

SAFE SYSTEM CASE STUDY

Scaling up speed tables in Cleveland

KEY TAKEAWAY: Cleveland's speed table program demonstrates proactive injury prevention. By scaling up speed table implementation citywide after a successful pilot program, the city reduced vehicle speeds through design instead of waiting for serious injuries and fatalities to trigger action.

SAFETY LEVER



Cleveland is demonstrating how shifting from reactive traffic safety responses to proactive, design-based speed management can deliver meaningful safety results. In 2022, the city piloted speed tables on residential streets where, based on crash data and reports of dangerous speeding, vehicle speeds posed everyday risks. The pilot delivered clear safety results, reducing average vehicle speeds by nearly 8 mph. Building on this success, Cleveland expanded the program citywide, installing more than 100 speed tables in 2024 and continuing to add more in 2025 and 2026. Cleveland's experience demonstrates how pilot projects can generate data-driven momentum, allowing cities to move from testing solutions to scaling what works to improve safety.



City of Cleveland

Instead of reacting to serious crashes ...

... Cleveland was proactive

Waiting to install traffic calming until after a serious crash or fatality occurs

This delays action and leaves known risks unaddressed.

Installing speed tables at locations with documented speeding concerns

Acting quickly to bring vehicle speeds below targets likely to be survivable for pedestrians addresses a known safety risk before it claims a life.

Instead of relying on enforcement alone ...

... Cleveland designed for safety

Police enforcement as the only tool to change individual behavior

While enforcement can influence safety outcomes, it is highly resource-intensive and may be applied inconsistently. It does not address the underlying street design factors that contribute to speeding.

Investing in permanent, self-enforcing infrastructure improvements

Speed tables physically deter high speeds, helping ensure that safe behavior is encouraged by the roadway environment without depending on punitive measures.

Instead of being stymied by lack of evidence ...

... Cleveland used a pilot to build evidence

Avoiding new solutions

Delaying design changes because they are perceived as disruptive, expensive or difficult to justify allows serious crashes to continue.

Testing promising interventions

Pilot projects are a low-cost way to demonstrate effectiveness and strengthen the case for a design change.

Instead of fixing the squeaky wheel ...

Deploying safety interventions piecemeal or purely in response to complaints

When fixes are triggered primarily by petitions or similar initiatives, that can prioritize influence and resources over actual safety needs. The result is that many neighborhoods, especially historically underserved ones, are left without improvements and citywide safety gains are limited.

... Cleveland deployed a proven solution citywide

Advancing strategies that work

Building on the success of the pilot, Cleveland expanded its efforts citywide, installing 100 speed tables in 2024 and dedicating funding to add more in 2025 and 2026.

What lever did this intervention pull?

 **PRIMARY:** Cleveland's speed table program reduced **severity** by reducing vehicle speeds through proactive, design-based solutions. Because speed tables are self-enforcing, they also reduce reliance on costly, intermittent enforcement and help ensure more equitable, consistent safety outcomes.

State and local DOTs can reduce crash injuries by lowering one or more of the following

SAFETY LEVERS:



EXPOSURE

how much people drive



SEVERITY

how fast vehicles travel and how heavy they are



LIKELIHOOD OF A CRASH

how often road users come into conflict

What was the result?

 The 10 locations that received speed tables as part of the initial pilot saw [average speeds decline by nearly 8 mph](#).

What else can be done?

Interim step: Communities can establish survivable target speeds and use systemwide speed data to identify corridors with the largest gaps between operating speeds and safe thresholds, allowing agencies to act on risk before serious and fatal injury crashes occur.

Policy/process trigger: Adopt policies that support safe streets, such as a residential slow streets program, lower speed limits near schools and areas where people walk and bike, and traffic calming guidelines that support the use of speed tables; update street design standards to emphasize self-enforcing designs; prioritize safety within capital improvement programs.