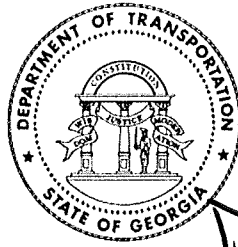


Russell R. McMurry, P.E., Commissioner



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

One Georgia Center, 600 West Peachtree Street, NW  
Atlanta, Georgia 30308  
Telephone: (404) 631-1000

*Donna Newman*  
*Pam Hodge*

January 22, 2018

RECEIVED

JAN 25 2018

*Isaiah*  
*1/29/18*

CITY MANAGER

Mr. Isaiah Hugley, City Manager  
Columbus Consolidated Government  
P.O. Box 1340  
100 Tenth Street  
Columbus, GA 31902-1340

RE: Request for traffic study to decrease speed limit on I-185

Mr. Hughley:

This letter is in response to a resolution from October 24, 2017 in which Columbus Consolidated Government requested that the Department conduct a traffic study along I-185 to consider reducing the posted speed limit from J.R. Allen Parkway (SR 22) to Victory Drive (SR 520). As requested, the District Three Traffic Operations unit conducted a traffic study that involved the collection of speed data, crash data and characteristics for the last three years, and general roadway inventory. Speed samples were taken at each milepost, in each direction, from MP 0.0 to 10.0. The results of the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed, broken down into four sections, are shown below:

Northbound	
MP 0-2	70.3 mph
MP 3-5	74.2 mph
MP 6-8	69.5 mph
MP 8-10	76.1 mph
Southbound	
MP 0-2	71.0 mph
MP 3-5	73.3 mph
MP 6-8	74.5 mph
MP 8-10	76.5 mph

The crash data assessment for this section of I-185 involved a thorough review of crashes, removing deer/animal collisions and crashes related to DUI or driver distraction. Our assessment of crashes that occurred during dry weather conditions indicated a decrease in crashes since 2015. In 2015, the speed limit was adjusted from 55 mph to 60 mph from MP 0.0 to MP 1.0, and from 65 mph to 70 mph from MP 1.0 to the Harris County line. While there was an initial increase in crashes in 2015, the crash rate has declined in the last two years. Wet weather crashes were assessed separately as these do not represent average driving conditions.

Per the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), a federal manual which governs traffic control devices and their implementation, the speed limit of a roadway should be set "within 5 mph of the 85<sup>th</sup>-percentile speed of free-flowing traffic". Our office took the data collected and input the speed samples along with the other characteristics listed above, and processed this through USLimits software, a federally recognized

program which provides an objective assessment of speed, crash history, and roadway characteristics. It recommended a speed limit of 75 mph; however, per Official Code of Georgia 40-6-181, the maximum speed limit on an interstate highway is 70 mph.

Based upon the data the Department has gathered, both for crash history and speed samples, it is our recommendation that the speed zones along I-185 remain as they are currently posted. The speed samples do not support a decrease in speed limit, particularly since the dry-weather crash rate has dropped in the last two years. While there have been concerns expressed about wet-weather crashes and the roadway conditions and while the Department has evaluated the pavement condition in certain sections, this response is intended to address the speed limit only. Further follow-up concerning the roadway during wet-weather conditions can be made but will need to be addressed as a separate issue.

If there are questions about the Department's traffic study, please contact our office at 706-646-6676. If there are questions concerning the roadway itself, particularly as it relates to wet-weather crashes, please contact our District Maintenance Office at 706-646-6930.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tyler Peek', written in a cursive style.

Tyler Peek, P.E.  
District Traffic Engineer

Cc: Wes Kennedy, District Maintenance Engineer  
J.D. Abercrombie, Area Engineer – Columbus  
Donna Newman, Columbus Consolidated Government Engineering Department