

# Speed, Speeding & Safety in Rural Areas

Jaime Sullivan, Director

NCSL “Safer Streets, Safer States”  
Pre-conference 2022





# Key Takeaways for Today

- Introduction to the National Center for Rural Road Safety
- Relationship between speed and safety
- Impact of speed
- Compare speeding statistics in urban vs rural
- Factors that influence rural speeding
- Strategies like Safe System Approach and Vision Zero
- List successful interventions in rural areas
- Opportunities for legislative impact



# National Center for Rural Road Safety

- FHWA Center of Excellence
- Established in Dec. 2014
- Next Generation Center
  - New operations started Feb. 1, 2022
  - Updated management team
  - (Some) new partners



# What We Do

- All rural road safety, all the time
- Focus on local practitioners
- Rural road safety resources and tech assistance
- Multi-disciplinary training
- National connections



# Center Resources

- Webinars
- Socials
- Safety Sidekick
- Newsroom
- Training E-blasts
- Rural Safety Summits
- Annual Rural Road Safety Awareness Week



@ruralroadsafety

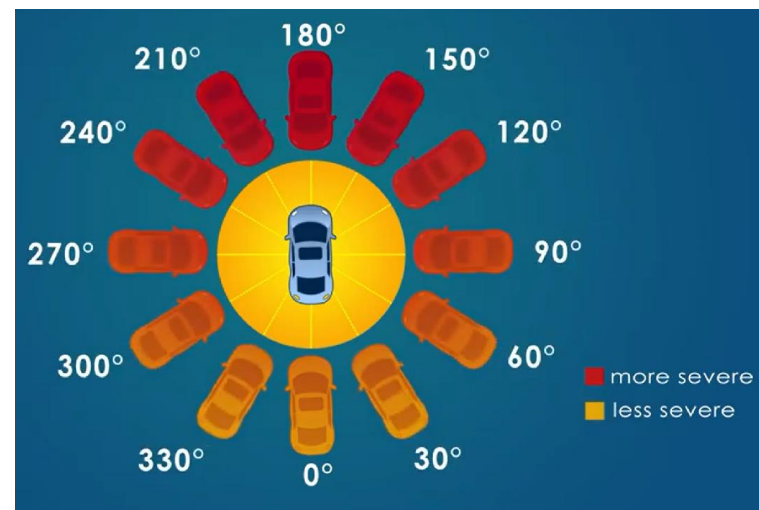
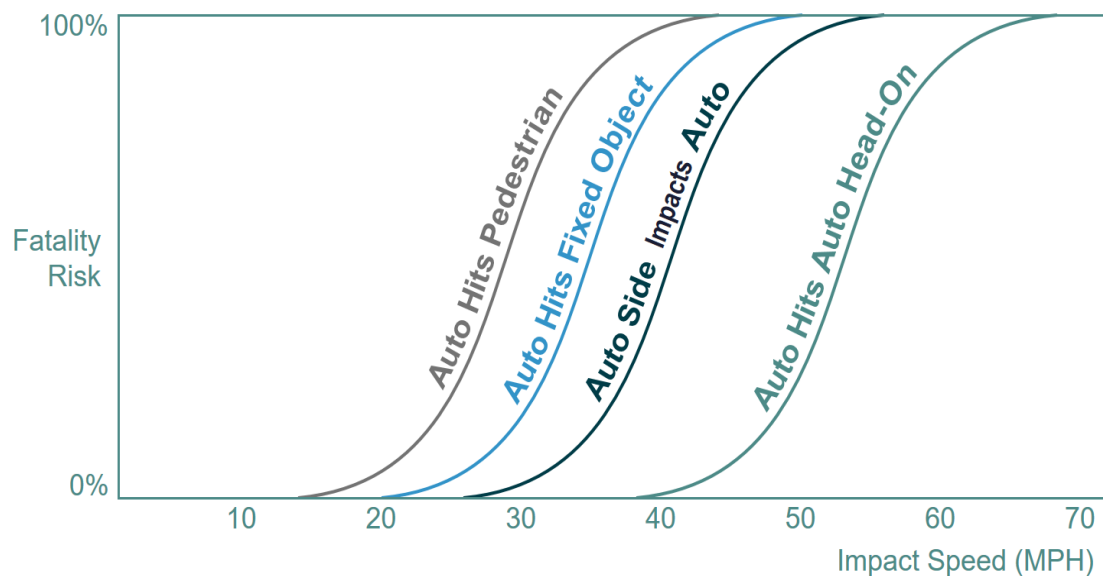
[www.ruralsafetycenter.org](http://www.ruralsafetycenter.org)





# Relationship Between Speed & Safety

“without speed there can be no movement, but with speed comes kinetic energy and with kinetic energy and human error come crashes, injuries, and even deaths.”



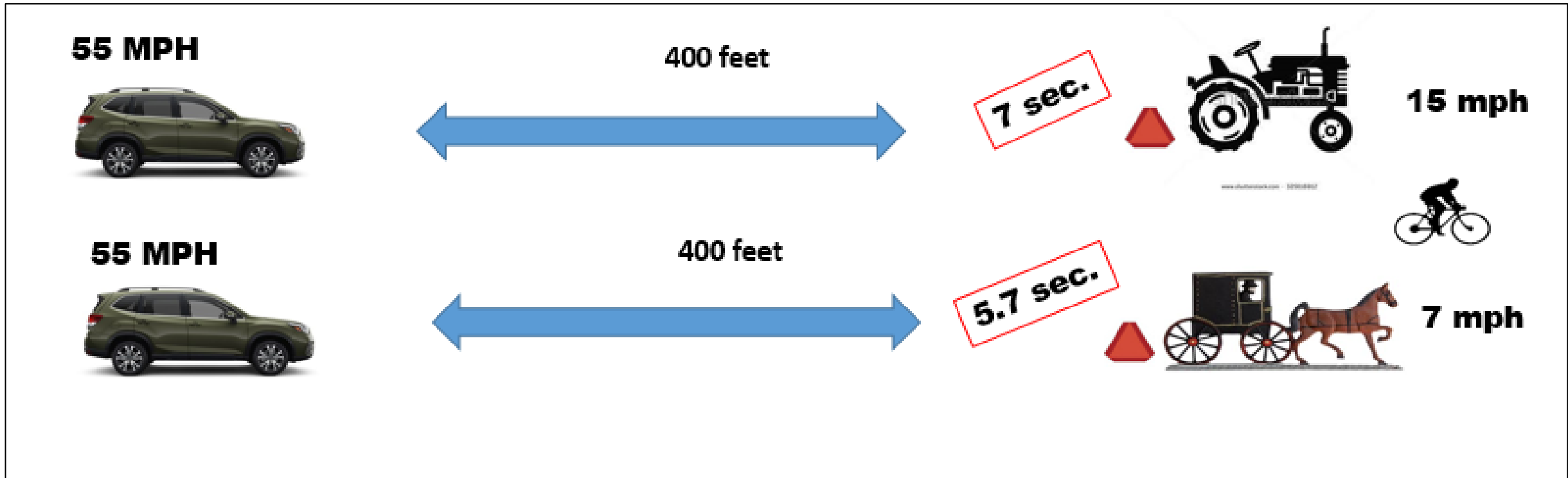


# Relationship of Speed to Likelihood of Survival





# Closure Collision Time and Speed

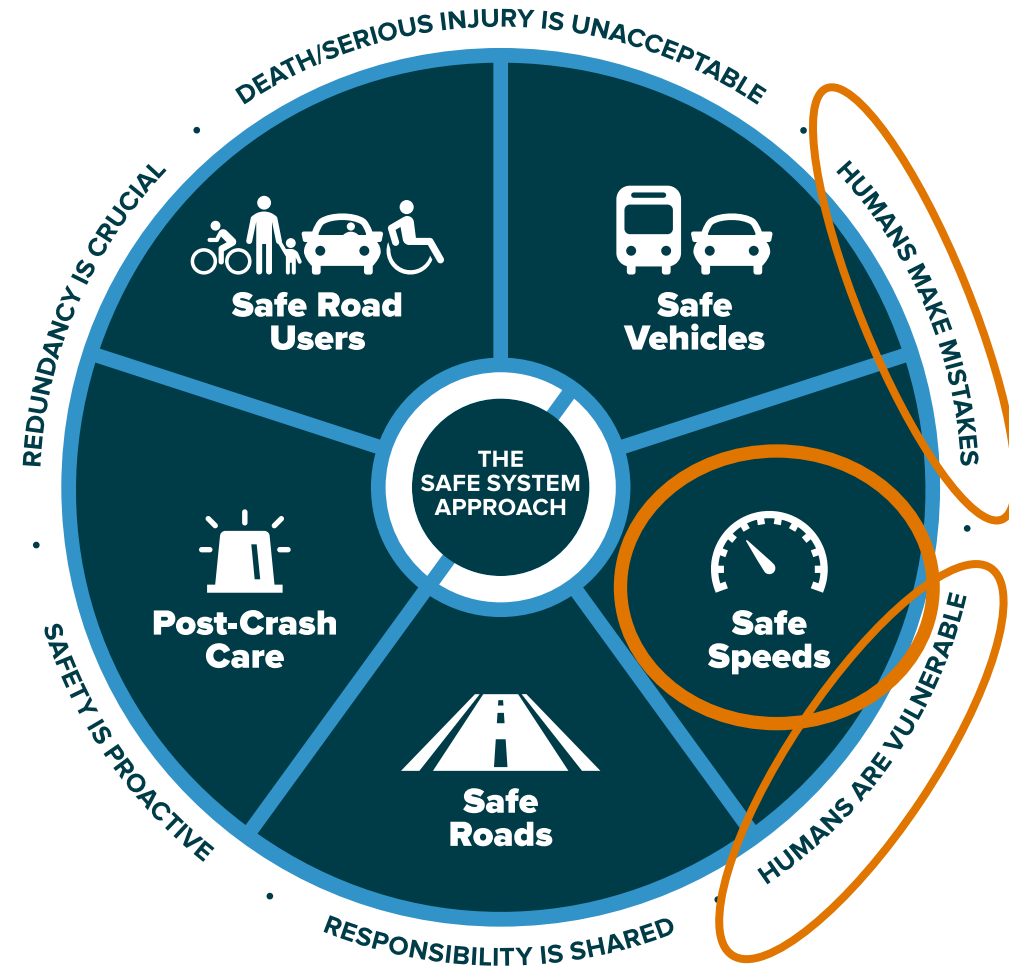






# Safe System Approach

- Different way to think about road safety problem
- Holistic approach
- Aims to eliminate fatal and serious injuries for all road users
- Accommodates human mistakes
- Keeps impacts on the human body at tolerable levels





# Safe Speed Element

- Not about universally reducing speeds
- Designing to meet user expectancies
  - Self-explaining roads
  - Self-enforcing roads
- Matching speed appropriate to the road conditions that exist
  - Vulnerable road users
  - Curves
  - Tourist areas
  - Weather



Source: FHWA

Some roads are engineered to accommodate higher speeds ...



Source: FHWA



Source: FHWA

... and others not.

V

street



Source: FHWA

Google

August 24,  
2022

| 11

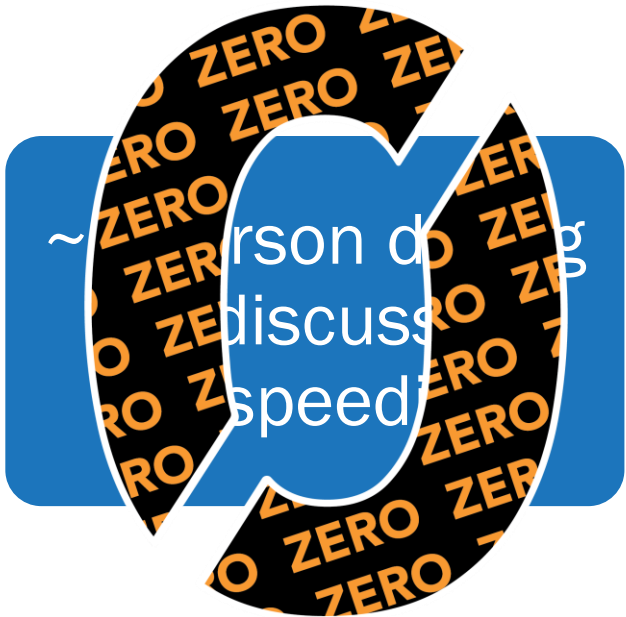


# Impact of Speeding on Safety

11,258 people died in speeding related crashes in 2020



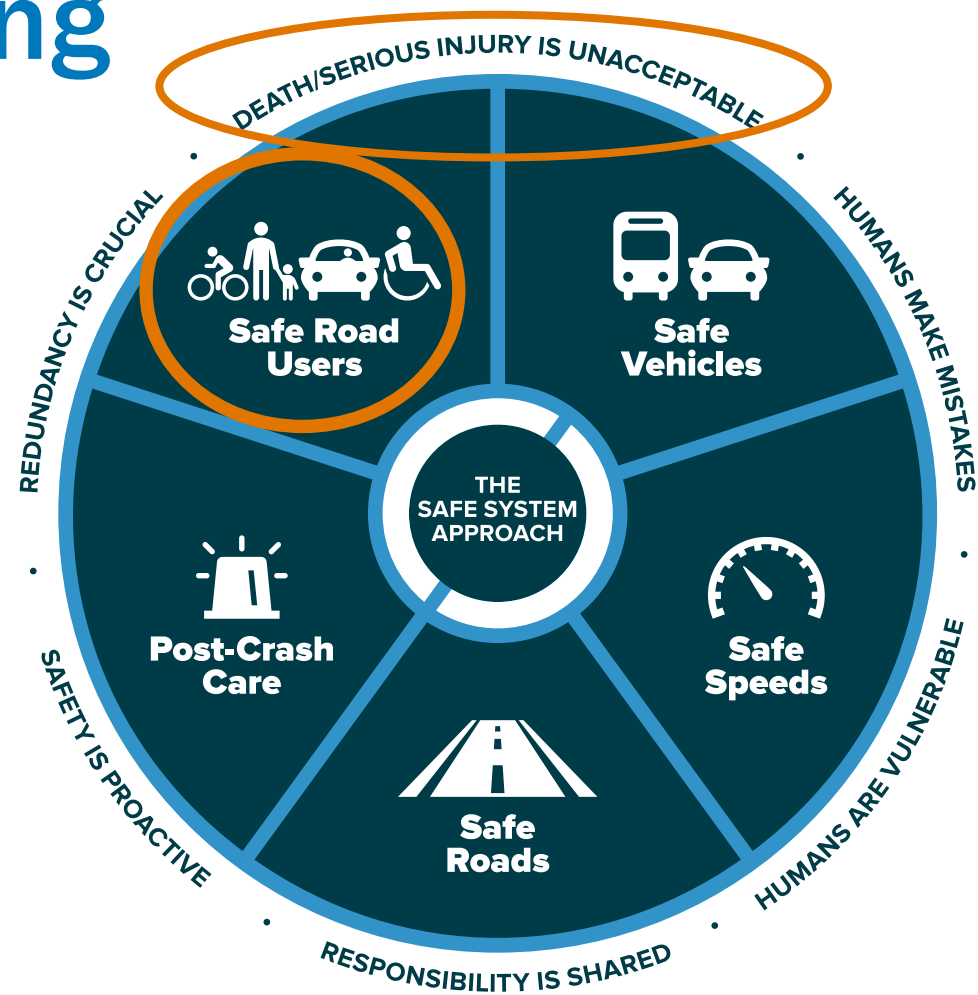
~31 people per day





# Consequences of Speeding

- Greater potential for loss of vehicle control
- Reduce a driver's ability to negotiate curves or maneuver around obstacles in the roadway
- Increase distance traveled before a vehicle can stop
- Increase the risk of crashes and injuries because other vehicles and pedestrians may not be able to judge distance correctly
- Reduced effectiveness of occupant protection equipment
- Increase degree of crash severity





# Rural Experience Imposes Unique Challenges

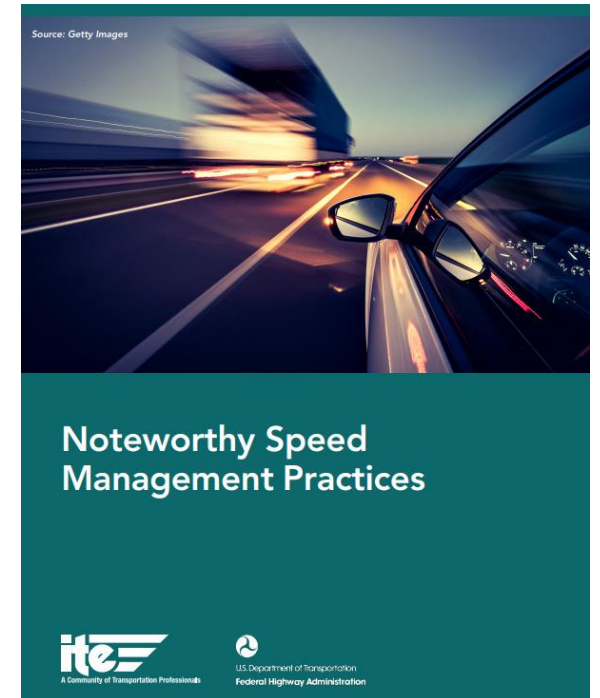
- Road Infrastructure
- Vehicle Mix
- Vulnerable Road Users
- Tourism
- Lack of lighting
- Rural Culture
- Resources and Funding
- Data
- Communication and Power Infrastructure
- Geographical Jurisdictions





# Speed Management Program

- Defining the relationship between speed, speeding, and safety.
- Applying road design and engineering measures to obtain appropriate speeds.
- Setting speed limits that are safe and reasonable.
- Applying enforcement efforts and appropriate technology that effectively target crash-producing speeders and deter speeding.
- Effectively marketing communication and educational messages that focus on high-risk drivers.
- Soliciting the cooperation, support, and leadership of traffic safety stakeholders.



<https://www.ite.org/pub/?id=BCD0260A-BF52-D7D0-44BD-1C3CBE531AE8>



# Safe Speed Road Design & Engineering Examples

## SPEED MANAGEMENT



[Speed Safety Cameras](#)

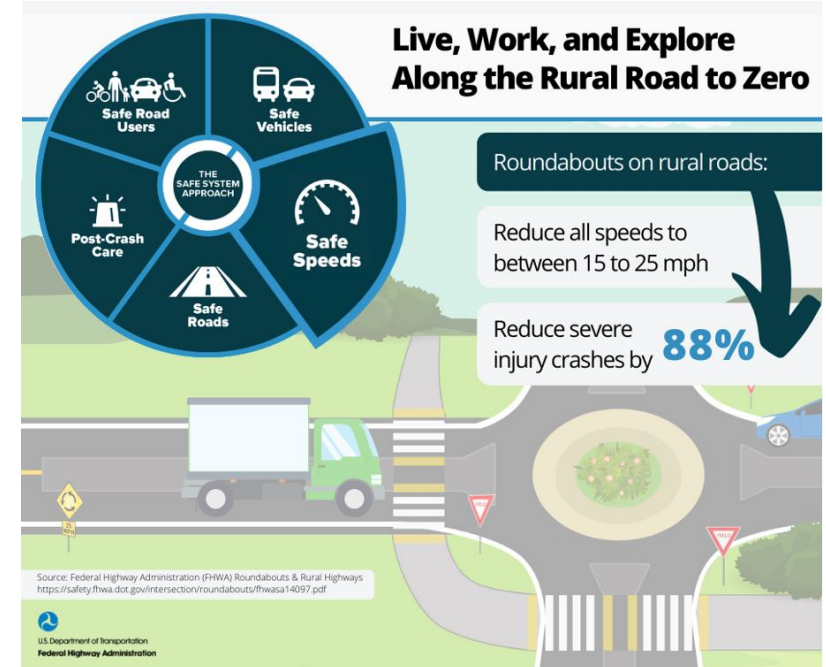


[Variable Speed Limits](#)



[Appropriate Speed Limits for All Road Users](#)

<https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/>







# Opportunities to Make an Impact

- Review your State's Policies
  - Vision Zero
  - Safe System Approach
  - Complete Streets
  - Adoption of Safety Action Plans
  - Local speed limit setting
  - Speed cameras
- Understand Challenge of Match
- Support National Initiatives
  - High Visibility Enforcement
  - NHTSA campaign



<https://www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov/get-materials/speed-prevention/speeding-wrecks-lives/speeding-catches-you>



# Thank you! Questions?

Jaime Sullivan, Director  
[jaime@ruralsafetycenter.org](mailto:jaime@ruralsafetycenter.org)

