

09-2672

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January 27, 2010

Los Angeles City Council
c/o City Clerk
200 N. Spring Street, Rm #395
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: CF#09-2672

Date: 1/27/10
Submitted in Transportation Committee
Council File No: 09-2672
Item No.: 5
Deputy: Comm from Public

Gentlemen:

This afternoon you will consider an increase in posted speed limit for Riverside Drive, including that portion which passes through the business and residential community of Toluca Lake. My comments are specifically pointed towards that section of Riverside Drive from the City of Burbank boundary on the East (Clybourn Avenue) to Lankershim Boulevard on the West.

Toluca Lake is a historic community within the City of Los Angeles. We were the first "bedroom" community for the City of Los Angeles established in the San Fernando Valley. We are a community known for our "Village" atmosphere. A community known for the large number of people who walk. A community known for being safe, secure and an ideal place to raise a family. In the recent past we have also become a traffic pass through community, where commuters now use Riverside Drive as a high-speed alternative to the parallel 134 freeway. Riverside Drive is now used to carry a heavy burden of commuter traffic; drivers attempting to avoid regular traffic slowdowns at the Barham Pass and Caluenga Pass. Although only pedestrian fatalities are recorded in City records, if you were track pedestrian injuries caused by vehicle pedestrian collisions you would know they are now a regular and sad occurrence on Riverside Drive in Toluca Lake. Crosswalks in this community have become useless since vehicles are either traveling too fast to stop or they simply ignore the pedestrian in their haste to be somewhere else quickly. What was until recently a quiet business district is now a freeway many hours of the day.

We have heard the argument that because the majority of traffic is ignoring the current posted speed limit on Riverside the State of California requires that the posted limit be increased. The community is not foolish. If that is truly the law, it is a wrong, it is ignorant, and it is a bad law and this City should challenge.

Drivers will always test the limit of speed. If a street is posted at 35 they will travel 45 miles per hour. If that same street is posted at 40 miles per hour the average car would then drive at 50 miles per hour. On and on - with no end, no matter what the posted speed, vehicles will challenge the number. Therefore, we will find ourselves in a never-ending cycle of increasing speed to meet the requirements of the State.

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In fact the obvious reason that this change in speed limit is being requested is the City of Los Angeles could then use both manned and automated radar enforcement on Riverside Drive. That is clearly the primary reason for this considered change and, in my opinion, is an example of City government acting at its very worst.

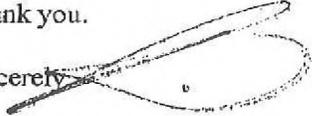
In a City strapped for cash and seeking alternative sources of revenue, the prospect of low cost automated radar endorsement is very appealing. The revenue numbers could be substantial. But what is the trade-off for that new source of revenue? The trade-off and real cost will come with the loss of human life. With injury and pain to people. With increased damages to personal property. Finally, with the destruction of a family community.

The State of California once lined highways with the ominous reminder that "speed kills". Now, they seek ways to encourage vehicle speed in some of the worst places. All reputable driving safety organizations will tell you – the insurance industry will tell you – that only bad things come with higher speeds. A person's response time is progressively diminished with higher speed. The amount of property damage and personal injury potential damage increases progressively with higher speed. The engineered crash safety performance of all cars diminishes with speed. The likelihood of surviving or avoiding a collision at 35 miles per hour is greater than avoiding or surviving a collision at 45 miles per hour. That is both a common sense statement and also one that can be substantiated with many respected studies.

The community does not want increased speed limits. Radar is only one way to enforce traffic laws. There are other ways to enforce posted speed limits that don't inherently hurt people. Our combined effort should not be on issuing violations but on finding way to slow traffic along this small stretch of Riverside Drive to average numbers that are safe – and numbers that will encourage commuter to return to the freeway.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Richard Bogy
Chairman, Community Development and Government Affairs
Toluca Lake Chamber of Commerce
Past President, Toluca Lake Chamber of Commerce
Vice President, Toluca Lake Homeowner's Association
Managing Partner, The Bogy Company – Insurance Agents Since 1910