



STUDY AND REPORT ON SPEED LIMITS



Minnesota Department of Transportation

PREFACE

Mn/DOT has conducted the speed limit study and prepared this report to meet the requirements of Laws of Minnesota 2008, Chapter 287, Section 119, STUDY AND REPORT ON SPEED LIMITS.

The cost to prepare this report was \$85,850. This cost includes staff hours for MnDOT, City, and County participation in the task force meetings, preparation and review of meeting material and consultant contracts to facilitate the task force and prepare the final report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report documents a series of recommendations developed by the Minnesota Department of Transportation for speed limits on local roads. The report also describes the process Mn/DOT utilized to reach these recommendations. This process benefited from the participation of several local government engineers in a Task Force convened by Mn/DOT. Mn/DOT has conducted the speed limit study and prepared this report to meet the requirements of Laws of Minnesota 2008, Chapter 287, Section 119, STUDY AND REPORT ON SPEED LIMITS. The input of all of the Task Force members was valuable and informative and helped to form a consensus for the group's recommendations.

Implementation of speed limit statutes involves an overlap of two principles:

- Definitions: what type of roadway the motorist is driving on, and
- Speed Limits: what the appropriate speed is for that roadway.

The direction from the Legislature to Mn/DOT acknowledged these two principles. Mn/DOT was specifically tasked to study and report on the following topics:

- Are the definitions of urban district, rural residential district and residential roadway appropriate?
- Is 30 MPH in urban districts appropriate?
- Are there locations where 25 MPH is appropriate?
- Is 30 MPH in rural residential districts appropriate?
- Is 55 MPH in rural residential districts within a city appropriate?
- Are there rural residential district locations within cities where 30 MPH is appropriate?

In response to these questions, Mn/DOT has developed proposed changes to the text of the statutes (2008 Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 169, TRAFFIC REGULATIONS). The full versions of those changes appear elsewhere in this report. The remainder of this section presents overviews and highlights of the major recommendations developed by Mn/DOT.

Recommendations on Definitions

Urban District

The current definition of Urban District was found to be acceptable; however some agencies interpret the term "streets" to include highways and others do not. The Task Force concluded all similar types of roadways regardless of ownership should uniformly apply the Urban District criteria. Consequently, the Task Force recommends that highways should be specified to clarify the matter.

Rural Residential District

In the current statute text, this definition only applies for township roads; it does not apply within cities or for county roads. The definition is confusing and outdated. It does not reflect certain types of modern, large-lot, subdivision designs along roadways (in cities and townships) or well-managed access roadways through commercial or residential areas. The recommended change

deletes the exclusive township reference and allows this definition to be applied regardless of jurisdiction. A Rural Residential District could be located in either a township or city, along a roadway owned by any jurisdiction. The proposed changes also clarify the residence spacing measurements for this definition and recognize the specific development conditions which meet the Rural Residential District criteria.

Residential Roadway

The current language for this definition reads, in part, “‘residential roadway’ means a street or portion of a street that is less than one-half mile in length” This wording lacks clarity and does not match the intended application. The recommended language has been clarified as to conditions for its appropriate application and includes only short (less than one-half mile) lengths of roadways and not short portions of a long stretch of roadway.

Recommendations on Speed Limits

30 MPH in an Urban District

At this time, Mn/DOT recommends no change to the basic Urban District speed limit of 30 MPH. Mn/DOT acknowledges that the Task Force membership brought different views to this issue. Several members favor a speed limit change to 25 now, if it could be successfully achieved, or a move toward 25 in the future. Several factors were cited in support of a 25 MPH speed limit. One key factor is the citizen-level support for the change. Another important factor is the increased pedestrian survival rates at lower speeds in the event of vehicle-pedestrian crashes.

Other factors were inconclusive or argued against a change. Analysis of pedestrian crash data between Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa yielded inconclusive results as to the safety benefits of a 25 MPH (Iowa and Wisconsin) versus 30 MPH (Minnesota) residential speed limit. Furthermore, a review of the survival rates at different speeds, coupled with the number of pedestrian fatalities on low-speed roads, indicates that to cause a significant change in pedestrian safety, travel speeds would need to change from 30 to 20 MPH or even lower. The level of resources currently committed to law enforcement and driver education make it difficult to enforce the existing 30 MPH limit. The judgment of the Task Force members, and of law enforcement personnel who were interviewed, is that in the current funding environment it would be difficult to establish proper enforcement of a 25 MPH statutory speed limit. This could lead to a larger disparity in actual travel speed. Signing alone would not be expected to overcome that. Even if signs were posted at 25, merely posting speed limit signs have not been shown to cause a change in driver behavior. Dispersion in travel speeds amongst drivers is a greater factor in safety than is the posted or statutory speed limit of 30 MPH or 25 MPH. There is concern that lowering the speed limit without a large enforcement effort to support the change would not result in a safety improvement. In addition, the need to post signs to educate drivers to the new speed limit would be expected to impose a significant burden on some communities.

Considering all aspects of the issue, Mn/DOT concludes that 30 MPH is the best speed limit for Urban Districts in Minnesota at this time. Efforts today should be aimed at achieving compliance with the existing 30 MPH statutory speed limit. Though the topic could be revisited

in the future if additional resources can be devoted to improved enforcement of and education regarding the existing speed limit.

30 MPH in a Rural Residential District / 55 MPH in a Rural Residential District within a City

These are related points. Strictly speaking, the term “Rural Residential District within a city” is a misnomer, as by current Minnesota Statute definition a “Rural Residential District” can only occur in a township. It was understood that what was meant by the question is the following: “For areas within a city that would be defined as Rural Residential District if in a township, is 55 MPH the appropriate speed limit?”

The Task Force members were unanimous; 55 is not an appropriate speed limit for a rural residential area within a city. Mn/DOT recommends that, in tandem with the revised definition for Rural Residential Districts, a new speed limit should be set for this category of roadway. To determine the correct statutory speed for these roadways, several representative speed studies have been conducted on Rural Residential District roads. As a result of these studies, it was determined that 35 MPH is the reasonable speed limit on these roads. The Rural Residential District definition and its accompanying speed limit are proposed to be consistent for all road authorities.

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

This report presents the Minnesota Department of Transportation's recommendations on speed limit matters pertaining to local roads. The recommendations address issues of definition, speed limit statutory text language and speed limit enforcement. These recommendations were developed in consultation with engineering representatives of local governments who participated in a Task Force process. The work of the Task Force was supplemented with research and with interviews of local government engineering and law enforcement personnel.

The recommendations documented in this report represent Mn/DOT's views. These views were informed by significant consultation with local government representatives. By taking the time to study and explore the speed limit topic, the Task Force was able to develop a consensus on how to effectively propose modifications that would be successful in managing speed limits throughout Minnesota.

1.2 Impetus for Study / History of Similar Studies

Speed limits and speed enforcement, in particular on local or residential roads, are important topics that local government units address on a frequent basis. Periodically over the past two decades, the increased concern over these issues has led to the topic's being brought to the legislature with ensuing study by Mn/DOT.

Mn/DOT last formally studied the local road speed limit topic in 1993-1994 via a Task Force that was formed at the request of the Mn/DOT Office of Government Affairs to investigate whether the 30 MPH statutory value should be lowered. Representation on that Task Force came from small and large cities and counties. Members included mayors, city administrators, city engineers, county engineers, professional transportation associations, and the Minnesota League of Cities. The Task Force was chaired by the Assistant State Traffic Engineer. The primary conclusion was that discourteous driving habits, residents' misconception of speeds, and an ongoing interest in safer neighborhoods combine to create a perception that drivers are traveling too fast on local streets. Safety in neighborhoods may be compromised by discourteous and careless driving, but was not found to be compromised by an overall speeding problem.

The results of the 1993-1994 Task Force effort were documented in the report "Task Force on Urban Residential Speed Limits, Final Report, March 1994."

Subsequent to the 1994 Task Force Report, no significant changes to speed limit statutes for urban districts or residential roads were implemented in Minnesota.

There has been, and continues to be, a desire on the part of many members of the public to change the urban district speed limit to 25. These desires have been communicated to members of the Legislature. In response to this, in the 2007 session of the Minnesota Legislature House File 1909 was proposed. (A copy of this bill is included in the Appendix A-3.) This bill ordered the Commissioner of Transportation to conduct a study of local

speed limit issues in consultation with local government. The major elements of the study were to include answers to the following questions:

- Are the definitions of urban district, rural residential district and residential roadway appropriate?
- Is 30 MPH in urban districts appropriate?
- Are there locations where 25 MPH is appropriate?
- Is 30 MPH in rural residential districts appropriate?
- Is 55 MPH in rural residential districts within a city appropriate?
- Are there rural residential district locations within cities where 30 MPH is appropriate?

Although HF 1909 was not enacted, Mn/DOT committed to conducting a study similar in scope to the study outlined in HF 1909. To facilitate the study process, in particular with regards to the requirement that local governments be consulted, Mn/DOT worked with the City Engineers Association of Minnesota and the County Engineers Association to solicit member participation in the study process.

While this study was being carried out, the 2008 Legislature enacted Laws of Minnesota 2008, Chapter 287, Section 119 (see Appendix A-4), which directed Mn/DOT to complete a study with the same parameters as outlined in the proposed 2007 House File. This study fulfills the requirements of that legislation.

1.3 Work Plan and Conduct of the Study

The goal of this study was to develop recommendations for possible changes to Minnesota Statute 169.14 that address the areas of concern raised in the Legislative direction to Mn/DOT. To reach this goal, Mn/DOT conducted a process that included the following major tasks:

- Conducting research and gathering information (through various methods)
- Refining the definitions found in speed limit statutes
- Developing potential alternatives for speed limit statutes
- Analyzing and evaluating the alternatives
- Selecting recommended alternatives

Throughout this process, Mn/DOT utilized a Task Force to direct the work of the study and to serve as a resource base for Mn/DOT. The Task Force membership was selected to provide broad and varied engineering representation. At the city level, the Task Force included four representatives spanning from central core (St. Paul) to suburban (Minnetonka and Chanhassen) to cities with both rural and urban components (Andover). At the county level, two Task Force members provided perspective from both the metro/urban viewpoint (Dakota County) and the outstate/rural viewpoint (Houston County). It should be noted that Dakota County has areas of rural character as well. The county engineering representatives were also able to provide information on township perspectives due to their periodic interaction with township representatives. The local

representatives to the Task Force represented the government agency engineering departments. Townships typically do not have that type of staff; therefore, direct participation from township officials was not requested. The Task Force membership also included representatives from the League of Minnesota Cities and Association of Metro Municipalities. These members participated early on in the study to bring forth observations and general themes they had learned from their member cities.

Mn/DOT was represented by one project manager and five additional Office of Traffic, Safety and Operations personnel.

Appendix A-6 shows the Task Force membership. The group met eight times. The dates of the Task Force meetings are listed on Appendix A-7.

1.4 Overview of Current Speed Limit Legislation in Minnesota

To understand the context of the Task Force's work and the resulting Mn/DOT recommendations, it is important to be aware of the base from which the Task Force's work started. That base is the current Minnesota legislation covering speed limits. (Appendix A-1 summarizes the history of Minnesota speed laws from 1881 to the present.)

The majority of Minnesota statute language that addresses speed limits is found within 2008 Minnesota Statute (MS) 169, TRAFFIC REGULATIONS. Appendix A-2 contains excerpts from the statute text that address definitions and speed limits germane to the local roadway environment. Some of the key principles found in MS 169 are the following:

- “No person shall drive a vehicle on a highway at a speed that is greater than is reasonable and prudent under the conditions.”
- The speed limit is “30 miles per hour in an urban district or on a town road in a rural residential district.”
- “Rural residential district” defines a “territory contiguous to and including any town road” (i.e., it only applies in townships; it does not apply in cities).
- The speed limit is “25 miles per hour in residential roadways if adopted by the road authority having jurisdiction over the residential roadway” and the road or portion of road is less than ½ mile.

2.0 CONDUCTING RESEARCH AND GATHERING INFORMATION

Throughout the course of the study, various types of research efforts were conducted so that Mn/DOT and Task Force members could further understand current speed limit experiences and make informed decisions on the evaluation and selection of alternatives.

2.1 Research on Speed Limits and Speed Zoning

2.1.1 Research in Minnesota

The Minnesota Statutes for speed limits (and related definitions) are based on the National Uniform Vehicle Code (UVC), first established in 1929. Since that time a number of updates and modifications have been implemented to the UVC and to Minnesota statutes, but key significant features remain.

Among the elements that have not changed in several decades are the following:

- The urban district definition is delineated by the presence of a house or business every 100 feet; this has been a constant in the UVC and Minnesota statutes.
- The speed limit in Minnesota has been 30 MPH since approximately 1937 for areas within what came to be termed “urban districts” in 1963. Currently, the urban district speed limit recommended in the UVC is 35 MPH.
- The UVC recommends that authority for all speed zones be the responsibility of the State Commissioner of Transportation. Minnesota statute does assign that authority to the Mn/DOT Commissioner. This was originally done – and continues to be done this way – to ensure uniformity in the implementation of speed zoning across the state. (An exception to this responsibility of the Commissioner exists in the provision for establishing a 25 MPH speed limit on a “residential roadway.” In 1994 a road authority having jurisdiction over a residential roadway was granted the right to establish such a speed limit if the authority chose to adopt that limit for the residential roadway and sign it appropriately.)

A unique element in current Minnesota statute was added approximately 10 years ago. A “rural residential district” defines a category of territory that can only exist in a township; however, recent development practices have created residential areas other than townships that meet the rural residential district classification.

Appendix A-1 summarizes the history of Minnesota speed laws from 1881 to the present.

2.1.2 Research in Other States

Research was conducted on definitions and speed limits for the other 49 states to provide a general overview of the state of the practice nationwide. Although data could not be readily obtained for all types of information from each state, a significant amount of information was acquired.

Major themes that arise from this nationwide review are:

- The statutory “low speed road” speed limit varies from 25 to 35 MPH in states across the nation.
- The roadway definition basis for low speed roads most commonly, but not always, falls into one of two models:
 - “Urban District,” or other reference to a single geographic territory (this is the Minnesota approach), or
 - establishment of two separate types of “low speed” geographic territories; one area for “Business District” and one area for “Residence District.”
- A third model, as adopted in California, Michigan and Oregon statute, is used to establish statutory zoning areas based on measurement of access points.

Table 2-1 presents a summary of statutory speed limit methods across the country.

Table 2-1: Summary of Statutory Speed Limits by State *

Basis for Speed Limit	Number of States			
	25 MPH	30 MPH	35 MPH	Unknown
"Urban District" definition	2	10	1	---
"Business District" & "Residence District" definitions (speed is same in both)	10	3	3	---
"Business District" & "Residence District" definitions (speed differs, this is the Res. Speed)	4	1		---
Misc./general/"other" basis	4	1	1	---
Unclear or none	---	---	---	10
Total	20	15	5	10

* As of January 2008

An element that enters into the discussion of speed limits in Minnesota, at least amongst the citizenry, is that the four states surrounding Minnesota all have a statutory 25 MPH residential speed limit. Task force members related anecdotal evidence in which new Minnesota residents from surrounding states express surprise and disappointment at the statutory 30 MPH limit.

2.2 Interviews with City Engineers

At the beginning of the study, prior to the first Task Force meeting, interviews were held with two city engineers (who were also members of the Task Force) to obtain detailed background on speed limit issues in their communities. The engineers were chosen to represent two very diverse communities with different concerns regarding the issues to be studied by Mn/DOT and the Task Force.

The two city engineers interviewed were those from St. Paul and Andover.

2.2.1 St. Paul City Engineer

Major elements that derived from this interview, and subsequent Task Force meetings, include:

St. Paul, as a core, inner city, is completely defined as urban district. St. Paul city officials and engineering staff are proponents of an urban district 25 MPH statutory speed limit. The City of St. Paul has about 900 miles of street, of which about 700 are residential, neighborhood-type streets. The advocacy for 25 MPH comes from residential areas; there is no similar advocacy from business areas. Much of the support for a 25 MPH speed limit comes from groups outside of the traffic engineering profession (e.g., new urbanist planners, transit and bicyclist advocates). Speaking on behalf of other city departments, the St. Paul engineer stated that of traffic-related complaints received from citizens, the most frequent one is excessive speed in residential areas.

St. Paul has conducted a significant number of speed studies on residential streets in neighborhoods and the 85th percentile speed, across multiple studies, tends to be very close to 25 MPH. St. Paul staff believes that the 25 MPH 85th percentile speed that is recorded in the City shows that drivers believe that 25 is the reasonable speed on residential streets in the city. The City Engineer further stated that the 85th percentile speed should be used as the basis for setting the speed limit, citing TRB Special Report 254 (1998), “Managing Speed: Review of Current Practices for Setting and Enforcing Speed Limits,” as a source for that direction. St. Paul has not experienced high numbers of vehicle-pedestrian crash events in residential areas. Pedestrian crashes tend to occur along or crossing arterial streets.

The current practice of the City of St. Paul is to not sign statutory speed limits unless requested to do so by police to aid in enforcement. However, the city does sign transition zones such as in a change from a 35 MPH zone to a 30 MPH area.

2.2.2 Andover City Engineer

The Andover city engineer was interviewed, as this city represents a completely different characteristic from St. Paul relative to statutory speed limits. The major issue of concern in Andover is that several residential areas have house spacings that are greater than the 100-foot interval stipulated in the urban district definition. Had these neighborhoods been located within a township rather than within a city, they would be categorized as “rural residential district” and would carry a statutory speed limit of 30 MPH. To any observer of residential development, these areas in Andover would clearly be seen as “residential.” However, from a statutory speed limit point of view, these neighborhoods fall into a logical void; current Minnesota statutes do not properly address this situation. The roads in these developments carry the statutory speed limit of 55 MPH. It should be noted that although the absolute speed limit is 55 MPH, the current statute also has a provision that all drivers should operate their vehicles at a “reasonable and prudent” speed for these conditions.

The City of Andover's prime desire for Mn/DOT's and the Task Force's efforts was to address this logical void in the statute to provide a more objective speed limit and rely less on the "reasonable and prudent" subjective nature currently available in statute. The void arises because the geographic territory descriptions contained in the statutes have not kept up with current design and development patterns in which lot spacings are greater than the urban district limit but still represent a residential neighborhood in character.

Figure 2-1 shows a variety of house spacings illustrating a transition area between urban and rural development in the same city/jurisdiction. This aerial photo shows that even within a small area of the city, nearby residential streets may vary enough in their house spacings that the streets have a mix of statutory speed limits.

2.3 Interviews with Law Enforcement

To gain another important perspective from outside the traffic engineering community, interviews were held with three law enforcement agencies. The agencies were selected to represent a wide variety of roadway and residential attributes. Interviews were conducted with the Carver County Sheriff's Office, the Burnsville Chief of Police and a St. Paul Senior Commander.

The Carver County Sheriff's Office provides police service for the entire county except the City of Chaska. With much of the geography of the county being rural, Carver County personnel are knowledgeable about rural residential applications as well as communities with built-up residential neighborhoods such as Chanhassen. The housing stock within the county is "new" (in comparison to the overall Twin Cities area). Carver County typically exhibits modern subdivision design parameters and most residential streets feature limited amounts of on-street parking.

Burnsville represents a fully built-up community with typical suburban residential development patterns. St. Paul represents a classic older, core city with a grid development structure, a higher density of houses, and a higher degree of on-street parking and pedestrian and bicycle activity.

The major, consistent findings among the three departments include the following:

- Uniformity of speed limits across the state is a key principle to preserve.
- The law enforcement personnel support the current 30 MPH and recommend against a change to 25 in part due to the limited staff available to enforce the current speed limit.
- They further state that in their opinions, only changing to a statutory 25 limit in urban districts would not reduce driving speeds.
- Pedestrian accidents tend to be in crosswalks of major streets, not in residential areas.

Figure 2-1: Andover Residential Neighborhood



Map Document: (F:\00000100.04\MN\Anoka\Andover\Traffic2.mxd)12/11/2007 - 12:06:18 PM

- They tend to see more effective speed reduction through engineering (lane narrowing, etc.) than through changes in speed limits, although they believe a sustained enforcement presence would also be effective in reducing speeds if staffing levels were able to support such an effort.
- What is reported as “speeding” by residents often is not, as vehicles are not exceeding the 30 MPH limit.
- Speeding that does occur tends to be on collectors and arterials, not on residential or side streets.
- All three agencies acknowledged that law enforcement agencies do not have the resources to put a high priority on speed control.
- They all also expressed frustration over the judicial system and its handling of disputed tickets. There is a general impression that a violator needs to be significantly over the limit for it to be worthwhile for the officer to write a ticket.
- The officers did not support a concept in which “residential” or “neighborhood” streets would be statutory 25 MPH and unsigned while “collector, arterial and above” streets would be statutory 30 MPH and signed.
- The officers supported a speed limit other than 55 for rural residential areas in cities.

2.4 Literature Review

A limited amount of national literature review was conducted on speed limits with particular emphasis on accidents and also on the impacts of changing speed limits. The following major points were found:

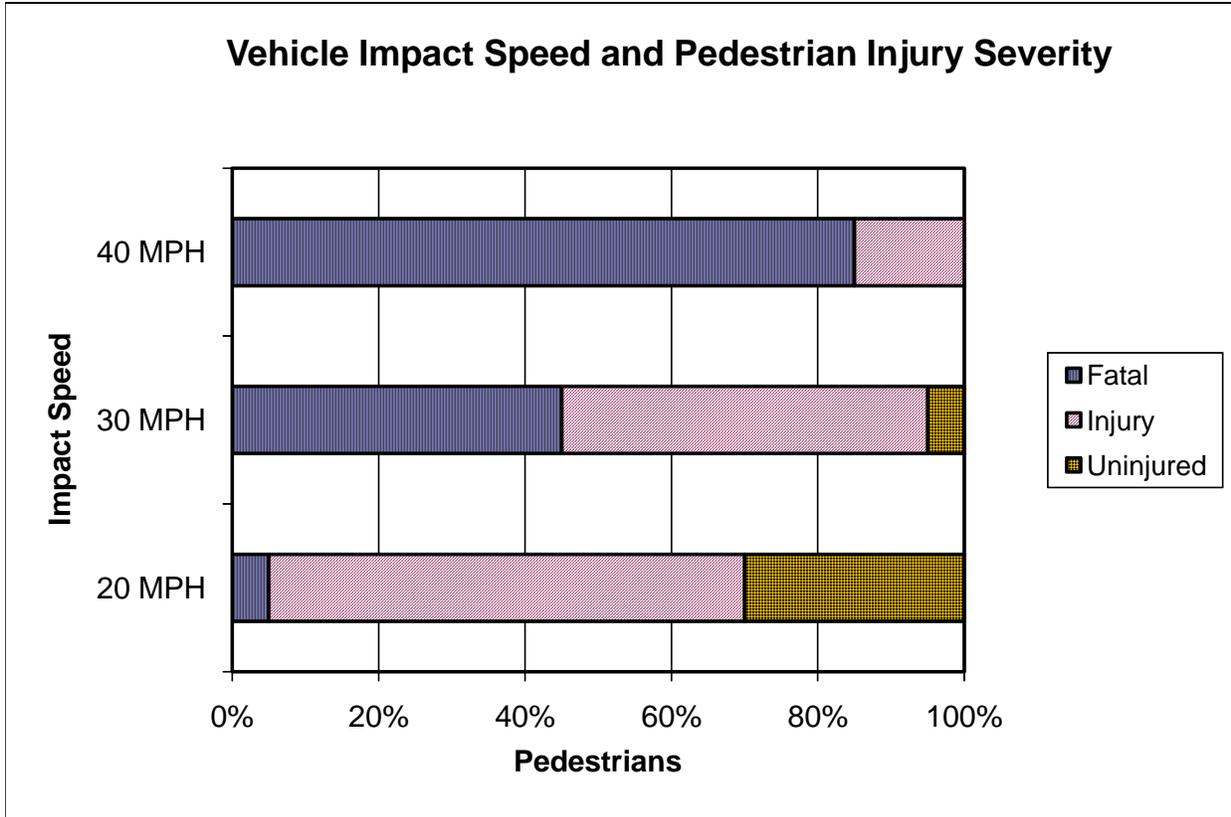
- In an automobile-pedestrian accident, survivability decreases significantly as the speed of travel of the automobile increases. See Table 2-2 and Figure 2-2, excerpted from a 1993 report by the UK Department of Transport. As shown in the table and its accompanying graph, in order to reach a very high survival rate travel speeds must be about 20 MPH. The referenced study does not directly report survivability data for pedestrian-vehicle crashes at 25 MPH. However, it can be inferred and interpolated from the data that the survivability rate at 25 MPH would be greater than at 30 MPH.
- Historically, the changing of speeds on roads via the installation of new signs (with either higher or lower speeds) has negligible impact on the prevailing travel speed. (A test in St. Paul confirmed this finding; Mn/DOT tests and national publications also confirm this – see <http://www.tfhrc.gov/safety/rd97002.htm>.)

Table 2-2: Pedestrian-Vehicle Crash Survivability on Lower-Speed Roadways ⁽¹⁾

Category	20 MPH	30 MPH	40 MPH
Fatal	5	45	85
Injury	65	50	15
Uninjured	30	5	0

⁽¹⁾ Value in cell is percent occurrence of that type of crash amongst all pedestrian-vehicle crashes for that speed

Figure 2-2: Pedestrian-Vehicle Crash Survivability on Lower-Speed Roadways



Source: UK Department of Transport Traffic Advisory Leaflet 7/93

2.5 Review of Crash Data

Crash data were reviewed in an effort to determine whether the statutory speed limit impacted pedestrian safety. The Task Force made the following observations based on the 2006 data, the most recent year for which data were available:

- In Minnesota in 2006, 494 fatalities were recorded on all categories of roadways, 38 of which involved pedestrians.
- Most of the pedestrian conflicts and fatalities occurred in Minnesota on collectors and arterial roadways.
- In Minnesota in 2006, 9 pedestrian fatalities occurred on roads with a 30 MPH speed limit.

To get a further picture of vehicle-pedestrian crash incidence, the Task Force also looked at Iowa and Wisconsin, two neighboring states with good data available. Both of these states have a 25 MPH speed limit on residential roadways, in contrast with Minnesota's 30 (for the entire Urban District).

Table 2-3 summarizes the five-year (2002-2006) pedestrian fatality and injury crash history for Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin. In order to obtain a comprehensive view of pedestrian crash occurrences, data were obtained for multiple measures. The data is for roads in Minnesota that are 30 and for Iowa and Wisconsin are 25. Tables showing comparisons for each individual measure by year are included in the Appendix.

**Table 2-3: Pedestrian-Involved Crash Experience Summary
Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin
Five-Year Averages, 2002-2006**

Measure	Pedestrian Fatality Rate			Pedestrian Injury Rate		
	MN	IA	WI	MN	IA	WI
Per Million Residents ⁽¹⁾	2.94	2.57	9.35	125.09	100.36	250.82
Per 100 Square. Miles ⁽²⁾	0.02	0.01	0.08	0.73	0.53	2.11
Per Million Licensed Drivers ⁽³⁾	3.92	3.57	12.90	166.46	139.38	345.96
Per Million Registered Vehicles	2.47	2.22	9.82	104.80	86.67	263.37
Per Billion Vehicle Miles Traveled	0.27	0.24	0.86	11.40	9.37	23.13

⁽¹⁾ Population data source: U.S. Census Bureau

⁽²⁾ Square mileage data source: U.S. Census Bureau

⁽³⁾ Additional data sources: respective state databases

As shown, amongst these three states Iowa has the lowest pedestrian crash rate experience for all of the indicated measures. For each measure, Minnesota ranks slightly behind Iowa.

However, Wisconsin's statistics demonstrate a worse experience on their 25 MPH roads over the five-year time span.

With the great discrepancies between the Iowa and Wisconsin pedestrian-involved crash histories, no conclusion can be drawn about the relative pedestrian safety of a 25 MPH speed limit vs. 30 without performing a comprehensive study, which is beyond the scope of the current Task Force mandate.

3.0 REFINING DEFINITIONS FOUND IN SPEED LIMIT STATUTES

Definitions relative to speed limits, as well as to other traffic regulations, are found in 2008 Minnesota Statute 169.011, DEFINITIONS. As part of the Task Force work, all applicable definitions were reviewed. Where the need for clarification or improvement was noted, the committee worked to develop revised definitions. Presented below are three definitions which were studied in detail; changes were recommended for all three of them.

3.1 Urban District

3.1.1 Urban District Discussion

The task force studied the definition that is used for “Urban District.” In Minnesota statute the Urban District definition is based exactly on the definition as expressed in the Uniform Vehicle Code (UVC). This definition has been in use in the UVC since 1934 and is used by many other states besides Minnesota. Those factors provided a baseline level of support for its use.

The task force identified deficiencies in the definition as detailed below, but did not believe that these deficiencies detracted sufficiently from the definition to warrant its being substantially changed.

The identified possible deficiencies included the following:

- Although the general concept of an “Urban District” is understandable, the wording in the definition is vague.
- The definition may be considered outdated for current development patterns.
- The definition relies on spacing between structures for defining the distance; there are no distinctions made for other factors which influence the safety, throughput and safe travel speed of a road (e.g., width of road or boulevard, frequency of driveways or cross streets, number of lanes, access control, parking, road curvature and alignment, etc.).
- Similarly, the definition does not address other area conditions that can influence the *perception* of appropriate speed (e.g., nearby large commercial development, setback of buildings, pedestrian activity and pedestrian paths).
- The definition does not make a distinction relative to a roadway function or surrounding land use (e.g., residential or business).
- The use of the word “street” within the definition (rather than “street or highway”) causes confusion amongst agencies over which roadways are covered by this definition (e.g., are “highways” covered?)

Regarding the lack of distinction regarding the surrounding land use, the Task Force explored the possibility of creating two classifications within the urban category (e.g., an “Urban Business Roadway” and an “Urban Residential Roadway”). However, after considerable discussion within the Task Force, it was determined that a substantial change in the “Urban District” application may be difficult for drivers to understand. Drivers can clearly understand when they are operating in an Urban District; however, it may be difficult to notice the change from an Urban Business

District to an Urban Residential District. The potential for different speed limits to be applied to Urban Residential Districts and Urban Business Districts also presents concerns about uniformity of speed limits based on driving conditions.

“Urban District” was found to be a reasonable method for describing urban area conditions requiring a lower statutory speed for most city roadways. The overall view of the Task Force was that the Urban District concept was understandable to the motorist (i.e., the motorist can recognize an urban zone and know that the statutory speed limit for that zone is 30 MPH). It was further recognized that for roadways that meet the general characteristics of the Urban District but for which a higher travel speed is appropriate (e.g., collectors and arterials), the agency should request a speed study; those types of roads should likely not be 30 MPH roadways.

The current definition of Urban District was deemed to be generally acceptable, with the exception that some agencies interpret the term “streets” to include highways and others don’t. The Task Force agreed that if conditions are the same along a roadway (e.g., there is 100 ft. spacing), it is appropriate that the roadway, regardless of whether it is a highway or street, should fall under the same definition for the sake of uniformity statewide.

3.1.2 Urban District Recommended Text

The Task Force recommendation is to modify the Urban District definition as shown below:

Statute 169.011, Subd. 90. Urban district. "Urban district" means the territory contiguous to and including any street **or highway** which is built up with structures devoted to business, industry, or dwelling houses situated at intervals of less than 100 feet for a distance of a quarter of a mile or more.

3.2 Rural Residential District

3.2.1 Rural Residential District Discussion

The question posed by the legislature regarded whether the current 55 MPH speed limit in rural residential districts within cities is appropriate. However, as the Task Force explored this issue, it expanded to include other considerations relevant to this definition; the review was not limited to areas within cities.

In the current text of Minnesota Statute 169, the Rural Residential District definition does not appear in 169.011 DEFINITIONS, but rather appears in 169.14. The Task Force recommended moving the definition to 169.011 along with the following changes:

- Houses must be visible and fronting the roadway; this is a feature recognizable by the driver.
- Houses may be on both sides or only on one side of the road.

- The Task Force explored whether the measurement of house spacing should decrease from its current 300 ft. distance. Several “typical” road segments in areas deemed to be appropriate to this category were examined and the existing spacings measured. It was determined that for average spacings of up to 300 ft., the Rural Residential District definition was appropriate. Decreasing the distance would cause many roadways that should be covered by this definition to not be identified as Rural Residential District.
- In the current statute it is unclear whether the spacing should be measured along both sides of the street or only along one side. In the proposed definition, this is clarified; spacing is measured considering primary driveway access to houses on one or both sides of the street.
- The exclusive application to townships is removed; the rural residential district may occur in any jurisdiction.

3.2.2 Rural Residential District Recommended Text

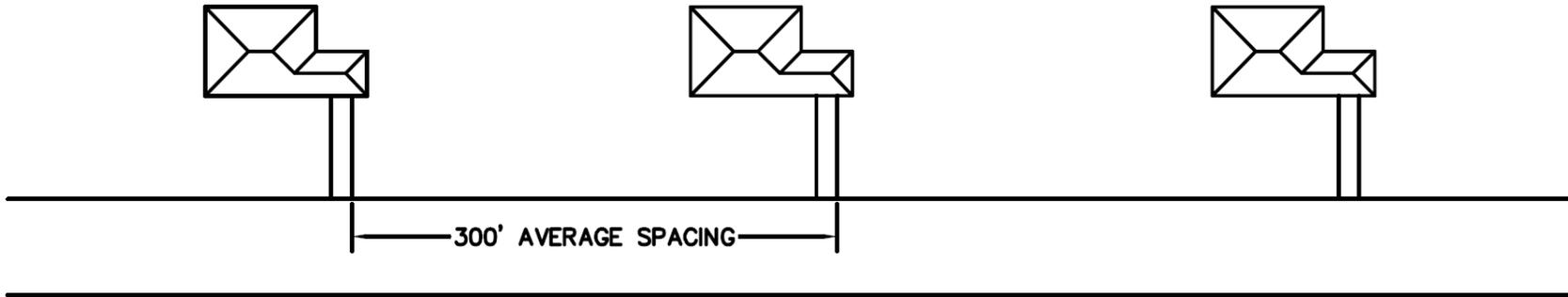
The proposed text is below:

Statute 169.011, Subd. xx. **Rural Residential District.** (a) "Rural Residential District" means the territory contiguous to and including any street or highway that is built up with visible dwelling houses on one or both sides of the road with their primary access points at intervals averaging 300 feet or less for a distance of one-quarter mile or more.

(b) For purposes of this subdivision, “interval” means the measured distance between the primary access point for each dwelling house whether houses are on one or both sides of the road.

Figure 3-1 is a schematic drawing demonstrating how to measure the spacing as described in the proposed text. Figure 3-2 is an aerial photo of a location in Denmark Township, Washington County, which illustrates a typical development meeting the 300 ft. spacing guideline of the Rural Residential District.

Figure 3-1: Diagram Illustrating Rural Residential District Access Spacing Measurement Guidelines



ABOVE:
SPACING MEASUREMENT FOR HOUSES ON ONE SIDE OF ROAD ONLY.

BELOW:
SPACING MEASUREMENT FOR HOUSES ON BOTH SIDES OF ROAD.

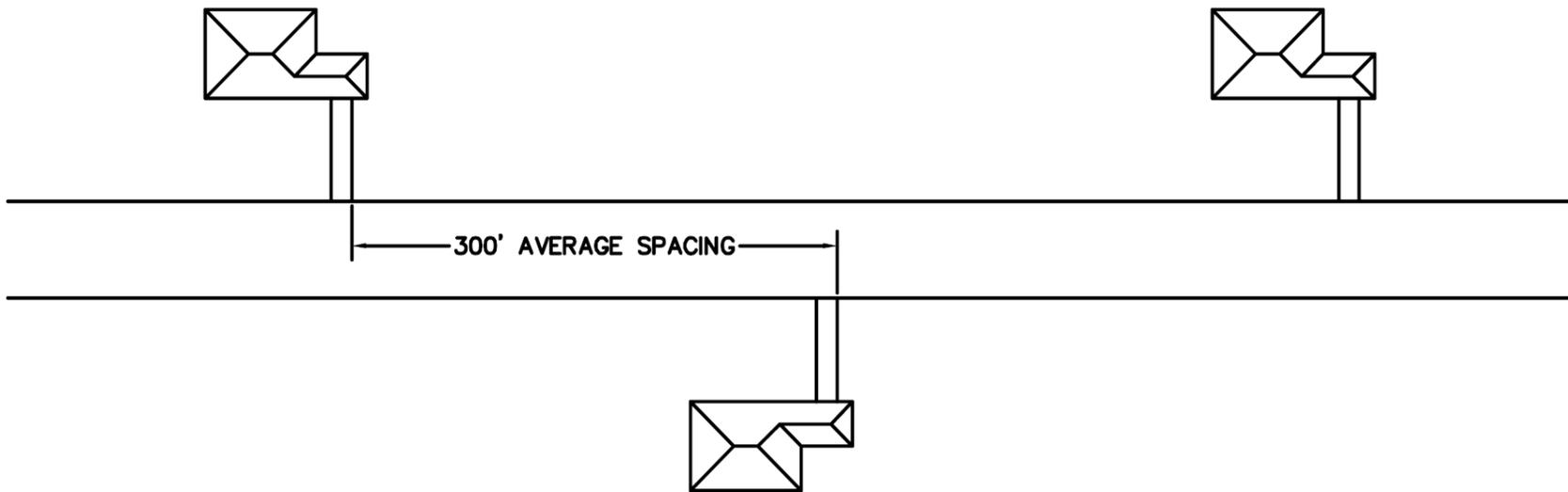
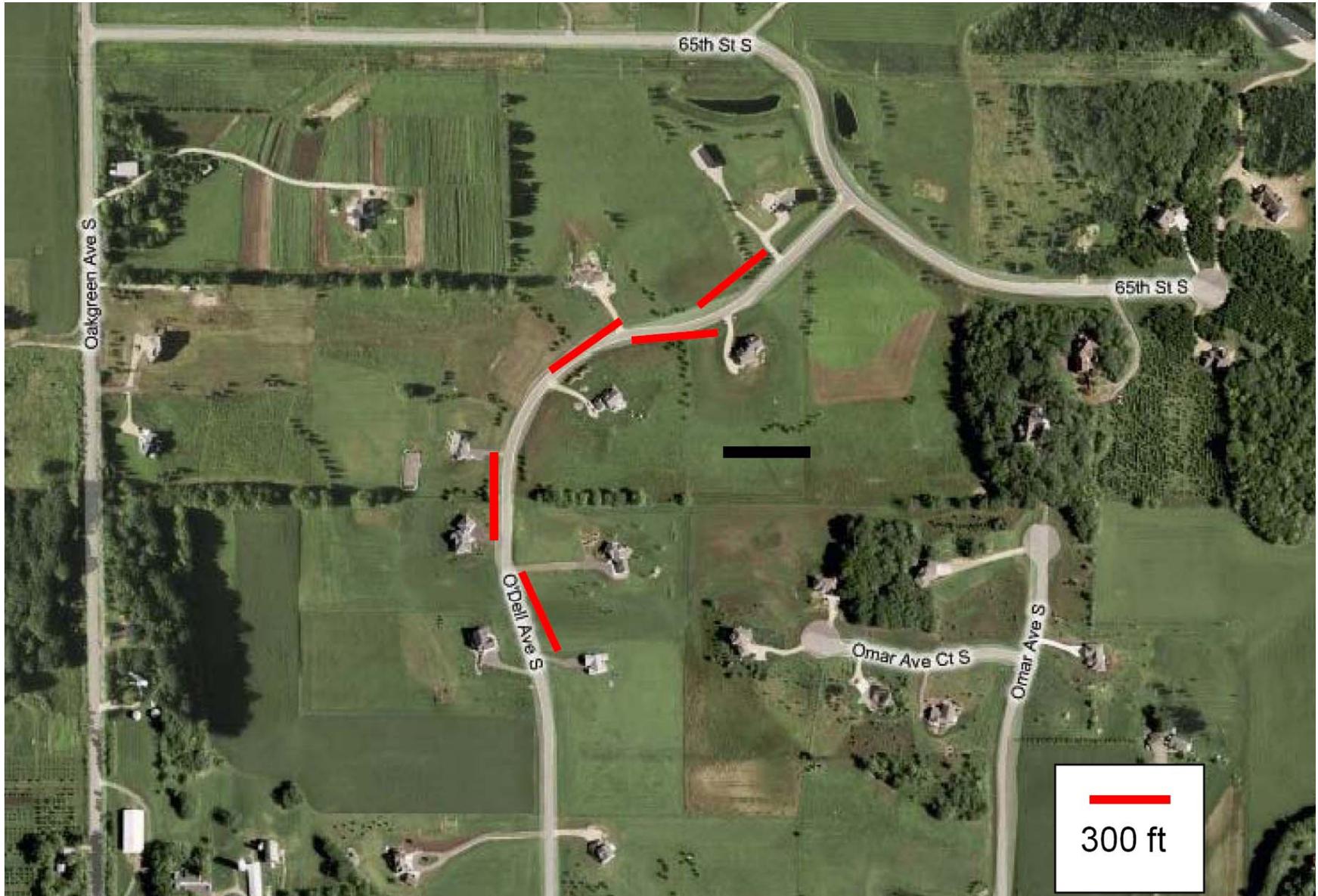


Figure 3-2: Aerial Photo Illustrating Rural Residential District Access Spacing Measurement Guidelines



3.3 Residential Roadway

3.3.1 Residential Roadway Discussion

The current text for residential roadway is reprinted below.

Statute 169.011, Subd. 64. **Residential Roadway.** “Residential roadway” means a street or portion of a street that is less than one-half mile in length and is functionally classified as a local street by the road authority having jurisdiction.

The corollary point to this definition is that cities may set a 25 MPH speed limit on a residential roadway, without a speed study, if adopted by the road authority having jurisdiction over the residential roadway (see MS 169.14 Subd. 2(a)(7)).

This definition in the statute was originally scaled to one-quarter mile length roads (i.e., truly short roads or cul-de-sacs), but at a later date the text was altered to one-half mile to encompass an exception condition. The Task Force spent a considerable amount of time discussing the merits and application of the residential roadway provision. Because of the vague terminology “street or portion of street,” some Task Force members expressed concern over potential misapplication of the residential roadway provision. Informal observations indicate that some cities do make more frequent use of this provision. However, even with more frequent use of the provision, it is impractical for incorrect use to occur due to the signing requirements that are part of the statute. When implementing a 25 MPH speed limit under this provision, cities are required to install speed limit signs at the beginning and end of the residential roadway. This requirement makes it impractical to attempt to lengthen the 25 MPH zone beyond the half-mile limit set in the statute.

It was also acknowledged in the Task Force meetings that if the basic statutory speed limit for urban districts were to change to 25 MPH, then this residential roadway definition would become irrelevant and should be removed from statute.

Several options were developed in the Task Force in an attempt to clarify the definition and limit the possibility that this provision could be implemented incorrectly. A guiding point in reaching a decision was the idea that the original *intent* of the Residential Roadway provision was to apply to entire (short) roads, not to segments within continuous roads. The Task Force decided to return to that intended usage. The Task Force recommendation is to delete “or portion of a street” from the provision to clarify the text. If changed in that way, the statute would clearly only apply to truly short roads.

With the proposed change in the statute text, the element that includes “a portion of a street” would no longer apply. This means that roadway segments, as opposed to a complete length of road under a half mile, that have been signed as 25 MPH zones under 169.14, Subd. 2 (7) would no longer be eligible to retain the 25 MPH status solely on the Residential Roadway basis. These zones, and the corresponding

signing, would need to be removed upon adoption of the proposed change to the Residential Roadway definition.

It was acknowledged that for continuous stretches of roadway where lower speed is desired, the agency can request that speed studies be done.

3.3.2 Residential Roadway Recommended Text

The proposed text is below:

Subd. 64. **Residential Roadway.** “Residential roadway” means a street ~~or portion of a street~~ that is less than one-half mile in length and is functionally classified as a local street by the road authority having jurisdiction.

4.0 DEVELOPING RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO SPEED LIMIT STATUTE TEXT

Through the course of work by the Task Force, the members explored several options and alternatives for establishing revisions to the speed limit statutes found in 2008 Minnesota Statutes 169.14, SPEED LIMITS, ZONES; RADAR. Many of these alternatives and discussions centered on the question of “what is the proper statutory speed limit” and what might be a basis for changing it from its present value. A related question is whether the speed limit should vary for different types of “lower speed” roadways.

The group explored the issue of whether roadways could be differentiated so that “pure residential” streets could have a statutory 25 MPH limit while collectors, arterials and above could be set at a statutory 30 MPH. No alternative was developed that would likely be acceptable to all stakeholders (e.g., citizens, politicians, enforcement, engineers, etc.). In particular, the law enforcement community opposed having a dual-level set of statutory speed limits within an Urban District (or similarly defined) area.

Similarly, discussions were held about setting statutory speed limits on some other basis (e.g., functional classification or geographic boundary such as within the seven-county metro area or within the Minneapolis/St. Paul urban core). However, this was found to go against the principle of uniformity. One of the important principles that the Task Force supported is that speed limit setting should be uniform state-wide and should not vary from city to city or in different parts of the state.

The work of the committee therefore focused on how to amend the speed limit statutes without creating a significant change in the approach to setting speed limits and without causing a complete overhaul of the speed limit statute text.

4.1 Urban District

4.1.1 Urban District Discussion

Many factors were examined in considering what the appropriate statutory speed limit should be in Minnesota for the Urban District or “low speed” roadways. Within the Task Force this essentially represented an analysis of “25 vs. 30” for the statutory limit. One of the first issues to be considered was the engineering, or basic safety, element. A key point within the safety discussion is the concept of “survivability.” Data were presented to the Task Force that depicted survival rates for pedestrians for vehicle/pedestrian crashes at varying speeds. It is intuitively clear that the higher the travel speed of the car, the more critical a vehicle/pedestrian conflict would be. Thus, survivability rates decline as speeds increase. The graph shown in Figure 2-2 (Section 2 of the report) depicts the survival rates as a function of vehicle speed. A change in travel speed from 30 to 25 does cause an incremental change in survivability. However, given the limited number of pedestrian fatalities on low-speed roads in Minnesota, to obtain significant changes in survivability would require a decrease of travel speeds to 20 – or lower. It was further concluded that there would not possibly be overall support for a statutory speed limit of 20 MPH nor compliance with this speed. Basing a decision on speed limit solely on the issue of pedestrian survivability in a crash event would not yield an acceptable limit.

Another factor examined in the speed limit deliberations was the overall pedestrian accident experience (as opposed to strictly the survivability element of crashes). As discussed in Section 2.5 of this report, the data examined within the scope of this Task Force effort did not yield clear results indicating that a particular speed, 25 or 30, was inherently safer for pedestrians. This is an item that may warrant further, more thorough analysis; but it was not practical to do so as part of this effort. For the purposes of the current study, it was concluded that the Task Force did not have a safety reason to recommend a change to the current statutory speed limit.

Also weighing heavily in the determination of a possible change in the recommended speed limit is the enforcement component. The general position in the enforcement community is that with current resources, it is difficult to enforce the present 30 MPH statutory speed limit. There was great reluctance to be tasked with enforcing an even lower limit.

With the realistic view that enforcement strength for a lower speed limit would be lacking, the Task Force explored the question of what would likely happen if the statutory limit were to change to 25, knowing that enforcement might be “weak.” The view in the committee was that changing the speed limit alone would not have the desired effect. Without substantial compliance on the 25 MPH limit, there would likely be more differential in speeds and more vehicles weaving, leading to a greater potential for collisions. The speed disparity could cause a more dangerous condition.

The Task Force acknowledged the citizen-level support for a change to a 25 MPH statutory limit. Task Force members understand that both local officials (such as council members) and state legislators receive significant feedback from their constituents about speed. Further, the Task Force acknowledged that – based on some measures of safety/survivability – a lower speed limit could be justified. Reasons like this do provide some rationale towards a change in the speed limit to 25 MPH. Since enforcement plays such a large role in the viability of a speed limit, the group concluded that if support for enforcement of 25 MPH wants to be obtained, first the enforcement community would need to be shown that support can be provided to them for enforcement of the current 30 MPH limit. If that can be accomplished over a period of years, it might be possible in the future to revisit the speed limit issue and expect that enforcement would support a new limit. The main methods to provide support to enforcement are through vigorous funding and support of education efforts focused on teaching drivers to obey all speed limits. The education efforts need to teach our citizens the dangers of speeding. Successful education models do exist and have proven to modify driver behavior. Mn/DOT and other road authority agencies should explore opportunities to promote education. This could be through, for example, public service announcements or support for speed enforcement saturation at the local level.

The Task Force also considered the prospective cost to communities of the need to post signs as one aspect of educating the public regarding a new statutory speed limit.

This could impose a significant burden on some communities with limited funds to allocate for such a purpose.

While there will continue to be local requests for lower speed limits, Mn/DOT recommends that for the present time in Minnesota, a change to a lower speed limit would not be advisable. A more appropriate step to take at this time is to work for an increase in resources for stronger enforcement of current speed limit regulations and expanded public education efforts. The recommendation from Mn/DOT is to retain the statutory 30 MPH speed limit for Urban Districts.

Apart from the speed limit number, another facet of the current statute is that the speed limits for Urban District and Rural Residential District are combined in one clause, and are therefore the same value. As discussed in Section 4.2 below, because of the differing characteristics of Urban Districts and Rural Residential Districts, it is recommended that speed limit text relating to the Rural Residential District be removed from the 169.14, Subd. 2(a)(1) and instead be contained in its own separate area.

4.1.2 Recommended Statute Text

The recommended revision to the statute text addressing the urban district, 169.14 Subd. 2(a)(1), is shown below:

Subd. 2. **Speed limits.** (a) Where no special hazard exists the following speeds shall be lawful, but any speeds in excess of such limits shall be prima facie evidence that the speed is not reasonable or prudent and that it is unlawful; except that the speed limit within any municipality shall be a maximum limit and any speed in excess thereof shall be unlawful:

(1) 30 miles per hour in an urban district ~~or on a town road in a rural residential district;~~

4.2 Rural Residential District

4.2.1 Rural Residential District Discussion

The characteristics of an area defined as “Rural Residential District” are clearly different from an area defined as “Urban District.” Therefore, the Urban District and Rural Residential District speed limits should be different and Statute 169.14, Subd. 2(a)(1) should not cover both districts.

The Rural Residential District should realistically carry a speed limit that is more appropriate for its characteristics. The Task Force assumed that as house spacing increases, and accesses and inter-vehicle conflicts decrease, drivers would likely be comfortable and can safely manage driving faster than the speed within an Urban District. A related point is that if the speed is more realistically set to this proper level, there would be a good chance of voluntary compliance and more consistent speeds.

In order to test the Task Force assumption and to determine the proper speed, the Task Force suggested, and Mn/DOT conducted, a number of speed studies on representative Rural Residential District roadways. The individual roadway studies exhibited a broad range of average and 85th percentile speeds. These data were further examined with the understanding that for the sake of uniformity the intent was to establish a single statutory speed for the entire category of rural residential roads. Also, a major consideration was that the selected speed be appropriate and safe in the densest of the rural residential areas. Based on these analyses, the recommended statutory speed limit for all rural residential roadways should be 35 MPH. As with other roadway types, if that statutory speed does not appear reasonable for a specific condition, the road authority may request a speed study.

If the 35 MPH Rural Residential speed limit were to be adopted, it was the view of the Task Force that it would need to be signed. Since it is a different value than the Urban District speed limit, it could not be covered in a blanket statement addressing all statutory 30 MPH zones. Similarly, it was thought that it would not be practical to expect motorists to distinguish a Rural Residential zone, and to know that the statutory speed limit is 35, if signing of the 35 MPH area were not provided.

An option was considered that required the road authority to adopt the 35 MPH zone for the Rural Residential District (and post appropriate signing). In this option, a Rural Residential District road would have to be adopted by a formal process, so only roads that really needed the speed control could be selected. If not selected, a road would remain at a statutory 55 MPH limit or could be addressed through a speed zoning study request. Task Force members felt strongly that this option deviated from the core principle of uniformity and consistency statewide. Placing an optional decision in the authority of the local governments suggests that interpretation and application of the Rural Residential District could vary from city to city. This option did not advance beyond initial discussions within the Task Force.

4.2.2 Recommended Statute Text

The Task Force recommends adding provision Subd. 2(a)(8) to the speed limit statute:

(8) 35 miles per hour in a Rural Residential District and speed limit signs shall be erected upon entering the Rural Residential District.

4.3 Residential Roadway

4.3.1 Residential Roadway Discussion

The issue of discussion for this item related to the definition of the term “residential roadway” and its application to short roadways rather than portions of roadways (see Section 3.3 of this report). The task force agreed that for roadways which can be properly categorized as residential roadways the speed limit should remain at 25 MPH.

4.3.2 Recommended Statute Text

The task force recommends that 169.14, Subd. 2(a)(7) remain as is:

(7) 25 miles per hour in residential roadways if adopted by the road authority having jurisdiction over the residential roadway.

5.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED STATUTE CHANGES

This section summarizes the proposed changes to Minnesota statutes (proposed additions to statute are highlighted and underlined; proposed deletions are highlighted and struckthrough).

5.1 Urban District

Statute 169.011, Subd. 90. Urban district. "Urban district" means the territory contiguous to and including any street or highway which is built up with structures devoted to business, industry, or dwelling houses situated at intervals of less than 100 feet for a distance of a quarter of a mile or more.

5.2 Rural Residential District

The current definition for Rural Residential District is found in MS 169.14, Subd. 2(c). It is recommended that it be removed from its current location in statute, redefined, and reintroduced in the definition portion of statute, 169.011:

Statute 169.011, Subd. xx. **Rural Residential District.** (a) "Rural Residential District" means the territory contiguous to and including any street or highway that is built up with visible dwelling houses on one or both sides of the road with their primary access points at intervals averaging 300 feet or less for a distance of one-quarter mile or more.
(b) For purposes of this subdivision, "interval" means the measured distance between the primary access point for each dwelling house whether houses are on one or both sides of the road.

5.3 Residential Roadway

Statute 169.011, Subd. 64. **Residential Roadway.** "Residential roadway" means a street or portion of a street that is less than one-half mile in length and is functionally classified as a local street by the road authority having jurisdiction.

5.3 Speed Limit Statute

Statute 169.14, Subd. 2. **Speed limits.** (a) Where no special hazard exists the following speeds shall be lawful, but any speeds in excess of such limits shall be prima facie evidence that the speed is not reasonable or prudent and that it is unlawful; except that the speed limit within any municipality shall be a maximum limit and any speed in excess thereof shall be unlawful:

- (1) 30 miles per hour in an urban district or on a town road in a rural residential district;
- (2) 65 miles per hour on noninterstate freeways and expressways, as defined in section 160.02, subdivision 19;
- (3) 55 miles per hour in locations other than those specified in this section;
- (4) 70 miles per hour on interstate highways outside the limits of any urbanized area with a population of greater than 50,000 as defined by order

of the commissioner of transportation;

(5) 65 miles per hour on interstate highways inside the limits of any urbanized area with a population of greater than 50,000 as defined by order of the commissioner of transportation;

(6) ten miles per hour in alleys; and

(7) 25 miles per hour in residential roadways if adopted by the road authority having jurisdiction over the residential roadway.

(8) 35 miles per hour in a Rural Residential District and speed limit signs shall be erected upon entering the Rural Residential District.

(b) A speed limit adopted under paragraph (a), clause (7), is not effective unless the road authority has erected signs designating the speed limit and indicating the beginning and end of the residential roadway on which the speed limit applies.

~~(c) For purposes of this subdivision, "rural residential district" means the territory contiguous to and including any town road within a subdivision or plat of land that is built up with dwelling houses at intervals of less than 300 feet for a distance of one quarter mile or more. [This definition is removed from its current location in statute, redefined, and reintroduced in the definition portion of statute as outlined in section 5.2 of this report.]~~

(d) Notwithstanding section 609.0331 or 609.101 or other law to the contrary, a person who violates a speed limit established in this subdivision, or a speed limit designated on an appropriate sign under subdivision 4, 5, 5b, 5c, or 5e, by driving 20 miles per hour or more in excess of the applicable speed limit, is assessed an additional surcharge equal to the amount of the fine imposed for the speed violation, but not less than \$25.

APPENDIX A

- A-1 Minnesota Speed Limit History
- A-2 Excerpts from 2008 Minnesota Statute 169, "Traffic Regulations"
- A-3 Minnesota House File 1909
- A-4 Laws of Minnesota 2008, Chapter 287, Section 119
- A-5 Comparative Pedestrian-Involved Crash Data Tables
- A-6 Speed Limit Task Force Membership
- A-7 Task Force Meeting Schedule

APPENDIX A-1 MINNESOTA SPEED LIMIT HISTORY

1881 – Streetcars in Duluth restricted to 6 MPH

1885 – Incorporated villages or boroughs are authorized to regulate the rate of speed of engine powered vehicles.

1911 – Rate of speed.—Sec. 16. No person shall drive a motor vehicle upon any public highway "of this state at a speed greater than is reasonable and proper, having regard to the traffic and use of the highway, or so as to endanger the life or limb or injure the property of any person. If the rate of speed of any motor vehicle, operated on any public highway in this state, where the same passes through the closely built up portions of any incorporated city, town or village, or where the traffic is more or less congested, exceeds ten (10) miles an hour for a distance of one eighth of a mile, or if the rate of speed of any motor-vehicle, operated on any public highway of this state, where the same passes through the residence portions of any city, town or village, exceeds fifteen (15) miles an hour for a distance of one-eighth of a mile, or of the rate of speed of any motor-vehicle operated on any public highway in this state, outside the closely built up business portions, and the residence portions of any incorporated city, town or village, exceeds twenty-five (25) miles an hour for a distance of one-quarter of a mile, such rates of speed shall be prima facie evidence that the person operating such motor-vehicle is running at a rate of speed greater than is reasonable and proper, having regard to the traffic and use of the way, or so as to endanger the life or limb or injure the property of any person. If the rate of speed of a motor-vehicle, operated on any public highway in this state, in going around a corner or curve in a highway, where the operator's view of the road traffic is obstructed, exceeds six (6) miles per hour, such rate of speed shall be prima facie evidence that the person operating such motor-vehicle is running at a rate of speed greater than is reasonable and proper, having regard to the traffic and the use of the way, or so as to endanger the life or limb or injure the property of any person.

1917 – General Statute Section 2635 – Statutes renumbered and the in-town distance changed from 1/8 to 1/10 mile.

1925 – If the rate of speed of any motor vehicle operated on any highway where the same passes through the closely-built-up portions of any municipality, or where the traffic is congested, exceeds 15 miles an hour for a distance of one-tenth of a mile, or if the rate of speed of any motor vehicle operated on any highway where the same passes through the residence portion of any municipality exceeds 20 miles an hour for a distance of one-tenth of a mile, or if the rate of speed of any motor vehicle operated on any highway outside the closely-built-up business portions and the residence portions of any municipality exceeds 35 miles an hour for a distance of one-quarter of a mile, such rate of speed shall be prima facie evidence that the person operating such motor vehicle is driving at a rate of speed greater than is reasonable and proper.

Sec. 16. Not to pass horse drawn vehicles at a greater speed than 15 miles per hour.—No person operating a motor vehicle or tractor on a highway shall, upon meeting or overtaking any horse or other draft animal driven or in charge of a woman, child, or aged person, or upon meeting or overtaking any other domestic animal except dogs and poultry being upon the highway, pass said animal at a rate of speed greater than 15 miles per hour; and in case said animal exhibits any signs of fright, the operator shall bring his vehicle to a stop,

1927

1. Fifteen miles an hour when approaching within fifty feet of a grade crossing of any steam, electric or street railway when the driver's view is obstructed. A driver's view shall be deemed to be obstructed when at any time during the last two hundred feet of his approach to such crossing he does not have a clear and uninterrupted view of such railway crossing and of any traffic on such railway for a distance of four hundred feet in each direction from such crossing;
 2. Fifteen miles an hour when passing a school during school recess or while children are going to or leaving school during opening or closing hours;
 3. Fifteen miles an hour when approaching within fifty feet and in crossing an intersection of highways when the driver's view is obstructed. A driver's view shall be deemed to be obstructed when at any time during the last fifty feet of his approach to such intersection, he does not have a clear and unobstructed view of such intersection and of the traffic upon all of the highways entering such intersection for a distance of two hundred feet from such intersection;
 4. Fifteen miles an hour in going around curves or along a grade upon a highway when the driver's view is obstructed within a distance of one hundred feet along such highway in the direction in which he is proceeding;
 5. Twenty miles an hour on any highway where the same passes through the closely built-up portions of any municipality or where the traffic is congested, when traffic on such highway is controlled at intersections by traffic officers or traffic control devices;
 6. Fifteen miles an hour on all other highways where the same pass through the closely built-up portion of any municipality or where the traffic is congested;
 7. Twenty miles an hour on any highway where the same passes through the residence portion of any municipality;
 8. Thirty-five miles an hour under all other conditions,
- (c) Municipalities in their respective jurisdictions are hereby authorized in their discretion to increase the speed which shall be prima facie unlawful upon "thru" highways at the entrances to which vehicles are by ordinance of such municipalities required to stop before entering or crossing such "thru" highways. Municipalities shall place and maintain upon all "thru" highways as to which such speed is so increased adequate signs giving notice of such special regulations and shall also place and maintain upon each and every highway intersecting any such "thru" highway, appropriate top signs which shall be illuminated at night or so placed as to be illuminated by the headlights of an approaching vehicle or by street lights.

1929 – Rural speed is raised.

8. Forty-five miles an hour under all other conditions.

1937 – Statutes are renumbered and reformatted, the beginning of Statute 169.14 as we know it and traffic control devices must comply with American Association of State Highway Officials. 30 MPH in a business or residence district and 45 MPH under all other conditions. The commissioner may establish speed zones up to 60 MPH daytime and 50 MPH when vehicle lights are needed.

1939 –. 30 MPH in any municipality. Changed the rural statutory values to 60 MPH daytime/50 MPH nighttime and authorized the Commissioner to set any speed limit.

1942 – Governor's Order implements a Wartime Speed Limit of 40 MPH under orders from the USA Office of Defense Transportation.

1942-1945 – Wartime Speed Limit changed only 4 months afterward, to a maximum 35 MPH upon the advice of the Wartime National Rubber Director. Repeat offenders will lose their gas ration stamps.

1963 – Changed rural statutory values to 65 MPH daytime/55MPH nighttime and introduced the definition of “urban district.”

1974 – National Maximum Speed Limit 55 MPH (NMSL55) on all roads imposed by US DOT for emergency energy conservation, prompted by foreign oil embargos. US DOT requires substantial compliance to NMSL55 or else funding will be sanctioned. Governors order implements this in MN.

1975 – Legislation makes Governor’s Order into law. Local authorities are granted the power to establish school zone speed limits 20 MPH below the normal speed limit but not lower than 15 MPH.

1980 – Gives municipalities the power to override Commissioner’s speed orders in urban districts.

1984 – Sets 10 MPH in alleys unless studied and posted with a different speed limit

1986 – Dimmler Amendment – 10 MPH over, or less, the ticket is not recorded on drivers license record if on a 55 MPH highway.

1987 – US DOT issues new interpretation of NMSL55 and allows rural interstates to go to 65 MPH and MN follows this. Local road authorities are authorized to lower work zone speed limits by as much as 15 MPH below the normal limit.

1991 – Allows local road authorities to set speed limits on park roads at 20 MPH below normal and establishes rustic road speed limit at a maximum 45 MPH.

1994 – 25 MPH on residential roadways. The beginning and end of the zone must be signed and less than ¼ mile in length. Fines are doubled in work zones.

1995 – Federal repeal of NMSL55. Commissioner’s Order keeps all speed limits status quo until a study can be performed to determine course of action.

1997 – Speed limits raised to 70 MPH on rural interstate, 65 MPH on expressways and urban interstates. Commissioner’s authorization keeps most urban interstates at 55 or 60 MPH. Fines are also doubled for citations issued in school zones or for not reducing speed when passing an emergency vehicle on the side of the road.

1999 – Rural residential district definition introduced establishing 30 MPH speed limit with house spacing at 300 feet or less, on platted land or subdivisions. This applies to township roads only.

2001 – Residential roadway definition changed to ½ mile in length. Work zone signs are required to be posted and workers must be present for the fine to be doubled.

2003 – Permits a school speed limit to be 30 MPH less than the normal speed limit.

2005 – Fines are doubled for citations issued for 20 or more MPH above the speed limit and revokes drivers license for 6 months for offenders over 100 MPH.

Research based on files in the MN Department of Transportation and session laws at website <https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/laws/>.

APPENDIX A-2

EXCERPTS FROM 2008 MINNESOTA STATUTE 169, "TRAFFIC REGULATIONS"

169.011 DEFINITIONS.

Subd. 64. **Residential roadway.** "Residential roadway" means a street or portion of a street that is less than one-half mile in length and is functionally classified as a local street by the road authority having jurisdiction.

Subd. 90. **Urban district.** "Urban district" means the territory contiguous to and including any street which is built up with structures devoted to business, industry, or dwelling houses situated at intervals of less than 100 feet for a distance of a quarter of a mile or more.

169.14 SPEED LIMITS, ZONES; RADAR.

Subd. 1. **Duty to drive with due care.** No person shall drive a vehicle on a highway at a speed greater than is reasonable and prudent under the conditions. Every driver is responsible for becoming and remaining aware of the actual and potential hazards then existing on the highway and must use due care in operating a vehicle. In every event speed shall be so restricted as may be necessary to avoid colliding with any person, vehicle or other conveyance on or entering the highway in compliance with legal requirements and the duty of all persons to use due care.

Subd. 1a. **License revocation for extreme speed.** The driver's license of a person who violates any speed limit established in this section, by driving in excess of 100 miles per hour, is revoked for six months under section 171.17, or for a longer minimum period of time applicable under section 169A.53, 169A.54, or 171.174.

Subd. 2. **Speed limits.** (a) Where no special hazard exists the following speeds shall be lawful, but any speeds in excess of such limits shall be prima facie evidence that the speed is not reasonable or prudent and that it is unlawful; except that the speed limit within any municipality shall be a maximum limit and any speed in excess thereof shall be unlawful:

- (1) 30 miles per hour in an urban district or on a town road in a rural residential district;
- (2) 65 miles per hour on noninterstate freeways and expressways, as defined in section 160.02, subdivision 19;
- (3) 55 miles per hour in locations other than those specified in this section;
- (4) 70 miles per hour on interstate highways outside the limits of any urbanized area with a population of greater than 50,000 as defined by order of the commissioner of transportation;
- (5) 65 miles per hour on interstate highways inside the limits of any urbanized area with a population of greater than 50,000 as defined by order of the commissioner of transportation;
- (6) ten miles per hour in alleys; and
- (7) 25 miles per hour in residential roadways if adopted by the road authority having jurisdiction over the residential roadway.

(b) A speed limit adopted under paragraph (a), clause (7), is not effective unless the road authority has erected signs designating the speed limit and indicating the beginning and end of the residential roadway on which the speed limit applies.

(c) For purposes of this subdivision, "rural residential district" means the territory contiguous to and including any town road within a subdivision or plat of land that is built up with dwelling houses at intervals of less than 300 feet for a distance of one-quarter mile or more.

(d) Notwithstanding section 609.0331 or 609.101 or other law to the contrary, a person who violates a speed limit established in this subdivision, or a speed limit designated on an appropriate sign under subdivision 4, 5, 5b, 5c, or 5e, by driving 20 miles per hour or more in excess of the applicable speed limit, is assessed an additional surcharge equal to the amount of the fine imposed for the speed violation, but not less than \$25.

APPENDIX A-3
MINNESOTA HOUSE FILE 1909

03/07/2007

REVISOR

RR/JN

07-3483

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State of Minnesota
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

EIGHTY-FIFTH
SESSION

HOUSE FILE No. **1909**

March 12, 2007

Authored by Tingelstad and Hausman

The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Transportation Finance Division

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to traffic regulations; requiring legislative report on speed limits.
1.3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.4 Section 1. STUDY AND REPORT ON SPEED LIMITS.

1.5 The commissioner of transportation shall report to the chairs of the legislative
1.6 committees with jurisdiction over transportation and local government by January
1.7 30, 2008, on speed limits on local roads. The commissioner shall consult with local
1.8 governments and solicit input from local governments before issuing the report. The
1.9 report must include, at a minimum:

1.10 (1) whether the current statutory speed limit of 30 miles per hour in urban districts
1.11 and rural residential districts is appropriate, or if there are locations where the appropriate
1.12 speed limit is 25 miles per hour;

1.13 (2) whether the current statutory speed limit of 55 miles per hour in rural residential
1.14 districts within a city is appropriate, or if there are locations where the appropriate speed
1.15 limit is 30 miles per hour; and

1.16 (3) whether the current definitions of urban district, rural residential district, and
1.17 residential roadway are appropriate, or whether and how they should be changed.

APPENDIX A-4
LAWS OF MINNESOTA 2008, CHAPTER 287, SECTION 119
STUDY AND REPORT ON SPEED LIMITS

The commissioner of transportation shall report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over transportation and local government by January 30, 2009, on speed limits on local roads. The commissioner shall consult with local governments and solicit input from local governments before issuing the report. The report must include, at a minimum:

(1) whether the current statutory speed limit of 30 miles per hour in urban districts and rural residential districts is appropriate, or if there are locations where the appropriate speed limit is 25 miles per hour;

(2) whether the current statutory speed limit of 55 miles per hour in rural residential districts within a city is appropriate, or if there are locations where the appropriate speed limit is 30 miles per hour; and

(3) whether the current definitions of urban district, rural residential district, and residential roadway are appropriate, or whether and how they should be changed.

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**APPENDIX A-5a
COMPARATIVE PEDESTRIAN-INVOLVED CRASH DATA TABLES**

Minnesota Five-Year Data

Year	Crash Severity			Grand Total
	Fatal	Injury	Property Damage	
2002	18	774	8	800
2003	16	552	66	634
2004	12	629	13	654
2005	20	637	6	663
2006	9	594	2	605
Grand Total	75	3186	95	3356

Iowa Five-Year Data

Year	Crash Severity			Grand Total
	Fatal	Injury	Property Damage	
2002	6	332	0	338
2003	5	314	0	319
2004	8	288	2	298
2005	12	260	3	275
2006	7	289	2	298
Grand Total	38	1483	7	1528

Wisconsin Five-Year Data

Year	Crash Severity			Grand Total
	Fatal	Injury	Property Damage	
2002	49	1391	37	1477
2003	53	1387	33	1473
2004	55	1272	37	1364
2005	47	1515	45	1607
2006	53	1330	41	1424
Grand Total	257	6895	193	7345

**APPENDIX A-5b
COMPARATIVE PEDESTRIAN-INVOLVED CRASH DATA TABLES**

Pedestrian-Involved Crash History Data by Number of Residents

Year	Pedestrian Fatal Rate per Million Residents			Pedestrian Injury Rate per Million Residents		
	MN	IA	WI	MN	IA	WI
2002	3.58	2.04	9.01	154.06	113.12	255.75
2003	3.16	1.70	9.69	109.11	106.73	253.70
2004	2.36	2.71	10.00	123.48	97.53	231.31
2005	3.90	4.05	8.50	124.27	87.69	274.06
2006	1.74	2.35	9.54	114.96	96.91	239.34
5-Year Average	2.94	2.57	9.35	125.09	100.36	250.82

Population data source: US Census Bureau

Pedestrian-Involved Crash History Data by Number of Square Miles

Year	Pedestrian Fatal Rate per 100 Square Miles			Pedestrian Injury Rate per 100 Square Miles		
	MN	IA	WI	MN	IA	WI
2002	0.02	0.01	0.07	0.89	0.59	2.12
2003	0.02	0.01	0.08	0.63	0.56	2.12
2004	0.01	0.01	0.08	0.72	0.51	1.94
2005	0.02	0.02	0.07	0.73	0.46	2.31
2006	0.01	0.01	0.08	0.68	0.51	2.03
5-Year Average	0.02	0.01	0.08	0.73	0.53	2.11

Square miles data source: US Census Bureau

**APPENDIX A-5c
COMPARATIVE PEDESTRIAN-INVOLVED CRASH DATA TABLES**

Pedestrian-Involved Crash History Data by Number of Licensed Drivers

Year	Pedestrian Fatal Rate/Million Licensed Drivers			Pedestrian Injury Rate/Million Licensed Drivers		
	MN	IA	WI	MN	IA	WI
2002	4.79	2.84	12.76	205.85	157.35	362.24
2003	4.22	2.36	13.28	145.65	148.11	347.62
2004	3.12	3.77	13.78	163.38	135.85	318.80
2005	5.17	5.61	11.63	164.60	121.50	375.00
2006	2.33	3.26	13.02	153.49	134.42	326.78
5-Year Average	3.92	3.57	12.90	166.46	139.38	345.96

Pedestrian-Involved Crash History Data by Number of Registered Vehicles

Year	Pedestrian Fatal Rate/Million Registered Vehicles			Pedestrian Injury Rate/Million Registered Vehicles		
	MN	IA	WI	MN	IA	WI
2002	3.27	1.77	9.72	140.73	97.94	275.99
2003	2.64	1.45	10.27	91.09	91.28	268.80
2004	1.94	2.29	10.42	101.94	82.52	240.91
2005	3.17	3.57	8.75	101.11	77.38	282.12
2006	1.41	2.04	9.94	93.25	84.26	249.53
5-Year Average	2.47	2.22	9.82	104.80	86.67	263.37

Pedestrian-Involved Crash History Data by Number of Vehicle Miles Traveled

Year	Pedestrian Fatal Rate/Billion Vehicle Miles Traveled			Pedestrian Injury Rate/Billion Vehicle Miles Traveled		
	MN	IA	WI	MN	IA	WI
2002	0.33	0.19	0.83	14.23	10.57	23.70
2003	0.29	0.16	0.89	9.96	9.94	23.27
2004	0.21	0.25	0.91	11.13	9.00	21.06
2005	0.35	0.38	0.78	11.27	8.23	25.25
2006	0.16	0.22	0.89	10.49	9.12	22.39
5-Year Average	0.27	0.24	0.86	11.40	9.37	23.13

**APPENDIX A-6
SPEED LIMIT TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP**

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Saint Paul, MN 55102-1660

ANDOVER

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City Engineer
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Andover, MN 55304

CHANHASSEN

Paul Oehme
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Chanhasen MN 55317-8363

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Kristi Sebastian
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Marcus Evans
Houston County Engineer
Houston County DOT
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7699 Anagram Drive
Eden Prairie, MN 55344

APPENDIX A-7
SPEED LIMIT TASK FORCE MEETING SCHEDULE

Meeting #1 – December 20, 2007

Meeting #2 – January 7, 2008

Meeting #3 – January 28, 2008

Meeting #4 – February 11, 2008

Meeting #5 – February 25, 2008

Meeting #6 – March 10, 2008

Meeting #7 – April 28, 2008

Meeting #8 – October 2, 2008

Meeting #9 – November 17, 2008