

Opinion: Caltrans listens to residents regarding speed limits

To the community,

I just finished my meeting with Jody Jones and Andrew Brandt from Caltrans. Apparently our concerns were heard because Caltrans is modifying its recommendation regarding speed limits.

In Meyers, from Hopi to right above Arapahoe the speed limit will remain the same 40 miles per hour. The entrance to Meyers to Hopi is being classified as a transition zone from the 55 miles per hour as you come down from the summit to the 40 miles per hour beginning at Hopi. For this four-tenths of a mile, the speed will increase from 40 to 45 then it goes back down to the 40.



Norma Santiago

A little beyond Arapahoe where the speed limit is currently 50 it will increase to 55 until you get into the city where it will transition to 45 then to 40 until before you get to Stateline where it will remain 35.

In its evaluation, Caltrans does take into account those optional considerations noted in the federal law; however, combined with the other considerations the most they can

reduce the speed limit is 5 miles per hour. So unless something dramatically changes in driver behavior or geometrically along the highway, these are the speed limits.

However, understand that by 2014, given the road projects that Caltrans has planned, the study will be repeated and the speed limit will be adjusted accordingly. Included in those plans are a class 2 bike trail on Highway 50 through Meyers; a pedestrian crosswalk across Highway 50 that is going to be sited between Apache and the bus station; a pedestrian button at Pioneer Trail and Highway 50.

While I know this isn't all we wanted, however, most important, we were successful in convincing Caltrans to keep the Meyers commercial core at 40. As we move through the implementation of the Meyers Community Plan, we will continue to arm ourselves with the community design that further merits additional decreases in speed.

I want to thank all of you for your ongoing support throughout this process. I will continue to pursue changes in legislation that reflect further considerations, for example when the law refers to environmental considerations, it speaks to what is actually on the road in terms of buildings, storefronts, etc. There is no consideration given to how higher speeds effect air quality.

Additionally, I would like to see Caltrans adopt the USLIMITS methodology for setting speed limits which affords greater flexibility. Unfortunately, all this has to go through the legislative process which takes time, but I am hopeful for the change.

The new signs should be up in mid-April.

Again, thank you everyone for your support.

Norma Santiago, El Dorado County supervisor