



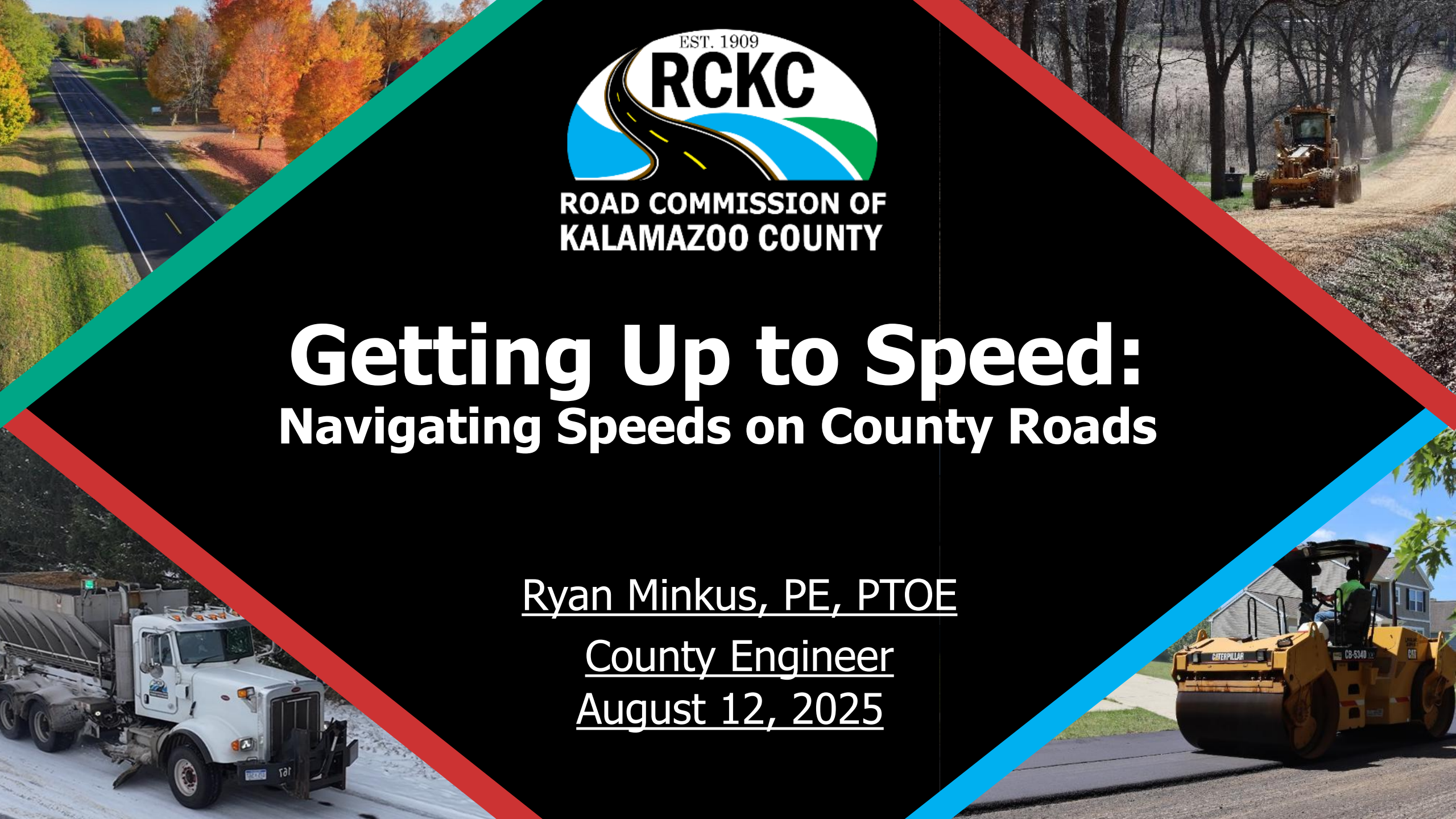
ROAD COMMISSION OF
KALAMAZOO COUNTY

Getting Up to Speed: Navigating Speeds on County Roads

Ryan Minkus, PE, PTOE

County Engineer

August 12, 2025



Resident concerns

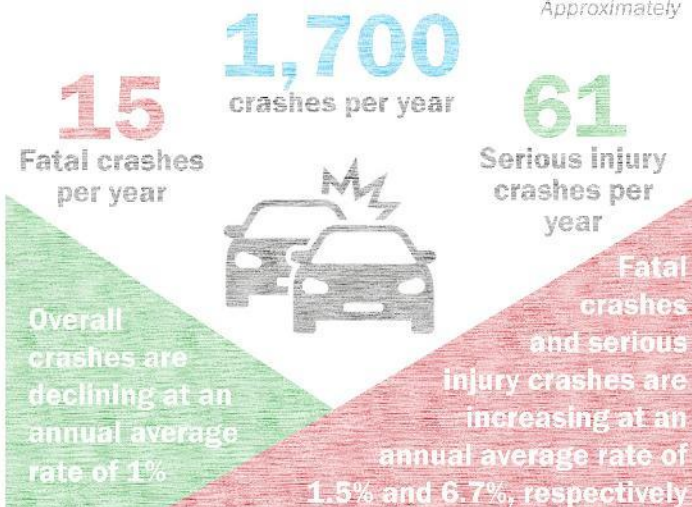
RCKC TRANSPORTATION SAFETY ACTION PLAN



Full Plan: www.kalamazooountyroads.com/upload/resources/91/RCKC%20Transportation%20Safety%20Action%20Plan%202023.pdf

AVERAGE FOR RCKC NETWORK:

Approximately



PRIMARY ROADWAYS Total Miles: 445.83 miles

LOCAL ROADWAYS Total Miles: 824.63 miles

PERCENTAGE OF ROAD NETWORK MILES



PERCENTAGE OF CRASHES



MOST PREVALENT CRASH TYPES



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

324

Survey responses

184

Location specific concerns collected

THEMES OF THE SURVEY FEEDBACK:

- Congestion
- Delineation
- **Speeding**
- Curves
- Lack of shoulders
- Narrow lanes
- Pavement conditions
- Signal timing
- Turning movements
- Visibility
- Wide roads
- Lack/condition of non-motorized facilities



FREQUENT MENTIONED COUNTERMEASURES:

- Drainage maintenance or improvements.

One of the top themes from the Safety Action Plan

Service Requests

2022: 45

2023: 23

2024: 48

2025: 26

Frequent inquiries

Children in neighborhood

New drivers

Walking/Running

Overall quality of life



"Playing" by tinou bao is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

What is the purpose?



"Speed Limit Sign" by chadelliott2012 is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.

Balances safety and compliance

Optimize efficiency while managing risk

Inform motorists of maximum driving speeds under favorable conditions

In general, most motorists do not perceive driving as a life-threatening activity

How did we get here?

"Victory Speed Limit"

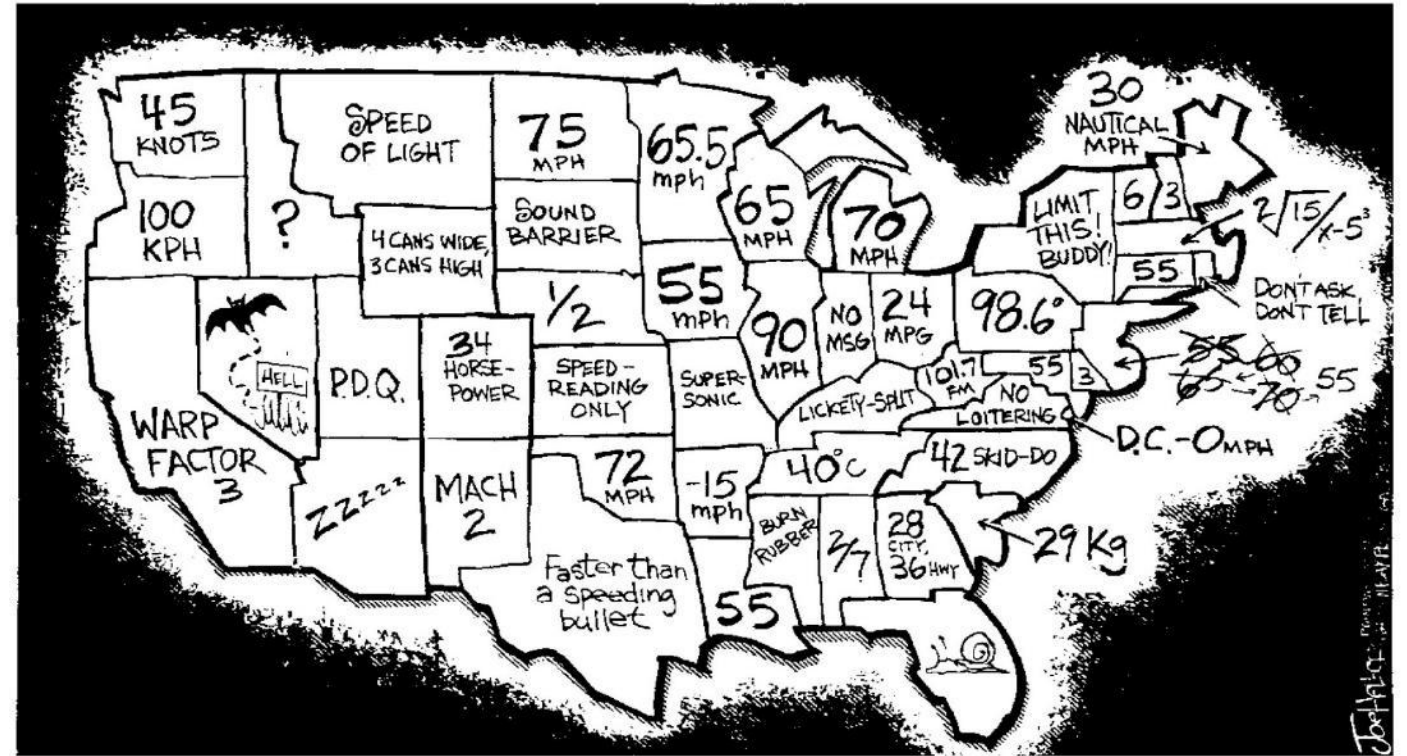
- Set max 35MPH
- From 1942 to 1945

National Maximum Speed Limit

- Four-lane divided highways
- Set max 55MPH in 1974
- Response to 1973 oil crisis

Repeal of NMSL

- December 8, 1995
- Authority returns to States



When Congress allow States to set their own Speed Limits

Figure 3-1 Parody of state response to repeal of 55-mph (89-km/h) National Maximum Speed Limit (reprinted with permission of Joe Heller, *Green Bay Press-Gazette*).

Transportation Research Board (TRB), Special Report 254: Managing Speed—Review of Current Practice for Setting and Enforcing Speed Limits. National Research Council, Washington, DC, 1998, p. 83.

Michigan Vehicle Code



MICHIGAN VEHICLE CODE (EXCERPT) Act 300 of 1949

257.627 Speed limits.

Sec. 627. (1) An individual operating a vehicle on a highway shall operate that vehicle at a careful and prudent speed not greater than nor less than is reasonable and proper, having due regard to the traffic, surface, and width of the highway and of any other condition existing at the time. An individual shall not operate a vehicle on a highway at a speed greater than that which will permit a stop within the assured, clear distance ahead. A violation of this subsection shall be known and may be referred to as a violation of the basic speed law or "VBSL".

(2) Except as provided in subsection (1), it is lawful for the operator of a vehicle to operate that vehicle on a highway at a speed not exceeding the following:

(a) Fifteen miles per hour on a highway segment within the boundaries of a mobile home park, as that term is defined in section 2 of the mobile home commission act, 1987 PA 96, MCL 125.2302.

(b) Twenty-five miles per hour on a highway segment within a business district.

(c) Twenty-five miles per hour on a highway segment within the boundaries of a public park. A local authority may decrease the speed limit to not less than 15 miles per hour in a public park under its jurisdiction.

(d) Twenty-five miles per hour on a highway segment within the boundaries of a residential subdivision, including a condominium subdivision, consisting of a system of interconnected highways with no through highways and a limited number of dedicated highways that serve as entrances to and exits from the subdivision.

(e) Twenty-five miles per hour on a highway segment that is part of the local street system as designated by a local jurisdiction and approved by the state transportation commission under 1951 PA 51, MCL 247.651 to 247.675, and that is within land that is zoned for residential use by the governing body of an incorporated city or village under the Michigan zoning enabling act, 2006 PA 110, MCL 125.3101 to 125.3702, unless another speed is fixed and posted.

(f) Twenty-five miles per hour on a highway segment with 60 or more vehicular access points within 1/2

Michigan Statute establishes how speed limits are set.

- Amendments are possible

"Highway in the evening" by vonobennachunten is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

Balancing the different needs

- Rural Roads (55 MPH)
- Residential (25 MPH)
- Business District (25 MPH)
- Public Park (25 -or- 15 MPH)
- Mobile Home Park (15 MPH)

Each serves a purpose



"Matchbox cars @ garage sale" by daniel spills is licensed under CC BY 2.0.



"A Face in the Crowd" by mpardo.photo is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

School Zones



Speed can be lowered 20MPH, yet not less than 25MPH

- On a designated school route
- Apply typically 30 minutes before and after scheduled school sessions

"Trained adult crossing guard" by RamseyCountyMN is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.

Construction Zones

45 MPH unless otherwise designated

New for 2025

- Limited photo speed enforcement allowed for MDOT projects



I plead the 85th

Impartial statistical representation of drivers' abilities for any road

85th percentile

- ± 5 MPH of Average

70% of all drivers within ± 10 MPH

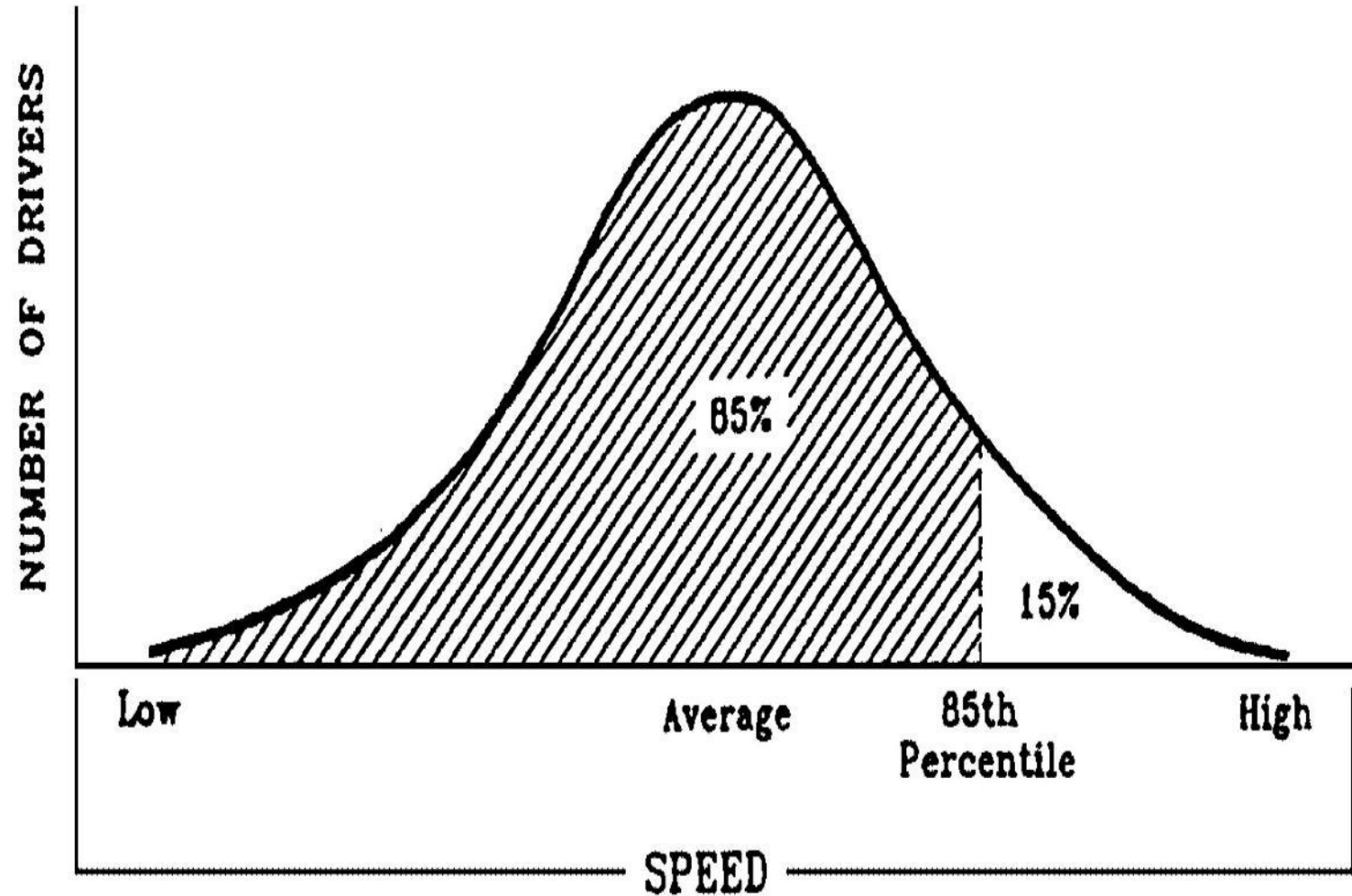


Figure 3-2 Speed distribution showing the 85th percentile speed (Krammes et al. 1996).

Transportation Research Board (TRB), Special Report 254: Managing Speed—Review of Current Practice for Setting and Enforcing Speed Limits. National Research Council, Washington, DC, 1998, p. 92.

Crash Rate & Average Speed

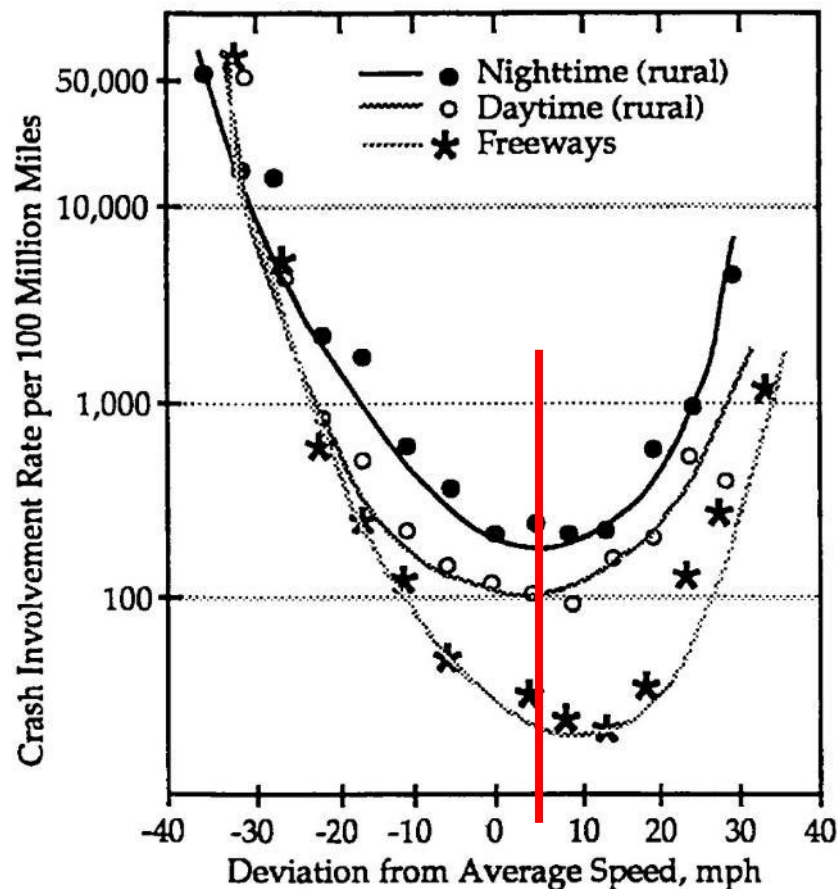


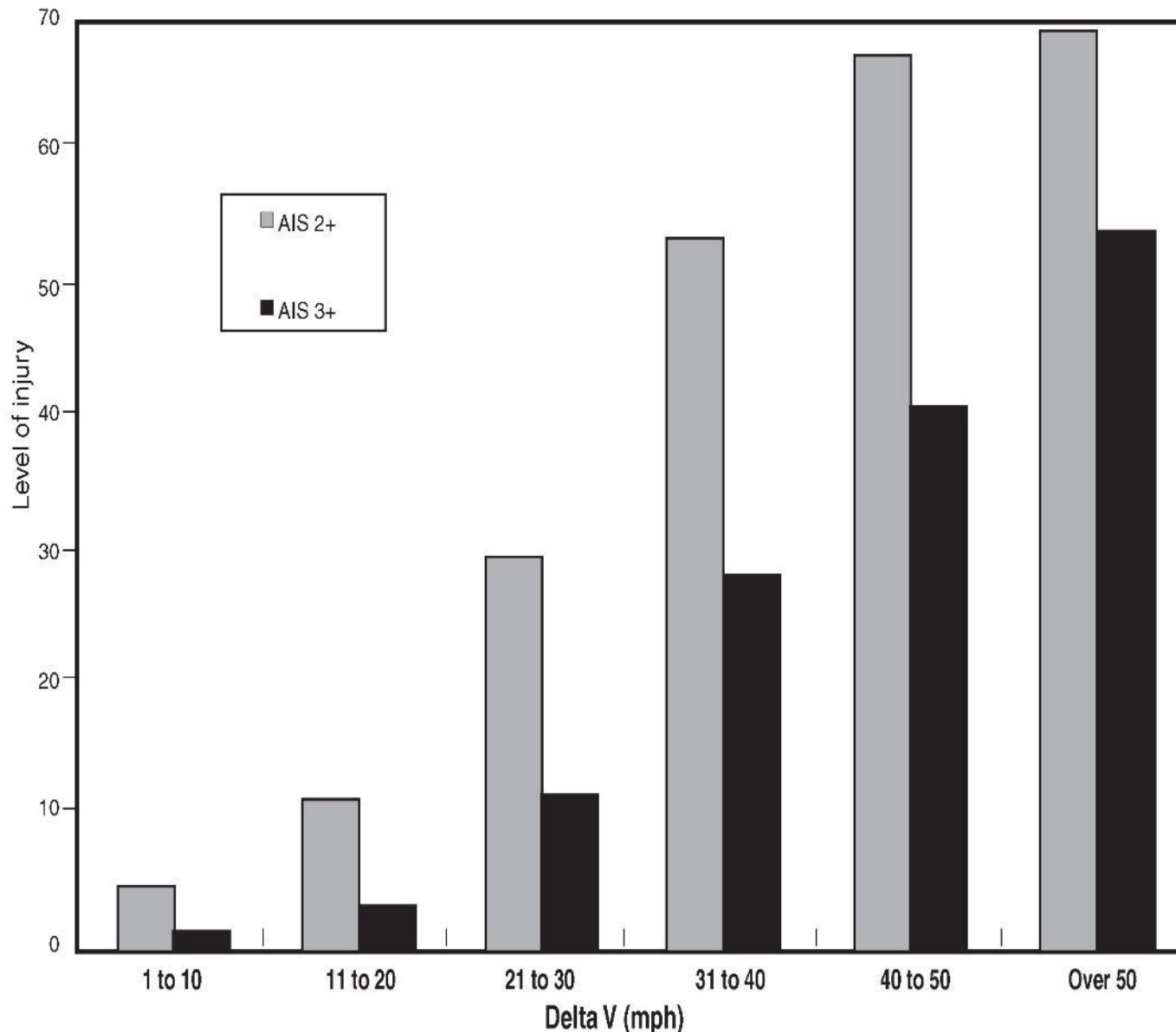
Figure B-2 Crash involvement rate by deviation from average traffic speed (Solomon 1964; Cirillo 1968 in Stuster and Coffman 1997, 4). 1 mph = 1.609 km/h.

Somewhere around the average speed produces the lowest rates of crashes

Near the average, ± 10 MPH does not significantly increase rates of crashes

85th percentile =
 ± 5 MPH of average

Speed differential and road safety



Crash severity increases with speed difference

70% of drivers within 10 MPH of each other when using 85th percentile

Differences of less than 10 MPH, lowest level of injury

Transportation Research Board (TRB), Special Report 254: Managing Speed—Review of Current Practice for Setting and Enforcing Speed Limits. National Research Council, Washington, DC, 1998, p. 65.

"Speed Kills" campaigns and the data



"Driving at night" by Alan Cleaver is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

Michigan 2023 facts:

21,357 (7.4%) of all crashes involved a driver speeding

Excessive speed a factor

- 210 (19.2%) fatalities
- 805 (13.8%) suspected serious injuries

Michigan State Police, Criminal Justice Information Center. (2025). 2023 Michigan Traffic Crash Facts — Fact Sheets.

How do we manage speed?



Referred to as 3 E's

- **Education**
- **Enforcement**
- **Engineering**

Order for applying each of the E's can vary.

- **New Roads – Engineering likely most efficient**

"This Photograph Brought to You by the Letter E" by Steve Snodgrass is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

Neighborhood Traffic Management

- Use road design and physical strategies to influence driver behavior
- Increase safety in residential areas
- Reduces risks for non-motorists
- Can retrofit existing roads



"Traffic circle" by Richard Drdul is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.



"Speed hump" by Eric Fischer is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

Historical Development

- Long, straight roads
- Few “interruptions”
- Relies on traffic control (signs)
- Requires enforcement efforts for compliance



New Development

- Winding roads
- Restricting sight distance
- Uses road geometry to influence driver behaviour
- Works 24/7 without enforcement efforts for compliance



Connect With Us

PHONE | 269-381-3171

WEB | KALAMAZOOCOUNTYROADS.COM

FACEBOOK | @KALAMAZOOCOUNTYROADS

TWITTER | @RCKCROADS

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LINKEDIN | road-commission-of-kalamazoo-county

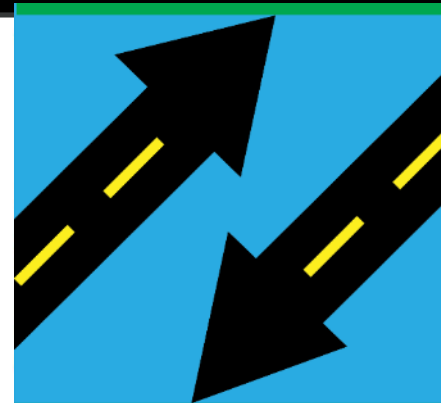
ADDRESS | 4400 SOUTH 26TH ST, KALAMAZOO, MI 49048

Keep up to date with RCKC

Helpful Tips

- Only enter the information of your *preferred* contact method. Alerts may go out early in the morning, so a text message or email may be your preference to receive road updates.
- For text message, make sure to enter your phone number specifically in the text message field.

CONNECT TO ROAD COMMISSION OF KALAMAZOO COUNTY ALERTS



RCKC CONNECT

RCKC ALERTS SIGN UP NOW

HAVE YOU SIGNED UP?

Receive Message Alerts for:

- ◆ Road Construction
- ◆ Road Closures/Detours
- ◆ General Public News



To Sign Up Visit: www.kalamazoocountyroads.com

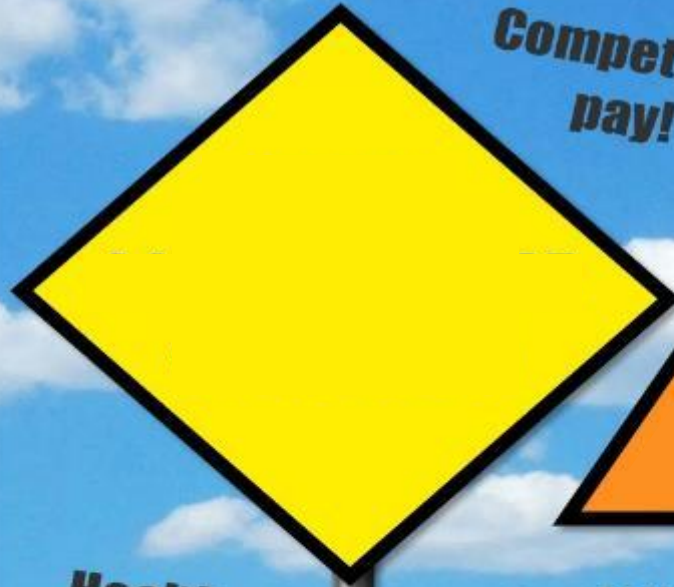
RCKC IS HIRING

Seeking a sign that you need a career change?

WE'RE HIRING!

Join an award-winning team in public service

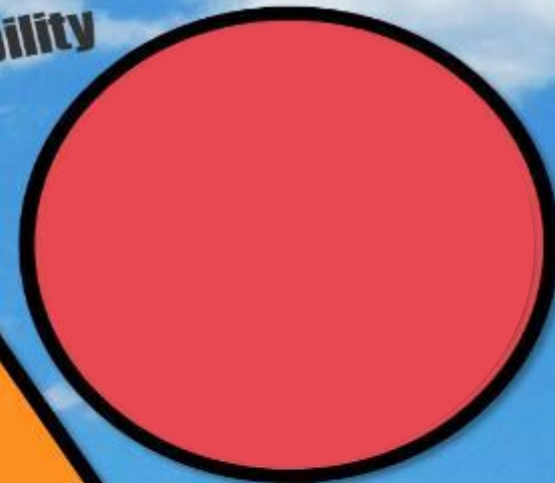
To learn more, visit www.kalamazooountyroads.com/jobopenings



**Competitive
pay!**



Stability



**Health &
dental
insurance**

**Employee
Assistance
Program**

**Career
advancement
opportunities**

**Pension
plan**

RCKC IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER



**ROAD COMMISSION OF
KALAMAZOO COUNTY**

**THANK YOU!
QUESTIONS?**

**YOUR LOCAL ROAD
PROFESSIONALS SINCE
1909**

