

DESIGN MEMO 4.03

To: Designers, Contractors, and City Departments
Date: January 1, 2025
Subject: Design Speed
Category: Horizontal and Vertical Design

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1 Purpose

This design memo provides guidance for establishing roadway design speed. The information provided herein is based on established practices supported by and methodology used by the City of Columbus.

2 Applicability

Until further notice, this direction will be used for scoping, design, review, and construction of plans within the City of Columbus Right-of-Way.

3 Definitions

Definitions of key terms in this memo are provided in Design Memo 1.00: Introduction and as outlined below.

Design Speed: As defined in A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, published by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), "Design speed is a selected speed used to determine the various geometric design features of the roadway. The selected design speed should be a logical one with respect to the anticipated operating speed, topography, the adjacent land use, modal mix, and the functional classification of the highway."

Operating Speed: As defined in A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, "Operating speed is the speed at which drivers are observed operating their vehicles during free-flow conditions."

Speed Limits (Legal and Posted): Speed Limits in Ohio are defined by Ohio Revised Code, Section 4511.21 - Speed Limits. Contact the Division of Traffic Management with any speed limit related questions for projects within the City of Columbus.

4 Design Guidance

4.1 Design Speed

The Design speed for roadway projects within the City of Columbus shall be as outlined below:

- For roadways where the speed limit is 45 mph or less, the design speed shall be equal to the speed limit.
- For roadways where the speed limit is 50 mph or greater, the design speed shall be 5 mph greater than the speed limit.

The design Consultant shall not establish design speed. The design speed and posted will typically be listed in the City project scoping document. If the design speed is not listed in the City project scoping document, the Consultant shall coordinate with the assigned City Project Manager. If a project does not have a City Project Manager, the Consultant shall contact the Division of Traffic Management for further guidance.

