

Village of Merrilan

April 19th, 2023

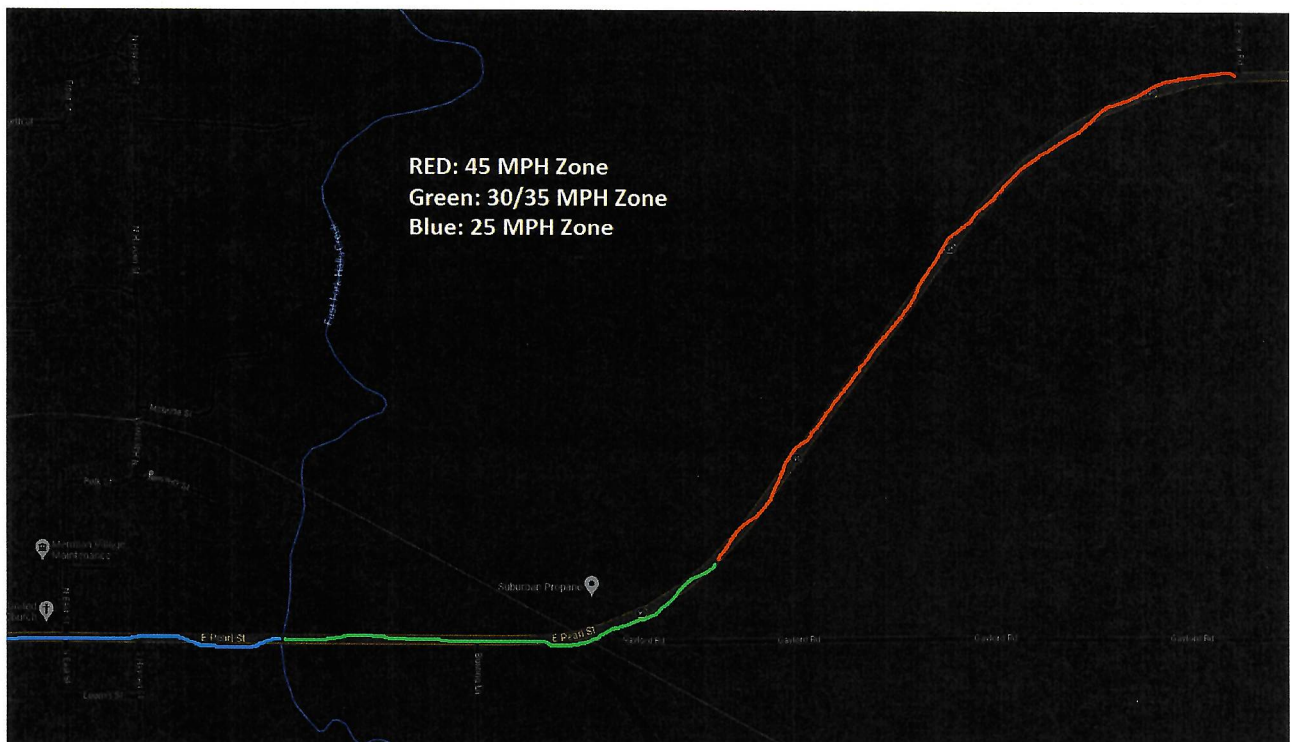
Wisconsin Department of Transportation

RE: Reduction of speed limit on State Highway 95 Westbound into the Village

Dear,

The Village of Merrilan is again requesting a reduction in the speed limit on State Highway 95 on the east side of the Village, with some concerns on State Highway 95 on the west side, along with US Highway 12 north and south. We request the speed limit be reduced to 30 (preferably) or 35 MPH once within the Village limits. There are multiple reasons for this request, and they are as follows:

1. The current posted 45 MPH location is at a curve and directly before the railroad tracks. This is abrupt and dangerous. If you drive this on a regular basis you can easily identify the hazard presented with this setup. The 45 MPH should begin on the curve prior, near 44.45783127710087, -90.819506461995, or just west of Kovar Rd & State Highway 95. Then the speed limit should be further reduced to 30 or 35 MPH before the railroad tracks, and then reduced to 25 MPH once past the East Fork Halls Creek bridge as it currently stands. See diagram below.



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2. Residents, again, have expressed concerns on multiple occasions about traffic speeds along this stretch. The existing posted speed limit and driver tendency to already exceed speed limits results in continued speeding while going further into the Village. This includes passing by the Elementary school and school zone. We have had to make calls to multiple different trucking companies advising them to further reduce their speed and respect the posted limits or otherwise face fines from law enforcement. This includes Bunting Lane which has multiple residents who come and go like any normal person does and have trouble entering/exiting this location.
3. As we all know ATV and UTV riding in Wisconsin has taken off a considerable amount in recent years. This includes the Village of Merrilan. Economically, it is essential. We have many seasonal residents and visitors who come to our Village, county, and surrounding areas to take part in these and other recreational activities. Village residents use ATVs throughout town as we have allowed, and in general it generates additional freedom and revenue. These speed limits reduce these opportunities for visitors and residents, and therefore potential revenue. Reducing the speed limit in these areas, including what is mentioned below, will further expand the economic opportunities and ease-of-access for ATV and UTV operators.
4. In your prior letters you mention not taking action to address or enforce speeding issues on highways and that they are law enforcement issues. In general, you are correct. But ultimately the DOT oversees setting these speed limits and hearing the concerns of the public and localities involved. Not properly addressing the concerns presented by the very people who live, and work here would be nothing short of complete disregard for the said public and locality. If you understand human behavior in the least, you understand that you can in fact persuade behavior by something as simple as design. Like the design for passing/secondary lanes on hills such as those on State Highway 27 between Jackson and Monroe counties. The painted lines are designed to push traffic naturally to the right lane vs. the left lane.
5. In addition to State Highway 95 east there are concerns about the speed limits abruptly changing while entering the Village from State Highway 95 west, US Highway 12 north, and US Highway 12 south. State Highway 95 west abruptly changes to 35 MPH from 55 MPH, yet another 20 MPH immediate reduction in speed, resulting in the same issues with traffic entering the Village. This plays into issues we have had at the main intersection, State Highway 95 & US Highway 12, where traffic does not always stop as it should. Again, with human behavior. This speed limit does not even change until after the Halls Creek bridge, which is basically the last opportunity to adjust speed for a driver.

US Highway 12 entering from the north (heading south) also abruptly changes, right at a corner, again. Traffic regularly enters town at a high rate of speed and tends not to slow down until they fly over the railroad tracks. This also applies for exiting the Village with traffic going at a high rate of speed. US Highway 12 entering from the south (heading north) changes at the Village limits, but disregards the amount of traffic coming off and on to Old Highway 12 and Castle Hill Rd. There are many semi-trucks that come off and on to Castle Hill Rd. I do think some of this can be addressed with better signage about the reduced speeds in these areas further ahead of time, and maybe more frequently.

I surely hope the Wisconsin Department of Transportation takes all of this into consideration and takes action to address these concerns for the Village of Merrillan. Village Officials and residents do not feel heard. I do want to note a disconnect in some of the wording used in prior communications from the DOT.

- “should not be an issue” – this is an assumption and not an actual observation or fact. The concerns presented here are facts because we live here.
- “more than adequate distance for braking” – how is this determined? Do you consider all vehicle conditions, weights, road conditions, potential visual impairments (trees, sun, watching for deer as there are a lot in that area, etc.)?
- Trucks approaching the railroad crossing on State Highway 95 – do you take into consideration the potential hazardous materials a truck may be carrying, or material that may shift during braking, etc.?

One last thing. In the previous study it mentioned lowering the speed limit to 40 MPH from 45 MPH, why was this not done?

I am reachable at 608-487-3505 or cwruck@merrillanwi.gov.

Thank you for your time,



Christopher Wruck
Village President, Merrillan