

**REQUEST FOR REDUCTION IN SPEED LIMIT: SOME GOOD NEWS – AND SOME BAD NEWS**

**GOOD NEWS:** We had been told that it takes about 1+ year for ODOT to evaluate a road for a requested change in speed limit. But Save175th's request has been looked at by the Washington County Traffic Engineers already and acted upon.

**BAD NEWS:** Amazingly enough, our request has been denied as the traffic data does not support the request. Below is the Washington County traffic engineer's initial assessment – so the change never got to ODOT. But, we can assure you that Save175th Neighborhood Association will pursue this and request to see the data: "location of where the traffic counts were taken, time of day, day of week, and actual traffic counts." As this data seems difficult to imagine given what we believe we see on a regular basis.

On the flip side, these numbers support the need for greater traffic enforcement and the concern for a new High School on this (even) fast(er) road.

Here is an excerpt from Roger Henderson's planned testimony to the Board of Commissioners at their 20 January Meeting on behalf of Save175th. I think he paints quite a vivid picture!

- "Please Petition ODOT to reduce the speed limit to 35 mph. Speeds of 52 to 57 mph, which is the current documented average for 85% of the traffic on 175th, are just not safe for this area. Visualize yourself trying to cross the street to get your mail with cars coming both directions at 50 mph plus. Ever served on a jury with pictures of someone's brains all over the side of a car? I have, and I'd hate to see that happen to one of my neighbors."

For your records, here is the Washington County Traffic Engineer's Specific email Response on our Speed Limit Reduction Request:

Dyami forwarded your request for a speed reduction on 175th Ave to us in Traffic Engineering and I was asked to investigate and reply.

As you mentioned, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) sets speed zones on county roads, but they only do so when requested by the county. The key determining factor for a speed zone change is how fast drivers are currently traveling. Engineering studies have shown that motorists drive at a speed they feel is comfortable for the conditions, often regardless of what speed is posted on the signs. In order to avoid a speed trap, Oregon laws directs that speed zones must not vary significantly from the speed that the majority (85%) of traffic is traveling.

We recently collected speed data on 175th Ave between Kemmer Rd and Scholls Ferry Rd and it shows that 85% of traffic is traveling between 52 and 57 mph. This tells us that the posted speed of 45 mph is actually too low, however we do not plan to ask for a higher speed zone. At this time, your request for a speed reduction must be denied. I will notify the Sheriff's Office of these findings and request additional enforcement. You can also request enforcement [here](#) or via their Traffic Hotline at 503-846-3998 extension 1145.

With the planned development of South Cooper Mountain, traffic patterns, speeds and volumes are expected to change on 175th Ave. Increased volumes typically reduce the speed of traffic. I would expect at some point that a speed reduction will be possible, but it may not be until the majority of the area has developed. We in Traffic Engineering collect traffic data annually and will monitor this area for the possibility of a speed reduction in the future.

Sincerely,

Sarah Owens, *Engineering Associate - Traffic Engineering*

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