

# MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable, Manatee County Board of Commissioners  
From: Ron Schulhofer, Director, Public Works Director  
Date: June 1, 2015  
Subject: Summary of Countywide Speed Limits Work Session  
on May 12, 2015



The purpose of this memorandum is to summarize the May 12, 2015 countywide speed limits work session discussion and the Board's direction to the staff.

## Discussion:

- During a previous regular Board of County Commissioners' (BoCC) meeting, setting speed limits within the County was discussed. Subsequently, during a January 20, 2015, work session, staff presented the criteria and process of setting speed limits. BoCC agreed that there is a need to set consistent speed limits to meet driver's expectations. The BoCC requested that staff review roadways, countywide, and present the recommendations to the Board for their consideration.
- At the May 12, 2015 work session, staff discussed the purpose and objectives of speed limits. Furthermore, staff presented engineering criteria used to determine speed limits and presented the results of the engineering analysis.
- The speed limit is intended to notify the driver of the maximum operating speed that is considered reasonably safe in optimum weather and visibility conditions.
- Objectives of setting speed limits:
  - Encourage driver compliance by developing proper credibility and respect for speed zones.
  - Reduce speed differences among drivers thereby, reducing the probability and severity of crashes.
  - Provide realistic speed restrictions to which meaningful enforcement can be applied.
- The engineering investigation included evaluating the quantitative and qualitative criteria.
- Quantitative Criteria:
  - Measuring vehicular speed
    - 85<sup>th</sup> Percentile Speed – the speed at or below which 85 percent of the vehicles are traveling.
    - 10 miles per hour (mph) Pace – the 10 mph range containing the highest number of vehicles in the study.
- Qualitative Criteria:
  - Surrounding land use and access points
  - Roadway geometry

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- o Reported crash history
  - o Transition between adjacent segments
  - o Past requests
  - o Traffic volume
- The following table summarizes the thoroughfares that were evaluated and discussed:

Corridor	From	To	Existing Speed Limit (mph)	Recommended Speed Limit (mph)
Rye Road	County Road (CR) 675	State Road (SR) 64	55	55
Golf Course Road	Fort Hamer Road	Rye Road	40 & 30	45
Chin Road	US 301	Old Tampa Road	30	45
Lockwood Ridge Road	University Parkway	SR 70	35, 40 & 45	45
Lorraine Road	University Parkway	SR 70	35	45
Lorraine Road	SR 70	SR 64	50	50
Lakewood Ranch Boulevard	University Parkway	SR 70	35	40
Lakewood Ranch Boulevard	SR 70	SR 64	45	45
University Parkway	I-75	Ganton Avenue	45	50
Whitfield Avenue	University Parkway	Lockwood Ridge Road	30	40
63rd Avenue E	US 301	Lockwood Ridge Road	35 & 40	40
Honore Avenue	University Parkway	Lockwood Ridge Road	35	40 & 35
75th Street W	Manatee Avenue	Cortez Road	40 & 45	45
75th Street W	Cortez Road	53rd Avenue W	50 & 35	50
El Conquistador Parkway	53rd Avenue W	Legends Boulevard	35	45
El Conquistador Parkway	Legends Boulevard	34th Street W	30 & 35	40

- The discussion was generally in agreement with staff's recommendations. However, there were concerns raised with the following corridors;
  - o **Rye Road**  
Due to the proposed development in the area, Commissioner Benac proposed that the speed limit should be lowered to 45 mph. However, staff indicated that the existing data does not support lowering the speed limit at this time. Staff also mentioned that when White Eagle Boulevard is developed to intersect with the SR 64 and Rye Road intersection, the speed limit will be evaluated for a potential change.

o **Lakewood Ranch Boulevard**

For the segment between SR 70 and University Parkway, several commissioners indicated their opinions that the existing 35 mph speed limit should remain due to the adjacent residential land uses. Staff indicated that the data does not support the existing 35 mph speed limit; but rather 40 mph.

o **Whitfield Avenue**

There was discussion that the existing 30 mph speed limit was too slow and not appropriate. However, there was also discussion about arbitrarily changing the speed limit to 35 mph. Staff recommended 40 mph.

o **75th Street W**

Commissioner Chappie indicated that due to the relatively narrow lanes between Manatee Avenue and 18th Avenue West, his opinion was that the existing speed limit of 40 mph should remain. The future developments in the area were also discussed with the need to reevaluate the speed limits at that time. Staff recommended 45 mph.

o **El Conquistador Parkway**

Commissioner Chappie's opinion was that the existing speed limit of 30 mph from Legends Boulevard to 34th Street West should remain. There was discussion about a possible 35 mph speed limit for this section however, staff indicated that the existing data does not support this proposal. Staff recommended 40 mph from 34<sup>th</sup> Street West to Legends Boulevard and 45 mph from Legends Boulevard to 53<sup>rd</sup> Avenue West.

In summary, setting speed limits is often controversial and complex. Florida Statutes, national and state standards and transportation manuals provide direction and guidance in setting appropriate speed limits. However, homogeneous speed limits may not be appropriate for all corridors. Therefore, staff recommends a consistent application of standards and guidelines to establish appropriate speed limits.

**Action Items:**

- Public Works staff will coordinate with the County Attorney Office (CAO) staff to draft an ordinance with the proposed speed limit changes discussed at the May 12, 2015 work session.
- Public Works staff will seek the BoCC's approval to advertise for the public hearing in August 2015 with a potential public hearing date in September 2015

cc: Ed Hunzeker, County Administrator  
Dan Schlandt, Deputy County Administrator  
Karen Windon, Deputy County Administrator  
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