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**TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE ASSOCIATION OF PLANNERS
TO THE JOINT STANDING
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION**

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY PROVIDED IN FAVOR OF LD #527
“An Act to Allow Municipalities to Create Bicycle and Pedestrian Zones with
Reduced Speed Limits”**

DATE OF HEARING: Thursday, March 2, 2023

**Honorable Senator Matthea Daughtry, Honorable Representative Lynne Williams,
Distinguished Members of the Committee on Transportation:**

The Maine Association of Planners strongly supports LD #527 to allow creation of “Bicycle and Pedestrian Zones” with reduced speed limits. This bill will empower municipalities to create a more sustainable transportation system within designated walkable and bikeable zones within their community. It would remove an unneeded barrier to creating reduced speed zones by eliminating the requirement for expensive, time consuming, and potentially counterproductive speed studies.

Research¹ shows that crashes with vulnerable road users - bicyclists and pedestrians - at speeds above 25 miles per hour are far more likely to result in fatal injuries than are slower speed crashes. Unsafe motorist behavior is a major reason they don't walk or bike to destinations, even ones that are close by, in their communities.

MAP fully supports the legislation as written, however, offers the following suggestions for “friendly amendments” in order to make the legislation even better:

- Consider expanding the zones where this measure may be applied by swapping “downtowns” in line 21 with “designated growth areas of a municipality consistent with section 4349-A, subsection 1, paragraph A”

¹ National Association of City Transportation Officials, 2018 “Speed Kills”
<https://nacto.org/publication/city-limits/the-need/speed-kills/>





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- Allow reductions from speeds up to 45 miles per hour in order to capture streets with unacceptably high speed limits
- Consider replacing the word “and” with “or” in line 21, which currently reads “speed limit is 35 miles per hour or less ~~and~~**OR** where not more than 6,000 motor vehicles”
- Consider raising the Average Annual Daily Trips (AADT) for streets this bill applies to from 6000 to 12000

Maine’s climate change plan, “Maine Won’t Wait” calls for an increase in walking and biking in the state in order to reduce our carbon footprint and dependence on fossil fuels. Increasing the share of trips made by walking or bicycling is crucial for meeting this goal. Reducing vehicle speeds, by lowering speed limits, is a tool Maine’s municipalities should be given by passing this legislation.

We appreciate your time and attention to this legislation, and would be happy to answer any planning-related questions you may have regarding this bill.

Sincerely,

Damon Yakovleff, AICP
Portland, Maine

