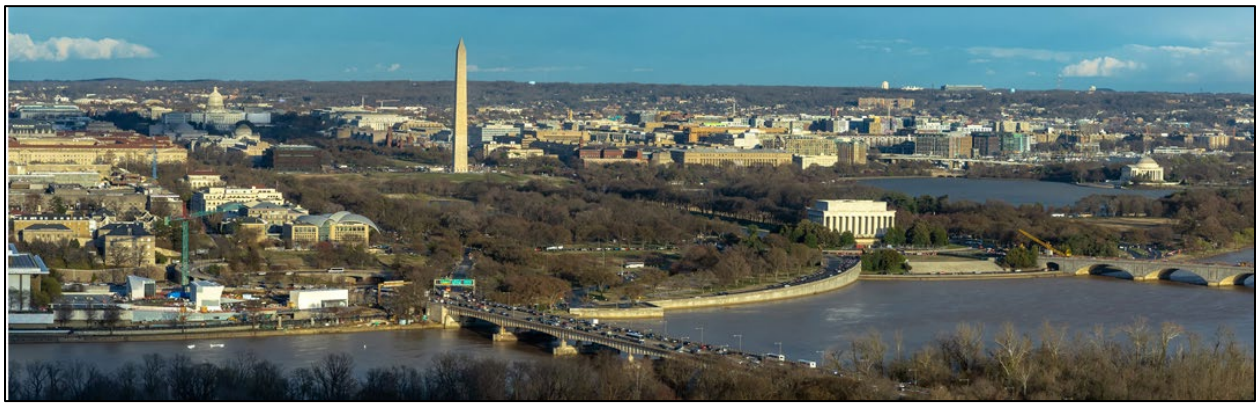


Intelligent Speed Assistance Case Study: Government of the District of Columbia

Active Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA) is a vehicle technology designed to reduce speeding by helping drivers comply with posted speed limits. Using a combination of global navigation systems (GPS), digital speed limit maps and traffic sign recognition, active ISA prevents a vehicle from accelerating beyond the posted speed limit or a pre-established threshold above the limit (for example, +5 mph). Rather than applying the brakes, the system limits throttle input, allowing drivers to maintain safe speeds while retaining full braking control.

The District of Columbia (District) was the first U.S. jurisdiction to enact active intelligent speed assistance (ISA) legislation targeting drivers who repeatedly receive citations for excessive speeding, commonly known as "super speeders." Effective September 2025, the Strengthening Traffic Enforcement, Education, and Responsibility (STEER) Act applies to District and out-of-state drivers whose licenses are suspended for criminal speeding (30 mph or more above the posted limit) or aggravated reckless driving (20 mph or more above the limit) when the offense causes bodily harm, a collision or at least $1,000 in property damage. A judge may require a motorist convicted of either offense to enroll in the ISA program as a condition of continued licensure.

While super speeders are a primary use case for active ISA, government and commercial fleets also present an opportunity for harm reduction through widespread adoption of this technology. Active ISA holds tremendous potential to influence not only organizational safety culture but also employees' personal driving habits as they experience the technology firsthand. As early adopters, governments can lead by example and help shift the public's perception of speeding.

District ISA Pilot

The District first tested active ISA in its fleet vehicles in early 2025. The pilot, a partnership between the Department of For-Hire Vehicles (DFHV) and the District Highway Safety Office (DHSO), involved installing ISA on 10 School Connect vehicles (large passenger vans). During the first three months of the pilot, buses logged 10,000 miles without a single speeding event.[1] Knowing they could not exceed the

[1] R. Birt, conversation with the author, April 2025.

posted speed limit, drivers reported heightened situational awareness and increased attention to conditions both inside and outside the vehicle. According to the DHSO, the pilot successfully met its objective of encouraging participants to model the safe driving behaviors the District seeks to promote on its roadways. The results reinforced active ISA's potential as an effective tool for advancing long-term traffic safety and supporting broader behavioral change among drivers.

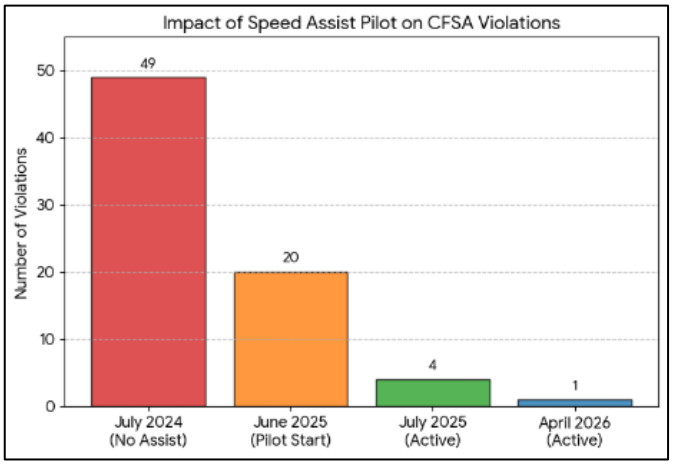
Building on this effort, the District launched a second, 6-month active ISA pilot beginning in Summer 2025 through a partnership between the DHSO, the Department of Public Works (DPW) and the Office of Risk Management (ORM). Active ISA devices were installed in 79 vehicles used by Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) social workers and core staff. The vehicles included hybrid Toyota Prius and Sienna minivans and two Toyota Corollas. The device was also installed in 177 District Department of Transportation (DDOT) vehicles, including sedans, pickup trucks, vans, and dump and utility trucks.

The ISA devices installed in CFSA vehicles were set to allow speeds up to 5 mph above the posted limit. The DDOT vehicles initially had either a zero threshold or a ±5 mph threshold. The DDOT threshold was revised during the pilot to allow for more flexibility on higher-speed roads, but the zero threshold remained in effect when a vehicle was traveling on residential streets.



Both agencies' employees received training on how to use the technology and how to report ISA-related issues encountered on the road. To support transparency and generate public awareness, DHSO created a decal for the ISA-equipped vehicles indicating that the vehicle operator could not exceed the posted speed limit. Separate from this pilot, the District produced and distributed a short video to employees in May 2025 addressing District fleet vehicle safety protocols, including following speed limits.

Figure 1

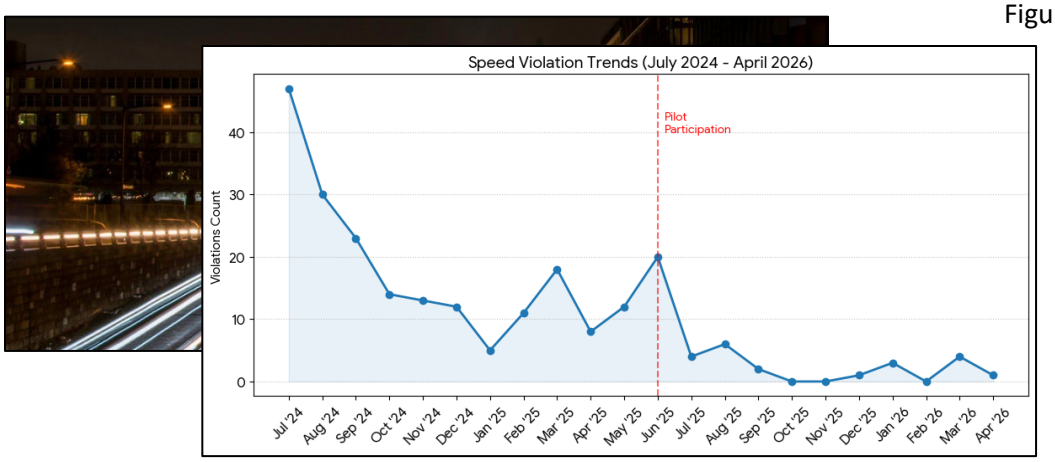


Results

Telematics tracking data revealed that prior to the start of the pilot employees driving CFSA fleet vehicles frequently exceeded the posted speed limit (commonly reported themes were that social workers were rushing to a home, to a child or to court as quickly as possible). Comparing the baseline speed violation data in July 2024 to the same period in July 2025, when ISA use began, violations involving CFSA vehicles dropped from 49 to 4, a 91% decrease. Figures 1 and 2 show a steady downward trend in speeding violations after the ISA devices were installed. In April 2026, violations fell to one, a record low.[2]

[2] T. Roper, personal communication, May 8, 2026.

Figure 2



DDOT also reported significant reductions in speeding infractions for ISA-equipped vehicles, focusing on three infraction types over the posted speed limit: 11-15 mph, 16-20 mph and 21-25 mph. (ISA installation began in October 2025, with devices in use through April 2026.) Comparing 2025 and 2026 data, Figures 3 and 4 show that speeding citations for the first two infraction types fell 84% and 93%, respectively. In 2026, no citations were issued for exceeding the posted limit at the highest range (Figure 5), compared to eight that were issued in the previous year. Like CFSA, DDOT officials attributed the improvement directly to the ISA technology.

Figure 3: DDOT Infractions for Speeding 11-15 mph Over the Limit, 2025 & 2026

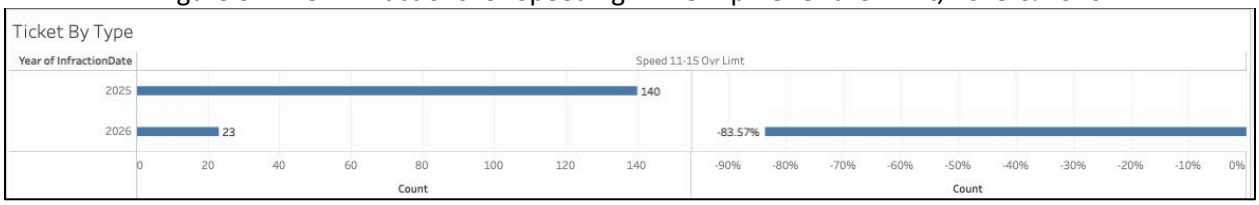
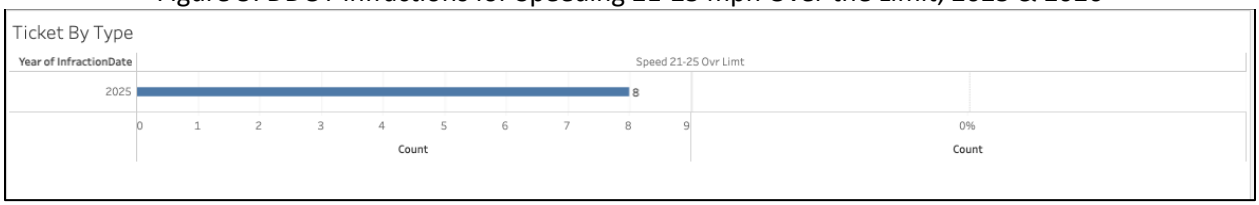


Figure 4: DDOT Infractions for Speeding 16-20 mph Over the Limit, 2025 & 2026



Figure 5: DDOT Infractions for Speeding 21-25 mph Over the Limit, 2025 & 2026



Both agencies reported collecting continuous end-user feedback during the pilot. Two common themes emerged: ISA non-responsiveness when traveling through tunnels and when merging from lower- to

high-speed roads, and a significant power drain for hybrid and all-electric vehicles. For the latter, multiple systems (the ISA device and other onboard components) were all competing for power, which quickly depleted the hybrid or electric vehicle's battery. Ensuring these vehicles were charged nightly was critical.

Signal interruptions, such as those experienced by CFSA and DDOT employees when entering tunnels, were a safety concern, particularly at the onset of the pilot. Fleet vehicle operators also reported ISA acceleration and/or deceleration issues. District officials reported signal interruption, connectivity and acceleration problems to the ISA provider and advised staff to avoid tunnels when possible and stay in the rightmost lane until a solution was provided.

Best practice for active ISA providers is to use GPS and onboard maps; however, GPS loss is a concern, especially in tunnels, rural areas and in dense urban environments. When the signal is temporarily lost, the ISA device will default to either a preset maximum speed set by the manufacturer or the last recognized speed limit until connectivity is restored. For the DC pilot, temporary situational speed assistance (an override) was made available to both CFSA and DDOT employees to help address these situations. The ISA vendor also installed new hardware in vehicles experiencing deceleration issues and DDOT revised the speed threshold on higher-speed roads as noted previously.

Employees interviewed during the pilot were asked if they received ISA training and/or written information. All recalled receiving general information about how the device works, with several indicating they were not aware the ISA vendor had provided an instructional video and would have benefited from reviewing it. Approximately 50% of the interviewed employees also recalled seeing the ISA decal on the vehicles they drove. However, a CFSA official noted that only half the ISA-equipped fleet displayed the decal.

Next Steps

CFSA and DDOT officials deemed the pilot successful in reducing speeding and would like to continue using the technology once it is fully operational. Given employees' concerns about operating ISA-equipped vehicles in tunnels and on high-speed roadways, agency officials agreed these issues must be addressed before broader implementation. While ensuring compliance with posted speed limits remains the primary objective, officials emphasized the need to balance speed management with overall driving safety. At the same time, there was consensus that, much like seat belts and backup cameras, active ISA has the potential to significantly improve roadway safety and eventually become a standard vehicle feature.