



April 1, 2021

Sent via eMail:

City of Bend - City Council (council@bendoregon.gov)

Dear City of Bend Mayor and Councilmembers:

Following many discussions at our Century West Neighborhood Association (CWNA) board meetings and a Special Meeting held in March, we are writing to request assistance with road and traffic safety on Century Drive. While CWNA has been discussing traffic safety on Century Drive for many years, on February 4, 2021 we sadly experienced the loss of one of our residents from Sagewood, Kathleen Sue Case. Mrs. Case was attempting to turn left (northeast) onto Century Drive while driving her SUV, and she was struck by a pickup truck (travelling southwest) on Century Drive.

We held a Special CWNA Meeting on March 10th with a significant number of our members attending. We recorded that meeting, and you may watch it at <https://youtu.be/l10Xl5tgHao>. We very much appreciated having David Abbas and Janet Hruby from the Transportation and Mobility Department attend, as well as Henry Stroud from Bend Parks and Recreation's Planning Department.

CWNA has long advocated for reduced speeds on Century Drive between the Mt. Washington/Reed Market roundabout and the city limits. Repeated concerns from our members include: dangerous driving conditions for neighbors turning into and out of driveways on Century Drive; insufficient turnout lanes to enable safe speed reductions for turns into and out of neighborhoods; increased traffic flow from new and expanding neighborhoods (Lodges at Bachelor View and Tetherow); increased traffic flow related to expanding tourism at Mt Bachelor and all forest, river and lake activities; and, a lack of any safe pedestrian crossing across Century Drive to access the Haul Road trail.

Following several conversations with representatives from the City of Bend advocating for a new speed study in this area, a study was initiated and a Speed Zone Order was finally issued on February 21, 2019, providing a total speed reduction of 5 mph. Requests for further speed limit reductions have been denied based on the most recent traffic study results. ODOT set speed limits according to the speed at which 85% of motorists travel.

Our particular area of focus is between the Century/Mt Washington/Reed Market roundabout and Bachelor View Road. CWNA respectfully requests the following actions:

1. CWNA would like to see a reduction in speed limit to 35 mph, such as that on Brookwood Blvd., (another minor arterial serving RS/RM Zones). We understand that to do this, a speed study is required and must be ordered by the City of Bend and conducted by ODOT. We understand there is a significant backlog of traffic studies due to COVID, however, we ask for your help in encouraging ODOT to conduct the study as soon as possible. Solutions beyond lowering the speed were also discussed in our meeting, including traffic calming infrastructure changes such as street-narrowing or raised medians. When these solutions are pursued, CWNA board and members will volunteer to “adopt the road” and will conduct a periodic volunteer clean-up effort along Century Drive.
2. CWNA would like the council to discuss and arrive at a consensus to deliver the following statement: *50 mph is an inappropriate speed for any roads within Bend city limits. Speeds within Bend city limits should be consistently applied as Statutory Speed Limits as outlined in the Uniform Vehicle Code ([https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/speedmgmt/ref\\_mats/fhwasa12004/](https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/speedmgmt/ref_mats/fhwasa12004/)):*
  - 15 mph (25 km/h) - alleys; narrow residential roadways
  - 20 mph (30 km/h) - business districts, school zones
  - 25 mph (40 km/h) - residential districts, public parks, ocean shores
  - 55 mph (90 km/h) - open rural highways, trucks on interstate highways
  - 65 mph (105 km/h) - passenger vehicles, light trucks, motor homes, and light duty commercial vehicles on interstate highways.

Our rapid increase in population and greater density requirements have created more of an urban atmosphere, and speed limits should reflect that change. We submit this area of Century Drive is a Residential District and note that it is becoming standard to see speed limits of 25 mph in residential areas in many cities. Please see references 1 and 2 at the end of this letter.

3. The status quo of the drawn out *process and statute* has resulted in actual fatalities in the last few years, and the ongoing inaction by our City and State is unacceptable. If we can reduce or prevent risk of injury and death on a dangerous section of roadway, we all have a responsibility to advocate for those measures. We realize we cannot prevent every accident, however, we do ask the City of Bend to take control of this portion of our roadway, so our local jurisdiction can more easily make the changes needed to create greater safety for Bend residents.
  
4. CWNA members are concerned the prior traffic study relied on the “Engineering Approach” to evaluate Century Drive, i.e, ***“\* The original research between speed and safety which purported that the safest travel speed is the 85th percentile speed is dated research and may not be valid under scrutiny. See the section titled "The Safety of Speed" for a synopsis of current thinking on the relationship between speed and safety.”***

*This information was taken from FHWA Home / Safety / Speed Management / Methods and Practices for Setting Speed Limits: An Informational Report*

[https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/speedmgt/ref\\_mats/fhwasa12004/](https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/speedmgt/ref_mats/fhwasa12004/)

This section also references other factors that may in fact create the need for further reductions in speed limit:

- Traffic volume: vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles;
- Weather and visibility;
- Roadway design elements, including:
  - i. Road function/purpose;
  - ii. Lane and shoulder width;
  - iii. Horizontal and vertical curves;
  - iv. Available sight distances;

- v. Driveways with restricted visibility and other roadside developments;
- vi. High driveway density;
- vii. Rural residential or developed areas; and
- viii. Paved or improved shoulders.

We suggest the characteristics of the area have changed, and Century Drive has multiple design elements that should cause engineers to re-evaluate the speed limits set.

5. CWNA asks the Council to direct Bend Police to prioritize additional enforcement of the speed limits in this area and all areas of Century Drive on a consistent basis.
6. The city has one permanent flashing Speed Feedback Sign installed near the city limit. We respectfully request funds and authorization to have an additional Speed Feedback Sign, with that sign being moveable to any area CWNA deems appropriate within our neighborhood.
7. CWNA would like to see an emphasis put on identifying and deploying safe pedestrian crossings of SW Century Dr. southwest of the Mount Washington/Century/Reed Market roundabout. We are concerned about safe routes to school and safe crossings to the Haul Road Trail. This was the #1 requested NSSP project in CWNA in 2019 and was not selected as a project due to cost constraints. Previously suggested locations include at East Campbell/Mt Bachelor and at Skyline Ranch/Bachelor View intersections with Century Drive. Additional marked crosswalk locations connecting residential neighborhoods on the North side of Century Drive to the existing Haul Road pedestrian pathway/recreational trail should also be explored. Note the following statistics as outlined in the AAA report from 2011, Impact Speed and a Pedestrians Risk of Severe Injury or Death <https://nacto.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/2011PedestrianRiskVsSpeed.pdf>:

*“Results show that the average risk of severe injury for a pedestrian struck by a vehicle reaches 10% at an impact speed of 16 mph, 25% at 23 mph, 50% at 31 mph, 75% at 39 mph, and 90% at 46 mph. The average risk of death for a pedestrian reaches 10% at an impact speed of 23 mph, 25% at 32 mph, 50% at 42 mph, 75% at 50 mph, and 90% at 58 mph.”*

**The current section of Century Drive has a speed limit of 45mph. This research above points to why CWNA believes so strongly that more must be done to make this section of road safer.**

8. CWNA believes immediate deployment of signage along SW Century Dr. would improve safety - eg. "Blind Intersection Ahead," "Deer Xing," "Watch for Children Crossing" type of signs.
9. We understand that the City Council has recently adopted the budget for the next fiscal year, making it difficult to add costly projects. However, many of the suggestions put forth in this letter are relatively low cost and can be implemented in a short period of time. Because of the real and ongoing safety issues along Century Drive that are steadily increasing due to west side development and recreation traffic, the Century West Neighborhood Association asks that you modify the City's budget and work program to place these suggested traffic and safety issues higher on your priority list for implementation.

In summary, the goals of the neighborhood are to reduce speeds to an "appropriate" level to create slower & safer streets within the city limits, create safer intersections so there are fewer safety hazards to avoid injuries and/or fatalities, and create safe crossings for walking and cycling.

CWNA wishes to acknowledge and extend our appreciation of the Transportation and Mobility representatives. They have been good partners in our discussions, and we know they sincerely wish to help our neighborhood. They are constrained by budget and process, and those are the items you, our City Council, can help resolve. We urge your attention to this safety concern and desire an expeditious response and plan.

Respectfully, and on behalf of CWNA Board and CWNA Members,

Lisa Mushel  
CWNA Chair

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References:

1. <https://www.seattle.gov/transportation/projects-and-programs/safety-first/vision-zero/speedlimits>  
*“We are reducing and posting 25 MPH speed limits on just about every arterial street (any street with a yellow dividing line) in Seattle. Some arterial streets with higher traffic volumes will have their posted speed limit reduced to 30-35 MPH with ongoing evaluations for a lower speed limit. Speed is the critical factor in the frequency and severity of crashes. As we continue to redesign our high injury network of streets, we’re also looking at proactive, systemwide improvements. Lowering speed limits across the city is a key element of this work. Seattle is one of the first cities in the country to study how reducing speed limits and increasing speed limit sign frequency improves safety for everyone. **Early results** show a decrease in vehicular speeds and a reduction of up to 39% in crashes.”*
2. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-08-08/lower-speed-limits-could-save-your-city-and-life>  
*“A lot of bike and pedestrian advocates will also argue that Americans are just doing speed limits wrong. Most state DOTs typically follow a rough measure known as the 85th percentile rule. Traffic engineers conduct studies measuring the average speed of drivers on a road, then they set speed limits so that 85 percent of those drivers would be traveling under the speed limit. That idea, as FiveThirtyEight detailed in 2015, effectively sets a minimum speed rather than a maximum. In 2017, the National Transportation Safety Board recommended that the Federal Highway Administration scrap the guideline in favor of other road factors like crash history or pedestrian counts.”*

*A recent report from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety estimates that rising speed limits in the United States have led to an additional estimated 37,000 deaths over the past 25 years. “We know that very small changes in speed can have big consequences for pedestrians,” says Jessica Cicchino, the vice president of research at IIHS. “A pedestrian struck at 25 miles per hour has [sic] 25 percent chance of being seriously injured—but that climbs to a 50 percent chance at 33 miles per hour.” Importantly, lower speed limits also reduce the number of crashes, as an IIHS study found last year in Boston after it lowered its default speed in 2017.”*