



Chief's Report
Ruston Police Department
Tuesday, May 21, 2024

During the last council meeting, I was asked for my input on the proposed Ordinance to reduce the speed limit on some streets from 25 MPH to 20 MPH.

In response to this request, I offer seven points for your consideration:

- It is very common for the Department to receive comments from residents about lowering the speed limit from the current 25 MPH limit.
- When conducting speed enforcement (a difficult task in residential areas), our officers' typical allowable speed above the limit is 7-10 miles per hour or greater before considering a traffic stop (or > 32 MPH) in recognition to the next point;
- The court will not likely sustain a violator's contest of an infraction if the violator's speed is less than 5 miles per hour over the limit (or > 31 MPH).
- Lowering Ruston's speed limit to 20 MPH in residential areas will match the City of Tacoma's recent reduction to 20 MPH (in effect January 1, 2024).
- The proposed speed reduction supports our Comprehensive Plan vision of a walkable community, healthy lifestyle, and quality of life.
- Considering the desired avoidance of collisions, property damage and potential injury to pedestrians, the reduction of 5 MPH in the speed limit increases the accumulative time of a driver's response to avoid a collision (driver recognition of hazard, driver's physical input to the vehicle, and vehicle's mechanical dwell time to complete stop). At a presumed velocity of 30 MPH, and a recognition-to-a-stop time of 4-5 seconds, a vehicle will travel up to 44.1 feet before it can come to a stop to avoid a collision.
- A recent traffic study confirms the violation rate (>5MPH over the speed limit) is as high as 25% of all vehicles in some places.

Last week, Officer Cory Hansen responded to a medical on the Waterwalk. As he arrived, panicked parents handed their infant to him. Presenting the symptoms of blue-colored skin, lifeless and no breathing, he recognized the baby may have something lodged in the airway. The officer applied a trained life-saving technique and in a few moments the baby came alive. This act qualifies for the Department's lifesaving award, which will be bestowed in the near future.

Prepared by Nestor Bautista