

The purpose of the Statewide Speed Limit Vision Project was to develop a vision for setting speed limits supported by cities, counties, advocacy groups, and public safety.

[mnspeedlimitvision.org](http://mnspeedlimitvision.org)

## VISION STATEMENT

Speeds limits are set with an emphasis on all users with key influences of **safety, engineering, and surrounding land use.**

### Core Values

**Speed limits are:**

- 1 Affected by community context, land use, and road design.
- 2 Governed by voluntary compliance through education and accepted social norms.
- 3 Established through consistent technical evaluation and applied equitably across all communities.

## Why develop a speed limit vision for Minnesota?

Although statistics show low fatality rates on Minnesota roads compared to other states, **we have room for improvement as we strive toward zero fatalities.** Various approaches for setting speed limits are being used across the nation that incorporate factors such as crash history, roadway context, and presence of vulnerable road users like pedestrians and bicyclists.

In Minnesota, we believe that:

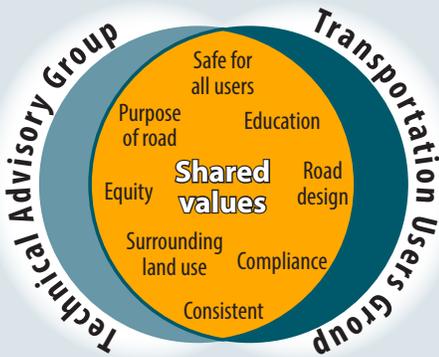
- Promotion of safety culture, crash severity reduction, surrounding land use, and non-motorized users should be the amongst the highest considerations when determining a road's speed limit.
- Achieving driver compliance through the equitable application of engineering, road design, education and enforcement should be considered for all users when determining a road's speed limit.
- A vision for speed limits should recognize the different functions roadways provide.



Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) is a statewide initiative that strives toward achieving zero traffic-related deaths on Minnesota roads.



[www.minnesotatzd.org](http://www.minnesotatzd.org)



### Who developed the Vision?

Technical and non-technical advisory groups from rural, suburban, and urban locales worked together to develop the vision. Advisors included transportation engineers and planners; public safety and health officials; and advocates of vulnerable user groups such as pedestrians and bicyclists.

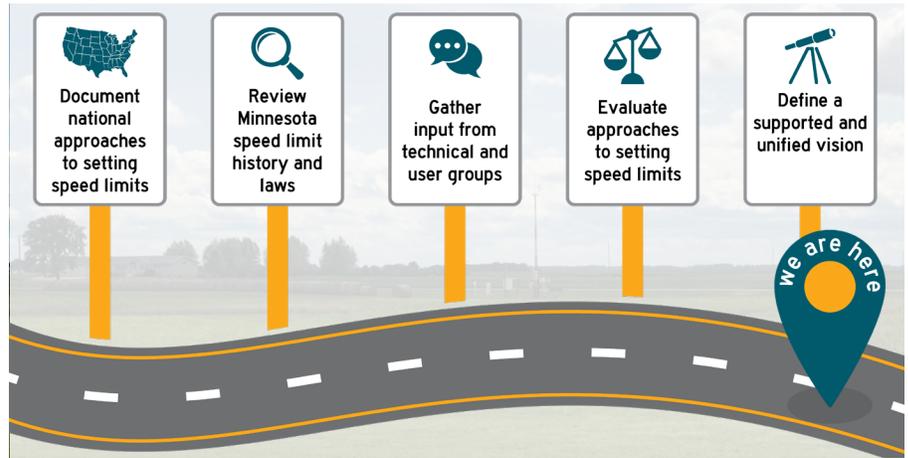
*The Statewide Speed Limit Vision Project revealed that the engineering community and advocacy groups in Minnesota agree on many aspects of how to set speed limits.*

*Speed is one element of our traffic safety culture. To be effective, we need to consider all elements.*

# How did we get here?

## A Long History

Since the early 1900s, Minnesota state law has addressed vehicle speeds. In 1911, the first law setting motor vehicle speeds on public highways referenced reasonable and proper speeds “so as not to endanger the life or limb or injure the property of any person.” In 1937, the Commissioner of Highways was given the authority to set speed limits on all roads. More recently, a 2019 change in state law allows cities to set speed limits on some roads under their jurisdiction.



## A Shift in the Conversation

Speed limits in Minnesota are set by state law or an engineering study. Today, the conversation about how to set speed limits is shifting in both urban and rural areas. In rural areas, pressure has been building to increase speed limits on rural roads. In urban areas, the conversation focuses on moving beyond traditional approaches to setting speed limits, especially as it relates to safety and vulnerable users.

The current practice for setting speed limits is expanding beyond traditional approaches — recognizing context, users and function.



## Road Safety Snapshot

According to 2018 Minnesota Department of Public Safety data, the fatality rate on Minnesota roads remains low compared to other states. The overall fatality rate in 2018 was **0.6 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT)**, one of the lowest rates in the nation.

Since the launch of TZD in 2003, the number of people dying in crashes has nearly dropped in half. However, our work is not done because **one death is too many.**



**100 million miles is about 4,000 trips around the Equator.**

**655 deaths**  
2003

Minnesota had a **44% drop in crash-related deaths since 2003, but we need to do better.**

**364 deaths**  
2019

## What about pedestrians?



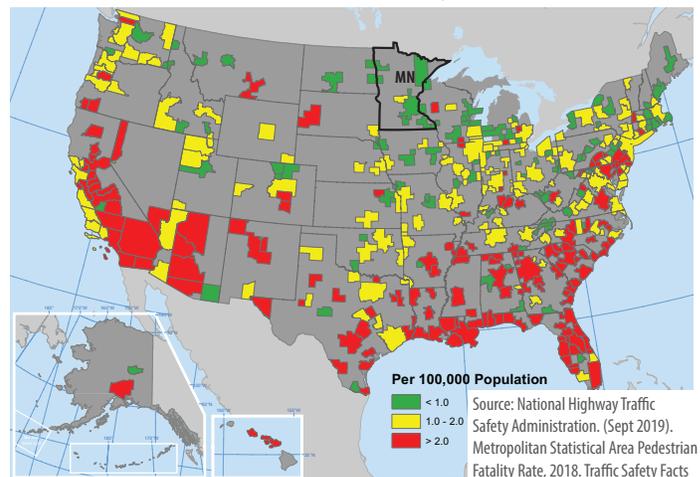
A national study by the U.S. Department of Transportation highlights that **pedestrian fatality rates** in Minnesota metropolitan areas are low compared to other states (see map below).

## What about bicycles?



Minnesota was ranked as the third most bicycle-friendly state in the nation in 2019 according to the League of American Bicyclists. Scores are based on bicycle friendly actions, infrastructure, policies and other factors.

The fatality rate for bicyclists in Minnesota is one of the lowest rates in the nation at **3.4% per 10,000 bicycle commuters.**



Learn more at: [mnspeedlimitvision.org](https://mnspeedlimitvision.org)

[Project overview](#) | [History of speed limits in Minnesota](#) | [Frequently asked questions](#) | [Research/literature](#) | [Resources](#)