

From: Admin and Rules <DOTAdminRules@state.sd.us>
Sent: Friday, November 21, 2025 7:00 AM
To: DOT Admin Rules <DOTAdminRules@state.sd.us>
Subject: Comment on : 70:01:02:44 -Lincoln County speed zone rule

Name: Avery

Address:

City: Harrisburg

State: Sd

Zip: 57032

Email:

Phone:

Comment: We do not need a speed change, we need more in depth drivers education and holding those causing accidents liable. A point system perhaps for drivers under 18 in the area. The issue I see most frequently are teenagers speeding, swerving, in their phones, ignoring lights and signs around this area. Particularly before and after school starts. The 5 accidents in the same spot the first day of highschool should indicate this. Others should not suffer due to the negligence of Lincoln county properly teaching these kids how to drive. I have lived in Harrisburg my whole life, and never have we needed to quadruple check that cars are stopping at a stop light, or look over our shoulders 5x before changing lanes because there is a teenager going 75 in the 55. This is not an issue that will be resolved by changing the speed limit. It will only increase the erratic behavior and road rage these people who are dangerously driving do. Say you lower it to 45, these kids are still going to go 65. They do not care. It is unacceptable that this is even a conversation when there is a specific group causing the issues. Address it before it happens. The fine or consequences for causing accidents or recklessly driving simply needs to be taken more seriously in our area and not just overlooked as "young or inexperienced drivers." Driving is a privilege, not a right. And the people I see causing these issues are always young teenagers, or the extreme elderly. There needs to be repercussions for these behaviors and changing a speed limit will not do that. It will only increase accidents and reckless driving.

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Name: Corinna Christopherson

Address: 27116 Bluebird Place

City: Harrisburg

State: SD

Zip: 57032

Email:

Phone:

Comment: I am fully supportive of reducing the speed limit on Highway 115 from 55 MPH to 45 MPH, particularly for the stretch between 271st Street and 273rd Street. Our neighborhood of 35 homes has its primary entrance on the east side of the highway just south of 271st Street, and we regularly experience significant safety concerns due to current traffic conditions. During peak travel times—approximately 7:15–8:00 a.m. and 3:00–5:30 p.m.—it can be extremely difficult to safely exit our development. Vehicles frequently exceed the posted 55 MPH limit, creating hazardous conditions for families attempting to merge into traffic. This concern is heightened by the number of children living in our neighborhood. For those attending schools in the Harrisburg School District, all facilities (excluding the Harrisburg Freshman Academy for 9th graders) are located to our south, requiring families to cross the two northbound lanes before merging into southbound traffic each morning. The afternoon traffic leaving the high school, often traveling at high speeds, presents an additional challenge and increases the risk of accidents. The number of near misses I have personally witnessed is alarming, and the situation is genuinely frightening for parents and residents alike. Implementing a reduced speed limit in this area would, in my view, significantly enhance public safety and provide much-needed peace of mind for the families who rely on this stretch of highway every day. I welcome and strongly support this change.

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Name: Greg Stensaas

Address: 27452 SD Highway 115

City: Harrisburg

State: SD

Zip: 57032

Email: stensaas60@gmail.com

Phone: 6053218793

Comment: How stupid, people think that reducing speed limit is the cure for people not knowing how to focus and pay attention when they're driving. Get rid of people playing on phone, screwing around with music, weaving in and out of traffic when school is out, and not focusing on driving and then there is not problem. Speed limit won't fix those issues. It a wide 2 lane state highway with no visibility issues and if you cannot figure out how to handle a little traffic on that type of road, you better take driving lessons. I drive the road all the time and over 83% of the time, there is very little traffic. I think you need to get a petition that says leave the road alone and teach people how to drive.

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Name: Greg Stensaas

Address: 27452 SD-115

City: Harrisburg

State: SD

Zip: 57032-5421

Email: stensaas60@gmail.com

Phone: 6053218793

Comment: Some say the reduced speed would fix the problem and not make accudents as bad, maybe, but people will still drive 50 mph so really won't make a difference. Fix the problem by giving distracted driver tickets or improper driving tickets that would help much more. Much of the time at stop lights, people are so distracted the forget to drive; example of not focusing on driving. Okay so less risk of injury there but its still the same mindset. Seems like the concern area seems to be from 271 to 273 maybe have it monitored from 7 through 9am and 3pm through 6pm everyday and see what happens. There would be some tickets people would complain about at first but then they would learn. Is there any research or data that says this proposal makes sense and has merit. If not, the change should not take place.

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Name: J. Bearden

Address:

City: Harrisburg

State: SD

Zip: 57032

Email:

Phone:

Comment: I feel like it should also be mentioned that having blinking yellows could help with congestion that the majority of our wrecks are coming from especially around school periods the willow/Minnesota ave light always goes straight to red for no reason with no oncoming traffic the one on tiger way gets backed up for the same reason which causes wrecks for those who have to break before the turn late is available.

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Name: Josh Cunningham

Address: 908 Greyhawk Ct

City: Harrisburg

State: SD

Zip: 57032

Email: joshcunningham@hotmail.com

Phone:

Comment: Hwy 115 is what it is, a highway and it should stay that way and the speed limit should remain 55 mph. There are no residents or very few that live on this section of the highway. Drivers need to learn how to drive, pay attention and should be held accountable for their lack of driving ability. I feel that we need a longer left turning lane to turn on to Tiger Way coming from the north,

changing the speed limit isn't going to do anything when cars turning to go to the high school are sitting in the driving lane and other drivers are distracted. Drivers need to pay attention and parents need to instill in their kids to obey the laws of the road. Is there any other 4 lane highways not going through a town that the speed limit has been reduced due to high volume of traffic? I don't know the answer so that is why I am asking. If it is common practice then I am all for it but if we are just changing because people don't know how to drive then I think we need to address that issue instead of just changing the speed limit thinking that would solve the problem. Changing the speed limit isn't going to fix anyone lack of driving skills. Thank you for your time.

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Name: Mark Noordsy

Address: 7900 S Pinewood Ave

City: Sioux Falls

State: SD

Zip: 57108

Email: emailmarkn@hotmail.com

Phone: 763-528-8870

Comment: Before you seriously considering changing the speed limit, consider that all the accidents happened at the beginning of the school year and at the start of the school day. Consider that having 14-15 old drivers driving to school the first time and not paying attention to traffic is the likely issue. Kids need their parents to reinforce no cell phones while driving, pay attention to traffic and thinking ahead. Driving a car carries great responsibility and drivers need to be held accountable for their (in)actions. The government simply cannot account for drivers not paying attention. This real life! One other observation, once the accidents occurred and people got used to the traffic, the accidents ended. Finally, consider suspending the parking lot privileges of any student that causes an accident or is ticketed within one mile of a school. That would be an appropriate punishment versus mom and dad paying! In summary, keep everything as it is. Thank you.

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Name: Shawn Kirsch

Address: 805 Honeysuckle Dr

City: Harrisburg

State: SD

Zip: 57032

Email: shawn@ps98aud.io

Phone: 7012146284

Comment: I am opposed to continued speed limit reductions around Harrisburg. It seems to be a knee jerk reaction to poor driving that is merely attributed to speed. I drive from Harrisburg into Sioux Falls and back almost every day, going straight down this highway. Every day there's people hanging out in the left lane, going just under the speed limit, next to someone else in the right lane, going at or just under the speed limit. Nuisance, maybe? Frustrating, certainly. Particularly as I come to a stoplight just as it turns red. Every stoplight missed by 10 seconds could be another 2 minutes slower to my destination. When people are using the left (passing) lane appropriately, they are often not using the little stick in there car to show their intent to change lanes. And if they do, it isn't activated until they are actively changing lanes, negating the purpose of signaling their intent. The number of times I put my turn signal on, glance in my mirror to double check it's clear to move over, then look back ahead to find the slow vehicle in front of me is already moving over, no blinker engaged, is too many to count. Even worse is when they don't have anyone in front of them impeding them from achieving the speed limit, then suddenly hit their brakes and begin moving to a turn lane, no signal activated. I could easily slow down a little and wait for you to move out of the lane, instead a very surprising brake light forces me to suddenly hit my brakes, and then see the ripple effect in the vehicles behind me, also waiting to pass this person not quite at the speed limit. Without enforcement of basic driving principles, most often related to appropriate signaling of intent to do something, and/or impeding traffic behind them, even if only slightly, accident reduction will be minimal. Severity of the accidents may improve, but they will still happen. Enforce appropriate use of turn signals 3-5 seconds BEFORE turning/changing lanes. Enforce stopping AT stop signs, not past them with your vehicle sitting on top of a crosswalk. Don't allow vehicles to just be in the passing lane with traffic stacking up behind them (states that fine this activity have it right). Pull kids over that are too busy looking at their phone to proceed down the road when the light turns green. Pull kids over that are too busy looking at their phone to observe the traffic around them. Only once we are enforcing basic expectations of everyone driving can we have a practical discussion that lowering the speed limit is the answer to anything. Until then, it's just an easy target to blame, not one of many root causes to address that will continue to lead to accidents.



South Dakota Transportation Commission

Public Hearing

Subject: ARSD 70:01:02:44 – Lincoln County Speed Zone Rule Public Hearing

Meeting: November 25, 2025, 9:00 a.m. Central Time

From: City of Harrisburg
Heath VonEye, PE, MSE, CPWP-M
Deputy City Administrator | City Engineer

Additional Data and Arguments Submitted 11/21/25 per Oct 28 Notice of Hearing:

The City of Harrisburg thanks you for your time in setting a public hearing for consideration of our recent request for a lower speed limit on SD Hwy 115/Minnesota Ave, from 55 mph to 45 mph, one-half mile north of 271st St (current 45mph zone) to one-half mile south of 273rd St.

We greatly appreciate the DOT staff's time and explanations regarding the recent speed study data. While we acknowledge that data is important, we also want to advocate for arguments aligned with the FHWA, AASHTO, NACTO, and Vision Zero considerations that are commonly used in cities nationwide. For ease of reference, I'm summarizing some of those for you here for your consideration, a few of the main points highlighted for a cursory summarization:

- 1. Engineering judgment allows consideration beyond the 85th percentile.**
 - a. Speed studies are one tool, but not the only determinant.
 - b. The MUTCD explicitly allows engineering judgment and engineering study factors beyond prevailing speeds.
 - c. Local context (land use, crash patterns, vulnerable users – pedestrians) can justify deviation from speed studies.

The 85th percentile is informative, but it cannot outweigh safety considerations, land-use context, and conflict exposure. Professional Engineering judgment supports a lower limit when risk factors are present. Recently, SD Hwy 11 speed reduction occurred from 65 mph to 55 mph. This was not due to the speed study supporting it, but rather due to "high crash rates and number of approaches". In comparing traffic volumes turning onto SD Hwy 115 vs the reduced speed segment of SD 11, there are much higher residential densities creating traffic turning conflicts onto SD115 than the driveway densities on SD11.

2. High pedestrian and bicycle activity increases risk at higher speeds.

- a. Even if volumes are modest, speeds that are safe for cars are not safe for mixed users.
- b. Pedestrian fatality risk rises sharply above 25-30 mph.
- c. Children, elderly residents, or ADA users near or crossing higher speed 5-lane roadways increase vulnerability.

As previously submitted, this corridor has seen substantial adjacent growth (east and west of Hwy 115) and an increase in vulnerable users – pedestrians, bicyclists, residents. Even small decreases in speed significantly reduce the severity of crashes.

3. Existing roadside features or land use create higher conflict potential.

- a. Driveway density
- b. Cross street frequency
- c. Turning movements from traffic generated from adjacent development
- d. Schools
- e. Commercial nodes

These factors justify a lower speed limit regardless of the 85th percentile. This corridor's expanding land use and conflict points – driveways, turning traffic, and pedestrian generators – make high speeds incompatible with safe operation.

4. Overall crash history may not be high yet, but the risk profile is high.

- a. When a roadway is changing as dynamically as SD 115 through Harrisburg, we should be looking at ***predictive risk***, not just current speed and past incidents.

Crash history alone should not dictate the speed environment we set. Growth and traffic changes increase exposure, and it is better to practice to prevent predictable problems rather than wait for them.

5. Anticipated future development changes the appropriate operating speed.

- a. Residential density, commercial growth, and street connectivity continue to increase, and are expected to continue.

With planned development, pedestrian traffic and turning movements will increase. It is best to implement a safer speed environment now rather than react after problems continue to arise.

6. Consistency with speed zones in surrounding and like routes through urban areas matters.

- a. Drivers expect consistency. If nearby segments or adjacent roads have lower limits, driver consistency is lost.
- b. As previously cited, Cliff Ave and 273rd St were recently reduced to 45 mph by Lincoln County.
- c. SD Hwy 11 south of Sioux Falls was recently reduced by the SDDOT as cited previously.

Matching the corridor to surrounding arterial speed zones improves driver expectation and reduces unpredictable speed variation. In reviewing all of rule 70:01:02:44 (attached with the Hearing Notice), it is notable that this Hwy 115 segment is the fastest speed limit (aside from one overpass stretch of Hwy 18 over I-29, and the recently revised Hwy 11, both at 55mph). All of the remaining maximum speeds into, through, and out of urbanized areas throughout Lincoln County are set at 25 to 45 mph.

7. Roadway geometry may not support higher speeds, even if drivers exceed them.

- a. Wide lanes, long tangents, and rural cross-sections in the growing areas often encourage higher speeds than are safe.

The current geometric design invites higher speeds than the context around the roadway can safely support. A reduced limit helps match operating speed to realistic safe speed.

8. Public safety concerns from residents and safety concerns or observations.

- a. Community input is a factor in an engineering study.

Residents experience the roadway daily. Their documented concerns (many shared with the DOT), combined with safety challenges, support creating an environment that prioritizes safety.

9. Speed limit changes can support broader policy goals.

- a. The City has an adopted comprehensive plan for growth management,
- b. Also, a Transportation master plan,
- c. We are part of the MPO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan
- d. Have begun implementing Safe Routes to School initiative,
- e. And the SDDOT has actively explored (or perhaps now implemented) Vision Zero initiative to reduce traffic fatalities and severe injuries.

A reduced speed limit strengthens compliance with adopted policy, which is a legally defensible justification, and aligns with our adopted practices for walkability, safety, and multimodal access.

In summary, while the speed study shows current driver behavior, it does not reflect the safety needs of this corridor. Considering land use, vulnerable users, future growth, conflict points, and safety policy, a reduced speed limit is prudent and defensible decision based on engineering judgment.

Thank you again for your dedication to all staff and Commission members, for considering these important requests to help keep our SD highways safe. In particular, thank you for learning more about and considering the unique growth factors that Harrisburg is incurring and that this speed reduction request stems from.