



LEWIS COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS ENGINEERING AND TRAFFIC INVESTIGATION REPORT

IN THE MATTER OF: Evaluation of the existing speed limit on a portion of Bunker Creek Road, from Hwy-6 @ milepost 0.000 to the Willapa Hills Trail crossing @ milepost 0.823.

REASON FOR INVESTIGATION: Initiated by Public Works and a request from the Lewis County Sheriff.

COUNTY ROAD: 24034 – Bunker Creek Road

TO: BOCC and file

FINDINGS:

- a.) **Current Speed Limit:** 20 mph
85% Prevailing Vehicle Speed: 26.8 mph @ 0.400, 33.2 mph @ 0.602
Average Daily Traffic: 2,017 @ 0.400, 1,299 @ 0.602
Truck Percentage: 25.2%
- b.) **Physical Features:** Bunker Creek Road is a Rural Minor Collector and the roadway has a width that varies between 29 and 56 feet, with a majority being 29 feet wide. The roadway is flat over the entire length, and has one minor horizontal curve near Adna Grocery and a horizontal turn where it intersects Hwy-6. The road is bordered by the unincorporated town of Adna to the north and east, and primarily by the Chehalis River to the south and west. Other than the Adna Grocery, there are no structures adjacent to the south and west of the roadway.
- c.) **Accidents/Characteristics:** The accident history shows that there was a property damage accident in 2023 and an injury accident in 2021 that were reported in the past five years within the study area of Bunker Creek Road.
- d.) **Remarks/Recommendations:** The current speed limit of 20 mph was established by Ordinance 94 in December of 1980. Currently, a speed limit of 20 mph would only be considered for a school zone and only during school hours in accordance with RCW 46.61.440.

Unrealistically low speed limits give those that live along the route the expectation that it will cause drivers to slow down and reduce accidents. Research conducted



throughout the country shows this to be untrue. The research shows that a driver's speed is influenced by the type of road and the current traffic condition, and not the posted speed limit. If an unreasonably low speed limit is posted, most drivers will ignore the signs, and some will try to stay within the posted speed limit. This causes real safety concerns because of the difference between faster and slower drivers. An unrealistically low speed limit also has the adverse effects of making violators out of reasonable and otherwise law-abiding citizens, and creates a difficult situation for law enforcement in controlling the speed limit and issuing citations that may not be upheld in court.

Lewis County uses an engineering approach to setting speed limits, and the Operating Speed Method is a nationally accepted method within the traffic engineering community and Federal Highway Administration. Speed limit setting is primarily based on the 85th percentile speed, which is the speed at which 85 percent of free-flowing traffic is traveling at or below. Setting a speed limit based on the 85th percentile speed is based on safety, and research has shown that traveling at or around the 85th percentile speed yields the lowest crash risk for drivers. The 85th percentile speed method is also attractive because it reflects the collective judgment of the vast majority of drivers as to a reasonable speed for given traffic and roadway conditions.

Based on this traffic investigation, accepted engineering practices, and all roadway factors considered; the recommended speed limit for this segment of Bunker Creek Road would be 30 mph

e.) **Attachments:** vicinity map

Recommended by:

Mike Kroll
Transportation Planner

2/17/26
Date

Approved by:

Wes Anderson, P.E.
County Engineer

2/17/24
Date