

# Speed Limit Reduction Factsheet



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## Background

In February 2020, the Tacoma City Council adopted Resolution No. 40559 committing to Vision Zero and the goal of eliminating traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2035. Contained within Resolution No. 40559 was direction to complete a study on the “State of Speed and Safety in Tacoma” and include consideration of a default speed limit of 25 MPH on arterials and 20 MPH on residential streets.

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## Why Lower Speed Limits?

- 1.** Lowering speeds improves safety by reducing the frequency and severity of crashes. Lower speeds improve visibility, provide additional time for drivers to stop, and reduce the potential for fatal or severe injuries by lowering impact forces.
- 2.** Neighborhood streets should be safe and healthy places, creating environments that are walkable, encourage social connection, and foster a sense of community. Additionally, neighborhood business districts are meant to provide services to the surrounding community, to be a place for neighbors to gather, and be walkable.
- 3.** While everyone is affected by traffic collisions, collisions do not affect everyone equally. In Tacoma, people who are hit while walking or biking make up only 6% of crashes but 57% of fatalities and serious injuries. Making roadways safer for vulnerable users, such as children and individuals with a disability, is an important part of making the roadways safer for everyone.

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## Proposed Speed Limit Changes

| Residential   | Neighborhood Business District   |
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| Lower the default citywide speed limit on residential streets from 25 MPH to 20 MPH | Lower the speed limited from 30 MPH to 25 MPH on arterial streets in four Neighborhood Business Districts:<br>Old Town<br>6th Avenue<br>McKinley Hill<br>Lincoln |

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## Education and Enforcement

If the proposal becomes law, the City will launch a comprehensive education campaign with information about the speed limit reduction. There will be a grace period between the time when the law goes into effect and when enforcement begins to give people time to learn about the new speed limits.



Research has shown that reducing speed limits slows traffic and improves safety – even without additional enforcement. Vision Zero aims to limit the need for traffic enforcement by designing and building a transportation system that calms traffic, changes driver behavior, and supports the safety of people of all ages and abilities, regardless of how they travel.

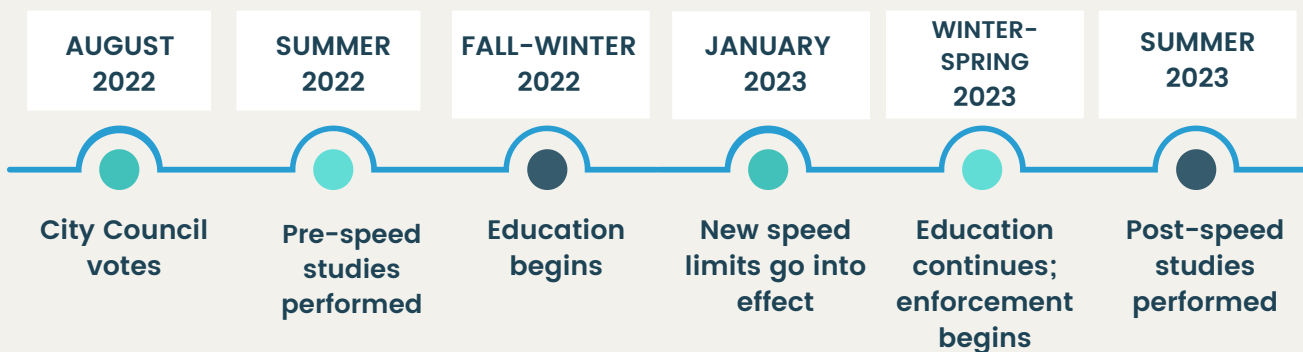
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## Evaluation

Traffic studies will be performed before and after speed limit changes in each Neighborhood Business District and on residential streets in each Council district to get an understanding of compliance and where countermeasures, such as traffic calming, may be necessary to encourage compliance.

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## Timeline for Speed Limit Reduction



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## Next Steps with Vision Zero

The remaining Neighborhood Business Districts will continue to be studied and may be candidates for future speed limit reduction.

The majority of fatalities and serious injury crashes are occurring on arterial streets, making these streets the next focus for future Vision Zero efforts. To lower speeds on most arterial streets, more is needed to change driver behavior than simply lowering the speed limit and changing signs. Learn more about Vision Zero at [cityoftacoma.org/visionzero](http://cityoftacoma.org/visionzero).

