

Safe Speeds Bellevue

Evaluating Speed Limits on Bellevue Streets

John Murphy, Benjamin Wright
Transportation Department

Transportation Commission

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Information Only

Update on Safe Speeds Bellevue program including outreach conducted to date, the results of four evaluation streets where the speed limit was lowered and a draft of proposed speed limits.



Agenda

1. Background
2. Evaluating Lower Speed Limits
3. Initial Outreach Results
4. Determining Safer Speed Limits
5. Outreach Next Steps



Background

- Launched Safe Speeds Bellevue in May 2025
- Speed limit evaluation on all streets posted 30+ mph
- Directed to initiate outreach and reduce the speed limit on four arterial streets and evaluate impacts
- Return with draft proposal for safer speed limits



Safe Speeds are Key to Vision Zero

Council adopted vision: Eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries on Bellevue streets by 2030.

Key Safe Speeds strategies:

- 1. Set appropriate speed limits**
2. Design streets for safety over speed
3. Leverage technology to manage speeds

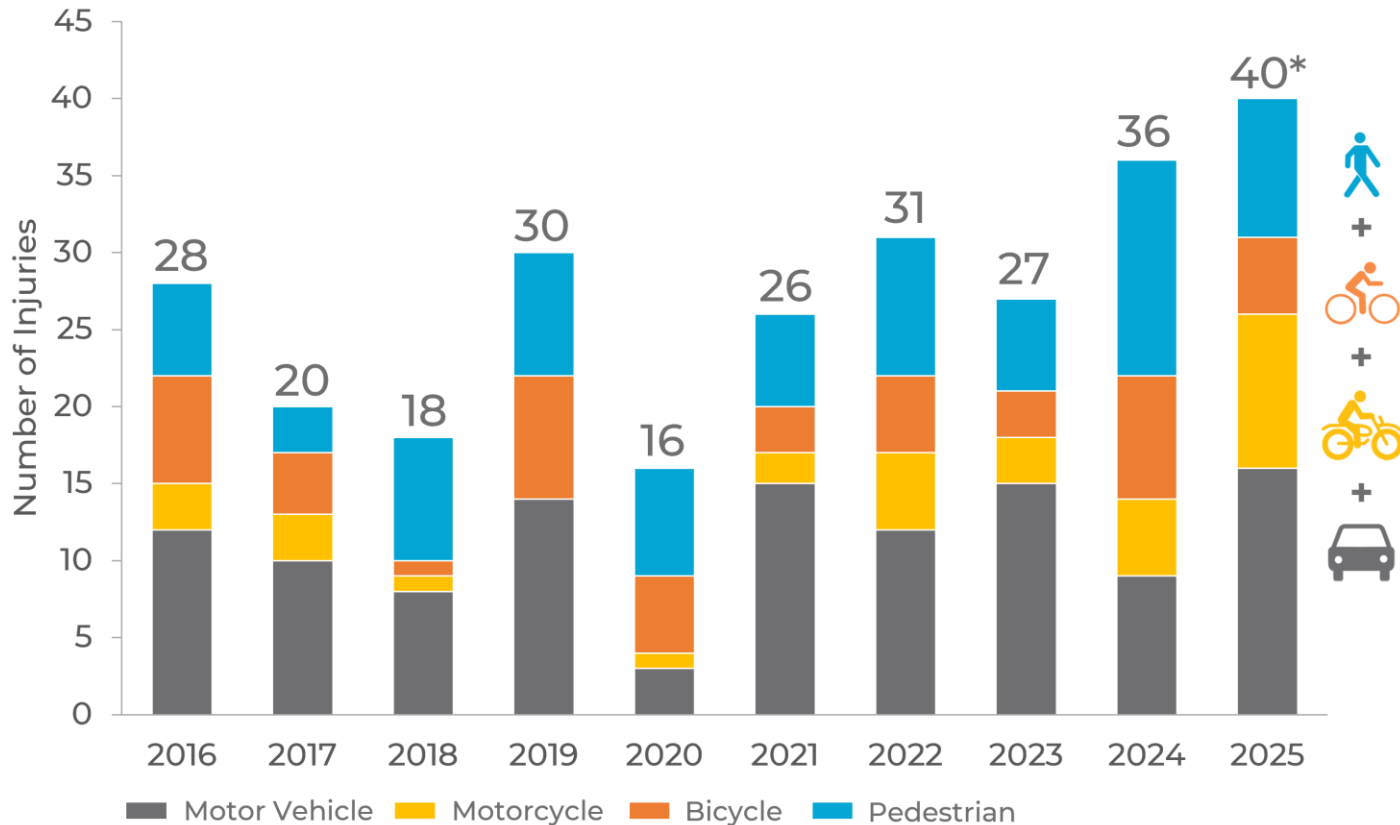


Safe System -
Council Resolution
(2020)



Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes

FATAL AND SERIOUS INJURIES (FSI) BY INJURED PERSON, 2016-2025



Source: WSDOT Collision Data (2016-2024), *Preliminary Collision Data 2025



Speeds vs Speeding

- Bellevue's speed management strategy focuses not just on reducing *speeding*, but also evaluating whether *current posted speeds* are sufficiently safe.
- *Speeding* is a contributing factor in *some* crashes, but *speed* is a contributing factor in the severity of *all* crashes.
- Speed also increases the likelihood that a crash will occur

30+ mph streets are

25%



of the street network,
but account for

88%

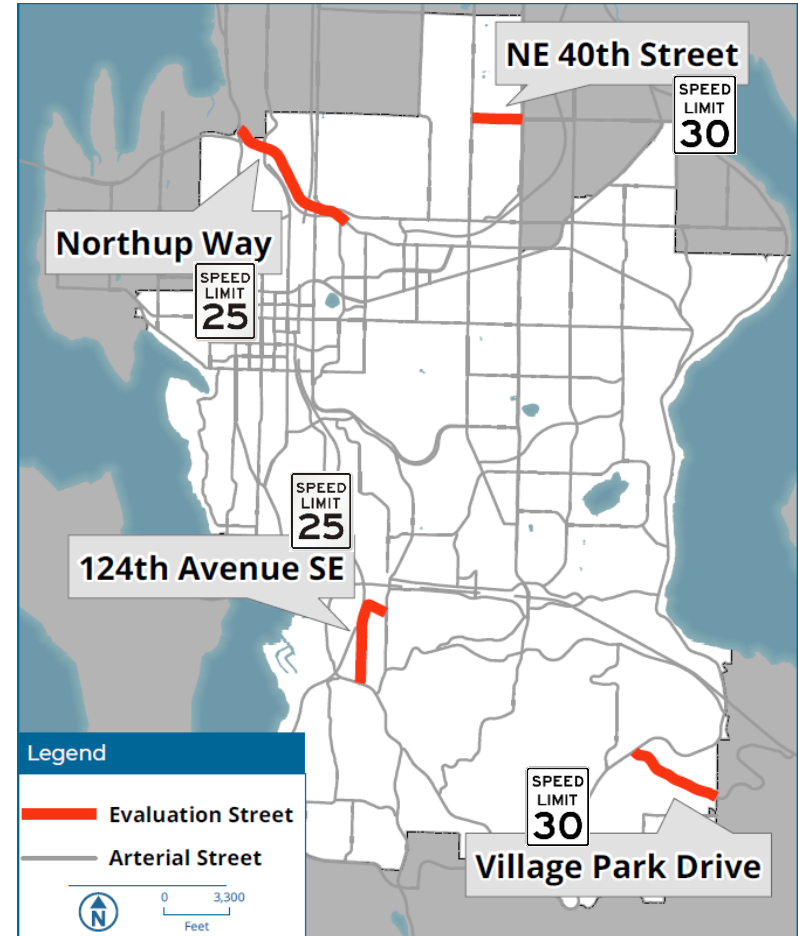


of crashes where a
person is **killed or
seriously injured**



Evaluating Safer Speed Limits

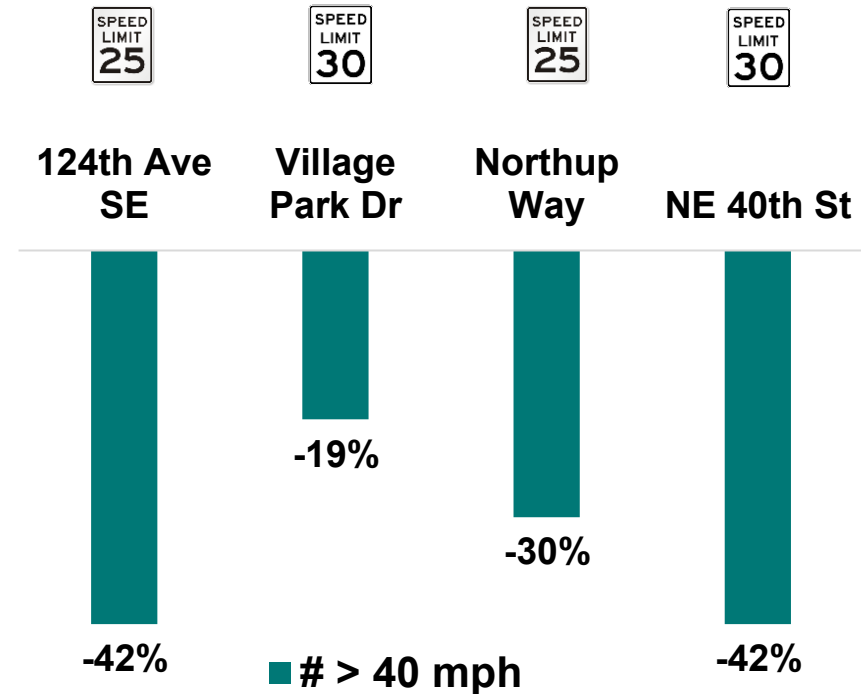
- Lower speed limits shown to decrease speeds in Bellevue, Seattle
- Lowered speed limit from 35 mph
- Launched in July 2025
- Message board, yard signs, postcard to notify



Lower Speed Limits Reduced High-end Speeding

- People driving responded to new speed limits: high-end speeding reduced
- Street context: near schools, bike lanes, crosswalks, no sidewalks
- Traffic volume fluctuated -8% to +6%

Change in High-end Speeding



Outreach Activities

- Two surveys (492 total responses)
- In-person events (Family 4th, Int'l Festival, Crossroads Farmers Market)
- Video: Recorded webinar, Lake-to-Lake segment, earned media
- It's Your City (65,000 households)
- Invitation to community associations
- Social media, listservs, newsletters
- 1:1 meetings



Outreach Findings

- Concern around schools, commercial areas, where people walk and bike, areas with speeding, and where deaths and serious injuries have occurred
- Interest in coupling speed limit reductions with enforcement and engineering
- Majority support reducing speed limits when presented with safety benefit

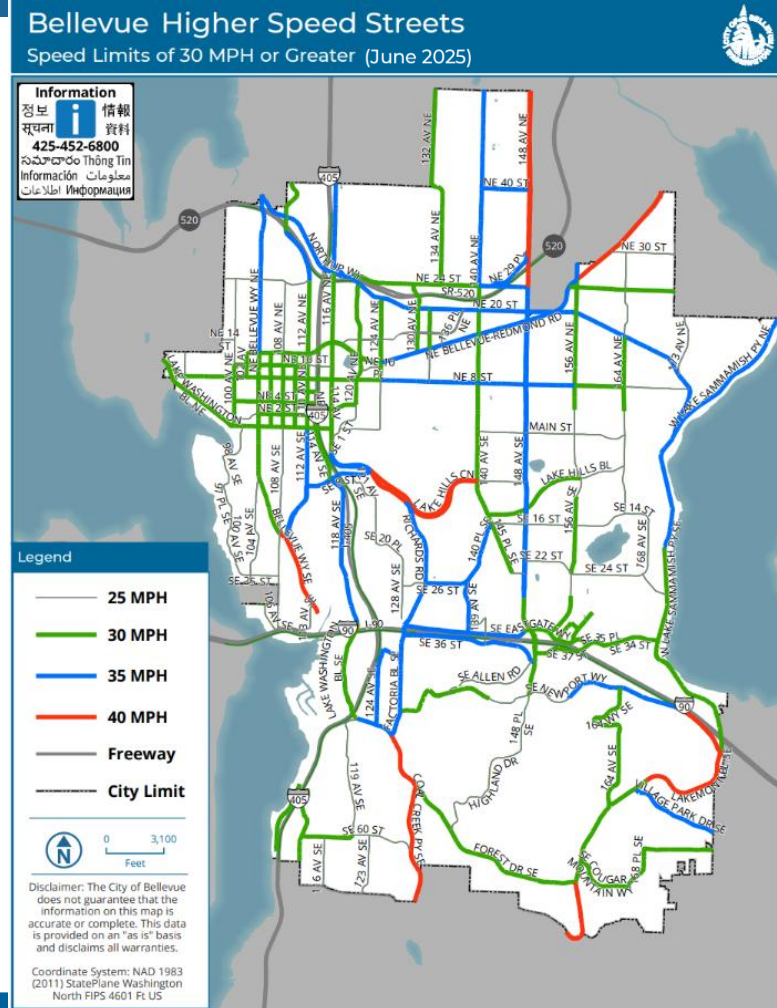
Over 75% think speed of cars affects the safety of people driving, biking, and walking

Over 70% say they will follow the speed limit



What are Safe Speeds?

- **What?** The highest speed people should drive vehicles on a street based on street's context
- **Why?** Minimize risk of a person being killed or seriously injured
- **How?** Use a context-sensitive approach to setting safer speed limits that best minimize risk
- **Where?** Current 30+ mph streets



Safe Speeds Study

CONFLICTS:

Frequency of potential conflicts on a street



Crossing point density



Modal mixing













ACTIVITY:

How active a street currently is or is expected to be



Activity Level

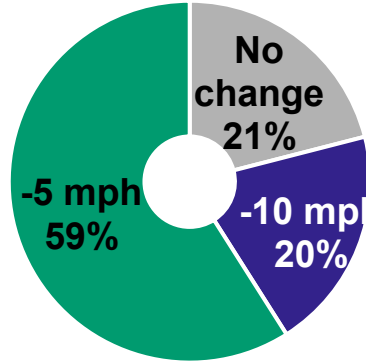
Safe Speeds Matrix

		CONFLICTS  		
		<i>High</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Low</i>
ACTIVITY 	<i>High</i>	 *		 *
	<i>Moderate</i>		 *	
	<i>Low</i>			

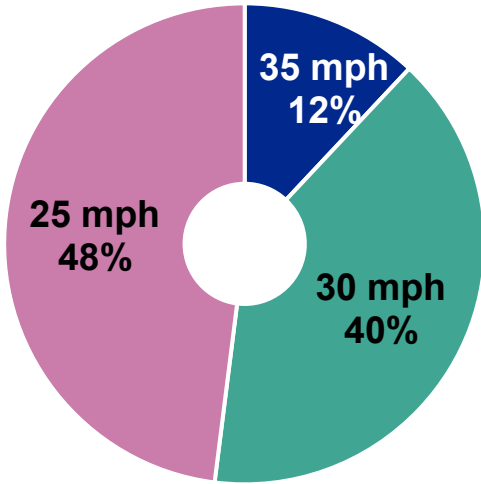
* Staff used engineering judgement on streets with high activity and high conflicts to consider a 20 mph speed limit. Staff also used engineering judgement on some other street categories to select a speed limit of either 25 or 30 mph

Proposed Speed Limits

Change in Speed Limits by Mileage

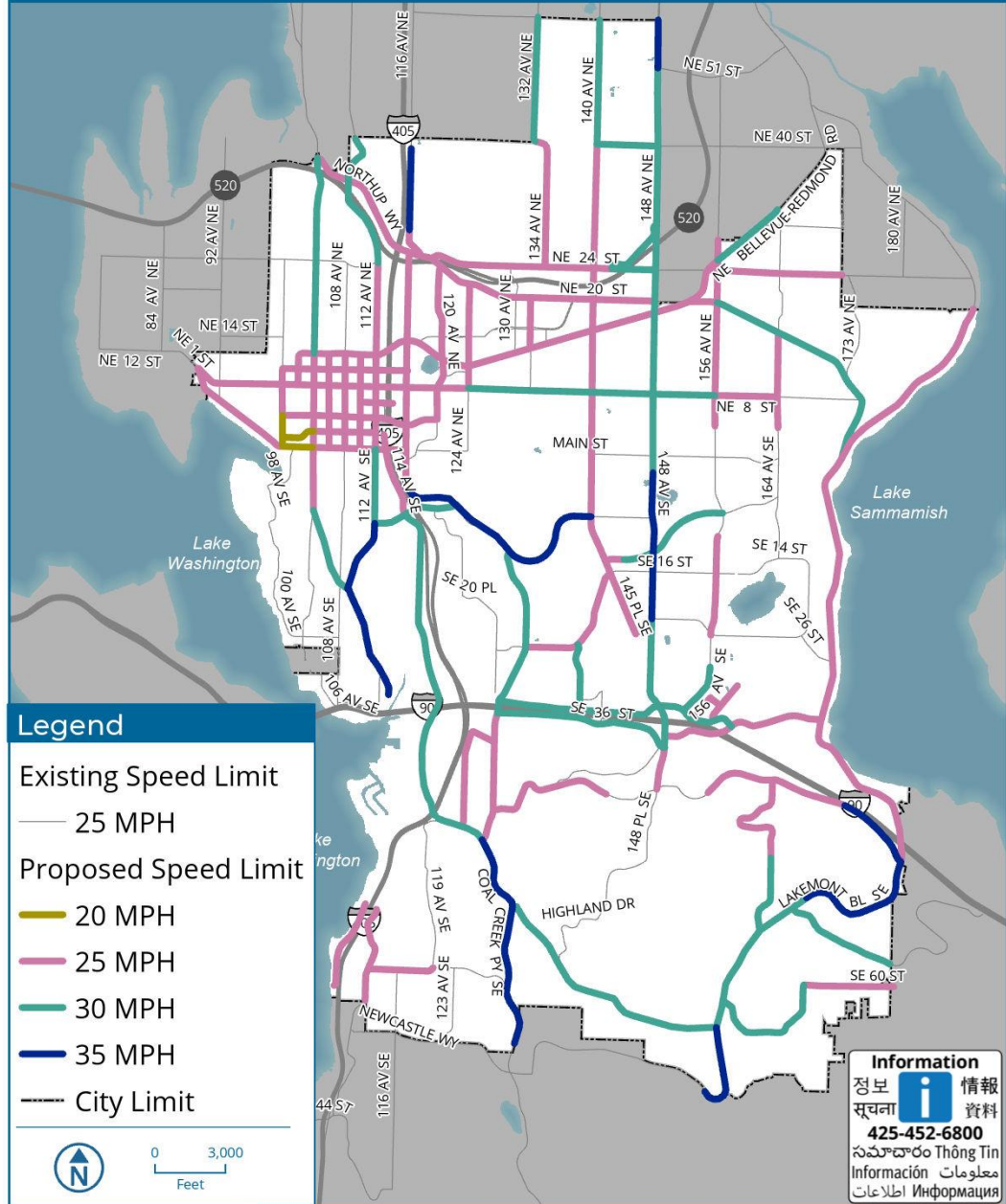


Proposed Speed Limits by Mileage



DRAFT Speed Limits

Proposed Speed Limits for All Current 30mph+ Streets



City of Bellevue

Additional Considerations

Downtown



25 mph speed limit

20 mph speed zone reflects different character

Redmond Coordination



Some speed limits require coordination with Redmond staff/council



Nexus with MIP

Reducing the posted speed limit can yield better outcomes for Pedestrian Level of Traffic Stress and Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress

Table 1: Pedestrian Level of Traffic Stress

Arterial Characteristics		Sidewalk Characteristics								
		Paved Shoulder ²	Width of Sidewalk (ft.)							
			<4	≥4 to <6		6 to <10		≥10		
Speed Limit Factor ¹	Arterial Daily Traffic Volume	Width of Buffer (ft.)								
		0	<5	≥5	<5	≥5	<5	≥5	<5	≥5
≤25	≤3k	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	>3k-7k	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	>7k	3	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	1
>25-30 mph	≤10k	3	3	3	2	1	2	1	2	1
	>10 -25k	4	3	3	2	1	2	1	2	1
	>25k	4	4	3	3	2	2	1	2	1
>30-35 mph	≤25k	4	4	3	3	2	2	1	2	1
	>25k	4	4	4	3	3	3	2	3	1
>35	Any	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	3	2

PLTS 1 PLTS 2 PLTS 3 PLTS 4

Table 4: Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress

Arterial Characteristics		Bicycle Facility Components: Guideline to Achieve Intended Level of Traffic Stress					
		No Marking	Sharrow Lane Marking	Striped Bike Lane	Buffered Bike Lane (Horizontal)	Buffered Bike Lane (Vertical)	Shared Use Path or Physically Separated Bikeway
≤25	≤3k	1	1	1	1	1	1
	>3k-7k	3	3	2	1	1	1
	>7k	3	3	2	2	1	1
>25-30 mph	≤10k	3	3	2	2	1	1
	>10 -25k	4	4	3	3	2	1
	>25k	4	4	3	3	3	1
>30-35 mph	≤25k	4	4	3	3	3	1
	>25k	4	4	4	3	3	1
>35	Any	4	4	4	4	3	1

BLTS 1 BLTS 2 BLTS 3 BLTS 4

Implementation Plan

- Speed limit implementation likely to be phased
- Goal: increase number of signs (and size on multilane roadways)

Example implementation plan

1. Urban Core
2. Streets on high injury network
3. Remaining streets



Future Implementation

Initial Phase

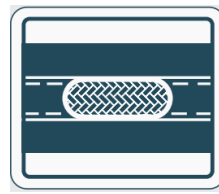
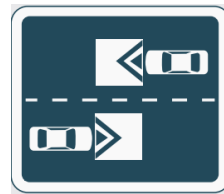
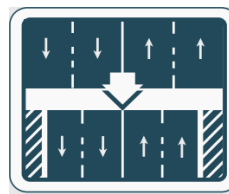


- Safer speed limits
- More speed limit signs
- Adjust signal timing

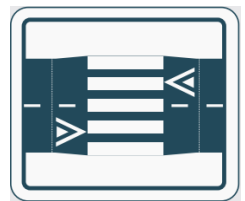
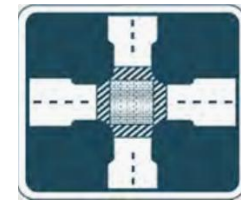
Potential Additional Tools



Technology



Traffic Calming



Crossings

Council and Outreach Approach

May 2025:
Launch Safe
Speeds
Bellevue

**June/July
2025:**
Approve/
implement
evaluation
streets

Jan. 2026:
Return with
draft Safer
Speeds map
(study
session)

June 2026:
Consider
approval of
Safer Speed
Limits (study
session)

2027+:
Implement
speed limit
changes

**Phase 1:
Consult & Inform**

Consult: community values, priorities and sentiments around Safer Speeds

**Phase 2:
Consult & Inform**

Consult: feedback on the draft Safer Speeds map and priorities

**Phase 3:
Inform**

Inform: Share on the approved Safer Speeds and implementation plan



Phase 2 Outreach

Goals

- Share draft speed limits
- Refine implementation strategy
- Identify questions community has about lower speed limits

Upcoming Activities:

- Additional in-person events
- Reaching out to community network
- Updated webpage, digital communications

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