Act Fast: The Growing Call for Slower Speeds
August 8, 2018 | City of Portland, Oregon
Today

1. Negative impacts of speed on Portland streets
2. Updating our speed limits
3. Helping people obey speed limits
4. Challenges
Not today, but happy to talk

- Process of changing speed limits
- Results of our efforts
- Crash data limitations
- Autonomous vehicles
- Street design treatments (only briefly today)
Negative impacts of speed

47% SPEED

53% OTHER FACTORS

DEADLY CRASHES

2004–13

SOURCE: 2004–13 PORTLAND CRASH DATA
Includes crashes which involved speeding or driving too fast for conditions
Negative impacts of speed

TOTAL DEATHS PER ROADWAY MILE OF POSTED SPEED LIMIT
Negative impacts of speed

Median family income of adults by mode of travel to work, Portland OR MSA

- **Automobile**: 73,600
- **Bike/Walk**: 42,300
- **Transit**: 44,700
- **Non-workers**: 39,300

Especially vulnerable to speed

Source: American Community Survey (2011-15), via IPUMS, courtesy City Observatory
# Negative impacts of speed

## What makes walking difficult in PDX?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Citywide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sidewalks/ walking paths missing on BUSY streets</td>
<td>4.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough safe places to cross busy streets</td>
<td>4.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>People driving too fast on RESIDENTIAL streets</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.44</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>People driving too fast on BUSY streets</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.29</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drivers not stopping for pedestrians crossing the street</td>
<td>4.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidewalks/ walking paths missing on RESIDENTIAL streets</td>
<td>3.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor lighting</td>
<td>3.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buckled/ cracked/ uplifted sidewalks, or other tripping hazards</td>
<td>3.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing curb ramps at intersections</td>
<td>3.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough time to cross the street</td>
<td>3.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 3: Barriers to Walking - Citywide Average Point Values (from 1-6). The figure shows that the top barriers to walking identified by survey respondents citywide are “Missing sidewalks on busy streets,” “Not enough safe places to cross busy streets,” “People driving too fast on residential streets,” and “People driving too fast on busy streets.”*
Negative impacts of speed
Portland’s approach to speed

• Setting new expectations
• 85th percentile method is not supported by evidence and is not part of Portland policy
  • Portland emphasizes street context and safety
  • Less physical separation requires lower speed limit

• Portland changes speed limits even when street design stays the same
  • Not necessary to pair speed limit changes with street redesign projects
  • Land use & development can support safe speeds
Refreshing our speed limits
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Refreshing our speed limits
Helping people obey speed limits: Street design
Helping people obey speed limits: Street design
Helping people obey speed limits: Speed safety cameras

58% decrease in people driving over the speed limit after installing speed safety cameras
Helping people obey speed limits: Messaging
Helping people obey speed limits: Messaging

20 MPH IS PORTLAND’S NEW SPEED LIMIT ON RESIDENTIAL STREETS

- The new speed limit takes effect April 1, 2018 and PBOT will be installing signs to reflect the change.
- Slower driving speeds help prevent crashes and, when crashes occur, reduce the harm that results.

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Helping people obey speed limits: Messaging

**Distance Needed to Stop**
- **20 MPH**: 64 ft.
- **30 MPH**: 112 ft.
- **40 MPH**: 170 ft.

**Chance of Death or Severe Injury**
- **10%** while traveling **20 MPH**
- **40%** while traveling **30 MPH**
- **80%** while traveling **40 MPH**

**Source**
Oregon Department of Transportation
“Transportation Safety: 5 Miles Over”
U.S. Department of Transportation’s
Helping people obey speed limits: Messaging
Challenges: Pushback

Photo: Next Door

Photo: KATU
Challenges: Pushback

Photo: KATU
Challenges: Pushback

• “You are making people frustrated, leading to more dangerous driving behaviors.”
• “Changing speed limits is pointless unless paired with more enforcement or street design changes.”
• “I’ve lived here for 30 years—I’ve never noticed a safety problem on this street.”
Challenges: Racial profiling

• Portland’s Vision Zero Action Plan commits to not result in racial profiling and to limit use of enforcement

• Excerpt from plan (with highlight):

  In areas of Portland where streets were built to move cars efficiently, those streets must be redesigned to move people safely. Vision Zero’s guiding principles and actions prioritize infrastructure investment on our most dangerous streets in traditionally under-invested communities. The enforcement actions in this plan are limited in order to reduce the possibility of racial profiling and disparate economic impacts.
Summing up

• Speed contributes to traffic injuries & deaths and to fear of walking and biking
• Updating speed limits: 20, 25, and 30 mph
• Supporting speed limits with street design, speed safety cameras, and messaging campaigns
• We’ve seen and heard some resistance to change, but there is support for safe driving speeds
• Speed management should account for racial profiling
Thank you

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