

2009

Town of Rolesville

Speed Limit Study

Report



Submitted to the Town of Rolesville Board of Commissioners on
Tuesday, October 20, 2009

Town of Rolesville Board of Commissioners

Mayor Frank Eagles
Commissioner and Mayor Pro Tempore Ronnie Currin
Commissioner Gil Hartis
Commissioner Frank Hodge
Commissioner Betty Whitaker
Commissioner Shannon Whitley

Speed Limit Study Committee

Carl Simmons, PE (Town of Rolesville Engineer)
Chief Tim Stoker (Town of Rolesville Police Department Chief)
Bryan Hicks (Town of Rolesville Assistant Town Manager and Planning Department Director)

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According to the Institute of Transportation Engineers, the purpose of speed zones are to establish a limit at which vehicles should travel that is reasonable and safe for a given section of roadway.

Introduction and Purpose

At the regularly scheduled meeting on June 1, 2009, the Town of Rolesville Board of Commissioners established a "Speed Limit Study Committee" to examine the speed limits Town wide (See Appendix A). The formation of such a Committee was important to the Town Board because of the public concerns about existing speed limits which were stated in previous public meetings and settings.

The purpose of this Speed Limit Study Committee was to have a non-political, unbiased, and professional group of individuals review the speed zones throughout the incorporated areas of Rolesville. As part of this study, the group would collect and review relative data of vehicular traffic, collect public opinion, and return with a report. The Town Board asked that the report include a recommendation on what steps, if any, should be taken relative to the speed limits within the incorporated areas (Town limits) of the Rolesville.

Committee Members and Meetings

At this June 1, 2009 Town Board of Commissioners meeting, three (3) people were appointed to be members of the 2009 Speed Limit Study Committee. They were as follows:

Mr. Carl M Simmons, P.E.
CMS Engineering
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Raleigh, NC 27601
Office Phone - 919.833.0830
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Rolesville, NC 27571
Office Phone - 919.554.6517
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The Committee members have over seventy (70) years of combined professional expertise relating to parts of this study. Each member has their own educational degrees, certifications, and on the job experience that helped produce this qualified and sustainable report.



In the beginning, the Committee agreed as a whole that there were four (4) major categories of data that needed to be collected so as to produce a comprehensive report. These four (4) categories were as follows.

1. The existing posted speed limits and the location of the signs
2. The average daily volume and speed of traffic at various locations throughout the corporate limits
3. The public opinion of the speed limits
4. The speeding citation charges issued by the Rolesville Police Department

The Committee met eight (8) times as part of this study. Below is a list of the dates when meetings were held between two (2) or more of the members.

- Wednesday, June 10, 2009
- Thursday, June 18, 2009
- Thursday, July 16, 2009
- Wednesday, August 5, 2009
- Wednesday, August 19, 2009
- Friday, August 28, 2009
- September 1, 2009
- October 14, 2009

Basic Demographic Data

The Committee felt that this study and report should include the basic demographic data and general information on Rolesville because different Towns would result in different study parameters. In many ways, the Town has grown a tremendous amount over the past ten (10) years. Below is some data that will explain the foundation of Rolesville.

Population

- 1990: 577 people
- 2000: 907 people
- 2008: 2,673 people (certified by the North Carolina State Demographer (*See Appendix B*))

General Characteristics (per the 2000 United States Census (*See Appendix C*))

- Total Population percentages
 - Male - 51.4%
 - Female - 48.6%
- Race percentages
 - White/Caucasian - 84%
 - Black/African-American - 8.5%
 - Other - 7.5%
- Average household size - 2.57 people
- Median family income - \$57,813
- Education percentages
 - High School Graduate or higher - 86.9%
 - Bachelor's degree or higher - 21%

Geography

- Number of parcels of land - 1,991
- Total acres of the Town limits - 2,540
- Total square miles of the Town limits - 3.97
- Number of roads within the Town limits (*See Appendix D*)
 - Town or privately maintained - 86
 - State maintained - 11
 - Total - 97
- Length of roads within the Town limits

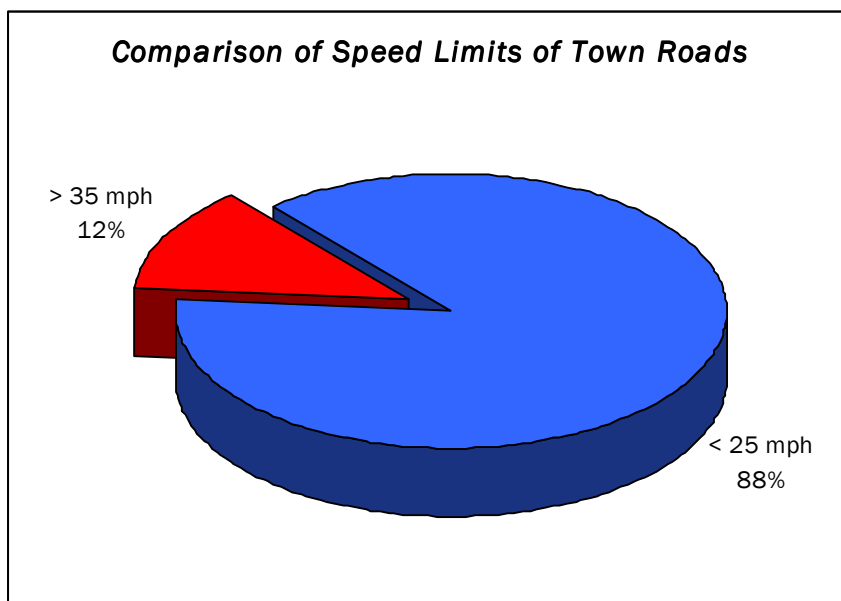


- Town or privately maintained – 18.13 miles
- State maintained – 8.24 miles
- Total – 26.37 miles

Data Collection – Existing Speed Limits and Posted Signage

As part of this study, the Committee needed to understand what speed limit zones existed within the Town limits. The Planning Department staff worked with the Committee in collecting and mapping out all 97 public (municipal and state maintained) roads within the Town limits (See *Appendix E*). Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Software and Global Positioning System (GPS) devices were used to collect this data.

After compiling and reviewing this data, it was determined that 88% (or 85) of the roads within the Town limits were posted at 25 mph (miles per hour) or lower. 12% (or 12) of the 97 roads within the Town limits were posted at 35 mph or higher.



The bulk of these roads that are posted 35 mph or higher are those that are maintained by the State of North Carolina. These roads carry large amounts of the vehicular traffic through the Town. As a note of reference, all roads in North Carolina are either municipally maintained or state maintained. There are no county maintained roads.

Granite Falls Boulevard is the only municipally maintained road that is posted higher than 25 mph. This road does have a school zone that is 25 mph during Sanford Creek Elementary hours however it was classified as being posted at 35 mph as part of this study and report.

Basically all of the 25 mph posted roads in the Town are classified as being local residential roads. A greater part of these roads have right-of-ways widths of 50 feet. These roads are lined with residential dwellings units, numerous driveways, sidewalks, and some even have sensitive grades and curvature due to topography. Their primary purpose is to channel residential traffic to the collector and arterial roads within the Town. In lieu of all these factors and because of safety, these roads are posted at 25 mph.

A large majority of these roads have the same posted speed limits in both directions (See *Appendix F*). East Young Street however is one road that has southbound traffic posted at one speed (35 mph) and northbound traffic posted at a different speed (55 mph) for a short period of road (approximately 1,200 feet). This is due to recent signage erected by the Department of Transportation along with the corporate limits expansion over the past couple years.



Data Collection – Existing Traffic

The Committee set out to collect large amounts of existing traffic data involving this study. The data collected was two-fold. One category was the number of vehicles traveling up and down various Town roads (i.e. traffic volume) and the other category was the rate of speed of this vehicular traffic.

The Committee researched various means to collect this data. Some of the devices considered to accomplish this were pneumatic road tube volume counters, magnetic sensors, LiDar, microwave detectors, acoustic detectors, and inductive loop volume counters. The final decision was to use a “radar speed sign” made by *Speed Sentry Shield®* which was supplied by All Traffic Solutions out of State College, Pennsylvania (See *Appendix G*). This product was chosen because it was not too technologically complex for the user, it had compact and mobile characteristics, and lastly because it was economically efficient at the time this study was performed. The device works by using low frequency infrared radar to count the number and speed of all vehicles traveling the road.

The Police Department assisted the Committee in erecting this device at ten (10) different locations (See *Appendix H*). The device was attached to existing metal u-channel posts and data was collected of both oncoming and outgoing vehicular traffic. The digital display was not turned on or visible to vehicular traffic in hopes of producing more realistic data. The device was erected along:

- North Main Street (US 401) near Waterstone Lane (near Old Town Subdivision)
- South Main Street (US 401) near Perry Street
- South Main Street (US401) near Grand Park Drive (near Hampton Pointe Subdivision)
- East Young Street
- West Young Street
- Rogers Road
- Redford Place Drive
- Granite Falls Boulevard near Rogers Road
- Granite Falls Boulevard near West Young Street
- Jonesville Road near Prides Crossing (near Carlton Pointe Subdivision)

Between the dates of July 31, 2009 and August 12, 2009, the device remained stationary and erected for at least a twenty-four (24) hour period while collecting data at the ten (10) locations. There were no special events, holidays, or inclement weather which could have possibly skewed the data. The Committee understood that this data was only a snapshot of the existing traffic and only provided an average sample of data.

At these ten (10) different locations, over 33,000 vehicles were counted as traveling various Rolesville’s roads (See *Appendix I*). The average vehicles per day traveling by these locations are as follows:

- 4,485 average vehicles per day along North Main Street (US 401) near Waterstone Lane
- 7,711 average vehicles per day along South Main Street (US 401) near Perry Street
- 10,886 average vehicles per day along South Main Street (US401) near Grand Park Drive
- 2,781 average vehicles per day along East Young Street
- 1,482 average vehicles per day along West Young Street
- 1,820 average vehicles per day along Rogers Road
- 856 average vehicles per day along Redford Place Drive
- 52 average vehicles per day along Granite Falls Boulevard near Rogers Road
- 2,102 average vehicles per day along Granite Falls Boulevard near West Young Street
- 1,213 average vehicles per day Jonesville Road near Prides Crossing

The *Speed Sentry Shield®* device collected the speed of these 33,000 plus vehicles. The Committee then sorted this data into various categories which were:

- 1 to 20 mph



- 21 to 25 mph
- 26 to 30 mph
- 31 to 35 mph
- 36 to 40 mph
- 41 to 45 mph
- 46 to 50 mph
- 51 to 55 mph
- 56 to 60 mph
- 61 to 100 mph

Each location, because of its characteristics, had a different higher percentage of vehicles traveling at different speeds.

- 43.7% of vehicles traveling along North Main Street (US 401) near Waterstone Lane had speeds between 36 and 40 mph
- 49.3% of vehicles traveling along South Main Street (US 401) near Perry Street had speeds between 31 and 35 mph
- 41.2% of vehicles traveling along South Main Street (US401) near Grand Park Drive had speeds between 36 and 40 mph
- 38% of vehicles traveling along East Young Street had speeds between 36 and 40 mph
- 42.2% of vehicles traveling along West Young Street had speeds between 41 and 45 mph
- 37.6% of vehicles traveling along Rogers Road had speeds between 46 and 50 mph
- 41.8% of vehicles traveling along Redford Place Drive had speeds between 26 and 30 mph
- 32% of vehicles traveling along Granite Falls Boulevard near Rogers Road had speeds less than 20 mph
- 39.4% of vehicles traveling along Granite Falls Boulevard near West Young Street had speeds between 31 and 35 mph
- 22.7% of vehicles traveling along Jonesville Road near Prides Crossing had speeds between 41 and 45 mph

A graphical breakdown showing the comparison of speeds traveled can be seen along with the data in Appendix I.

Traffic Engineers across the United States maintain that speed limits should be established according to the 85th percentile of free flowing traffic. This means the limit should be set at a level at or under which 85 percent of people are driving. The Manual of Transportation Engineering Studies (1st Edition, 1994) state that the 85th percentile is the safest possible level at which to set a speed limit. The Committee took this frequently used method and ideology into consideration when analyzing the existing traffic data.

Data Collection – Public Opinion

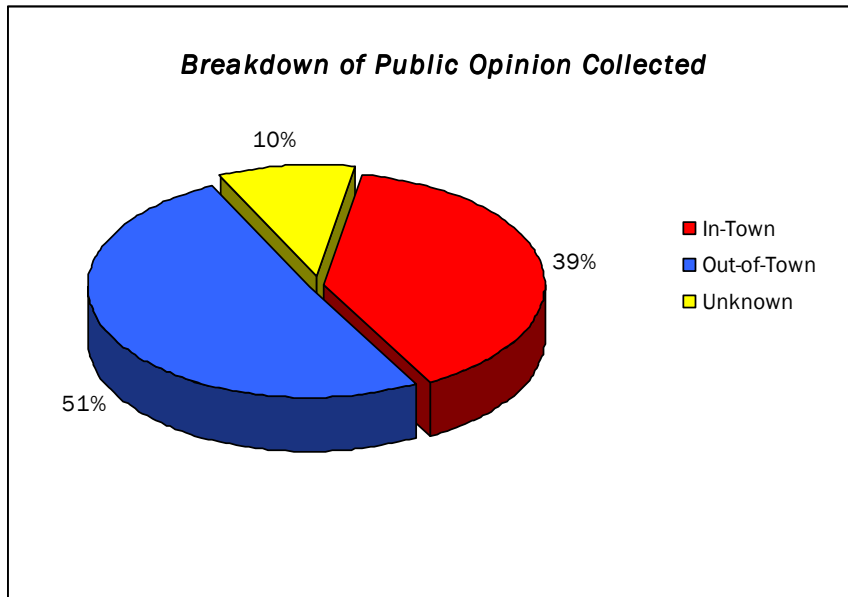
As directed by the Town of Rolesville Board of Commissioners, the Committee sought to obtain as much public input and opinion as possible involving the speed limits within the Town. This information began to be collected on June 2, 2009 through personal one-on-one conversations, over the phone conversations, telephone voicemails, and email correspondence.

Mrs. Ann Faison-Keith (residing at 4244 Burlington Mills Road) also assisted the Town in collecting opinion of the public. At her cost, she obtained a permit to erect five (5) signs (See *Appendix J*) at various locations around Town to encourage citizens and non-citizens alike to give the opinion as part of this study. These signs allowed more people to know about this study and its goal which assisted staff in getting more input.

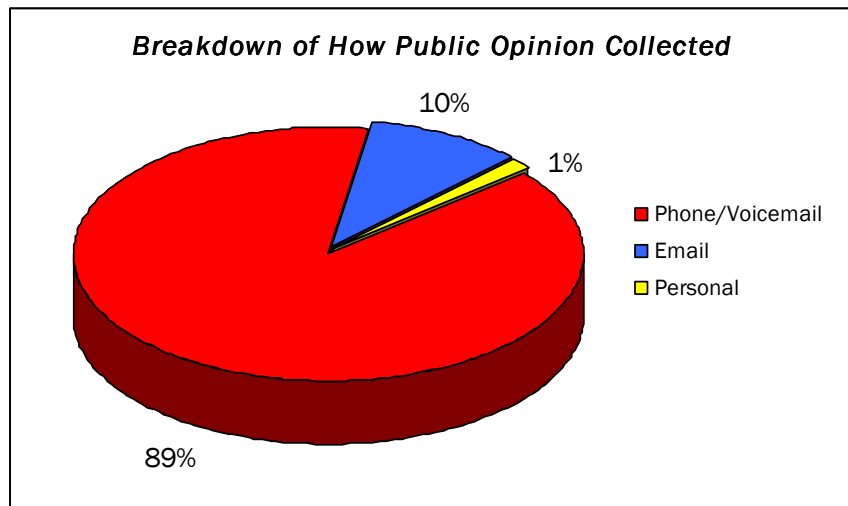
All conversations and correspondence collected by the Committee members was entered into a spreadsheet (See *Appendix K*). Every single person was informed that no names, addresses, phone numbers, or contact information would be included within this study so as to address any public fears of potential retribution. Some individuals chose to give specific comments with their opinion which was also entered into the spreadsheet. Due to the numerous and repetitive specific comments, the Committee summarized and simplified the spreadsheet (See *Appendix L*).



297 people who participated in the public opinion survey. 116 (39%) of them lived within the Town limits, 151 (51%) of lived outside of the Town limits, and 30 (11%) of them chose not to reveal their residential status or either left a voice mail without this information. Below are several graphical charts which summarize the data collected through the public opinion process.

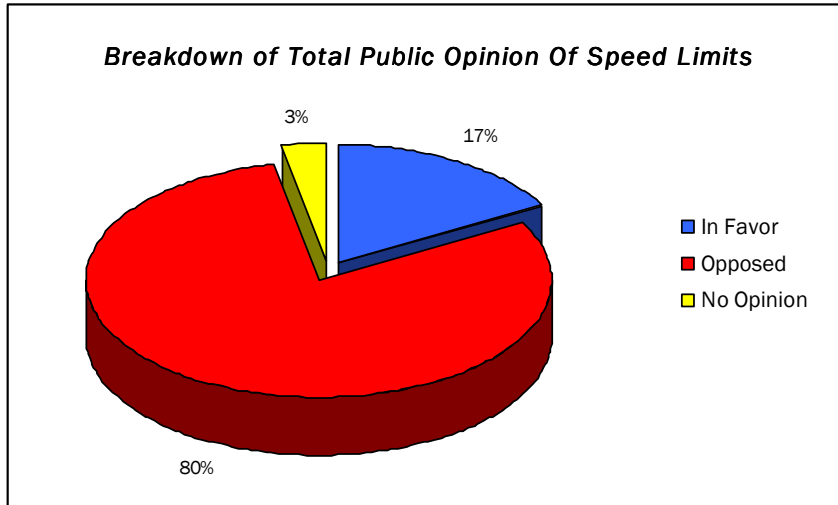


As seen above, the majority (51%) of public input was collected from out-of-Town residents. The explanation for this is because of the signs posted at various locations by Mrs. Ann Faison-Keith. The signs did however also encourage some in-Town residents to contact the Committee and give their opinion too.

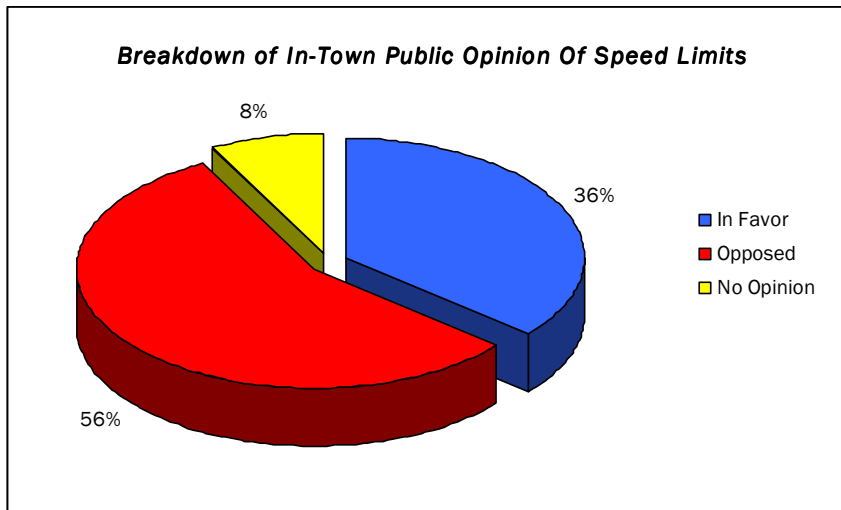


As seen above, the majority (89%) of the public input was collected via telephone and voicemail correspondence. The explanation for this is also because of the signs posted at various locations by Mrs. Ann Faison-Keith. A copy of all email correspondence is included within this report (See Appendix M).





As seen above, out of the total number of persons who gave their opinion, the majority (80%) were in opposition to the speed limits within the Town. The specific comments given (See Appendix K) were mainly focused on the North Main Street and South Main Street (or US 401) corridor.

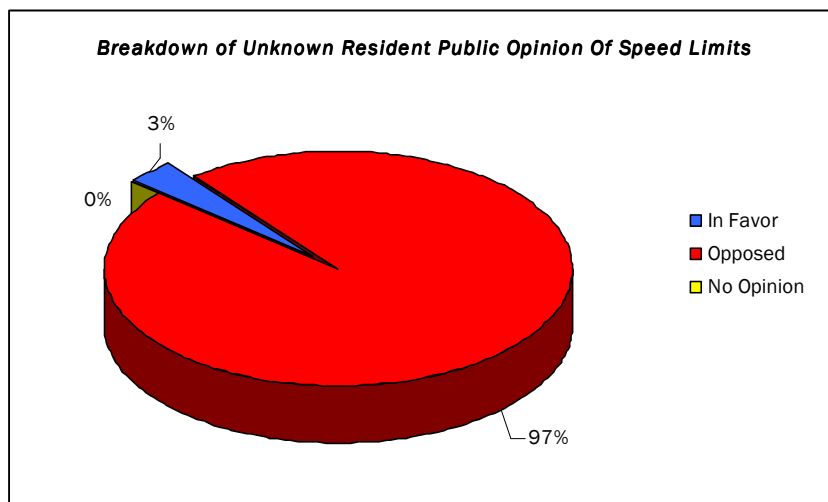
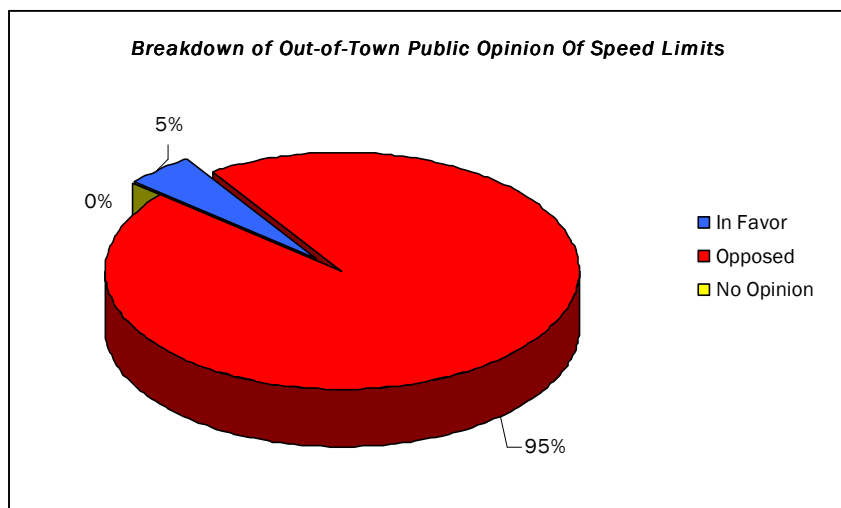


As seen above, the majority (56%) of in-Town residents, who participated in this collection of public input, were opposed to the speed limits in Rolesville. The specific comments given (See Appendix K) were again mainly focused on the North Main Street and South Main Street (or US 401) corridor and not the local roads or collector streets. Due to this fact, the Committee collected data, they worked hard to obtain input from those who either live directly on North and South Main Streets or either lived in a subdivision that directly accessed US 401.

An overwhelming majority of those who lived along North Main Street were in favor of the existing speed limits. Those who lived around the downtown and Rolesville Elementary area of South Main Street were also in favor of the existing speed limits. However, the residents who lived either directly on the southern end of South Main Street or resided in a subdivision who directly accessed US 401, were basically split (50% to 50%) in opinion on the matter.

The evidence of this data can again be seen through the specific comments (See Appendix K). However the true calculation is not be provided in this report because of confidentiality concerns.





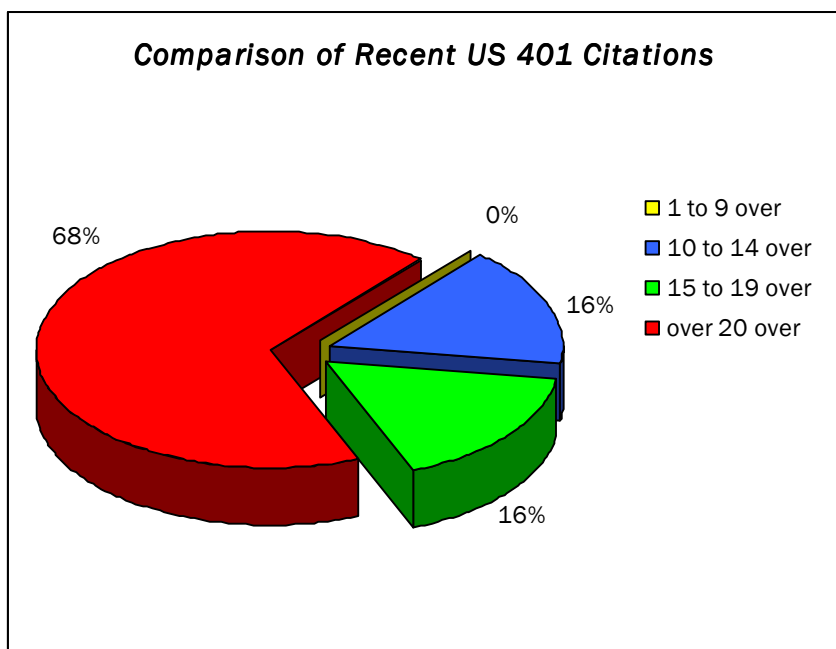
As seen in both charts above, the majority of out-of-Town and unknown people that participated in this public opinion section of the study were opposed to the existing speed limits in Town. The specific comments given (See Appendix K) were again mainly focused on the North Main Street and South Main Street (or US 401) corridor and not on the local roads or collector streets. It is of the Committee’s opinion that this data was generated from those who commute through Rolesville from home to work and back to home. Most participants had concerns that it took them too long to travel through Rolesville because of the existing speed limits.

Data Collection – Police Department Citations

Before requesting this Speed Limit Study, the Town of Rolesville Board of Commissioners heard public concerns that the speed limits in Rolesville were too low at certain locations. Some comments noted in the public opinion collection were that “Rolesville is a speed trap”, “Rolesville only has lower speed limits so more revenue can be generated through tickets”, and “Rolesville will issue tickets for one mile per hour over the posted speed limit.”

So as part of this study, the Committee sought to clarify potential confusion that existed within the public. The Rolesville Police Department submitted data showing the number of tickets written within the past five (5) months along North and South Main Street (See Appendix N). The data showed that a total of 283 citations were written along US 401 all together. There were 122 citations written for North Main Street and 161 citations written along South Main Street. Below is a chart showing the breakdown of citations written in association with the miles per hour over the posted speed limit.





As seen above, the majority of citations written within these five (5) months were for those vehicles traveling 20 mph or higher over the speed limit.

In response to the concern that the Town of Rolesville sought more revenue through citations, the Committee researched state law. The North Carolina State Constitution under Article 9 – Section 7 (See Appendix O), states that the clear proceeds of all penalties and of all fines shall be faithfully appropriated and used exclusively for maintaining free public schools.

Summary and Recommendations

As with all recommendations, the quality and quantity of the information collected for this study combined with the thoughtfulness, perseverance, and professionalism of the study Committee helped produced several findings. In this case, all factors came together in an excellent manner and the final recommendations are all sound and sensible.

After analyzing the data generated through this study, the 2009 Speed Limit Study Committee has seven (7) recommendations for the Town of Rolesville Board of Commissioners to consider. They have been placed in no particular priority or order and are as follows:

- [Recommendation #1: Change the speed zone on Teresa and Brandi Drive from 20 mph to 25 mph.](#)
Reasoning: After much research, a clear explanation to the history of why these roads were posted as 20 mph could not be found. Traffic count data was not collected for this area but there are 44 homes in the incorporated subdivision. The Committee felt that there should be consistency throughout the Town on all local residential roads considering the existing right-of-way widths. Teresa Drive and Brandi Drive are the only roads within the Town that are posted at 20 mph and therefore the Committee is recommending they both be changed to 25 mph from West Young Street to Chalks Road for both lanes of traffic (See Appendix Q).

The map below highlights the area that is recommended as being changed from 20 mph to 25 mph.

- [Recommendation #2: Change the speed zone on Granite Falls Boulevard from 35 mph to 25 mph from West Young Street to Rogers Road](#)
Reasoning: Granite Falls Boulevard currently services several commercial facilities including the State Employees Credit Union, Granite Falls Swim and Athletic Club, Sanford Creek Elementary School, and the FMC Kidney Dialysis Center. It will also eventually service 237 residential lots that are part of the Granite Falls Subdivision once it is completed. The western end of the road has much slope and curvature however the eastern end is relatively normal.



There is an average of 52 vehicles per day on the western end (near Rogers Road) and an average of 2,102 vehicles per day on the eastern end (near West Young Street). The logical reasoning for this difference is because of the location of Sanford Creek Elementary School. As stated earlier in the report, Traffic Engineers across the United States maintain that speed limits should be established according to the 85th percentile of free flowing traffic (See *Appendix P*). This means the limit should be set at a level at or under which 85 percent of people are driving. The Manual of Transportation Engineering Studies (1st Edition, 1994) state that the 85th percentile is the safest possible level at which to set a speed limit. The data collected shows that 85% of the vehicular traffic is less than 25 mph on the western end and between 26 and 40 mph on the eastern end near Sanford Creek Elementary.

In consideration of this traffic data, the safety of the kids at Sanford Creek Elementary, and the curvature and slope of the road, the Committee recommends changing the speed limit on Granite Falls Boulevard to 25 mph from West Young Street to Rogers Road for both lanes of traffic (See *Appendix Q*).

- [Recommendation #3: Change the speed zone on South Main Street from 35 mph to 45 mph from Grand Park Drive to Lonnie Drive.](#)

Reasoning: South Main Street services several existing commercially and residentially developed lots. There is however a large amount of commercially zoned but undeveloped land. Recent site plan approvals have taken place to begin development of these undeveloped parcels.

As stated previously in the report, the residents who live either directly on the southern end of South Main Street or resided in a subdivision that is directly accessing US 401, were simply split (50% to 50%) in opinion on their road's speed limit. Support from the residents of the Hampton Pointe Subdivision for keeping the speed limit at 35 mph on South Main Street has been expressed at Town Board meetings in the past. Discontent on the 35 mph speed limit, as being too low, has also been expressed from area residents and commuters to staff and the Town Board.

As stated before, Traffic Engineers across the United States maintain that speed limits should be established according to the 85th percentile of free flowing traffic (See *Appendix P*). Considering this, 85% of the vehicular traffic was between the 36 and 45 mph range.

The traffic data will change tremendously when the area is developed and the desired traffic signal is erected at the intersection of South Main and Jonesville Road/Hampton Lake Drive. The Planning Department staff has plans to officially request that the North Carolina Department of Transportation approve the traffic signal once the construction is completed for the Wake County Alcoholic Beverage Control store and the Bojangles Restaurant in this area.

Considering the 85th percentile of traffic, the amount of undeveloped land at this time, and the public's divided opinion, the Committee recommends that the speed limit be changed along South Main Street from 35 mph to 45 mph from Grand Park Drive to the Town limits near Lonnie Drive for both lanes of traffic (See *Appendix Q*). This will allow for a transitional speed zone for traffic heading both into Town and out of Town. It will also continue to assist the residents of Hampton Pointe Subdivision in getting in and out of their subdivision.

As a note of reference, the Police Department has an understandable concern relating to this recommendation and are of the opinion that the speed limit should stay at 35 mph. They have stated their respect of the Committee's recommendation and the data collected.

The Committee does recognize that South Main Street is a State maintained road and such a change must be submitted to the North Carolina Department of Transportation for review.

- [Recommendation #4: Change the speed zone on Jonesville Road from 55 mph to 35 mph and 45 mph from South Main Street to the Town Limits.](#)

Reasoning: Jonesville Road services the Haynes Office Park off Vineyard Pine Lane where construction has begun on a new Wake County Alcoholic Beverage Control Store. This road is intersected by Prides Crossing which funnels traffic from Carlton Pointe Subdivision. When finished, this subdivision will have 298 residential lots. Between Prides Crossing and the Town limit boundaries, there are only two other residences within this 1,300 feet span.

The traffic data collected is somewhat skewed because of the close proximity of Prides Crossing and Vineyard Pine Lane to South Main Street (US 401). The 85% is not properly shown because of traffic entering and exiting these



roads onto Jonesville Road. The data would have possibly been better collected at a more southern location if an existing sign or u-channel post had existed.

In consideration of the proposed and future development of the area along with the traffic count data collected, the Committee recommends that Jonesville Road be changed from 55 mph to 35 mph from South Main Street (US 401) to 1,000 feet before the Town limit boundaries for both lanes of traffic. The Committee also recommends that the speed limit be changed from this 1,000 feet mark toward the Town limits (near the Jonesville community) from 55 mph to a 45 mph zone (See Appendix Q). A large section of Jonesville Road, as it traverses through the Jonesville Community, is already a 45 mph zone which would simplify this recommended change.

The Committee does recognize that Jonesville Road is a state maintained road and such a change must be submitted to the North Carolina Department of Transportation for review.

- [Recommendation #5: Change the speed zone on Rogers Road from 45 mph to 35 mph from Grand Rock Way to South Main Street.](#)

Reasoning: The Committee is making this recommendation because of safety concerns. The Rolesville Police Department, along with various citizens, have stated their concern with southbound traffic on Rogers Road continuing at 45 mph or higher so as to make the traffic signal at South Main Street. The Committee thoroughly analyzed the traffic data collected so as to validate this concern however the information collected was only for one day and was a sample of what could exist at other various times.

Considering the safety of those entering and existing the Brown property medical complex (Rolesville Veterinary Clinic and Heard Family Dentistry), Rite Aid Pharmacy, Granite Ridge Town homes, and the Granite Ridge Commercial center, the Committee recommends that the speed limit on Rogers Road be changed from 45 mph to 35 mph from Grand Rock Way to South Main Street for both lanes of traffic.

The Committee does recognize that Rogers Road is a state maintained road and such a change must be submitted to the North Carolina Department of Transportation for review.

- [Recommendation #6: Change the speed zone on East Young Street from 55 mph to 35 mph for northbound traffic](#)

Reasoning: As stated previously in this report, a large majority of the roads in Rolesville have the same posted speed limits for lanes of traffic in both directions (See Appendix F). East Young Street however is one road that has southbound traffic posted at one speed (35 mph) and northbound traffic posted at a different speed (55 mph) for a short period of road (approximately 1,200 feet). The reason for this is because of recent signage erected by the Department of Transportation along with the corporate limits expansion over the past couple years. The lack of consistency causes confusion for some motorists and the Committee felt that there should be consistent speed limit zones on both sides of all roads throughout the Town.

The Committee therefore recommends that a consistent speed limit zone should be established for all of East Young Street from US 401 to the Town limits just short of Century Farm Road. As part of this recommendation, the Committee suggests that the 1,000 feet transitional area be moved further south (See Appendix Q).

The Committee recognizes that East Young Street is a State maintained road and such a change must be submitted to the North Carolina Department of Transportation for review.

- [Recommendation #7: The Town of Rolesville Board of Commissioner should be advised on an annual basis of the speeds and relative traffic data](#)

Reasoning: It was of the Committee's opinion that the Town Board of Commissioners should be annually advised of the speed limits and the relative traffic data around Town. This would assist the Town Board in making decisions with various projects.

The most logical way for this to be done is to have the elected officials adopt an ordinance and map establishing the speed limits on the various roads in Town. Staff should collect traffic data annually and present it to the Town Board. The Committee recommends that the Town of Rolesville purchase a *Speed Sentry Shield®* device to assist in this work.



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