



Mark Newcomb, Chairman
Wes Gardner, Vice Chair
Natalia D. Macker
Luther Propst
Len Carlman

March 17, 2026

John Eddins, P.E., District 3 Engineer
Wyoming Department of Transportation
3200 Elk Street
Rock Springs, WY 82901

Re: Step-Down Speed Limit Request west of Wilson, Wyoming

Dear Mr. Eddins,

The Teton County Board of County Commissioners and the Teton County Sheriff respectfully request that WYDOT study and modify WY-22 speed limits coming into the town of Wilson from Teton Pass. We recommend adding a step-down speed limit in the transition zone that would go from 45 mph, then to 35 mph, and then to 25 mph in the town of Wilson, ideally shifting the start of the 25 mph zone several hundred feet west of the current location. Should it be necessary to conduct additional speed limit studies, we further request that those be undertaken this spring, 2026.

This segment presents challenging operating conditions, including a sustained downhill grade as vehicles descend from the Pass toward Wilson. As drivers transition from a steep mountain corridor to a community environment, the Board believes a step-down speed zone may help alert travelers to their approach to a populated area and encourage drivers to adjust their operating behavior accordingly.

A traditional engineering analysis may indicate an 85th percentile speed above the currently posted 45 mph. However, the purpose of this request is not solely to evaluate the existing operating speed, but to better understand which tools or countermeasures could support a step-down speed transition, such as that depicted in Figure 1, that would improve safety as vehicles approach Wilson. Signage alerts drivers descending the pass to operate in lower gears. The Board and the County Sheriff support using the flexibility provided, and good engineering judgment, to support a step-down speed transition to improve highway safety as vehicles approach Wilson.

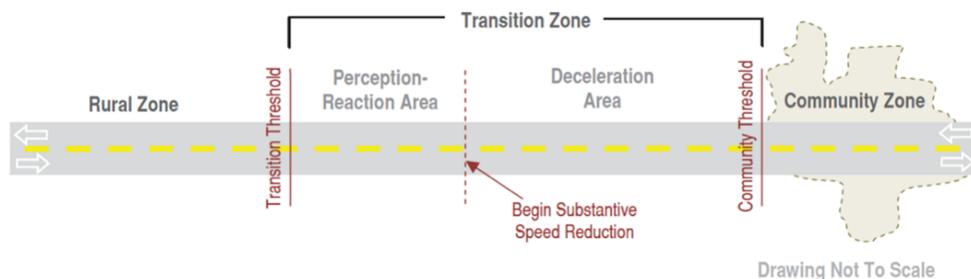


Figure 1. Example Speed Transition Zone from NCHRP Report 737: Design Guidance for High-Speed to Low-speed Transition Zones for Rural Highways



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Federal guidance recognizes that speed limits should be established through engineering studies that consider roadway context, infrastructure conditions, and surrounding land use, rather than relying solely on the 85th percentile speed. The FHWA guidance¹ on 'Setting Transition Zones' notes that engineering judgment may be used to adjust base speeds to reflect conditions such as pedestrian activity, roadway geometry, and changes in the surrounding environment. In addition, FHWA tools such as USLIMITS2 and Safe System approaches recognize that speed management may consider metrics beyond the 85th percentile, including the median speed and the presence of vulnerable road users.

The Board also encourages WYDOT to consider guidance from NCHRP Report 737, *Design Guidance for High-Speed to Low-speed Transition Zones for Rural Highways*, which identifies the importance of designing transition zones, including the perception area and deceleration area, where drivers recognize changing roadway conditions and safely reduce speed. In the case of the approach to Wilson, these areas may warrant careful evaluation to determine whether physical roadway and roadside features, visual cues, or operational treatments could better signal the transition from a 45-mph mountain corridor to a community setting. A sample diagram for appropriate step-down locations is provided in Figure 2.



Figure 2. WY22 Step-Down Speed Proposal

Accordingly, the Board respectfully asks that the study consider not only the 85th percentile operating speed, but also contextual and operational factors that influence driver expectations and safe speeds, including:

¹ Federal Highway Administration. (n.d.). 4. *Setting Transition Zones*. U.S. Department of Transportation. <https://highways.dot.gov/safety/speed-management/speed-management-eprimer-rural-transition-zones-and-town-centers/4-setting>



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- The transition from a steep mountain corridor to the community setting of Wilson and the relatively flat valley floor;
- The sustained downhill grade and braking conditions experienced by vehicles descending Teton Pass;
- Whether roadway geometry or surrounding land use changes in ways that may not align with driver expectations, such as entering a developed area;
- Whether motorists are provided with sufficient cues² and countermeasures to recognize the changing environment, including gateway treatments, signage, pavement markings, rumble strips, speed feedback signs, or other physical measures;
- Opportunities to design and reinforce the perception and deceleration areas associated with a step-down speed transition; and
- Opportunities to improve safety as drivers approach Wilson and areas with increased pedestrian activity.

To support coordination with upcoming construction activities in downtown Wilson, the Board respectfully requests that relevant data collection be completed by May 1, with recommendations regarding potential countermeasures developed shortly thereafter.

We appreciate WYDOT's partnership and look forward to working together to evaluate practical measures that can improve safety for residents and travelers entering the Wilson area.

Sincerely,

Mark Newcomb, Chair

Matt Carr, Teton County Sheriff

Maureen Murphy, Clerk Attest

² Federal Highway Administration. (n.d.). *Implementing countermeasures*. U.S. Department of Transportation. <https://highways.dot.gov/safety/local-rural/speed-management-manual-local-rural-road-owners/4-implementing-countermeasures>