

City of  
Bellevue



# Transportation Commission Study Session

**DATE:** February 12, 2026  
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**SUBJECT:** Safe Speeds Bellevue

## DIRECTION REQUESTED

Action

Discussion/Direction

Information

## INTRODUCTION

The Safe Speeds Bellevue program was created to support the City Council-adopted Vision Zero initiative to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries on Bellevue streets by 2030. The program is comprehensively evaluating all existing speed limits on streets currently posted at 30 mph or higher and considering lower speed limits to account for various changes in city land use and transportation patterns that have occurred since the speed limits were initially set.

Through this study session, staff will present the approach to evaluating higher speed streets for possible speed limit changes, proposed speed limit changes based on staff evaluation, outreach conducted to date and results of four evaluation streets where a lower speed limit was introduced. Safe Speeds Bellevue was initiated by the City Council in May 2025.

This agenda item is intended to provide information for Commissioners. No action is requested.

## BACKGROUND AND INFORMATION

Safe Speeds is one of the four pillars of Bellevue's Safe Systems approach adopted by Council in 2020. The Safe Speeds pillar of the Safe Systems approach recognizes the direct connection between speed and the severity of injuries when crashes occur. Streets in Bellevue that have a posted speed limit of 30 mph or more represent only 25% of the total street mileage but account for 88% of crashes where a person is killed or seriously injured. Research shows that lowering speed limits is not only effective at reducing vehicle speeds but also at decreasing the quantity and severity of crashes.

## **OUTREACH**

Following the May 20, 2025 City Council meeting, staff began outreach on Safe Speeds Bellevue. A project webpage that includes a virtual comment box and on-demand webinar was the springboard to deliver various digital (social media, listserv) and print (It's Your City) communications on the effort. A focus during the summer was to engage with people in-person and through community surveys; staff attended events such as the Crossroads Farmers Market and Bellevue Family Fourth and almost 500 people responded to surveys.

Staff also provided a presentation to the Bellevue Network on Aging (BNOA) and shared information/materials with Bellevue Youth Link Board, City Hall and Mini City Hall, Bellevue community centers and King County libraries within city limits. The project team also reached out to neighborhood associations in Bellevue to offer informational presentations, but none were requested.

## **EVALUATION STREETS**

At the May 20, 2025 City Council meeting, the Council directed staff to prepare an ordinance to reduce the speed limit on four arterial streets and evaluate impacts (subsequently approved on consent June 2, 2025). Four streets that previously had a speed limit of 35 mph were reduced to either 30 mph or 25 mph in July 2025 with work performed by city crews. A follow-up traffic study was conducted in September, allowing at least eight weeks for drivers to adjust behavior. The study data was compared against data collected before the change to identify whether there were reductions in operating speeds. Across all corridors, there was a 19-42% reduction in high-end speeding (number of people traveling 40 mph or higher).

## **PROPOSED SPEED LIMITS**

Following the initial success of the evaluation streets, proposed speed limits (Attachment 1) were determined for each of Bellevue's streets with a posted speed limit of 30 mph or higher by conducting a Safe Speed Study consistent with national best practices. Data was collected for each segment that included existing conflict points (intersections, driveways and mid-block crossings), facilities for people walking and biking and activity level (land use, transit stops, schools, community amenities, etc.). This data was used to rate the "Activity" and "Conflicts" on each segment.

The draft proposal for safer speed limits results in no change on 21 percent of streets, a 5 mph speed limit reduction on 59 percent of streets, and a 10 mph speed limit reduction on 20 percent of streets. The proposal includes a 25 mph speed limit for most of Downtown Bellevue due to the high activity and high or moderate number of conflicts. Staff additionally propose a small 20 mph speed zone centered around Old Bellevue and the Downtown Park that reflects the unique character of these streets.

Additionally, there are several streets that require coordination with the City of Redmond to implement the proposed speed limits. These include 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and a portion of Bel-Red

Rd where the city limits run down the center of the street. Bellevue staff are working with Redmond staff to reach agreement on safer speed limits for all adjoining/shared streets.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Beginning in February, staff will share the draft speed limit proposal with the community. Staff will also seek input on possible scenarios for phased implementation of new speed limits to help identify community priorities. Staff will share the draft speed limits with the community by attending in-person events, by reaching out to established community networks including community associations, by updating print and digital communication channels with the most recent information and by leveraging the Engaging Bellevue platform.

Staff plan to return to Council late in the second quarter with the results from this next round of outreach and will also seek direction to approve the lower speed limits. Reduced speed limits will likely need to be implemented in phases over multiple years to align with the available capital budget. Staff will share a recommended implementation approach alongside input from the community. Phasing will consider feasibility, community priorities, locations along the city's high injury network and other factors that create contiguous geographies that are legible to the community.

Setting safer speed limits that reflect the current land use and mobility options in Bellevue is only the first step in managing Safe Speeds on city streets. The evaluation streets implemented in July 2025 show that speed limit changes alone can reduce high-end speeding. However, additional tools and street design changes may be needed to further encourage people to slow down. Technology such as radar feedback signs and speed safety cameras along with physical changes to the street design including lane width adjustments, speed cushions, raised crosswalks and other features that are appropriate for the new speed limits are envisioned as longer-term next steps for Safe Speeds Bellevue.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Proposed Speed Limits (map)