Town of Wolfeboro

Wolfeboro Police Department
Chief Christopher Warn
Police Chief

Captain Mark Livie
Executive Officer

Sherri Moore
Exec. Admin. Assistant

WOLFEBORO POLICE DEPARTMENT

Sewall Road Traffic and Speed Study
Study Location: Sewall Road, Wolfeboro, New Hampshire
Study Period: May 17, 2026 – September 22, 2026
Current Posted Speed Limit: 30 MPH
Proposed Speed Limit: 25 MPH
Total Vehicles Recorded: 134,253

Purpose
The Wolfeboro Police Department conducted a traffic and speed study on Sewall Road following a request to evaluate whether the existing posted speed limit of 30 MPH should be reduced to 25 MPH.

Radar data was reviewed to evaluate traffic volume, prevailing vehicle speeds, speed distribution, and overall driver behavior. The radar information was considered along with the physical and residential characteristics of Sewall Road to determine whether a reduction to 25 MPH would be appropriate.

Roadway Characteristics
Sewall Road is a heavily residential roadway serving numerous homes and properties, including a substantial amount of residential development along the Lake Winnipesaukee shoreline. The roadway consists of a combination of curved sections and intermittent straightaways. There are numerous residential driveways and access points throughout the corridor. The curved portions of the roadway require motorists to adjust their speed based upon roadway alignment and available sight distance, while several straighter sections provide an opportunity for motorists to increase speed before transitioning back into curves and more concentrated residential areas.

The combination of residential development, frequent property access, curves, changes in roadway alignment, and intermittent straightaways is an important consideration when determining an appropriate speed limit for the entire corridor.

Traffic Volume

During the study period, the radar unit recorded a total of **134,253 vehicles**.
The length of the study and number of vehicles recorded provide a substantial sample of normal traffic activity on Sewall Road and allow for an evaluation of prevailing driving behavior rather than relying upon isolated observations or individual speeding complaints.

Speed Analysis

The radar data showed an overall **average speed of approximately 24.5 MPH.**
The calculated 50th-percentile speed was approximately **25.4 MPH**, meaning approximately half of the traffic was traveling at or below that speed.
The calculated 85th-percentile speed was approximately **30.5 MPH**. This indicates that 85 percent of the observed traffic was traveling at approximately 30 MPH or less.
The highest individual speed recorded during the study was **70 MPH**. However, isolated high-speed readings are not representative of the overall traffic pattern and should be considered separately from normal operating speeds.

Speed Distribution

Speed Range	Vehicles	Percentage
25 MPH or less	65,110	48.5%
26–30 MPH	44,269	33.0%
31–35 MPH	20,569	15.3%
36–40 MPH	3,761	2.8%
41 MPH or greater	544	0.4%
Total	134,253	100%

The data shows that approximately 48.5% of all motorists were already traveling at 25 MPH or less.

Approximately 81.5% of all vehicles were traveling at or below the existing 30 MPH speed limit, while approximately 96.8% were traveling at 35 MPH or less.

Only approximately 3.2% of recorded traffic exceeded 35 MPH, and less than one-half of one percent exceeded 40 MPH.

Findings and Assessment

The radar data does not indicate a widespread excessive-speed problem on Sewall Road under the existing 30 MPH speed limit. The overwhelming majority of motorists are traveling at or near the existing posted speed.

However, the purpose of this study is not simply to determine whether motorists are violating the current speed limit. It is also to determine whether 30 MPH remains the appropriate posted speed for the character and use of Sewall Road.

Several findings are significant when considering a reduction to 25 MPH.
The overall average speed was approximately 24.5 MPH, which is already below the proposed 25 MPH speed limit. Nearly half of all vehicles recorded were traveling 25 MPH or less. The

50th-percentile speed was approximately 25.4 MPH, further demonstrating that a substantial portion of motorists naturally operate on Sewall Road at approximately 25 MPH.
The 85th-percentile speed of approximately 30.5 MPH must also be considered. That figure demonstrates that the existing 30 MPH speed limit is generally consistent with the upper range of normal traffic behavior. Therefore, the radar data alone would not establish a need to lower the speed limit based upon excessive speeding.

The physical characteristics and use of the roadway, however, provide additional considerations. Sewall Road is a heavily residential roadway rather than an open through-travel corridor. It contains numerous residential driveways and access points, curves and changes in roadway alignment, as well as intermittent straightaways where vehicle speeds can increase before motorists transition back into curved and residential portions of the roadway.

When these roadway characteristics are considered together with an average operating speed of approximately 24.5 MPH, a 25 MPH speed limit would not be inconsistent with the manner in which a substantial portion of motorists are already using the roadway.

Recommendation
Based upon the radar data, traffic patterns, residential character, and physical configuration of Sewall Road, the Wolfeboro Police Department recommends reducing the posted speed limit on Sewall Road from 30 MPH to 25 MPH.

This recommendation is not based upon a finding of widespread excessive speeding. The data actually demonstrates relatively good compliance with the existing 30 MPH speed limit. Rather, the recommendation is based upon the overall character of the roadway and the fact that prevailing traffic behavior already reflects a lower-speed residential environment. The average recorded speed of approximately 24.5 MPH is consistent with the proposed 25 MPH limit, and nearly half of all motorists currently travel at or below 25 MPH.

Reducing the speed limit to 25 MPH would establish a more appropriate and consistent speed expectation throughout the corridor, particularly through the heavily residential portions, curves, numerous residential access points, and transitions from straight sections into curved areas.

Conclusion
The Sewall Road radar study provides a significant sample of 134,253 vehicles collected between May 17 and September 22, 2026.

The study found an average speed of approximately 24.5 MPH, a 50th-percentile speed of approximately 25.4 MPH, and an 85th-percentile speed of approximately 30.5 MPH. Approximately 48.5% of motorists were already traveling at 25 MPH or less, and approximately 81.5% were traveling at or below the existing 30 MPH limit.

The study does not demonstrate a significant speeding problem. Instead, it demonstrates that normal traffic on Sewall Road already operates at relatively low speeds. When that data is considered together with the heavily residential nature of the roadway, numerous residential

access points, roadway curvature, and intermittent straightaways, the Department finds that 25 MPH is an appropriate posted speed for Sewall Road and recommends reducing the existing speed limit from 30 MPH to 25 MPH.

Prepared by:
Captain Mark Livie

Wolfeboro Police Department