year. CD5 Councilmember Paul Koretz introduced the motion reluctantly as the only means to allow radar enforcement on a street where present speed limits were rendered out of date based on the 85th percentile rule and recent speed surveys.

"Increasing speed limits through residential areas will result in more fatal crashes and yet state law



forces us to raise speed limits in order for streets to qualify for radar enforcement," said CD5 Councilmember Paul Koretz. "If this sounds counterintuitive and counterproductive, that is because it is. This is a ridiculous choice that impedes public safety. We need to correct this in State law and that is why I introduced a [Resolution to Support AB 43](#) that would return our local control."

AB 43 was introduced by Asm. Laura Friedman. The bill grants cities greater authority and flexibility to set and lower speed limits to protect vulnerable populations including the elderly, children, and other groups most at-risk of traffic violence. If AB43 passes, LADOT will be able to reduce speed limits along Olympic and Overland as well as over 200 miles of L.A. streets

AB43 has passed the CA State Assembly and is presently being considered by the CA State Senate.

About LADOT Transit

LADOT leads transportation planning, project delivery, and operations in the City of Los Angeles. We work together and collaborate to deliver a safe, livable, and well-run transportation system in the city and region. Our vision is for all people in Los Angeles to have access to safe and affordable transportation choices that treat everyone with dignity and support vibrant, inclusive communities.

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