



June 27, 2024

The Honorable Tistrya Houghtling
Supervisor, Town of New Lebanon
PO Box 328
14755 State Route 22
New Lebanon, NY 12125

Re: T24-102

Dear Supervisor Houghtling:

Thank you for your correspondence to the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), dated April 16, 2024, requesting a safety study and speed study on Route 20 near the Lebanon Valley Speedway in the Town of New Lebanon.

The study along the segment of Route 20 in the area of the Lebanon Valley Speedway (from Webster Hill Road to just west of CR 9) has been completed. The study included a field review of the geometry and conditions of this segment of Route 20, an analysis of the most current three-year crash history (January 1, 2021 – December 31, 2023), an analysis of the pedestrian crash history from January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2023, and a sample of motorist speeds.

The field review of the geometry and conditions and sample of motorist speeds occurred on a mid-weekday, during the daytime and during non-Speedway event hours. NYSDOT conducts speed studies following accepted traffic engineering practices including the practice of collecting speed data in off-peak hours. Since the off-peak hours represent most of the hours in a day, the data collected best represents the speed people are most likely to drive on any road during most of the day. The crash history analyses included crashes that happened at all times of the day.

NYSDOT cannot accommodate the request for a traffic study during a Lebanon Valley Speedway event as the Speedway events may generate atypical traffic conditions during off-peak hours along Route 20 in this area.

The segment of Route 20 in the area of the Lebanon Valley Speedway is a predominately straight and level segment of roadway. The speed limit is 55 MPH. A review of the existing traffic control devices (regulatory signs, pedestrian warning signs, ground mounted flashing beacons and pavement markings) revealed that the traffic control devices are appropriate and in sufficient condition.

Based on the field review NYSDOT has determined to close the passing zones along Route 20 from Webster Hill Road to just west of CR 9. The passing zones were closed on May 13, 2024.

The analysis of the most current three-year crash history (January 1, 2021 – December 31, 2023) was conducted. The analysis did not reveal a pattern of crashes along this segment of Route 20. For comparison, analysis of the crash history from January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2020 (which included pre-Covid crashes) was conducted. This three-year time frame also did not reveal a pattern of crashes along this segment of Route 20.

In the six-year crash history time frame, January 1, 2018 – December 31, 2023, there were two rear-end crashes at the Lebanon Valley Speedway crosswalk. One crash involved a vehicle that slowed down to allow pedestrians to utilize the crosswalk; the other crash involved a vehicle that was stopped in traffic for pedestrians crossing in the crosswalk. These two rear-end crashes did not result in the pedestrians being injured or struck by a vehicle.

The analysis of all pedestrian crashes from January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2023 revealed three crashes involving pedestrians. The Apparent Contributing Factors listed in the pedestrian crashes range from Traffic Control Disregarded, Driver Inattention / Distraction, Pedestrian/Bicyclist/Other - Pedestrian Error/Confusion and Failure to Yield the Right-Of-Way.

A sample of motorist speeds was taken. Speed limits in New York are based on the widely accepted principle of setting them as near as practicable to the speed at which 85 percent of the drivers are traveling at or below. The 85th percentile speed is a direct measure of the influence of roadway geometry, development density and pedestrian activity on driver behavior for a given location. In most instances, a speed limit based on the 85th percentile reflects the expectations of the largest proportion of drivers; is found to be a safe and comfortable limit; facilitates speed enforcement and offers the greatest chance of achieving some uniform speed on any given road.

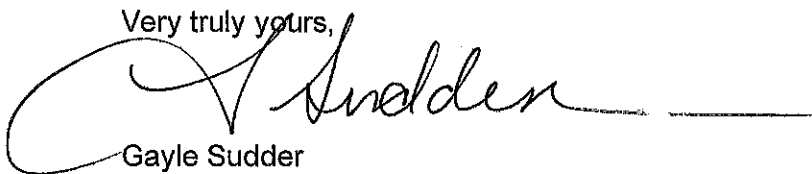
The average 85th percentile speed for the two spot locations surveilled is 57 MPH.

It is important to note that unrealistic speed limits do not invite voluntary compliance, do not reflect the behavior of the majority and results in the unlawful behavior of the majority.

An analysis of the data and related factors has shown that the existing road conditions along this segment of Route 20 would not support a lower speed limit. Therefore, NYSDOT will not lower the State Speed Limit 55 MPH on this segment of Route 20.

Thank you for your interest in traffic safety and for bringing your concerns to our attention. For further questions, please contact the Regional Traffic and Safety Group at (845) 437-3320 and reference T24-102.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gayle Sudder". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "G".

Gayle Sudder
Transportation Analyst