

Daniel La Spata

ALDERMAN, 1ST WARD
1958 N. MILWAUKEE AVE.
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60647
PHONE: 872-206-2685
E-MAIL: info@the1stward.com



CITY OF CHICAGO CITY COUNCIL



CITY HALL
3RD FLOOR - ROOM 300
121 NORTH LASALLE STREET
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602

Chair, Committee on Pedestrian and
Traffic Safety

Vice Chair, Committee on Contracting
Oversight and Equity

Ex-Officio, Chicago Plan Commission

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MONTHLY REPORT – MAY 2024 **COMMITTEE ON PEDESTRIAN AND TRAFFIC SAFETY**

Pursuant to the Rule 45 of City of Chicago Rules and Order, the Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety submits the following monthly report for April 2024.

Date, Time, & Location of Meeting:

On Wednesday, May 1st, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. the Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety held a meeting at City Hall in Council Chambers. The Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety meeting was called to order at 10:20 a.m.

Members in Attendance:

Chairman La Spata (1st Ward)
Alderman Hopkins (2nd Ward)
Alderman Robinson (4th Ward)
Alderman Yancy (5th Ward)
Alderman Chico (10th Ward) - virtual
Alderman Quinn (13th Ward)
Alderman Moore (17th Ward)
Alderman Curtis (18th Ward)
Vice Mayor Burnett (27th Ward)
Alderman Ervin (28th Ward) - virtual
Vice Chairman Cruz (30th Ward)
Alderman Knudsen (43rd Ward)
Alderman Martin (47th Ward)
Alderman Manaa-Hoppenworth (48th Ward)

Absent Members: Alderman Lawson (44th Ward)

Non-Members in Attendance: Alderman Sigcho-Lopez (25th Ward), Alderman Vasquez (40th Ward)

The Chairman accepted a motion from Ald. Manaa-Hoppenworth to allow for remote participation by Ald. Chico and Ald. Ervin, which was approved by the same role call as was used to establish quorum.

Public Comment:

There were 12 spoken and 34 written public comments (see pages 5-21 for written comment in its entirety).

Spoken Public Comment was provided by the following individuals (in order of appearance):

- Peter C. (virtual): 45th ward resident concerned about the use of stop signs in Chicago, stating CDOT often violates state law when installing stop signs and unwarranted stop signs foster non-compliance
- Zoe Leigh: trying to the issue of the illegal demolition of her mother's property resolved; tired of sharing a sidewalk with bicycles and Chairman should focus on adding bike lanes to the South and West sides
- George Blakemore: upset with the new rules where public cannot enter chambers until quorum is met; spoke about the issue of driving while Black and the racism in traffic enforcement where Black people are pulled over for minor things and can even be killed as a result of a traffic stop
- Anthony P.: shared he almost got hit by a car walking to the meeting; suggested Chicago look to other cities to think about how to implement infrastructure changes; noted south side lacks bike lanes and sidewalks are in disrepair and that must be addressed; called for ticketing people biking on sidewalks
- Michael Podgers: Better Streets Chicago; in support of lowering default speed limit to 25 mph; this is a first step and band-aid for reducing and eliminating traffic violence and requires enforcement to match posted numbers; emphasized need for robust funding and support for infrastructure that guides driver behavior toward better / safer driving; next steps must come quickly
- Kimberly M.: mother of someone who was struck by a vehicle and killed on January 21st on 95th and Union a block from his home; crying out for some reform and urged that something needs to be done about traffic safety; 79th and Stony Island is one of the most dangerous intersections in the world; need to do something soon and serious, be aggressive, and have a Pedestrian Bill of Rights
- Sativa Volbrecht: Sierra Club; co-chair of transportation team; in support of lowering the speed limit to create safer streets as even a few miles per hour can be the difference between life and death + lower speed limits are environmental issue; stressed need for enforcement but not through increased policing because traffic stops are dangerous – mentioned Dexter Reed – and instead investing in infrastructure change and non-car travel options; safe streets are streets designed for everyone
- James Anderson: over 100 politicians in Chicago and almost all of them primarily drive around, so may not be introspective about driving behaviors; slowing down will help save lives and prevent injuries
- Tim Shambrook: need bike and pedestrian infrastructure + CTA for growing the city – need to focus on the time taken by all people to travel from point A to B; supports 20 mph as all studies show that slower speeds lead to fewer injuries, fatalities, etc.; traffic calming is great way to slow streets down; safe streets is important for strong communities and helping people feel connected to their neighbors
- Emilee Chaclos: Sierra Club; supports speed limit reduction; knows too many people who've suffered serious injuries from various traffic situations; traffic calming infrastructure is needed; traffic violence impacts communities differently, especially Black communities, and that needs to be taken into account
- Neil Marklund: in support of lower speed limit; lower speeds were in 2012 and 2016 Chicago plans – need legislation for this asap; this will not increase travel times or congestion since average speed of cars is already lower than 25 mph due to existing traffic; slower speeds increase reaction and response times, generates less noise pollution, and reduces chances of injury and fatalities; Boston shows that even lowering the limit without enforcement had some impact on driver behavior
- Dixon Galves-Searle: Southwest Collective; Archer Heights is very dangerous and deadly crashes are a very likely possibility; shared three instances of traffic deaths of his neighbors; Pulaski, Archer, and other wide streets need to be changed for safety; need abundant and reliable buses, pedestrian bump outs, and bringing IDOT to the table too

Approval of March 2024 Rule 45 Report:

Ald. Martin moved to approve, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

Agenda of Matters Considered:

The Agenda of Matters Considered consisted of 9 pages and included the following matters:

- 90 ordinances related to disabled parking permits,
- 24 ordinances related to traffic warning signs and/or signals,
- 8 ordinances related to parking restrictions, and
- 6 ordinances related to residential parking permit zones.

Direct Introductions on pages 2-3 Passed without Department recommendations. Ald. Hopkins moved to approve all Direct Introduction ordinances, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

All matters on pages 4-5 Passed as Recommended by the appropriate Department(s). Ald. Quinn moved to approve all Recommended ordinances on pages 4-5, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

All matters on pages 6-9 Passed with No Recommendation. These items were submitted as aldermanic overrides or received no recommendations from City Departments. Ald. Martin moved to approve all No Recommendation ordinances on pages 6-9, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

All actions taken at the meeting were by viva voce vote.

Subject Matter Hearing – R2024-0008391

The subject matter hearing topic was a hearing on lowering the citywide default speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph. The resolution was introduced by Chairman La Spata and co-sponsored by Ald. Martin.

The hearing consisted of testimony from three City of Chicago departments and three subject matter experts, followed by Q&A..

- Commissioner Tom Carney and Managing Deputy Commissioner Vig Krishnamurthy, *Chicago Department of Transportation*
 - Discussed speed limits as the one tool in the toolbox for creating safer streets, emphasizing that safe streets are part of a strong Chicago and have an impact on economic development, livable neighborhoods, and more.
 - Presented data on Chicago's traffic fatalities in comparison to peer cities' traffic fatalities; on the racial and age disparities of traffic fatality victims; and on how traffic calming infrastructure and lower speed limits in Chicago have successfully lowered speeding
- Commissioner Olusimbe Ige and Kate McMahon, *Chicago Department of Public Health*
 - Emphasized how traffic related mortality disproportionately impacts people of color and the need to understand why that's the case and what prevention strategies could address that issue
 - Discussed how traffic laws are not enforced fairly or equitably and noted that solutions must center racial equity to ensure measures taken will not negatively impact people of color
- Comptroller Chasse Rehwinkel, *Chicago Department of Finance*
 - Shared information on the Clear Path Relief program for existing vehicle-related debt and the Fix-It Defense option for expired city sticker and expired license plate violations

- Audrey Wennick, *Metropolitan Planning Council*
 - Discussed how lowering speed limits can save lives by increasing driver reaction time and increasing driver field of vision without significantly impacted travel times
 - Provided examples of lower speed limit implementation in other cities, such as New York, Seattle, San Francisco, and Boston
 - Emphasized education of drivers being central to this policy to ensure behavior change and that revenue generated from fines should go to funding better street design to create safer streets the inherently encourage slower speeds
- Victoria Barrett, *Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning*
 - Provided data on traffic fatalities in the region since 2006 and data on pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities in the region since 2017, including a breakdown of fatalities by race
 - Discussed the importance of managing speeds, emphasizing how small decreases in the average speed can save lives and uplifting how vehicles size, weight, and shape has shifted over time to pose greater danger to pedestrians in the case of traffic crashes
- Amy Rynell, *Active Transportation Alliance*
 - Discussed safer speeds in context of the safe system approach for eliminating fatal and serious injuries for all road users, naming safer people, safer vehicles, safer roads, and post-crash care as companions to safer speeds in this approach
 - Emphasized that safety, not revenue, must be the goal of a lower speed limit policy, uplifting the need for self-enforcing streets, safe and equitable streets, and less reliance on punitive measures which includes having clear guardrails and an equitable approach to fines and fees when it comes to automated enforcement, such as red-light and speed-camera tickets

Alders Moore, Manaa-Hoppenworth, and Curtis shared comments and asked questions following the presentation, which included a request for information on the number of speeding tickets issued over the past five years and uplifting the need for walkable communities across the city; an interest in thinking through modernization as it relates to this and uplifting the need for public education on this topic; and an interest in amending the red-light camera ordinance to allow additional placements of the cameras, respectively. Alders Yancy, Sigcho-Lopez, and Vasquez additionally had comments / questions that were requested to be submitted through the chair in order to adjourn the meeting on time.

Having no further business before the committee, Chairman La Spata requested a motion to adjourn. Ald. Cruz so moved, and hearing no objections, Chairman La Spata adjourned the meeting at 12:18 p.m.

Written Public Comment:

New York City Department of Transportation Testimony, submitted May 1, 2024:

Good afternoon, Chair La Spata and the Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety. I am Erin LaFarge, Director of Safety Policy at the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT). Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on the background and outcomes of lowering New York City's speed limits.

The safety of all New Yorkers is DOT's number one priority, and to enhance safety, New York City employs a comprehensive program of engineering, education, and enforcement known as Vision Zero. Vision Zero posits that all crashes are preventable and even one loss of life is too many.

One important tool in our Vision Zero toolbox for safer roads is lowering speed limits. The faster a vehicle is traveling, the more time and space a driver needs to react to circumstances in order to prevent a crash. For example, a driver at 40 MPH needs 300 feet to perceive, react, and brake in the face of an unexpected event—twice as far as a driver at 25 MPH, who only needs 150 feet. And the faster a vehicle is moving when a crash occurs, the more damage is caused by the impact. Even a small difference in vehicle speed makes a big impact in terms of safety – a pedestrian who is struck by a vehicle traveling at 30 MPH is twice as likely to be killed as a pedestrian struck by a vehicle traveling at 25 MPH. Faster moving vehicles are particularly deadly for older pedestrians.

So, in November 2014, New York City worked with the State Legislature and the City Council to lower the default citywide speed limit from 30 miles per hour to 25 miles per hour. Data has shown that the lower speed limits established in 2014 contributed to a 23 percent decline in annual pedestrian deaths from the start of New York City's Vision Zero program through 2023, compared to the five-year average before Vision Zero began. In 2023, we experienced the lowest number of pedestrian fatalities in the last 100 years, aside from 2020.

New York City employs the Safe Systems Approach which uses redundancy to reinforce multiple layers of protection to both prevent crashes from happening and minimize the harm caused to those involved if it does. To that effect, we not only lowered speed limits, but also deployed widespread education campaigns and installed and continue to install street treatments to encourage slower speeds, including speed humps, cushions, and road diets. This past year, DOT installed more than 666,000 square feet of new pedestrian space, an all-time annual record. DOT also installed a record-breaking 31.9 new protected bike lane miles—reaching 220 protected bike lane miles in the last 10 years. In addition to these tools, New York City also reinforces lower speed limits with our speed camera program.

In 2013, New York City was granted authority by the New York State Legislature to pilot a speed camera program, initially in 20 school speed zones and only during limited hours and days. A violation is issued to the owners of vehicles that are traveling more than 10 miles per hour above the speed limit – in most cases, at least 36 miles per hour. Since the program began, New York City has succeeded in acquiring the authority to operate cameras in 750 school speed zones 24 hours a day and seven days a week.

Speed cameras have proven to be an effective method for enforcing our reduced speed limit and to direct the driving culture away from speeding. Of the vehicles that receive a speed camera violation, 74 percent receive no more than one or two. At locations where cameras are installed, speed camera violations dropped 70 percent on average in the period after they were installed. In the year after speed cameras were expanded to include nights and weekends, speed camera violations dropped 30 percent. It is clear that the combination of lower speed limits, consistent enforcement, and community education is working, and people are learning to slow down.

These methods have saved lives in New York City every day, and I believe they would be a welcome change for Chicago. So, thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Avis C., submitted April 20, 2024:

I am writing in response the input solicitation for amending the current speed limit. I am ALL FOR the speed limit on residential street be lowered to 20 mph AND ticketing those exceeding the limit. If speeders aren't going to be held responsible, there's NO NEED to spend taxpayer money on this, be it wasting time on legislation or purchasing /

posting new signs. Currently, absolutely nothing is being done to enforce the traffic laws in Wicker Park. If this will just be more of the same, don't bother.

Avis C.

Tracy M., Submitted April 25, 2024:

I am citizen of Chicago and in support of lowering the citywide default speed limit.

*Peace,
Tracy M. (he, him, his)*

Safeer S., submitted April 24, 2024:

Hello,

I support changing the speed limit to 25 mph in order to make Chicago more pedestrian friendly city. I personally saw a car hitting a biker and it was very traumatic to watch.

Safeer S.

Doug V., Submitted April 24, 2024:

*20 mph and concrete protected bike lanes, please. And please make the concrete too high to drive over.
I thank you and your children thank you .*

*Doug V.
1st Ward*

Michael B., Submitted April 25, 2024:

The Committee on Traffic and Pedestrian Safety ,

*As a constituent, I am reaching out to urge your backing for the reduction of the citywide default speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph. Changing speed limits alone is shown to make streets safer in cities like Toronto and Seattle.
<https://nacto.org/publication/city-limits/the-need/speed-limit-changes-have-big-impacts/>*

Chicago is currently grappling with a severe traffic safety issue. Over the last five years, there has been a concerning increase in both serious injuries and fatalities on our roads.

One of the primary contributing factors to these tragic accidents is speeding. This reckless behavior is frequently the leading cause of fatal crashes and severe injuries on our streets.

Those walking or cycling, particularly outside of vehicles, are particularly vulnerable to the dangers of traffic incidents, as are our most fragile community members, including children, seniors, and individuals with disabilities.

Moreover, in Chicago, where Black and Brown residents are disproportionately affected by traffic-related incidents, addressing dangerous speeding becomes not just a matter of safety but also one of public health equity.

Studies have demonstrated that lowering the speed limit has an immediate impact on driver behavior, effectively reducing speeds and ultimately saving lives. Numerous peer cities, including New York, Boston, San Francisco, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, and Indianapolis, have already taken proactive measures to lower speed limits, reaping the benefits of enhanced safety and livability. Importantly, this adjustment can be made without resorting to expanded enforcement methods that may be harmful or inequitable.

Any reduction in the speed limit should be accompanied by a clear commitment from the City of Chicago to invest in neighborhood improvements, prioritizing the redesign of our streets to promote safety and slower speeds.

I implore you to support initiatives aimed at making our streets safer for all Chicagoans by endorsing the reduction of the speed limit to 25 mph.

*Michael B.
Chicago, Illinois 60618*

Erin S., Submitted April 25, 2024:

The Committee on Traffic and Pedestrian Safety ,

As a constituent, I am reaching out to urge your backing for the reduction of the citywide default speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph. Changing speed limits alone is shown to make streets safer in cities like Toronto and Seattle. <https://nacto.org/publication/city-limits/the-need/speed-limit-changes-have-big-impacts/>

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*Erin S.
Chicago, Illinois 60608*

Melissa P., Submitted April 25, 2024:

The Committee on Traffic and Pedestrian Safety ,

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*Melissa P.
Chicago, Illinois 60608*

Derek F., Submitted April 26, 2024:

The Committee on Traffic and Pedestrian Safety ,

As a constituent, I am reaching out to urge your backing for the reduction of the citywide default speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph. Changing speed limits alone is shown to make streets safer in cities like Toronto and Seattle. <https://nacto.org/publication/city-limits/the-need/speed-limit-changes-have-big-impacts/>

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*Derek F.
Chicago, Illinois 60607*

Roman S., Submitted April 26, 2024:

The Committee on Traffic and Pedestrian Safety ,

As someone who bikes to work and carries two kids on a bike throughout the city I appreciate the committee's efforts to make Chicago streets safer for my family and myself.

However, lowering the speed limit in Chicago will not materially improve safety and would add another regressive tax on vulnerable Chicago Communities.

1) 4 out of 5 Traffic fatalities in Chicago over the past 3 years were caused by drivers not following the existing rules of the road, such as failing to yield, ignoring traffic signals, driving recklessly, or getting behind the wheel when they should not have been driving. Better, equitable enforcement of existing traffic laws can have a dramatic impact on safety.

2) Lower speed limits do not necessarily mean safer road conditions. In the first 7 months of reducing the speed limit on Augusta to 20 MPH traffic crashes are up 74%. West of Western where speed limit remains 30 MPH the number of crashes remains the same as prior year.

3) A 2021 ProPublica analysis found that Chicago traffic cameras disproportionately ticket Black and Latino drivers. It is likely that changes that the City Council is considering will result in more regressive taxes, in the form of speed camera tickets, on Black and Brown communities.

*Thank you
Roman S.
Chicago, Illinois 60613*

Kelli L., Submitted April 26, 2024:

The Committee on Traffic and Pedestrian Safety ,

As a constituent, I am reaching out to urge your backing for the reduction of the citywide default speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph. Changing speed limits alone is shown to make streets safer in cities like Toronto and Seattle. <https://nacto.org/publication/city-limits/the-need/speed-limit-changes-have-big-impacts/>

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One of the primary contributing factors to these tragic accidents is speeding. This reckless behavior is frequently the leading cause of fatal crashes and severe injuries on our streets.

Those walking or cycling, particularly outside of vehicles, are particularly vulnerable to the dangers of traffic incidents, as are our most fragile community members, including children, seniors, and individuals with

disabilities.

Moreover, in Chicago, where Black and Brown residents are disproportionately affected by traffic-related incidents, addressing dangerous speeding becomes not just a matter of safety but also one of public health equity.

Studies have demonstrated that lowering the speed limit has an immediate impact on driver behavior, effectively reducing speeds and ultimately saving lives. Numerous peer cities, including New York, Boston, San Francisco, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, and Indianapolis, have already taken proactive measures to lower speed limits, reaping the benefits of enhanced safety and livability. Importantly, this adjustment can be made without resorting to expanded enforcement methods that may be harmful or inequitable.

Any reduction in the speed limit should be accompanied by a clear commitment from the City of Chicago to invest in neighborhood improvements, prioritizing the redesign of our streets to promote safety and slower speeds.

I implore you to support initiatives aimed at making our streets safer for all Chicagoans by endorsing the reduction of the speed limit to 25 mph.

Kelli L.,
Chicago, Illinois 60646

Melissa M., Submitted April 26, 2024:

The Committee on Traffic and Pedestrian Safety ,

As a constituent, I am reaching out to urge your backing for the reduction of the citywide default speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph. Changing speed limits alone is shown to make streets safer in cities like Toronto and Seattle. <https://nacto.org/publication/city-limits/the-need/speed-limit-changes-have-big-impacts/>

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I implore you to support initiatives aimed at making our streets safer for all Chicagoans by endorsing the

reduction of the speed limit to 25 mph.

Melissa M.

Chicago, Illinois 60646

Noah W., Submitted April 27, 2024:

I am a resident of Logan Square and I strongly support a lowering of the speed limit from 30 to 25 mph. As a driver, this will hardly inconvenience me, but as a pedestrian and cyclist this could be literally life-saving. Cycling and walking near busy streets is the most dangerous thing I do on a daily basis, and anything that decreases average vehicular speed makes me and all other pedestrians and cyclists safer. A vehicle-pedestrian collision at 20 mph has a 10% fatality rate. A vehicle-pedestrian collision at 30 mph has a 50% fatality rate. I would gladly trade a few minutes on an average drive for a significantly lower likelihood of receiving (or causing!) severe harm in an accident.

Noah W.

Matt S., Submitted April 27, 2024:

I believe this would be a bad idea.

It seems difficult to believe the issue is really cars going 30 mph, but more likely the motorists who are speeding well beyond 30 MPH.

When driving a car, 30 mph is already a fairly slow speed to drive. 20 mph is an extremely slow speed to drive. I believe many drivers will ignore the 20 MPH limit.

Further then that many will be unaware, regardless of the level of signage since the state default limit is 30 mph, and this is a near universal situation across Illinois and across the country.

If anything, traffic patterns and intersections should be redesigned using AI and advanced traffic pattern modelling to try and design the safest intersections that can move the most traffic.

I think the traffic control officials and those desiring further limits on speeds and lanes usage taken by motor vehicles fail to understand the frustration caused when one cannot move in a reasonable manner through the city streets. Traffic has become ridiculously bad in no small part thanks to decrease in lanes which in many cases appear to create as many safety issues as they attempt to solve.

We do need more driver education and public service messages regarding things which Chicago drivers are bad at: Don't cause gridlock, get over to the right lane when making a right turn, don't block crosswalks and bike lanes (or as one might frame it: don't get in the way if you are able to).

We similarly need these for bikers: Stop at stop lights and signs, be aware that vehicles are going to have to cross into the bike lane to make turns and that is OK (where the bike lane is not separated) and stop for pedestrians.

And For Pedestrians: Use crosswalks, look both ways. Remember that vehicles have to turn at the end of a step-light, so just wait a minute instead of rushing across at the last second when it already says don't walk, if your child is small, carry them across the street, especially if you can't use the crosswalk for some reason. Bike lanes need to move off of busy streets entirely and have dedicated infrastructure like the bike trails on the northside along the river and the 606. Bicycling really does not work well mixed with vehicular traffic, which is utterly necessary and is critical for the survival of many people. Bicycling is an unreliable transportation option that does not suite the vast majority of people. Many are simply incapable of physically riding a bike and many more have basic needs that bicycle transportation simply cannot fill. Taking motor vehicle infrastructure away

from its intended use and dedicating it to bicycles is limiting infrastructure needed by our most vulnerable and frankly, all people, whereas bicycling can only be utilized by a small part of the population.

That said, some streets should be local traffic only for vehicles, minimal parking and have the majority of the street dedicated to bike traffic.

Again, a default speed limit 20 MPH is too slow and likely will not have the desired effect. Please consider the importance of making motor vehicle traffic safer by reducing driver stress and frustration and make traffic able to flow more freely through the city.

*Matt S.
Chicago, IL 60647*

George W., Submitted April 27, 2024:

Dear committee members, making this city into a 20 mph zone looks like a naked grab for \$\$ from its already heavily taxed citizens. George

Nathan R., Submitted April 28, 2024:

The Committee on Traffic and Pedestrian Safety ,

As a constituent, I am reaching out to urge your backing for the reduction of the citywide default speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph. Safety is critical to everyone and changing speed limits alone is shown to make streets safer. <https://nacto.org/publication/city-limits/the-need/speed-limit-changes-have-big-impacts/>

Pedestrian and cyclist deaths are on the rise as vehicles get heavier while driving at high speeds. The momentum from these vehicles pose a serious risk to people outside of a vehicle, especially children, seniors, and individuals with disabilities, and the problem is exasperated when drivers are speeding over the posted speed limits.

Moreover, in Chicago, where Black and Brown residents are disproportionately affected by traffic-related incidents, addressing dangerous speeding becomes not just a matter of safety but also one of public health equity.

Studies have demonstrated that lowering the speed limit has an immediate impact on driver behavior, effectively reducing speeds and ultimately saving lives. Numerous peer cities, including New York, Boston, San Francisco, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, and Indianapolis, have already taken proactive measures to lower speed limits, reaping the benefits of enhanced safety and livability. Importantly, this adjustment can be made without resorting to expanded enforcement methods that may be harmful or inequitable.

Any reduction in the speed limit should be accompanied by a clear commitment from the City of Chicago to invest in neighborhood improvements, prioritizing the redesign of our streets to promote safety and slower speeds.

We must support initiatives aimed at making our streets safer for all Chicagoans by endorsing the reduction of the speed limit to 25 mph, and I implore you to do the same.

*Nathan R.
Schwedt/Oder, Brandenburg 60610*

Molly T., Submitted April 28, 2024:

The Committee on Traffic and Pedestrian Safety ,

As a constituent, I am reaching out to urge your backing for the reduction of the citywide default speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph. Changing speed limits alone is shown to make streets safer in cities like Toronto and Seattle. <https://nacto.org/publication/city-limits/the-need/speed-limit-changes-have-big-impacts/>

Chicago is currently grappling with a severe traffic safety issue. Over the last five years, there has been a concerning increase in both serious injuries and fatalities on our roads.

One of the primary contributing factors to these tragic accidents is speeding. This reckless behavior is frequently the leading cause of fatal crashes and severe injuries on our streets.

Those walking or cycling, particularly outside of vehicles, are particularly vulnerable to the dangers of traffic incidents, as are our most fragile community members, including children, seniors, and individuals with disabilities.

Moreover, in Chicago, where Black and Brown residents are disproportionately affected by traffic-related incidents, addressing dangerous speeding becomes not just a matter of safety but also one of public health equity.

Studies have demonstrated that lowering the speed limit has an immediate impact on driver behavior, effectively reducing speeds and ultimately saving lives. Numerous peer cities, including New York, Boston, San Francisco, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, and Indianapolis, have already taken proactive measures to lower speed limits, reaping the benefits of enhanced safety and livability. Importantly, this adjustment can be made without resorting to expanded enforcement methods that may be harmful or inequitable.

Any reduction in the speed limit should be accompanied by a clear commitment from the City of Chicago to invest in neighborhood improvements, prioritizing the redesign of our streets to promote safety and slower speeds.

I implore you to support initiatives aimed at making our streets safer for all Chicagoans by endorsing the reduction of the speed limit to 25 mph.

*molly t.
Chicago, Illinois 60615*

Steve D., Submitted April 29, 2024:

Lowering the speed limit to 25 mph is a fantastic idea. Lower speeds greatly reduce the level of injury and chance of fatalities in crashes. I would feel much safer as a pedestrian and cyclist with a broad lowering of speed limits across the city.

*Sincerely,
Steve D.
47th Ward Resident*

Scott R., Submitted April 29, 2024:

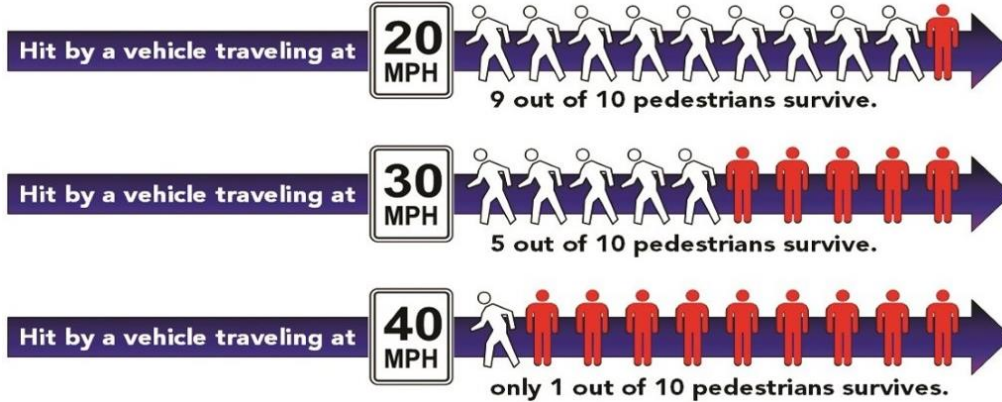
Hello Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety,

I support the initiative to lower the citywide speed limit to 25mph. This will create safer streets for everyone. My only concern with it is compliance. Enforcement through police is short-sighted and imperfect. We should be designing and building our residential streets so it is physically impossible to drive fast.

*Thank you,
Scott R.
1st Ward Resident*

Kurtis P., Submitted April 29, 2024:

Please support the 25 mph speed limit City wide. It will save lives.



Thank you,
Kurtis P.
Chicago, IL 60622

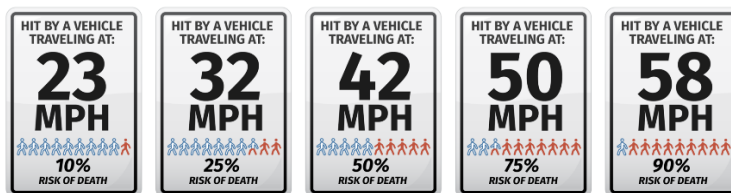
Jacob P., Submitted April 29, 2024:

Hello Committee and Councilmembers,

I am writing in support of the proposal to reduce the citywide speed limit for the City of Chicago to 25mph.

Lowering the speed limit to 25mph will increase the likelihood that a car is traveling at a speed where a pedestrian is more likely to survive a crash. That alone should be enough reason to reduce the speed limit given the amount of lives that have been lost to driver negligence over the past few years. There are many studies, but they all show a precipitous drop in fatalities when drivers are operating their vehicles at lower speeds. Especially in dense urban locations.

See images below representing stats from multiple studies. It could be argued that the speed limit should be dropped to 20mph, which is why reducing it to 25mph is a no brainer.

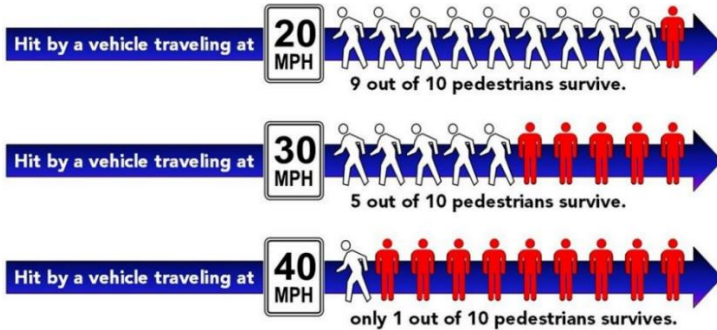
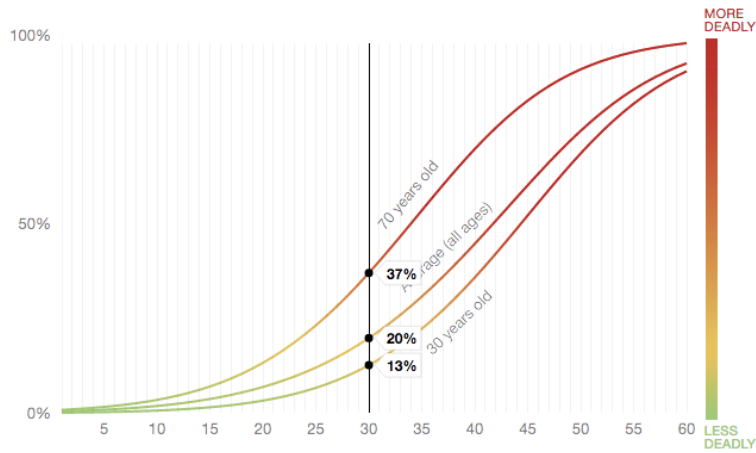


DEATH DUE TO SPEED

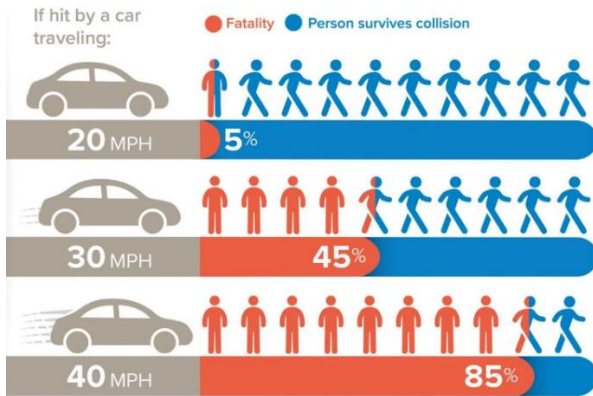
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, LITERATURE REVIEWED ON VEHICLE TRAVEL SPEEDS AND PEDESTRIAN INJURIES. MARCH 2000.
WWW.NHTSA.GOV/ABOUT-NHTSA/TRAFFIC-TECHS/
CURRENT/LITERATURE-REVIEWED-ON-VEHICLE-TRAVEL-SPEEDS-AND-PEDESTRIAN-INJURIES

The Chance of Being Killed by a Car Going 30 mph

Roll over the curved lines to see the risk at any speed



You can't prioritize both safety and speed



National Traffic Safety Board (2017) Reducing Speeding-Related Crashes Involving Passenger Vehicles. Available from: <https://www.ntsb.gov/safety/safety-studies/Documents/SS1701.pdf>



Jacob P.
 architect, designer, urbanist, environmentalist, cyclist
 Chicago, IL 60641

Courtney C., Submitted April 29, 2024:

Hello Committee Members,

I am grateful that the committee is considering lowering the default speed limit in the city of Chicago. While I applied this effort, I must say that it does not go far enough. Reducing the default speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph will not make that great of a difference compared to lowering the default speed limit to 20 mph. Signs are

often an ineffective tool in reducing drivers' speeds. The Chicago Department of Transportation needs to work with the Illinois Department of Transportation to re-time signals on State-controlled roads within the city. I live along Sheridan Road in Rogers Park and routinely see drivers going 15+ mph over the 30 mph speed limit. Part of why drivers are so easily able to speed along Sheridan Road is due to the signal timing.

Additionally, I would love to see this committee task, the Chicago department of transportation with constructing our local roads to self enforce a speed limit of 20 mph, especially our residential side streets. I live along a side street that has three small parks along it and a healthy amount of cyclist, who travel between the city and Evanston, and even Wilmette. It is not uncommon to see drivers fly down the street. This street has a 30mph speed limit despite the presence of parks and a high number of cyclists. Unfortunately, current city practices require residents to petition their neighbors and find a majority in order to get the city to install basic traffic calming like speed humps. We need to do away with this practice and Simply design all our side streets for lower speeds. Safety shouldn't be something that people have to labor to opt into safety should be the default on our streets. We cannot make safety the default if you have to go around and petition your neighbors for a simple speed hump. As we have seen in recent years, traffic fatalities are not just limited to arterial streets. People, including children, have been killed along side streets. We must do more to protect residents from traffic violence and designing our streets for slower speeds will go a lot further than putting up new signs that drivers will inevitably ignore.

Charlie R., Submitted April 29, 2024:

Hello,

I write in SUPPORT of lowering the speed limit citywide as is proposed. This will be safer for all road users and but significantly impact any trip times in a way that outweighs the benefits of increased safety and lower noise.

Signed,

22-year resident of Chicago

France B., Submitted April 29, 2024:

No to reduced speed to 25. Unbelievable and thanks for your last-minute poll.

Frances L.

5th ward

HJ, Submitted April 29, 2024:

The existing proposal to reduce the citywide speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph is not without issues. The areas of the city surrounding schools, some parks and recently reconfigured streets that include protected bike lanes have reduced speed limits. The new 20 mile an hour speed limit on Augusta and the soon-to-be implemented 20 mile an hour speed limit on Grand is how the city should approach implementing changes in speed for all road users.

What we need as a city is consistent enforcement of the existing laws and regulations that make traveling predictable and safer. These changes would include adding additional traffic enforcement officers, speed cameras and the installation of speed tables (similar to those on West Palmer Square) that physically limit the speed one can travel.

We also need to know what the cost of implementing these changes citywide as well as how they're going to be enforced equitably.

HJ

ROR

Steve I., Submitted April 29, 2024:

I support a reduced speed limit.

Look at this picture of a car parked on Western close to Diversey. It's 4:11 p.m. on April 24th. The car is in the "Express Bus Lane", AND parked in front of a fire hydrant.

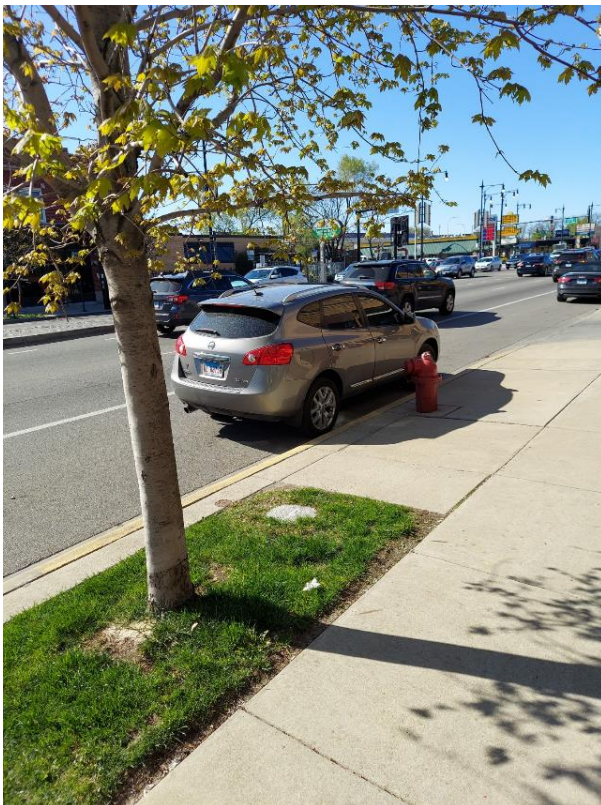
If Chicago can't enforce bus lane parking rules, how is the new speed limit going to be enforced?

I'm 2018, Chicago lost roughly 1.5 million dollars in revenue from driver's parking in bike lanes. (see below). The city isn't even enforcing that.

And don't tell me the police will do it. They have enough to do with Chicago's catch and release crime policies.

When walking in a crosswalk with the right-of-way I have been hit by a car twice in the past 3 years.

So yes, I'm in favor of it, but only if it gets enforced. Otherwise, just like the highly touted bus lanes, this legislation is absolutely worthless.



-Steve I.
Chicago, IL 60618

Roman S., Submitted April 29, 2024:

Honorable Aldermen and Alderwomen

As someone who bikes to work and carries two kids on a bike throughout the city I appreciate the committee's efforts to make Chicago streets safer for my family and myself. However, lowering the speed limit in Chicago will not materially improve safety and would add another regressive tax on vulnerable Chicago Communities.

1) 4 out of 5 Traffic fatalities in Chicago over the past 3 years were caused by drivers not following the existing rules of the road, such as failing to yield, ignoring traffic signals, driving recklessly, or getting behind the wheel when they should not have been driving. Better, equitable enforcement of existing traffic laws can have a dramatic impact on safety.

2) Lower speed limits do not necessarily mean safer road conditions. In the first 7 months of reducing the speed limit on Augusta to 20 MPH traffic crashes are up 74%. West of Western where speed limit remains 30 MPH the number of crashes remains the same as prior year.

3) A 2021 ProPublica analysis found that Chicago traffic cameras disproportionately ticket Black and Latino drivers. It is likely that changes that the City Council is considering will result in more regressive taxes, in the form of speed camera tickets, on Black and Brown communities.

I urge the committee to consider the full upsides and downsides of the changes that are being proposed today. Actual data from our city shows that lower speed limits do not have a significant impact on safety AND would create another regressive tax on vulnerable communities.

Thank you
Roman S.

Bryan B., Submitted April 29, 2024:

Hello committee members,

I would like to submit my personal endorsement of a 25mph speed limit in Chicago. Traffic injuries and fatalities are at epidemic levels in this country, and Chicago is not immune to these unfortunate trends. This is a public health issue that needs an urgent and multi-faceted solution. Lowering speed limits is one of many steps that can and should be taken to combat this epidemic.

*Sincerely,
Brian Borah, MD, MA
Medical Director
Vaccine-Preventable Diseases Surveillance | Disease Control Bureau
Chicago, IL 60608*

John Paul Jones – Sustainable Englewood Initiatives, Submitted April 29, 2024:

RE: City Council Committee Subject Hearing on Speed limits

Good morning, Daniel La Spata, Alderman and Chairman, Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety and fellow members of the city committee.

Sustainable Englewood Initiatives (SEI) is a local advocacy group working on environmental solutions, transportation planning, community benefit strategies, land use and zoning, climate resiliency and cultural reviews.

We are writing to support this significantly important subject matter hearing on the topic of lowering the city-wide default speed limit. We understand that no votes will be taken on the topic of the city-wide speed limit. However, we are pleased that the Chicago City Council has a desire to reduce traffic fatalities across the region.

We in Greater Englewood share your interest to review root causes of traffic crashes and the growing number of injuries caused by vehicles.

Along main corridors across the district, we continue to witness high speeds.

- One corridor is the 71st street (Emmett Till Road), this East/West Corridor has experienced a high rate of vehicle thief; so they would use this sector to escape heading to Dan Ryan Expressway.
- Ashland Av, many West Englewood youth cross this main street for schools (many district schools were closed in early 2000s). The area between 59th to 67th is a high speed corridor that deserves pedestrian friendly design concepts to head off crash injuries. CTA Greenline Ashland Station is located at 63rd Street.
- West bound along 69th and 63rd Street between Loomis Blvd to Damen Ave. Main corridor of public transit users.

Special Note: the city is currently considering using \$200,000 in TIF dollars to remove our traffic calmer at 61st and Hermitage, in order to satisfy a developer. The infrastructure should be rebuilt not removed!

Taking a new look at speed limits and possibly school zones would allow for necessary updating of travel times (CTA Bus scheduling and GPS users) and would help reduce unwarranted ticketing near closed schools. While simultaneously, reducing pedestrian and vehicle injuries.

To this end, thank you for this subject hearing on speed limits. We would be watching and learning how best to proceed in the Greater Englewood district with a specific interest around transit dependent users and safe crossings.

If any questions arise, please feel free to reach us via email at sustainableenglewoodin@gmail.com.

Truly,

John Paul Jones

President, Sustainable Englewood Initiatives (SEI)

cc: Englewood Elected Officials

CDOT office

CMAP, Transportation Staff and Committee

CTA Board

RTA staff

SEI Board Members

Teamwork Englewood

Grow Greater Englewood

Andrew W., Submitted April 29, 2024:

Hi my name is Andrew and I am a 31 year-old male living in a condo that I own at [redacted personal information] Chicago, IL 60640

I am ambivalent regarding the changing of the default citywide speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph. However, I would request that major arterial streets (e.g. Roosevelt, Ashland, Western, Fullerton) keep their 30 mph limits.

In addition, in areas of school speed limits of 20 mph I would like to request that flashing lights be installed to indicate when the 20 mph limit is active (i.e. "on schools days when children present")

Thank you,

Andrew W.

Saad A., Submitted April 30, 2024:

To the Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety:

I support the 25 mph speed limit reduction. This needs to be coupled with a street redesign rule otherwise the outcome of this will be increased traffic stops, tickets, and fines on the most underserved residents of Chicago.

With this new speed limit reduction, I ask that you implement a rule that declares that all new future projects on street construction are required to meet traffic calming measures that accommodate a 25mph speed limit.

Wider streets without any traffic calming are the ones where drivers are most likely to speed. These types of streets typically occur in underserved areas. I expect driving behavior to change, on average, due to a speed limit reduction, but this does not influence behavior as much as traffic calming measures. As a result, we're left with a marginal improvement in pedestrian safety that comes at the cost of alienating underserved residents. Going forward, street design and reconstruction of streets need to accommodate the fact that speed limits are 25 mph.

Thank you,
Saad A.

Griffin H., Submitted April 29, 2024:

Hello,

I am very much in favor of the measure to lower the city wide speed limit to 25 mph. Frankly there is no where in the city where one would need to travel faster than that, and I additionally think speed enforcement cameras should not have any threshold above the speed limit where they don't trigger. The speed limit either is or isn't the limit.

Best,
Griffin H.

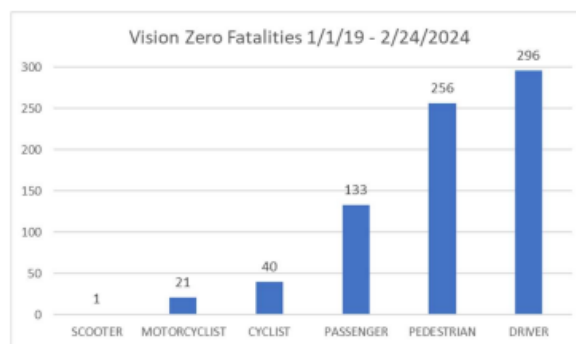
Carsten L., Submitted April 30, 2024:

To the Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety:

I wish to express my enthusiastic support for a lowering of the citywide default speed limit from 30 to 25 miles per hour. A reduction of Chicago's default speed limit would increase safety for all road users; pedestrians, transit riders, cyclists, automobile drivers and their passengers.

According to the data set Traffic Crashes - Vision Zero Chicago Traffic Fatalities posted on the Chicago Data Portal, there have been 747 fatalities on Chicago's roads from the beginning of recording on January 1st 2019, through February 24th 2024. A summary of the fatalities is below:

Victim	Count
PEDESTRIAN	256
PASSENGER	133
DRIVER	296
CYCLIST	40
MOTORCYCLIST	21
SCOOTER	1
TOTAL	747



747 lives have ended on Chicago's streets due to traffic violence in a little over 5 years. I will note that for this same time period there have been 3,142 Fatal Shooting Victimization in Chicago, according to the City's Violence Reduction Dashboard. Both of these figures are unacceptable, but today we have the opportunity for a discussion about good legislation that can reduce the number of traffic fatalities in Chicago. Chicago can join other cities like New York, Boston, D.C., Seattle, and Atlanta and lower the default speed limit to 25 MPH.

As a Chicagoan who is often a pedestrian, I anecdotally note the recent post pandemic trend of Chicago drivers failing to yield to pedestrians in crosswalks is getting worse. I have had several 'close calls' with vehicles in the past year when I have crossed in a marked crosswalk with the right of way. I don't care to think what would happen to me or another pedestrian if struck by a vehicle, but the data shows that reduction in speed is directly correlated to pedestrian survival. I share the graphic below from the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Roadway Safety Strategy report. This graphic draws on data published in 2011 from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety.



Sources: Fatality Analysis Reporting System; Early Estimates of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities and Fatality Rate by Sub-Categories in 2020, DOT HS 813 118, June 2021; AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, Impact Speed and a Pedestrian's Risk of Severe Injury or Death; National Traffic Speeds Survey III: 2015, DOT HS 812 485, March 2018.

I thank Alders La Spata and Martin for the introduction of this resolution, and look forward to working with my city to create safer streets for all roadway users.

Sincerely,
Carsten L., 2nd Ward Resident

Andy H., Submitted May 3, 2024:

Dear Alderman La Spata,

I'm writing to you as Chair of the Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety to express my support for [lowering the default speed limit to 25 mph](#). As a pedestrian and cyclist, the proposed change would make both of those modes safer for me to get around the city.

Thank you for your service to the citizens of Chicago.

Sincerely,
Andy H.
Chicago, IL 60640