



# CITY OF MANITOWOC

WISCONSIN, USA

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September 17, 2024

TO: Members of the Public Safety Committee

FROM: Alderperson Brett Vanderkin  
Dan Koski, Director of Public Infrastructure  
Greg Minikel, Engineering Division Manager  
Eric Nycz, City Attorney  
Chief Nick Reimer, Chief of Police

Re: Ad Hoc Committee on Speed Limits Recommendations

## Issue Presented

On August 12, 2024, the Public Safety Committee established a subcommittee to discuss perceived inconsistencies in speed limits throughout the City of Manitowoc and then make recommendations regarding its findings. Alder Vanderkin led the ad hoc committee, which included the remaining authors of this document. The following represents our findings and recommendations.

## Findings

Posted speed limits within the City of Manitowoc are almost universally consistent with the rubric used to set speed limits in the city. This may be somewhat surprising to citizens who are unaware of the factors that traffic engineers and police officers review when setting or recommending speed limits. Generally, city (urban) speed limits are set at 25 MPH. However, other considerations are considered, including (but not limited to):

- Traffic counts
- Density of access points (number of driveways)
- Road width
- Whether parking is allowed on the street
- Presence of sidewalks
- Presence of curves or elevation changes
- Whether sight lines are reduced by buildings or natural structures or growth
- Proximity of schools, parks, or other areas where kids may be at play
- Proximity of city limits
- Intersections
- Traffic Controls

Wider roads allow for increased safety at higher speeds. Where children are present, speed limits should be kept low. When vehicles enter the city limits, it is safer to have a vehicle decelerate gradually rather than

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON SPEED LIMITS

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immediately. These are the sorts of factors that are considered when setting speed limits. The committee noted only four instances where speed limits were set that were somewhat inconsistent with other, similar areas of the city and following these considerations. We offer the following recommendations to address those inconsistencies.

## **Recommendations**

The following are the Committee's recommendations to adjust current speed limits to provide more consistency within the City:

### **Decrease in Speed Limit:**

- South Rapids Road from Calumet to Custer St.; 40 MPH to 35 MPH.

Comment: This speed limit was set prior to Meijer's arrival and the change in egress to the County fairgrounds. With additional traffic turning off Rapids Road at those intersections, it is appropriate to lower the speed limit to 35 MPH and will make it consistent with the rest of Rapids Road, which has a current speed limit of 35 MPH.

- Clipper Dr. from South 41<sup>st</sup> Street to Custer Street; 35 MPH to 30 MPH.

Comment: The speed limit on this stretch of road was set nearly 40 years ago. Since that time, there has been an increase in development and traffic on this road. It is also a fairly short segment of road and it includes a curve near Custer Street. Those factors weigh against keeping the speed limit at 35 MPH.

- Viebahn Street from 19<sup>th</sup> Street to 26<sup>th</sup> Street; 45 MPH to 35 MPH.

Comment: There are soccer fields for children (and a park) on the south side of Viebahn Street in this stretch of Viebahn. Parents routinely park just off the street and must back up into the street to leave the fields. This is a potentially dangerous situation and the recommended reduction in the limit is for the safety of those soccer families who must, on occasion, back up blindly into the road.

### **Increase in Speed Limit:**

- Johnston Dr. from Albert Dr. to the city limits; 25 MPH to 35 MPH.

Comment: This change is recommended for consistency with the general rule of increasing speeds as motorists exit the city and, more importantly, provide a buffer for vehicles decelerating as they enter the city. The width of the road, traffic count, and driveway count are in line with other areas of the city where the speed limit is set at 35 MPH as vehicles enter/exit the city limits.

## **Conclusions**

The committee strongly recommends that the Public Safety Committee consider recommending the above-referred changes to the Common Council. Attached, please find several documents that were used in this assessment, as well as a document created by the brilliant Jen Bartz to help citizens understand how the City sets its speed limits.