

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Timothy J. Baroody, City Manager  
**FROM:** Mike Craig, Senior Planner  
**DATE:** April 20 for the April 26 Council Meeting  
**RE:** Reducing the Speed Limit within the Downtown Business District

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**Issue**

The existing speed limit on major Downtown streets should be reduced from 25 to 20 MPH.

**Recommendation**

Review the proposed ordinance and map in anticipation of taking action on an ordinance reducing the speed limit at the Council’s May 10 meeting.

**Background**

The City Government is focused on enhancing the pedestrian safety throughout the City. One way to reduce conflict between cars and pedestrians is by lowering speed limits where warranted and legally permissible. The City’s Downtown Core is a walkable activity center with a high pedestrian volume throughout the year. The concentration of attractions such as the thriving business district, historic architecture, and newly opened Riverfront Park create a walkable environment even for those who come to town for a visit by train or in their automobile.

Virginia State Code authorizes the local governing body to reduce the speed limit to 20 MPH in a “business district”. The state code definition of a business district is an area of the City where 75 percent or more of the property abutting a street, on either side of the street, for a distance of 300 feet or more is used for actual business purposes.

The City Manager’s office, Attorney’s office, Police, Transportation, Public Works, and Planning Departments convened to identify the areas within the Downtown Core where the State Code permitted the reduction of the speed limit. Based on the review, this group recommends the City Council reduce the speed limit on the following road segments from 25 to 20 MPH:

1. *Sophia Street between Lafayette Boulevard and Amelia Street;*
2. *Caroline Street between Lafayette Boulevard and Lewis Street;*
3. *William Street between Washington Avenue and Sophia Street; and*
4. *Lafayette Street between Sophia Street and Prince Edward Street.*

**Fiscal Impact**

The speed limit change will require changes in street signage.

**Attachments:**

1. Draft ordinance reducing the speed limit on the major business district streets and map.

# Downtown Business Area Speed Limit Reduction from 25 to 20 M.P.H.

 Street segments where Speed Limit to be reduced from 25 to 20 M.P.H.

 T-5 Urban Core Transect (Downtown)

 "Business Area" (defined by Va. State Code §46.2-100)





draft April 7, 2022  
Regular Meeting  
Ordinance No. 22-\_\_

**MOTION:**

**SECOND:**

**RE:** Reducing the speed limit from 25 miles per hour to 20 miles per hour in the Downtown Business District

**ACTION:** APPROVED: Ayes: 0; Nays: 0

**FIRST READ:** \_\_\_\_\_ **SECOND READ:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sec. I. Introduction.**

Virginia Code §46.2-1300 authorizes a local governing body to reduce the speed limit to less than 25 miles per hour, but no less than 15 miles per hour, on any highway within its boundaries that is located in a business district, provided that such reduced speed limit is indicated by lawfully placed signs. A “business district” is defined as the territory contiguous to a highway where 75 percent or more of the property contiguous to a highway, on either side of the highway, for a distance of 300 feet or more along the highway, is occupied by land and buildings actually in use for business purposes.

The City Manager has presented a map of downtown Fredericksburg showing those streets that meet the definition of a “business district,” with a recommendation to reduce the speed limit on these streets from 25 miles per hour to 20 miles per hour, in the interest of public safety, including motor vehicle and pedestrian safety. After considering this recommendation, the City Council concludes that the proposed reduction of the speed limit is in the public interest.

**Sec. II. City Code amendment.**

The City Code is amended by adding a new section 58-133 “Reduced speed limit in the Downtown Business District,” as follows:

§58-133. Reduced speed limit in the Downtown Business District.

- A. For purposes of the reduced speed limit in this section, the Downtown Business District *is comprised of the following streets:*

1. *Sophia Street between Lafayette Boulevard and Amelia Street;*
  2. *Caroline Street between Lafayette Boulevard and Lewis Street;*
  3. *William Street between Washington Avenue and Sophia Street; and*
  4. *Lafayette Street between Sophia Street and Prince Edward Street.*
- B. *The maximum speed limit on streets in the Downtown Business District shall be 20 miles per hour.*
- C. *The City Manager shall place signs indicating the reduced maximum speed limit on these streets.*

**Sec. III. Effective date.**

This ordinance becomes effective on July 1, 2022.

**Votes:**

**Ayes:**

**Nays:**

**Absent from Vote:**

**Absent from Meeting:**

Approved as to form:

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Kathleen Dooley, City Attorney

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***Clerk's Certificate***

*I, the undersigned, certify that I am Clerk of Council of the City of Fredericksburg, Virginia, and that the foregoing is a true copy of Ordinance No. 22- duly adopted at a meeting of the City Council meeting held Date, 2022 at which a quorum was present and voted.*

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***Tonya B. Lacey, MMC  
Clerk of Council***