



TO: **Transportation and Infrastructure Services Committee**
FROM: **Jen Tetatzin – Public Work Director**
BY: **Adam Cox – Senior Program Manager – Transportation**
CC: **Mayor Thomas McLeod**
DATE: **November 21, 2025**
SUBJECT: **West Valley Highway (SR 181) Ordinance**

ISSUE

Approve the West Valley Highway (SR 181) Ordinance amending Tukwila Municipal Code Chapter 9.16 “Local Speed Limits”

BACKGROUND

The boundary between City of Kent and the City of Tukwila along the West Valley Highway (SR 181) corridor is located on the center line of the highway. From S 180th St to the Union Pacific Railroad crossing, the southbound direction of SR 181 is within the City of Tukwila, and the northbound direction is within the City of Kent. The attached map provides a visual of the boundary.

Representatives from the City of Kent reached out to Tukwila staff with an inquiry about whether Tukwila would consider lowering the speed limit on the City’s section of West Valley Highway in coordination with Kent’s revision. The City of Kent had recently received approval from WSDOT to reduce the speed limit on West Valley Highway from 50 mph to 40 mph after the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) conducted a speed study, inclusive of the Tukwila section. As West Valley Highway is a state highway, WSDOT must approve all speed limits. City of Kent expects to adopt the speed limit reduction to 40 mph from S 180th Street southward on December 2, 2025. Kent forces are anticipated to change out speed limit signs sometime in January 2026.

DISCUSSION

City personnel are working in parallel with staff from the City of Kent to have the speed limit reduced on SR 181. The coordination efforts and adoption of the ordinance amendment will ensure that both the City of Kent and the City of Tukwila will post signage simultaneously, reducing confusion for both drivers and law enforcement.

This ordinance enables the Tukwila Police Department, Kent Police Department, and Washington State Patrol to enforce penalties against drivers who fail to comply with the posted regulatory speed limit.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

De minimis

RECOMMENDATION

The Council is being asked to approve the ordinance and consider this item at the December 1, 2025 Regular Consent Meeting.

ATTACHMENTS: Ordinance Amending Tukwila Municipal Code Chapter 9.16
SR 181 WSDOT Approval of Traffic Regulations
Tukwila Kent SR 181 Boundary Map

DRAFT

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TUKWILA, WASHINGTON, REPEALING VARIOUS ORDINANCES AS CODIFIED AT TUKWILA MUNICIPAL CODE (TMC) CHAPTER 9.16, "LOCAL SPEED LIMITS – ONE-WAY STREETS"; REENACTING TMC CHAPTER 9.16; ADOPTING UPDATED REASONABLE AND SAFE MAXIMUM SPEED LIMITS ON CERTAIN DESIGNATED STREETS, AS POSTED BY OFFICIAL TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, chapter 9.16 of the Tukwila Municipal Code ("TMC") adopts by reference the Washington Model Traffic Ordinance set forth in chapter 308-330 of the Washington Administrative Code ("WAC"); and

WHEREAS, the Washington Model Traffic Ordinance and RCW 46.61.415 set forth the procedure for local authorities to determine and declare the maximum speed limits on city arterials, streets, and other rights-of-way, based on an engineering and traffic investigation by the traffic engineer. Following an engineering study or traffic investigation, the City of Tukwila ("City") may establish limits on certain designated streets by resolution; and

WHEREAS, previously, Resolution No. 1370 established the maximum speed limit on certain portions of West Valley Highway (SR 181); and

WHEREAS, the City shares jurisdictional authority on West Valley Highway with the City of Kent from the southern City limits north to South 180th Street. The City of Kent controls speed limits for northbound traffic, and the City of Tukwila controls speed limits for southbound traffic, both requiring consultation with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) on state routes; and

WHEREAS, the City of Kent is lowering the maximum speed limit for northbound traffic on that portion of the shared West Valley Highway after an engineering study and traffic investigation, and with approval from WSDOT, the Kent City Council is reducing the speed limit from 50 mph to 40 mph; and

WHEREAS, the City desires to have the same maximum speed limit for southbound traffic on the shared portion of West Valley Highway with the City of Kent, and approval for the new maximum speed limit was granted by WSDOT based on the engineering study prepared by the City of Kent; and

WHEREAS, the City recognizes the need for updating and amending the code provisions under Title 9 of the Tukwila Municipal Code to enact the maximum speed limit change;

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TUKWILA, WASHINGTON, HEREBY ORDAINS AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Adoption of Findings of Fact. The City Council finds as follows.

The above recitals, set forth as “WHEREAS” clauses, are hereby adopted as Findings of Fact in support of the adoption of this ordinance.

Section 2. Repealer. Ordinance Nos. 1370 §1 (part), 1395 §1 & §2, 1583 §1, 1866 § 1, 1875 §1, 2380 §1, and 2566 §2, as codified at TMC Chapter 9.16, “Local Speed Limits – One-Way Streets,” are hereby repealed, thereby eliminating this chapter.

~~**CHAPTER 9.16**~~
~~**LOCAL SPEED LIMITS – ONE-WAY STREETS**~~

~~Sections:~~

~~9.16.010 — Forty MPH on Portion of West Valley Highway~~
~~9.16.020 — Secondary State Highway No. 181~~
~~9.16.030 — South 132nd Street~~
~~9.16.040 — Maule Avenue~~
~~9.16.050 — Interurban Avenue~~
~~9.16.060 — South 124th Street, 42nd Avenue South, and 50th Place South~~
~~9.17.070 — Thirty-five MPH on Portion of Tukwila International Boulevard~~

Section 3. TMC Chapter 9.16 Reenacted. TMC chapter 9.16 is hereby reenacted to read as follows:

CHAPTER 9.16
LOCAL SPEED LIMITS – ONE-WAY STREETS

Sections:

9.16.010 — West Valley Highway
9.16.020 — 42nd Avenue South
9.16.030 — South 132nd Street
9.16.040 — Maule Avenue
9.16.050 — Interurban Avenue
9.16.060 — 52nd Place South
9.17.070 — Tukwila International Boulevard

Section 4. TMC Section 9.16.010 is hereby reenacted to read as follows:

9.16.010 West Valley Highway.

A 40 mile-per-hour speed limit zone is established on the West Valley Highway (SR 181) from the southern limits of the City of Tukwila at approximately State Highway Milepost No. 9.24 northward to the end of the State Highway and the beginning of Interurban Avenue at approximately State Highway Milepost No. 11.45.

Section 5. TMC Section 9.16.020 is hereby reenacted to read as follows:

9.16.020 42nd Avenue South

42nd Avenue South from Interurban Avenue to the north terminus of the 42nd Avenue S Bridge is restricted to a maximum speed of 15 mile-per-hour for all Type 1, Type 2, and Type 3 trucks, as defined by the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHTO).

Section 6. TMC Section 9.16.030 is hereby reenacted to read as follows:

9.16.030 South 132nd Street.

South 132nd Street shall be a one-way street, traffic moving from 48th South to South 133rd Street.

Section 7. TMC Section 9.16.040 is hereby reenacted to read as follows:

9.16.040 Maule Avenue.

Maule Avenue shall be a one-way street, traffic moving from South 147th Street to South 143 Place.

Section 8. TMC Section 9.16.050 is hereby reenacted to read as follows:

9.16.050 Interurban Avenue.

A 35 mile-per-hour speed limit is established on Interurban Avenue from State Highway Milepost No. 11.45 to the north City limits.

Section 9. TMC Section 9.16.060 is hereby reenacted to read as follows:

9.16.060 52nd Place South.

52nd Place South is restricted to one-way traffic in the northwest direction between South 137th Street and 52nd Avenue South, moving from South 137th Street to 52nd Avenue South.

Section 10. TMC Section 9.16.070 is hereby reenacted to read as follows:

9.16.070 Tukwila International Boulevard.

A 35 mile-per-hour speed limit zone is established for both directions of traffic on Tukwila International Boulevard between South 139th Street and South 152nd Street.

Section 11. Signs to be Posted. The Public Works Director is hereby directed to post appropriate speed limit signs reflecting the speed limits established in this ordinance after coordinating with the City of Kent. The speed limit signs are to be posted at the same time between both jurisdictions to avoid driver confusion.

Section 12. Corrections by City Clerk or Code Reviser Authorized. Upon approval of the City Attorney, the City Clerk and the code reviser are authorized to make necessary corrections to this ordinance, including the correction of clerical errors; references to other local, state or federal laws, codes, rules, or regulations; or ordinance numbering and section/subsection numbering.

Section 13. Severability. If any section, subsection, paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase of this ordinance or its application to any person or situation should be held to be invalid or unconstitutional for any reason by a court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity or unconstitutionality shall not affect the validity or constitutionality of the remaining portions of this ordinance or its application to any other person or situation.

Section 14. Effective Date. This ordinance or a summary thereof shall be published in the official newspaper of the City, and shall take effect and be in full force five days after passage and publication as provided by law, provided that the speed limits set forth in this ordinance shall not be enforceable until appropriate signs are posted.

PASSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TUKWILA, WASHINGTON, at a Regular Meeting thereof this _____ day of _____, 2025.

ATTEST/AUTHENTICATED:

Andy Youn-Barnett, CMC, City Clerk

Thomas McLeod, Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM BY:

Filed with the City Clerk: _____
Passed by the City Council: _____
Published: _____
Effective Date: _____
Ordinance Number: _____

Office of the City Attorney

STATE TRANSPORTATION OPERATIONS ENGINEER
CALENDAR AGENDA

May 22, 2025

TO: Dongoho Chang, State Traffic Engineer

FROM: Jessi Henderson



RE: Approval of Traffic Regulations
CALENDAR ACTION

Below are items for inclusion on your Calendar for approval.

SPEED LIMIT

SR 181, Kent

OFFICIAL:

MP 6.17 TO MP 8.71 Both = 50 MPH

MP 8.71 TO MP 9.76 Both = 50 MPH

PROPOSED:

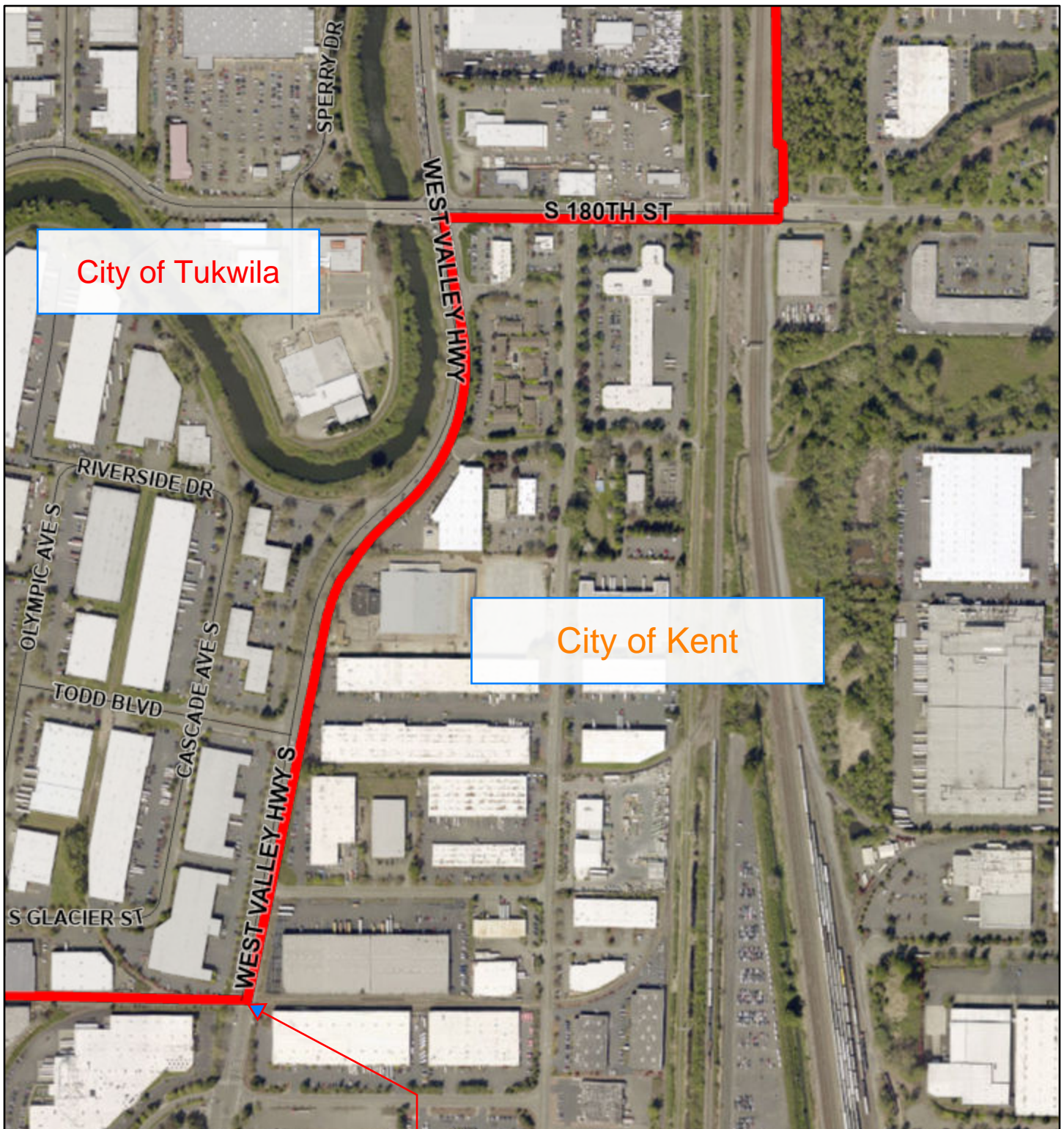
MP 6.17 TO MP 9.76 Both = 40 MPH

The proposed speed zone request was submitted by the Northwest Region based on a traffic engineering study. The region collaborated with the City of Kent, WSP on this request.

Approved:  May 22, 2025
Dongoho Chang
State Traffic Engineer

CC: David Weller, NWR Region
Lou Baker TDGMO
Rob Brown, City of Kent
Brenda Schenck, Washington State Patrol
Mike Swires, Regional Traffic Engineer

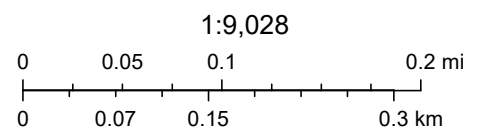
Tukwila iMap



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-  City Limits
-  Buildings
-  Street

Union Pacific
Railroad Crossing



City of Tukwila, King County, EagleView Technologies, Inc., King County