

85th Percentile  
Speed:

The Fall of a Legend



# 85th Percentile Speed

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What is it?

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Why is it controversial?

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85th	50th	Diff	average	Location
27	24	3	24	Ellsworth - Urban
31	30	1		Franklin- Rural
35	31	4	31	Sebec
46	38	8		Bangor
49	42	7		Sedgwick-Hales Hill
55	50	5		Ellsworth - 180
55	49	6		Route 9
57	53	4		Route 9
58	53	5		Route 9
61	55	6		Route 9
62	57	5		Route 9

# History of Setting Speed Limits in Maine

Northwestern Method

US Limits 2

NCHRP 966

# Why are we talking about this? - Safe Systems Approach and LD 527 and LD 1674

Focus on most severe crashes

Humans Have limited tolerance to crash forces

Expect people to make mistakes on the road

Crashes are a shared responsibility between individual drivers and the road system

Vehicle speed is a factor for crash likelihood and primary factor for severity

Pursue safe mobility. Set speed limits at the target speed.

# Human Behavior – Why do people speed?



Time Pressure



Belief it is safe



Positive affect – Adrenaline rush



Negative affect – boredom, impatience, road rage



Racing



Ignorance




Peer pressure

Context –  
What is it?

Green Book 1-6	Rural			Urban						
SmartCode (2005)/ ITE/CNU (200)	Natural	Rural		Suburban			General Urban	Urban Center	Urban Core	Special District
Massachusetts (2000)	Rural Natural	Rural Developed	Rural Village	Low Density	Town Center	High Density	Urban Residential	Urban Park	Commercial Business District	
Pennsylvania/ New Jersey (2000)	Rural			Suburban Neighborhood	Suburban Corridor	Suburban Center	Town/Village Neighborhood	Town/Village Center	Urban Core	
California (200)	Natural	Developing	Rural Main Street	Suburban Low Density	Suburban High Density		Urban Low Density		Urban High Density	
Florida (2007)	Natural	Rural	Rural Town	Suburban Residential	Suburban Commercial	Urban General	Urban Center	Urban Core	Special District	
Minnesota (200)	Natural	Rural	Rural Crossroad	Suburban Residential	Suburban Commercial	Urban Residential	Urban Commercial	Urban Core	Industrial Warehouse	
Green Book 7/ NCHRP 855 (200)	Rural		Rural Town	Suburban			Urban		Urban Core	
Oregon (200)				Rural Community	Suburban Fringe	Suburban Residential Corridor	Suburban Commercial Corridor	Urban Mix	Downtown/ Commercial Business District	
Washington (200)	Rural			Suburban			Urban	Urban Core		
AASHTO TCGD (2019)	Rural & Natural Areas		Rural Town	Suburban			Urban	Urban Core	Industrial, Warehouse, or Port	
Maryland (2019)	Rural		Traditional Town Center	Suburban		Suburban Activity Center	Urban Center	Urban Core		
Pennsylvania (2020)	Rural		Rural Town	Suburban			Urban	Urban Core		





Context – How can it be  
determined?

Walk Score- Assesses Walkability



# Context - Classifications

Context and Type	Rural	Rural Town	Suburban	Urban	Urban Core
Freeways	Limited-Access	Limited-Access	Limited-Access	Limited-Access	Limited-Access
Principal Arterial	Undeveloped	Developed	Developed	Developed	Full-Access
Minor Arterial	Undeveloped	Developed	Developed	Developed	Full-Access
Collector	Undeveloped	Full-Access	Developed	Full-Access	Full-Access
Local	Undeveloped	Full-Access	Full-Access	Full-Access	Full-Access





# Context

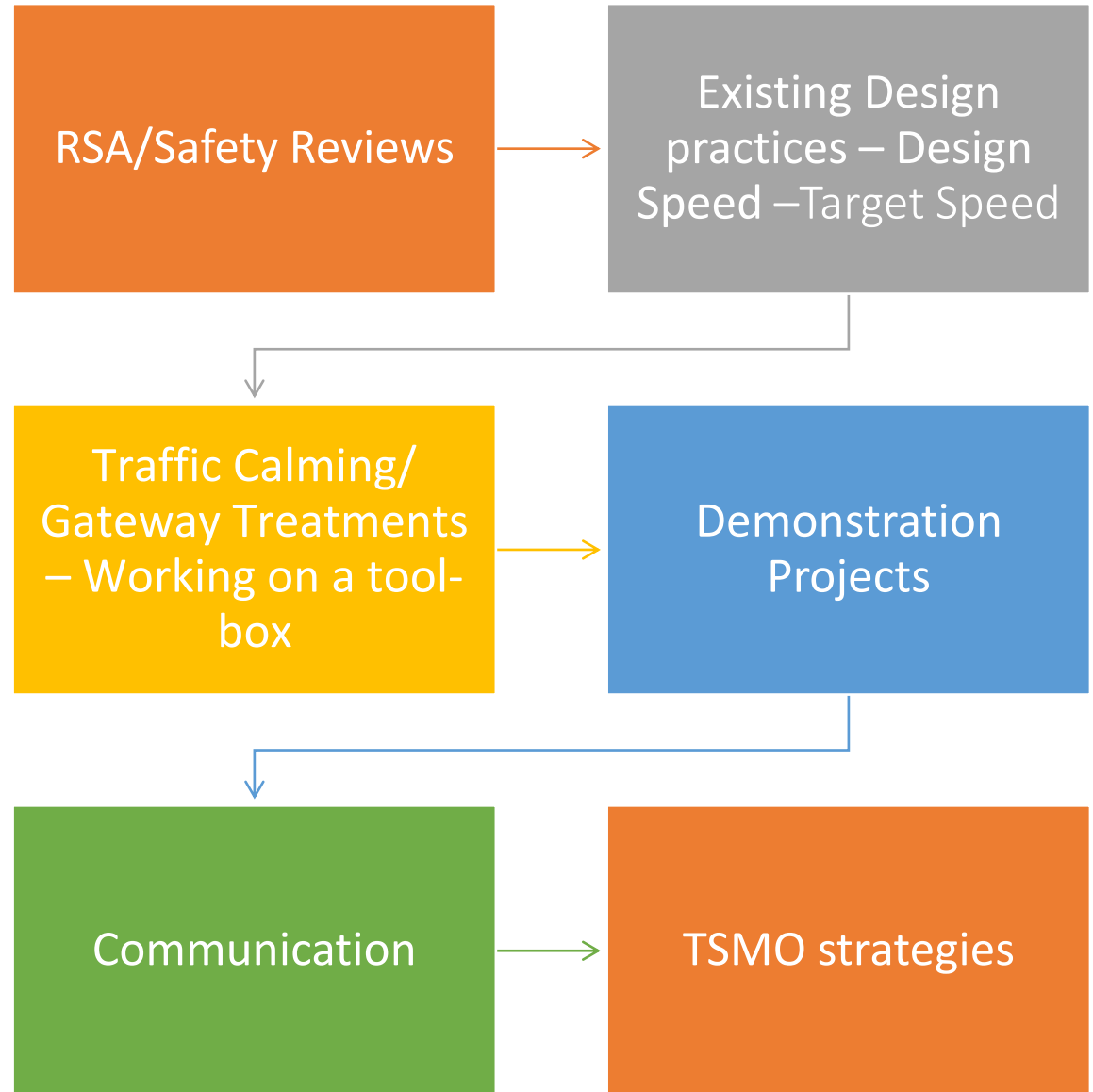
How do we get  
people to  
recognize it?

How do we get  
people to care  
enough to change  
their actions?

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# Context -

Recommendations  
How do We Build It?





# Speed Recommendations



Reduce Transition Speed  
Usage

Take a hard look at Speed  
zones posted 35 or 40 MPH

Look at 20 MPH Speed  
Limits in true  
Neighborhoods

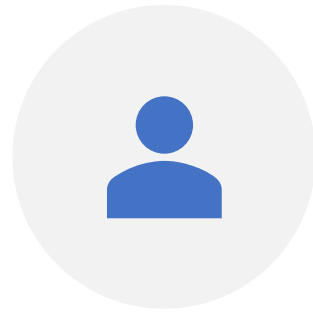
Review Existing Speed  
Limits

Research

# Recommendations (cont'd)



PILOT PROJECTS



MAINEDOT  
INTERNAL PILOTS



TRAFFIC CALMING  
INSTALLATIONS



DEMONSTRATION  
PROJECTS



# Recommendations

1

Create New  
Classifications  
systems

2

Hire a Traffic Ranger

3

Establish speed  
Management  
Toolbox

4

Continue to fund  
TSMO strategies to  
help vulnerable  
users

5

Update MaineDOT  
policies

6

Create a webpage  
dedicated to speed  
and setting speed  
limits

7

Establish a scoping  
tool to scope  
projects before they  
get into design