

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: SPEED LIMIT ON 6TH STREET (HAZEL AVENUE TO UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD UNDERPASS)

BACKGROUND:

As part public input sessions for the 6th Street Bridge Reconstruction Project, a citizen request was received to reduce the speed limit along 6th Street to 25 MPH from the bridge through the entrance of Brookside Park. The comments received by staff included concerns about the number of cyclists and pedestrians using the marked cross walk north-south across 6th Street at the park's entrance compared to the number of cyclists and vehicles that use 6th Street itself.

Over the last several years 6th Street has become one of the main cycling and pedestrian corridors in Ames due to the fact it most directly connects Downtown Ames to the Iowa State University campus. This makes the route prime for commuting to and from campus, and also is a significant connection point along the City's trail network and park system for recreational users. Several important factors contribute to the complexity of traffic in the area, such as the curvature of 6th Street from the UPRR underpass to the bridge, the high number non-motorized users, and how the roadway under the tracks cannot support on-street bike lanes because of the underpass.

Because of this complexity, staff would recommend lowering the speed limit from its current designation of 30 MPH to a residential level (25 MPH) from Hazel Avenue west to a point 100 feet east of the UPRR underpass where it becomes an ISU owned road. This would provide additional time for users to safely navigate this section of 6th Street. Operating closer to residential speeds will also promote better integration of on-street cycling and motorized users. It should be noted that this will also make the segment consistent with the speed limit on ISU's segment of this street.

When looking at the accident history for the most recent 10+ year period (2006-2016), there were 17 total accidents, of which six were either minor or possible injuries. Those injury accidents equate to a 35.3% injury rate, whereas on average Ames has a 24.2% injury rate city-wide. This segment thus experiences a slightly higher potential for injuries to occur. According to national best practices, lowering the speed limit alone to 25 MPH should result in a 22% reduction in all types of injury crashes. Once the bridge project is complete, staff will also ensure that proper signs and pavement markings are restored.

This proposed change around the Brookside Park entrance is just one example of an ongoing effort Public Works staff has initiated to improve safety and access to the City's

park system. Both Ames Police and the Parks and Recreation staff are also involved in this coordinated effort.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. a) Approve the ordinance to establish a 25 MPH speed limit on 6th Street from Hazel Avenue to a point 100 feet east of the railroad underpass.

b) Waive the requirement for three readings, thereby passing the ordinance on first reading to reopen 6th Street under the newly established speed limit to minimize confusion to the public.
2. Reject the proposed changes and retain the existing 30 MPH speed limit.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION:

The 6th Street bridge is nearing completion and is expected to open in early August. If City Council agrees with staff's recommendation to lower the speed limit to 25 MPH, it would be beneficial to waive the rules and pass the ordinance on all three readings at this meeting. This would allow the street to be reopened with the newly established speed limit in place, thereby encouraging the desired driving habits from the start.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1 as described above.



6th Street Speed Limit

Proposed 25 MPH Zone

ORDINANCE NO.

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF THE CITY OF AMES, IOWA, BY REPEALING SECTION 26.39(W) AND ENACTING A NEW SECTION 26.39(W) THEREOF, FOR THE PURPOSE OF DESIGNATED SPEED LIMITS ON CERTAIN STREETS; REPEALING ANY AND ALL ORDINANCES OR PARTS OF ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT TO THE EXTENT OF SUCH CONFLICT; PROVIDING A PENALTY; AND ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

BE IT ENACTED, by the City Council for the City of Ames, Iowa, that:

Section One. The Municipal Code of the City of Ames, Iowa shall be and the same is hereby amended by enacting a new Section as follows:

“Sec. 26.39. SPECIFICALLY DESIGNATED SPEED LIMITS ON CERTAIN STREETS.

(1) No person shall operate a vehicle in excess of the following designated speed limits on the following streets or portions of streets:

...

(w) **Sixth Street:** thirty (30) miles per hour from Grand Avenue to Hazel Avenue, and twenty-five (25) miles per hour from Hazel Avenue west to a point one hundred feet (100') east of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad underpass.”

Section Two. Violation of the provisions of this ordinance shall constitute a simple misdemeanor punishable as set out by law.

Section Three. All ordinances, or parts of ordinances, in conflict herewith are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict, if any.

Section Four. This ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and publication as required by law.

Passed this _____ day of _____, _____.

Diane R. Voss, City Clerk

Ann H. Campbell, Mayor