

Speed Limit Recommendation (Section 70-61 of the Code of Ordinances)

We recommend that the City Commission direct the City Manager and the Engineering Department to prioritize and take whatever actions necessary to immediately implement City Ordinance 12-17 (passed in 2 readings with votes of 6-0 and 6-1 by the City Commission on June 5, 2012 and June 19, 2012, respectively). This ordinance basically provides that the speed limit on all streets in which the City of Key West has jurisdiction be reduced to a maximum speed of 20 mph.

Why:

Public Safety and Alleviating Traffic Congestion by Promoting Alternative Transportation:

The City of Key West has numerous small, narrow and congested streets with limited line of sight. These streets are flooded with pedestrians, bicycles, and many other types of alternative transportation. Furthermore, many of these users at risk are tourists who are unfamiliar with our City and their surroundings and may have limited experience with alternative forms of transportation. Additionally, we have no fewer than 10 schools where many of our Community's children use alternative forms of transportation. This change would further enhance their safety.

Studies show that more people will choose alternative forms of transportation if speeds are lowered making these other non-automobile users feel safer. The result of implementation will be to alleviate congestion and reduce traffic including taking some pressure off the need for more automobile parking.

The Community of Key West experiences significant (millions of dollars) financial and nonfinancial losses due to the higher and less safe speed limits. Studies show that both the number and the severity of crashes are reduced at lower speeds. Our island city, that comprises less than 8 square miles, has recorded 2,076, 2,095 and 1,379 crashes in 2015, 2016, and 2017, respectively (data based on accident reports from the KWPD, these include only those reported and include 12 fatalities, 1,263 crashes with injuries, and the balance of 4,275 crashes reflecting property damage). This ordinance would result in a reduction in these numbers providing a significant benefit to the health, safety and welfare of the Citizens of Key West.

This action is necessary as this implementation action has been delayed for over 5 years for various budgetary and non-budgetary reasons. Most recently in early 2017, City Management/Engineering indicated to the City Commission that funds necessary for implementation would be included in FY2018 budget requests.

Resources: Each of these brief articles provide data on the importance of reducing speeds/speed limits including the many public safety and traffic alleviating benefits derived from such action.

<https://blog.altaplanning.com/reducing-speeding-related-crashes-through-design-5d79e8c7af8e>

<http://portlandtribune.com/pt/9-news/383815-272528-speed-limits-expected-to-drop-on-residential-streets>

https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2018/1/22/design-speed-is-a-value-statement?utm_content=buffer1438f&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=buffer

https://www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/2018/01/12/lowering-speed-limits-on-all-city-streets-will-save-lives.html?utm_content=buffer193de&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=buffer