

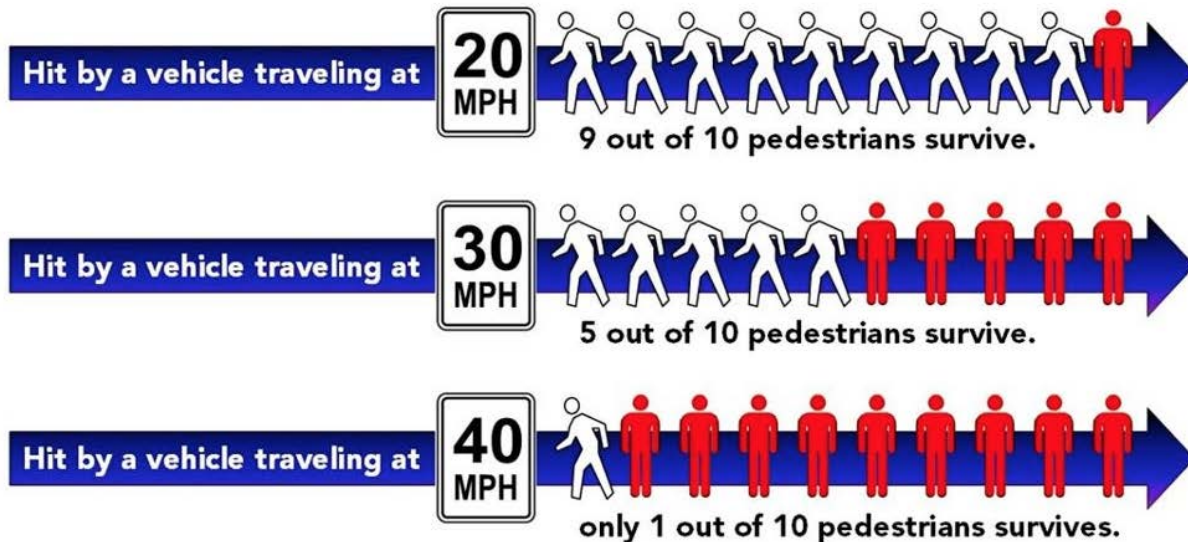
Speed Reduction Committee Recommendations Transportation Commission

Draft Recommendations, March 12, 2018

Subcommittee Members: Bradley Parsons, Stephanie Preston, Chip Smith

Executive Summary

In keeping with Ann Arbor's Vision Zero goal of zero traffic-related fatalities by 2025, the reality of lowering speeds must be addressed. Numerous [studies](#) show that pedestrian fatality rates increase dramatically with even moderate increases in vehicle impact speed.



The purpose of this committee was to research and prepare recommendations for Commission action to address a prior proposed resolution to City Council regarding lowering speeds city-wide to calm traffic and improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety. The scope of the committee includes reducing speeds on all city owned roads to 25 mph, possible further reductions in residential areas, suggested reductions on State owned roads, and suggestions to reduce crashes and improve safety.

Recommendations

Based on research, work with staff and other transportation professionals, this committee *does not* recommend a city-wide 25-mph speed limit for a number of reasons, including (but not limited to) location and traffic volume, functional classification, context, state and federal regulations, traffic patterns, surrounding land uses, and current road designs.

Other Recommendations:

- 1. Dedicated Funding and Staffing**
- 2. Adopt City Policy of Using Safe Systems to Design Roadways**
- 3. Increase Enforcement Efforts**
- 4. Expanded and Sustained Public Outreach Campaigns**
- 5. Amend the Traffic Calming Program.**
- 6. Lobby for Speed Changes on State-owned Roads.**
- 7. Create a Vision Zero Task Force**

A summary of our key recommendations is contained in the body of this report. Each is discussed in more detail in the corresponding numbered recommendation later in the document. Our suggested changes include an important combination of speed changes, road design changes, cultural changes, enforcement, changing qualifications for traffic calming, and systematic study of key problematic corridors. These efforts must be undertaken in combination for change to occur. Simply changing speeds without corresponding changes in road design, enforcement, and education about how to use crosswalks or to observe and pass bicycles will not be effective.

Mission of the Subcommittee

The purpose of this committee was to research and prepare recommendations for Commission action to address a prior proposed resolution to City Council regarding lowering speeds city-wide to calm traffic and improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety.

The scope of the committee involved analyzing the possibility of reducing speeds on all city-owned roads to 25 mph, possible further reductions in residential areas, suggested reductions on State owned roads, and suggestions to reduce crashes and improve safety. Inherently, this includes developing ideas for implementation. The Committee also used information from benchmark communities in our analysis and in the generation of our recommendations.

Sub Committee Background

The committee met bi-weekly on Fridays at 11am in the fall of 2017 for the purpose of compiling research, working with staff, asking questions about current policies and procedures and to work toward consensus recommendations that can be successfully implemented.

Based on research, work with staff and other transportation professionals, this committee *does not* recommend a city-wide 25-mph speed limit for a number of reasons, including (but not limited to) location and traffic volume, functional classification, context, state and federal regulations, traffic patterns, surrounding land uses, and current road designs. Additional recommendations are outlined and described below and on subsequent pages.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. Dedicated Funding and Staffing.**
- 2. Adopt City Policy of Using Safe Systems to Design Roadways**
- 3. Increase Enforcement Efforts**
- 4. Expanded and Sustained Public Outreach Campaigns**
- 5. Amend the Traffic Calming Program.**
- 6. Lobby for Speed Changes on State-owned Roads.**
- 7. Create a Vision Zero Task Force**

Recommendation 1: Dedicated Funding and Staffing

Create dedicated Vision Zero funding for safety improvements, including traffic calming, outreach and enforcement. Currently, a significant barrier to safer streets in Ann Arbor is funding and resources. Funding is needed to pay for: enhanced enforcement, capital improvements, programming, staffing and communications. Funding should be separate from and in addition to existing street reconstruction funds. This should be overseen by the City's Mobility Coordinator, who has yet to be hired. This position has been identified in the budget as a recurring expense by the City Administrator.

Recommendation 2: Road Design - Adopt City Policy of Using Safe Systems to Design Roadways

This committee recommends that the City Administrator and/or City Council adopt a policy of requiring a safe system approach to designing roadways and setting speed limits.

The publication referenced in Recommendation 6, *Reducing Speeding-Related Crashes Involving Passenger Vehicles* (Safety Study NTSB/SS-17/01 PB2017-102341. National Transportation Safety Board, 2017) recommends adoption of a safe system approach to setting speed limits. Specifically, the report states:

The safe system approach to speed limits differs from the traditional view that drivers choose reasonable and safe speeds. In the safe system approach, speed limits are set according to the likely crash types, the resulting impact forces, and the human body's ability to withstand these forces (Forbes and others 2012). It allows for human errors (that is, accepting humans will make mistakes) and acknowledges that humans are physically vulnerable (that is, physical tolerance to impact is limited). Therefore, in this approach, speed limits are set to minimize death and serious injury as a consequence of a crash (Jurewicz and others 2014). This approach is far more commonly applied outside of the United States, such as in Sweden (where it is called Vision Zero), the Netherlands (where it is called Sustainable Safety), and several jurisdictions in Australia (OECD 2008). However, it is now gaining acceptance in the United States, particularly in Vision Zero cities and municipalities.

The safe system approach calls for road designers to move from the conventional design (in which the posted speed limit is determined by the anticipated operating speed) to a proactive urban street design approach (in which the posted speed limit is determined by a target speed based on a desired safety result). The safe-system-approach-recommended maximum target speeds for urban roads are typically near the low end of the AASHTO minimum design speeds.¹

Recommendation 3: Increase Enforcement Efforts

As indicated in the National Transportation Safety Board's 2017 study "[Reducing Speeding-Related Crashes Involving Passenger Vehicles](#)," **speed limits must be enforced to be effective**, including high-visibility enforcement. Increased enforcement efforts need to be prioritized by the Ann Arbor Police Department. To do this, a different approach to enforcement that engages and involves all road patrol officers rather than a dedicated traffic enforcement unit should be evaluated. Other enforcement recommendations and support needed include:

- Performing high-visibility enforcement at targeted locations based on citizen reporting, crash data, speed study analysis, and radar sign reporting.
- Providing additional resources, including filling the vacant traffic officer position.
- Establishing a zero-tolerance policy on speeding, with citations for all infractions regardless of potential court outcome (i.e., not limited to speeds > 10mph over the posted

¹ *Reducing Speeding-Related Crashes Involving Passenger Vehicles, Safety Study NTSB/SS-17/01 PB2017-102341. National Transportation Safety Board. 2017. Pp 27-8.*

limit).

- Creating recurring, high-visibility enforcement campaigns aimed at speeding—similar in design to the recent crosswalk compliance campaign.
- Investigating automated enforcement possibilities, including seeking an exception for camera-based tickets at the State level if needed.

Recommendation 4: Expanded and Sustained Public Outreach Campaigns

Expand and enhance education efforts regarding the crosswalk ordinance, safe crossing, the 5-foot passing ordinance, and our commitment to safety, in order to foster cultural change. These campaigns should include collaboration with U-M, AAPS, large employers, and other local entities. Successful implementation is accessible to outsiders and recurs over time, to take into account our transitory population. For example, signs on roads entering town are more visible than articles in local papers. The city can also work with large employers to teach new employees our culture and specific rules.

The [City of Ann Arbor Pedestrian Safety and Access Task Force](#) noted an “unfamiliarity and misunderstanding of traffic laws and local expectations” as one of five “underlying issues to address.” The Speed Reduction Committee recommends **sustained public outreach campaigns** similar to those recommended by the Task Force, to include:

- Multifaceted, ongoing outreach efforts targeting residents, students, out of town commuters and visitors using a variety of targeted outreach methodologies. Such outreach might include extensive social media advertising, advertising on busses, public service announcements on local radio, and signage throughout the city.
- Engage public, private and institutional entities to integrate simple positive and memorable messages into their existing correspondence and interactions with their clientele.
- Emphasize that use of our roadways is a shared responsibility.
- Educate roadway users on the correlation between speed and injury severity.
- Increase the percentage of motorists who stop for and yield to pedestrians at all crosswalks and other pedestrian safety and awareness issues as deemed appropriate.
- Raise awareness of the local 5 foot passing ordinance.

Recommendation 5: Amend the Traffic Calming Program

As of November 2016, 76 street segments petitioned for traffic calming, with 24 segments receiving treatments (32%). 43 segments (57%) did not qualify based on speed criteria.

To improve the effectiveness of the Traffic Calming Program we recommend **implementing short-term changes** to broaden the existing Traffic Calming Program to allow more streets to qualify for resident driven improvements, to expand the toolbox of devices considered in the existing Traffic Calming Program, and to reform the process and engagement format. For example, staff should consider the following in the Program update already in progress:

- Reduce the qualifying speed criteria.

- Establish qualifying criteria aligned with the [“main objectives”](#) of the program, including: “promote non-motorized transportation”, “improve the quality of life for residents”, “reduce cut-through traffic,” and “create attractive streets.”
- Add non-speed qualifying parameters currently in use in other communities, such as: 25% of traffic non-resident during problem hour (East Lansing) and proximity to schools and pedestrian generators (Washtenaw County Roads Commission).
- Add vehicle deterrents and active transportation priority elements as part of the solutions toolbox, along with creative neighborhood-derived solutions.
- Simplify and reduce thresholds in the 10-step process.
- Maintain a high level of public input in the design process, allow residents to offer potential solutions, and include a resident-centered design workshop.

Information about the existing program requirements and process is provided in the [Traffic Calming Guidebook](#). Additional information on the Traffic Calming program can be found in the [Traffic Calming, Speed Limits, and Design Speed Report](#).

Recommendation 6: Lobby for speed changes on state-owned roads, starting with Washtenaw Avenue

Washtenaw is an MDOT controlled road, which limits the ability of city staff to make decisions about the posted speed limit and roadway design. Attractors of non-motorized activity exist along the corridor, including Tappan Middle School, Burns Park Elementary, Angell Elementary, University of Michigan, AAATA bus stops, churches and synagogues.

Other factors include: The highest speed limits in the city (45mph between East Stadium Blvd and Tuomy Road). A crash history for 2016 of 25 crashes in a 0.3 mile span near the Washtenaw/Stadium split, with 80% rear-end collisions and 50% involving new drivers and—most importantly—two fatal incidents in the last two years (one bicycle, one motorist). Speeding cars involved in accidents also damage adjacent properties with significant damage to fences, bushes, and even the first floor of a house.

We recommend that City Council authorize the City’s lobbyist, Representatives Rahbi and Zemke and Senator Warren and City staff to engage MDOT on the following items:

- Conduct a comprehensive corridor study, including an engineering evaluation of the corridor’s current conditions and street geometry, to determine changes necessary to reduce the speed limit throughout the corridor.
- Develop cost estimates for the changes required to lower the speed limit between Hill and Arlington to 25 mph.
- Explore opportunities to alter the physical roadway for speed reduction through street design.

Recommendation 7: Create a Vision Zero Task Force

This committee recommends the Council authorize the formation of a Vision Zero Task Force charged with creating a Vision Zero Action Plan and responsible for oversight and implementation. This Vision Zero Task Force should also be charged with:

- Developing a **Neighborhood Slow Streets Program**, to include:
 - Creating a neighborhood-based approach to transportation.
 - Creating a higher level of respect for non-motorized users by the community.
 - Enhancing community-City partnerships on transportation facilities and design.
 - Expanding the street design toolbox to create active transportation corridors.
- Developing a program for **System-wide changes to lowering speed**, that include:
 - Identifying priority corridors that include proximity to schools and parks, where bike facilities are present, high pedestrian activity zones, and where speeding is documented.
 - Adopting a “Safe Systems” approach to speed limits and roadway design.
 - Allowing for resident-initiated review of corridors for speed reduction
 - including an online crowd-sourced data tool for transportation system users to provide feedback and locate problem locations.
 - Performing ongoing crash data analysis to identify locations, priorities, and preferred outcomes.
 - Identifying a toolbox of engineering devices that could be suitable for higher functional class streets.