

## Asheville traffic proposal



JOEL BURGESS / CITIZEN-TIMES

The city installed 25 mph speed limit signs Wednesday on the south end of Charlotte Street. City Council is considering a 25 mph default speed limit for all of Asheville.

# 25 MPH CITYWIDE?

### Council considers lower default speed

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from 30 mph to 25 mph. So did residents near parts of 11 other roads, including Davenport Road, Lakeside Drive and Sweeten Creek Road. Those streets all saw their speed limits dropped to 25 mph in a vote Tuesday by the council.

But now, Asheville's elected officials said they might go further to reduce

on Charlotte Street and who was among the business owners and residents pushing for slower speeds. An Asheville native, O'Cain said "it would take a second to change."

"People get into patterns. But, ultimately, it benefits us all," he said.

Not all business owners supported

# Speed

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latest analyses by the North Carolina Department of Transportation on people on foot killed by cars. It said the Asheville metro area topped the state for per capita pedestrian deaths from 2008-12.

"We struggle with too many pedestrian fatalities, and I attribute that a lot to speeding and would like to see us continue toward working to reduce the speed limit all across the city," Vice Mayor Gwen Wisler said at Tuesday's meeting.

Councilwoman Julie Mayfield said lowering the citywide limit is already part of Asheville's pedestrian master plan. Mayfield said she was interested to know if there enough streets that "should be 25 mph, that it should be the default."

Councilman Brian Haynes said he

lives on a 25 mph-street in the River Arts District whose speed limit "is regularly ignored." While Councilman Cecil Bothwell said an added benefit to a lower limit would be fuel savings. City Traffic Engineer Jeff Moore said one of the most common calls to his office is for lowering speeds to 25 mph in residential areas. In response, city traffic workers are doing about four speed studies a week in different neighborhoods.

"And we're about six weeks behind," he said.

Moore said his department moves deliberately to avoid making changes it must later reverse or adjust. One thing is to not set limits that are artificially low to the point that they become "speed traps," he said. But he understands the push to lower speeds in residential areas.

"People walk, they walk their dogs, push their children in strollers," Moore said.

The city traffic engineer said he'll talk to police and city attorneys to make sure such a change has solid legal foot-

ing. State law sets municipal default limits at 35 mph but allows towns and cities to adjust that. The state department of transportation proposes speed limits on state highways, which include Biltmore

and Merrimon avenues, but the city must concur.

He'll present the information he gathers to the council's public safety committee, Moore said.