

# Setting safe speeds on Portland's shopping streets

## *How Portland requests 20 mph speed limits in business districts*

State law allows Portland to request 20 mph speed limits in business districts. As with all speed limit changes, Portland must request this change from Oregon's Department of Transportation.

### How requests work

1. As staff time allows, Portland's Bureau of Transportation identifies streets that may be eligible for business 20 mph speed limits. The public can also suggest business 20 street segments at [portlandoregon.gov/transportation](http://portlandoregon.gov/transportation) by clicking the "request" button.
2. Although not required by law, PBOT generally notifies the community that their street may be eligible for a 20 mph business district speed limit.
3. PBOT sends a letter to ODOT requesting a 20 mph business district speed limit.
4. If ODOT grants the request, PBOT creates a work order to place new 20 mph signage.

From start to finish, this process may take a month or more.

### Benefits of 20 mph speed limits

1. **Increased safety:** This is true even at relatively low speeds; a person who drives at 25 mph instead of 20 mph, and who crashes into a person walking, is nearly twice as likely to kill that person.<sup>1</sup>
2. **Improved walkability:** A 20 mph speed limit supports city goals to encourage walking by helping people feel safe and comfortable.
3. **Advances Vision Zero:** Safe driving speeds support the city's goal to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2025.

### Eligibility for business 20 mph speed limits

To qualify for a business 20 mph speed limit, a street must legally be in a "business district."

State law 801.170 defines a business district as "the territory contiguous to a highway when 50 percent or more of the frontage thereon for a distance of 600 feet or more on one side, or 300 feet or more on both sides, is occupied by buildings used for business."

In preparing requests to ODOT, PBOT generally includes the following information:

- Percentage of street frontage used for business
- Latest crash data on deaths and serious injuries on the street segment
- Evidence of support from the local community

PBOT may also use business license data to supplement information on commercial use.

### More information:

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<sup>1</sup> AAA, 2011/2013, Impact Speed and a Pedestrian's Risk of Severe Injury or Death