

# CITY OF SHOREWOOD

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## *City of Shorewood Policy for Speed Limit Review/Requests*

*Date: June 16, 2015*

*Re: Speed Limit Review Policy*

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### **Purpose**

This policy was created to define the process used to set speed limits along local streets in the City of Shorewood, MN. The City of Shorewood will address speed limit related concerns based upon guidelines from Minnesota Statutes, MnDOT policies, the MUTCD and engineering judgement. The city will be proactively reviewing existing speed limit signing within the city limits to ensure that they are correctly posted. Speed limits that are not supported by Minnesota State Statutes, Council approval, or MnDOT Commissioner's Order will be planned for replacement.

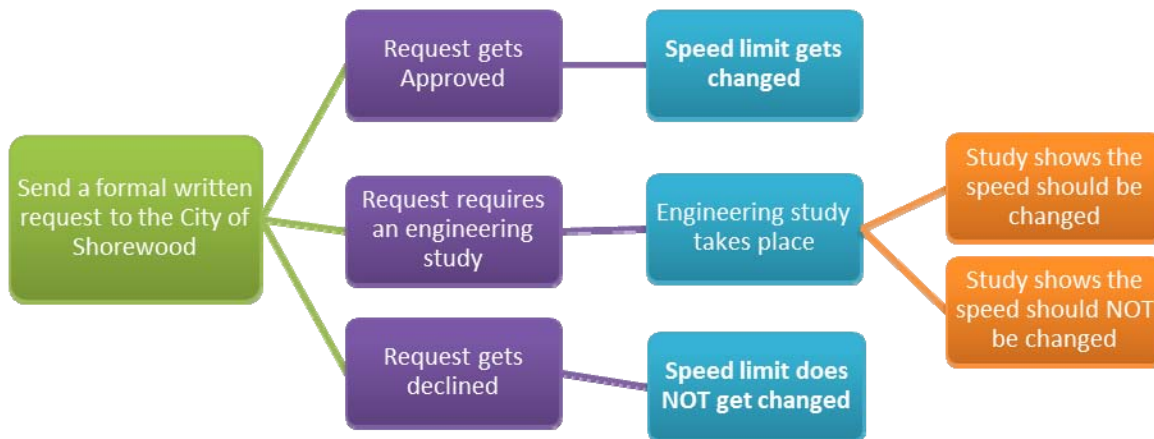
### **Implementation**

The City of Shorewood has established this policy to define the process for setting a speed limit and to what extent they can be modified. To make a request for a speed limit change, the following process is to be followed:

- Resident or Owner provides a formal written request to review a speed limit.
  - City Public Works Director or Engineer shall review the request and;
    - Determine the speed limit acceptable, or not acceptable,
    - Determine the need for Engineering Study or Engineering Investigation
- Streets that drive relatively similar should be set to the same speed limit for consistency, whether they are 25, 30, 35, or 40 mph.
- Speed limit evaluations should only take place when specific concerns are raised, and not on a regular basis.

- When final decisions are made they are not to be considered again unless a situation occurs (i.e., a large development is being constructed, or increase in vehicle crashes or pedestrian incidents occur).
- If additional monitoring is recommended by the Director or Engineer, driver feedback signs or physical changes may be considered.

The flowchart below shows a simple example of the speed limit review process:



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## **Speed Policy Review Background Information – Statutes and Guidelines**

### **Background**

The City of Shorewood has local streets with speed limits ranging from 20-40 mph. The basis for setting a speed limit follows the Minnesota State Statutes and the MN MUTCD. The following segments of information were taken from the MN Statutes and MUTCD, those of which apply to the city of Shorewood. A segment from the FHWA discussing best practices is also included showing how engineering studies are used to set new speed limits or change existing ones.

### **2014 Minnesota Statutes:**

#### **169.011 DEFINITIONS**

##### *Subdivision 64. Residential Roadway*

A “residential roadway” is a city street or town road whose length is up to a half-mile.

#### **169.14 SPEED LIMITS, ZONES; RADAR.**

##### *Subdivision 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.

##### *Subdivision 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;

(Subdivisions 2.2-2.6 do not apply here, therefore were excluded)

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

(8) 35 miles per hour in a rural residential district if adopted by the road authority having jurisdiction over 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) A speed limit adopted under paragraph (a), clause (8), is not effective unless the road authority has erected signs designating the speed limit and indicating the beginning and end of the rural residential district for the roadway on which the speed limit applies.

## **MnDOT MUTCD:**

### *2B.13 Speed Limit Sign*

A Standard: Speed zones (other than statutory speed limits) shall only be established on the basis of an engineering study that has been performed in accordance with traffic engineering practices. The engineering study shall include an analysis of the current speed distribution of free-flowing vehicles.

The speed limit (R2-1) sign shall display the limit established by law, ordinance, regulation, or as adopted by the authorized agency based on the engineering study. The speed limits displayed shall be in multiples of 5 mph. Speed Limit signs, indicating speed limits for which posting is required by law, shall be located at the points of change from one speed limit to another.

An Option: Other factors that may be considered when establishing speed limits are the following:

- Road characteristics, shoulder condition, grade, alignment, and sight distance
- The pace speed
- Roadside development (nearby school) and environment
- Parking practices and pedestrian activity (mainly children)
- Reported crash experience for at least a 12-month period

## **Methods and Practices for Setting Speed Limits: An Informational Report by the FHWA Safety Program**

Most engineering approaches to speed limit setting are based on the 85th percentile speed—the speed at which 85 percent of free-flowing traffic is traveling at or below. The typical procedure is to set the speed limit at or near the 85th percentile speed of free-flow traffic. Adjustments to either increase or decrease the speed limits may be made depending on infrastructure and traffic conditions.

The 85th percentile speed method is also attractive because it reflects the collective judgment of the vast majority of drivers as to a reasonable speed for given traffic and roadway conditions. This is aligned with the general policy sentiment that laws (i.e., speed limits) should not make people acting reasonably into law-breakers. Setting a speed limit even 5 mph below the 85th percentile speed can make almost half the drivers illegal; setting a speed limit 5 mph above the 85th percentile speed will likely make few additional drivers legal.

Under the operating speed method of setting speed limits, the first approximation of the speed limit is to set the speed limit at the 85th percentile speed. The MUTCD recommends that the speed limit be within 5 mph of the 85th percentile speed of free-flowing traffic. The posted speed limit shall be in multiples of 5 mph.

While the MUTCD recommends setting the posted speed limits near the 85th percentile speed, and traffic engineers say that agencies are using the 85th percentile speed to set speed limits, in reality the speed limit is often set much lower. At these locations, the 85th percentile operating speeds exceed the posted speed limits; and, in many cases, the 50th percentile operating speed is either near or exceeds that posted speed limit as well. Many agencies deviate from their agency's written guidelines and instead post lower speed

limits. According to an ITE Engineering Council Technical Committee survey, these reduced speed limits are often the result of political pressures. ***However, it is important to note that setting speed limits lower than 85th percentile speed does not encourage compliance with the posted speed limit.***