



## Speed Limit FAQ's – Frequently Asked Questions

### Why did the speed limit on Hershey Road change to 30mph?

The purpose of a speed limit is to improve safety by reducing the probability and severity of traffic accidents for all users.

Based on public safety principles, the mostly residential nature of Hershey Road, the City's recent adoption of Complete Streets and to create consistency with the Town of Normal the Bloomington City Council unanimously voted to reduce the speed limit.

### Is safety really an issue?

Speed has been identified as a key risk factor in road traffic injuries, influencing both the risk of a road crash as well as the severity of the injuries that result from crashes. As people travel faster, the risk of death or serious injury rises dramatically when crashes occur. A person walking struck by a person driving 40 mph is 50% more likely to die than one struck by a person driving at 30 mph.



## DEATH DUE TO SPEED

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, LITERATURE REVIEWED ON VEHICLE TRAVEL SPEEDS AND PEDESTRIAN INJURIES, MARCH 2000.  
[HTTP://WWW.NHTSA.GOV/ABOUT-NHTSA/TRAFFIC+TECHS/CURRENT/LITERATURE+REVIEWED+ON+VEHICLE+TRAVEL+SPEEDS+AND+PEDESTRIAN+INJURIES](http://www.nhtsa.gov/about/nhtsa/traffic+techs/current/literature+reviewed+on+vehicle+travel+speeds+and+pedestrian+injuries)

### Isn't lowering the speed limit just a way to raise additional revenue for the City?

No. The City of Bloomington is reducing the speed limit in order to make the city safer for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit and drivers.

### What factors are considered when determining the speed limit?

Historically, it is the City's practice to establish speed limits based on a speed study's 85<sup>th</sup> percentile, or the speed that 85% of vehicles do not exceed. There are several "standard" or statutory speed limits established by law such as 30 MPH in urban areas, 55 MPH in rural areas and 70 MPH on rural Interstates. Any other speed limit posting is considered an altered speed zone.

The National Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) defines an altered Speed Zone as a speed limit, other than a statutory speed limit, that is based upon an engineering study. The City utilizes the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Policy on Establishing Speed Limits to establish altered speed limits.

The speed study takes into account the actual speed being driven by individual vehicles. Using the data collected; the 85th percentile and the 10 MPH pace speed upper limit are calculated. The resulting prevailing speed can be adjusted by taking into account on street parking, high numbers of crashes, pedestrians, and the number of conflicting driveways and side streets. The use of the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile to establish speed limits is a well-known, often recommended, method employed by agencies such as the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and other municipalities nationwide.

However, the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile is a recommendation, not a mandate, and other factors can impact speed limits. The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile assumes drivers are reasonable and cautious, want to avoid an accident and want to get to their destination in the shortest possible time. A concern with establishing the speed limit at the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile is that it may not be appropriate for all classes of roads. For example, property access, community concerns and the safety of other users are important factors in setting appropriate speed limits.

### **What is Complete Streets?**

The Complete Streets ordinance has been adopted to accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, transit and cars, with the goal of creating a multimodal transportation network. Complete streets are accessible to people of all ages and abilities, including children, youth, families, older adults, and individuals with disabilities. Provisions for these types of streets are in important part of a number of federal policies that determine regional and local transportation funding decisions.