

SUBJECT: Changing prima facie speed limit requirements in residence districts

COMMITTEE: Transportation — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 9 ayes — Canales, Ashby, Bucy, Davis, Lozano, Martinez, Ortega, Perez, Rogers

3 nays — E. Thompson, Harris, Smithee

1 absent — Landgraf

WITNESSES: For — Anne O’Ryan, AAA Texas; Jay Crossley, Farm&City; Luisa Petersen; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Robin Stallings, BikeTexas; Kathy Sokolic, Central TX Families for Safe Streets; Brie Franco, City of Austin; Tammy Embrey, City of Corpus Christi; Guadalupe Cuellar, City of El Paso; Christine Wright, City of San Antonio; Jessica Anderson, Houston Police Department; Bill Kelly, Mayor's Office, City of Houston; Alina Carnahan, Real Estate Council of Austin; Mackenna Wehmeyer, TAG Houston; Julie Wheeler, Travis County Commissioners Court; Kenneth Flippin; Vanessa MacDougal; Rodney Peterzen)

Against — Terri Hall, Texas TURF, Texans for Toll-free Highways; Don Dixon

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Jason Griffin, Texas Department of Public Safety; Thomas Parkinson)

BACKGROUND: Transportation Code sec. 545.356(b-1) allows the governing body of a municipality to lower the speed limit for a highway or part of a highway in the municipality that is not officially designated or marked as part of the state highway system, if the governing body determines that the prima facie speed limit on the highway is unreasonable or unsafe. The lowered speed limit could not be less than 25 miles per hour.

It has been suggested that making it easier for municipalities to lower the prima facie speed limit in residential neighborhoods would help ensure

that motor vehicles were driven at safer speeds in the presence of pedestrians and children at play.

DIGEST:

CSHB 442 would establish that a municipality was not required to perform an engineering or traffic investigation to lower a speed limit under Transportation Code sec. 545.356(b-1) if the street was located in a residence district.

Changes to speed limits under Transportation Code sec. 545.356(b-1) would be exempt from statutory provisions:

- establishing that an altered speed limit becomes effective when the governing body erects signs giving notice of the new limit; and
- requiring the governing body of a municipality that lowers a speed limit to publish on its website and submit to the Department of Transportation a report on citations and certain accidents on the relevant highway.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2021.