

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1663
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Transportation
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

In 2019, 31 percent of Texas road fatalities were speed-related. There were more than 27,000 total speed-involved crashes across Texas in 2020, resulting in roughly 900 fatalities and 2,100 serious injuries. Pedestrians are more likely to be involved in accidents on neighborhood streets. Currently, a municipality can declare a speed limit no lower than 25 miles per hour on neighborhood streets if it is determined by the governing body that the prima facie speed limit on the highway is unreasonable or safe.

S.B. 1663 will allow municipalities to lower the speed limit to 20 miles per hour if determined by the governing body that the prima facie speed limit on the road is unreasonable or safe. Municipalities can lower the speed limit on a residential street without performing a traffic study.

The bill enables municipalities to lower speed limits in communities that express safety concerns about the prima facie speed limit. Furthermore, it would help mitigate the risk of pedestrian-involved crashes on residential streets. Data shows that a pedestrian struck by a vehicle going 23 miles per hour is at a 25 percent risk of severe injury and a 10 percent risk of death, which would be more significant if the pedestrian is a child. Lower speed limits will reduce the risk of severe injury in pedestrian involved collisions.

As proposed, S.B. 1663 amends current law relating to the authority of a municipality to alter speed limits.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Sections 545.356(b-1), (c), and (d), Transportation Code, as follows:

(b-1) Authorizes the governing body of a municipality, for a highway or a part of a highway in the municipality that is not an officially designated or marked highway or road of the state highway system, to declare a lower speed limit of not less than 20 miles per hour, rather than 25 miles per hour, if the governing body determines that the prima facie speed limit on the highway is unreasonable or unsafe, except as provided by Subsection (b-3) (relating to authorizing the governing body of a municipality with a population of 2,000 or less to declare a lower speed limit of not less than 10 miles per hour for a one-lane highway used for two-way access in the municipality that is not an officially designated or marked highway or road of the state highway system). Provides that a municipality is not required to perform an engineering or traffic investigation to declare a lower speed limit under this subsection if the street is located in a residence district.

(c) Provides that a prima facie speed limit that is altered by the governing body of a municipality under Subsection (b) (relating to providing that the governing body of a municipality has certain authority to alter prima facie speed limits) or (b-3), rather than

(b), (b-1), or (b-3), is effective when the governing body erects signs giving notice of the new limit and at all times or at other times as determined.

(d) Requires the governing body of a municipality that declares a lower speed limit on a highway or part of a highway under Subsection (b-3), rather than (b-1) or (b-3), not later than February 1 of each year, to publish on its Internet website and submit to the Department of Public Safety of the State of Texas a report that compares for each of the two previous calendar years certain data.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2023.