Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, TN

Legislation Text

File #: BL2023-1887, **Version:** 1

An ordinance amending Ordinance No. BL2021-594 to authorize lowering the speed limit on streets designated as local streets on the Major and Collector Street Plan within the General Services District from 30 miles per hour to 25 miles per hour, allowing exceptions to that general reduction to be granted by the Metropolitan Traffic and Parking Commission, and amending Section 12.20.020 of the Metropolitan Code.

WHEREAS, Ordinance No. BL 2021-594, approved February 3, 2021, authorized lowering the speed limit on streets designated as local streets on the Major and Collector Street Plan within the Urban Services District from 30 miles per hour to 25 miles per hour; and,

WHEREAS, Tennessee Code Annotated subsections 55-8-153(c)(2) and (d) allow the legislative bodies of municipalities and counties to prescribe lower speed limits within certain areas, zones, streets, or roads within their jurisdictions; and,

WHEREAS, Metropolitan Charter Section 11.904 authorizes the adoption of traffic regulations establishing speed zones upon Metropolitan streets and roads by the Metropolitan Traffic and Parking Commission; and,

WHEREAS, lowering the speed limit on streets designated as local streets on the Major and Collector Street Plan within the General Services District (GSD) from 30 miles per hour to 25 miles per hour has been proposed to increase safety for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists; and,

WHEREAS, at its meeting on April 10, 2023, the Metropolitan Traffic and Parking Commission passed a motion approving this ordinance; and,

WHEREAS, to the extent there is a need to make exceptions to the general speed limit reduction accomplished by the Neighborhood Speed Limit Reduction Project, and to allow the speed limit to remain at a speed other than 25 miles per hour in some locations, it is advisable for the Metropolitan Traffic and Parking Commission to be authorized to approve such exceptions; and,

WHEREAS, NDOT's recent review of speed data has revealed a 3.5 mph drop in speed along local streets in the USD where posted speed limits were reduced from 30 mph to 25 mph compared to local streets in the GSD that retained their 30 mph posted speed limit. The 3.5 mph drop (23.3 MPH USD, 26.8 MPH GSD) is based on an average of the most commonly observed vehicle speeds traveled; and,

WHEREAS, a federal study of pedestrian/vehicle crashes in the US shows that collisions at an impact speed of 23 miles per hour are half as likely to cause pedestrians severe injury or death as collisions at 31 miles per hour; and

WHEREAS, Section 12.20.020.A. of the Metropolitan Code currently provides for the speed limit in an area within the GSD where there is not a duly authorized and posted speed limit sign to be 30 miles per hour; and,

WHEREAS, it is further advisable, in conjunction with the Neighborhood Speed Limit Reduction Project, to lower the speed limit of 30 miles per hour on local streets in the GSD, specified in Section 12.20.020.A. to 25 miles per hour.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY:

Section 1. Speed limits on streets designated as local streets on the Major and Collector Street Plan within the General Services District in urban and suburban neighborhoods are hereby generally lowered from 30 miles per hour to 25 miles per hour, except for those for which exceptions are made pursuant to the process, and the Metropolitan Traffic and Parking Commission and its staff are hereby authorized to post appropriate signage indicating the speed limit reduction.

Section 2. Authority is retained by the Metropolitan Traffic and Parking Commission to officially adopt the above-referenced general speed limit reduction as well as any exceptions to the speed limit reduction, to allow the speed limit to remain at a speed other than 25 miles per hour in some locations. Upon receipt of a request for such an exception, the Commission shall hold a noticed public hearing on the request, and may grant an exception to the general speed limit reduction if the testimony at the public hearing supports it. Upon adoption of such an exception by the Commission, the Commission and its staff shall post or retain appropriate speed limit signage, accordingly.

Section 3. Section 12.20.020.A. of the Metropolitan Code of Laws is hereby amended by deleting it in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

A. Twenty-five miles per hour within the Urban Services District and General Services District urban and suburban neighborhood local street network.

Section 4. Section 12.20.020.B. of the Metropolitan Code of Laws is hereby amended by deleting it in its entirety and renumbering the following sections accordingly.

Section 5. Amendments to this legislation shall be approved by resolution.

Section 6. This ordinance shall take effect from and after its final passage, the welfare of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County requiring it.

Analysis

This ordinance amends Ordinance No. BL2021-594 to lower speed limits on local streets within the General Services District.

Ordinance No. BL2021-594, approved by the Metropolitan Council on February 2, 2021, lowered the speed limit on streets designated as local streets on the Major and Collector Street Plan within the Urban Services district. The speed limit was lowered from 30 miles per hour to 25 miles per hour. The Metropolitan Traffic and Parking Commission (“MTLC”) approved the lowering of speed limits on local streets throughout the General Services District from 30 miles per hour to 25 miles per hour at its April 10, 2023 meeting.

This ordinance would lower the speed limits on streets designated as local streets on the Major and Collector Street Plan within the General Services District in urban and suburban neighborhoods are hereby generally lowered from 30 miles per hour to 25 miles per hour. The MTLC would retain authority to officially adopt this speed limit reduction and provide exceptions to the speed limit reduction. The MTLC would be required to hold a noticed public hearing on the request prior to the adoption of an exception. Section 12.20.020 of the Metropolitan Code of Laws would be amended to reflect this change.

The MTLC is further authorized to post appropriate speed limit signage to effectuate this ordinance.

Fiscal Note: The estimated cost to Metro for the replacement of the speed limit signs is $60,000, broken down as follows: Parts and materials - $42,000, labor and overtime - $11,000, contingency - $7,000.

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