

# 2021

## Falcon Heights Speed Limit Evaluation

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City Engineer

April 30, 2021



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### Purpose

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The City of Falcon Heights engineering staff, the City of Roseville, has completed a technical evaluation to determine speed limits on Falcon Heights controlled streets. New state law allows cities to set speed limits on streets under their jurisdiction provided a technical evaluation has been completed. The City completed the evaluation based on the following goals;

- To improve safety of all residents using all modes of transportation,
- To be consistent with adjacent cities, and consistent on similar types of roads.

### Evaluation Process

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City staff completed a detailed evaluation to determine speeds on Falcon Heights streets. The evaluation included the following;

- Local policies and plans
- National guidance and adjacent city evaluations and policies
- City speed and traffic count studies

### Recommendations

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Based on the evaluation, staff recommends setting speeds of 25 mph on most major streets and 20 mph on all minor, local streets. Below is the recommended process for establishing speed limits;

- Collector streets are generally major streets with 25 mph speed limits and were evaluated to determine whether a lower speed limit is appropriate based on context and design
- Local streets are generally minor streets with 20 mph speed limits and were evaluated to determine whether a higher speed limit is appropriate based on context and design.
- Alleys will retain speed limits of 10 mph.

It is recommended that changes to speed limits be made upon approval of the report, by adoption of a new ordinance, including the installation of signs, enforcement efforts, and an education campaign.

# FALCON HEIGHTS SPEED LIMIT REPORT

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## INTRODUCTION

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This report analyzes local safety, engineering and traffic conditions and national best practices that inform the determination of appropriate speed limits in Falcon Heights. The findings of this report will be used to determine speed limit changes on City streets that align with City policies and new legislative authority.

### Legislative Authority for Setting Speed Limits

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In 2019, the governor signed into law a bill passed by the Minnesota State Legislature granting cities the authority to set speed limits on streets they control. This went into effect August 1, 2019. Below is the statute;

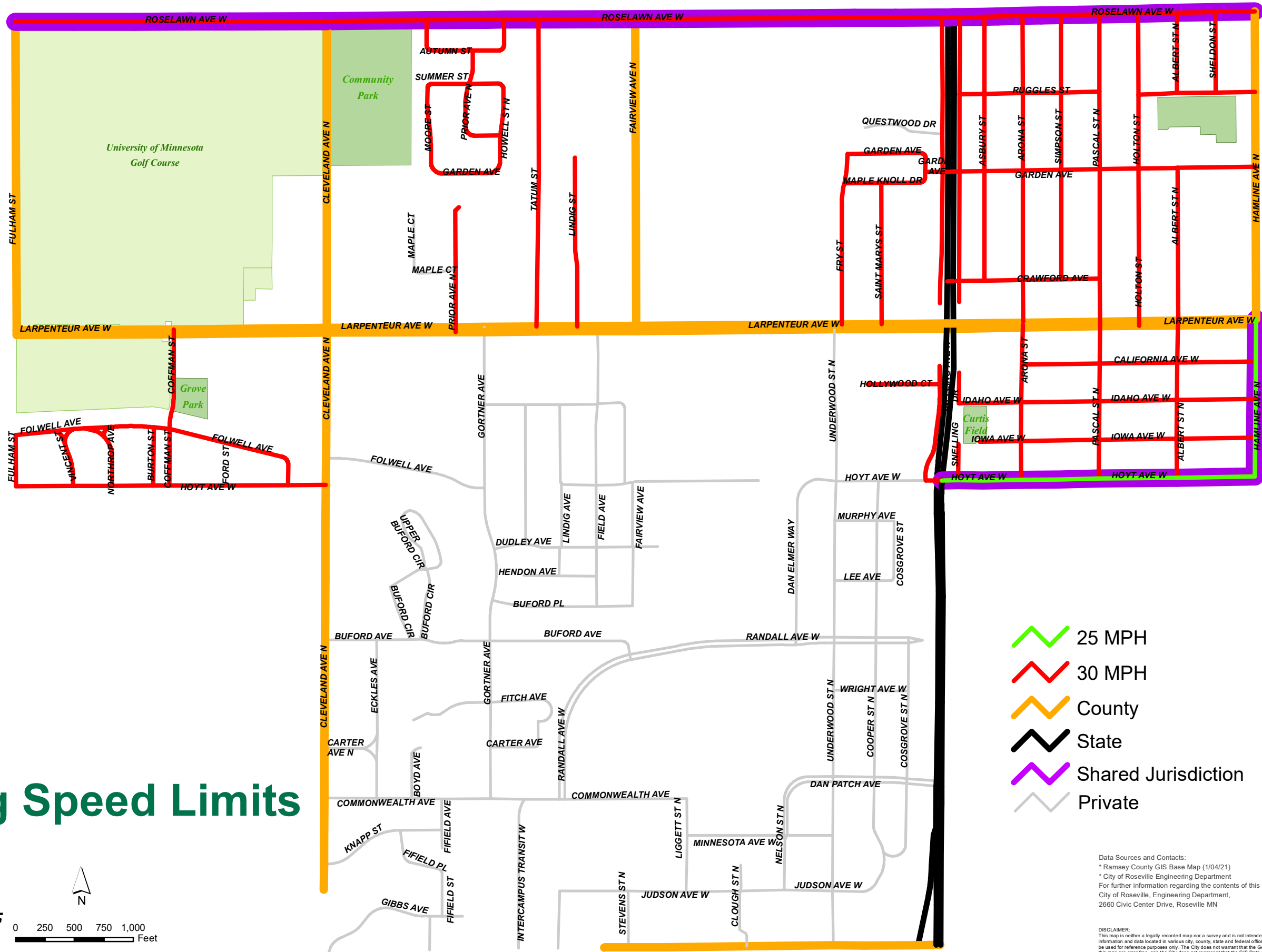
*Minnesota Statutes, Section 169.14, Subd. 5h. Speed limits on city streets. A city may establish speed limits for city streets under the city's jurisdiction other than the limits provided in subdivision 2 without conducting an engineering and traffic investigation. This subdivision does not apply to town roads, county highways, or trunk highways in the city. A city that establishes speed limits pursuant to this section must implement speed limit changes in a consistent and understandable manner. The city must erect appropriate signs to display the speed limit. A city that uses the authority under this subdivision must develop procedures to set speed limits based on the city's safety, engineering, and traffic analysis. At a minimum, the safety, engineering, and traffic analysis must consider national urban speed limit guidance and studies, local traffic crashes, and methods to effectively communicate the change to the public.*

The current speed limits on all Falcon Heights jurisdiction streets is currently 30 miles per hour which is the statutory urban speed limit set by Minnesota statute prior the new legislation going into effect on August 1, 2019.

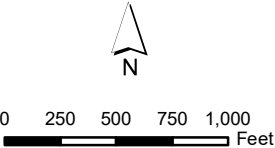
### Falcon Heights Speed Limits Goals

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The City intends to create safe streets for all roadway users including, walkers, bikers, transit users and drivers. The City intends to duplicate efforts done by the City of St Paul to reduce speed limits on local streets to 20 mph. Since numerous local streets are shared by the two cities and some neighborhoods (University Grove, Northome) are directly connected, it makes sense to have similar speed limit criteria for consistency within the area.



# Existing Speed Limits



mapdoc: SpeedLimitsExisting.mxd  
map: SpeedLimitsExisting.pdf

Prepared by:  
City of Roseville Engineering Department  
April 29, 2021

- 25 MPH
- 30 MPH
- County
- State
- Shared Jurisdiction
- Private

Data Sources and Contacts:  
\* Ramsey County GIS Base Map (1/04/21)  
\* City of Roseville Engineering Department  
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## COORDINATION AND OUTREACH

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Falcon Heights staff reached out to staff with the cities of St Paul and Roseville due to shared jurisdiction of roadways on City Limits.

For City roadways shared with St Paul, staff recommends using St Paul's recommended speed limits since Falcon Heights is using a similar criterion for roadways.

For City roadways shared with Roseville, Roselawn Avenue, the recommendation is to keep this speed limit at the current 30 mph at this time due to the multi jurisdiction roadway, traffic volumes, current speeds and roadway characteristics.

Falcon Heights staff conducted an online survey between April 6 and April 23, 2021. 176 Falcon Heights residents responded to the survey. 71% of the respondents were supportive of a 20 mph speed limit on local roads. Of the 29% who were against it, some of these supported 25 mph but not the 20 mph. A portion of the 29% did not want to see any change. A summary of the survey is included at the end of the report.

## LOCAL POLICIES AND PLANNING

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The 2040 Comprehensive plan has numerous policies that would support a reduced speed limit. These include the following.

- *Become a healthier, more active and livable community*
  - Falcon Heights is an Active Living Ramsey Communities partner.
- General Land Use Goal #3 - *To enhance access and safety for pedestrians and non-motorized transportation.*

Lower speed limits help meet these goals by promoting a safer environment for non-motorized users such as walkers and bikers, particularly on streets that do not have sidewalks, such as most neighborhoods north of Larpenteur.

## ANALYSIS

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Numerous local and national studies have been conducted that support reduced speed limits on local residential roadways. Below is a brief summary of these studies.

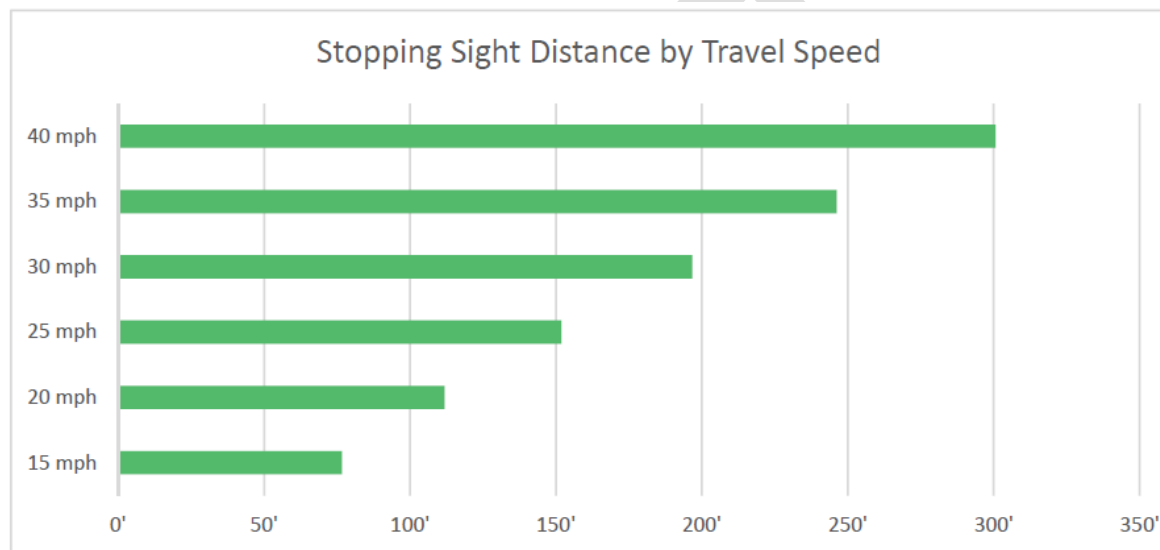
### National guidance

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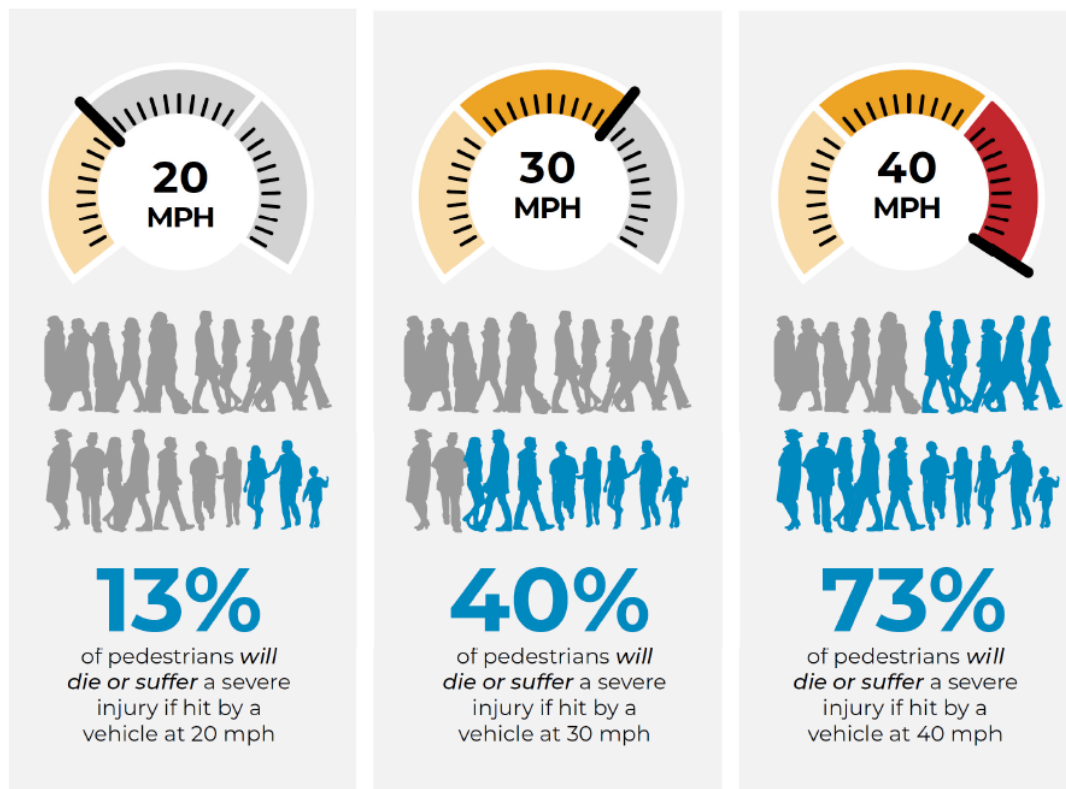
All neighboring states next to Minnesota have a default urban speed limit of 25 mph. Additional states allow 20 mph if certain criteria are met.

[St Paul's Speed Limit Evaluation Report](#), referenced numerous studies that support a reduced speed limit to reduce crashes and reduce severity of injuries.

Some of the key findings include reduction of the stopping distance with lower speeds, which helps reduce the amount of crashes. Additionally, if a crash does occur, the risk for a pedestrian being severely injured or killed is significantly reduced if the speed is 20 mph verse 30 mph. These findings are illustrated in the graphics below:



*Data Source: American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets. Washington, DC: AASHTO, 2011. "Assumes 2.5 second perception-braking time and 11.2 ft/sec<sup>2</sup> driver deceleration."*



Source : Brian C. Tefft. 2013. AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. Impact speed and a pedestrian's risk of severe injury or death.



## Other Metro Cities

St Paul and Minneapolis have very similar ordinances which allow the City Engineer to set the speed limits. Based on their analysis and procedures, they have set speed limits on their local roads to 20 mph and 25 mph on the majority of their collector routes with a few other exceptions.

St Anthony Village has set a 25 mph speed limit on all of their city jurisdiction roadways.

St Louis Park is completing its evaluation in April 2021, but is expected to adopt speed limit changes in the summer of 2021. They have similar recommendations to St Paul and Minneapolis by establishing 20 mph on local roads, 25 mph on most collector street with a few 30 mph and 35 mph exceptions.

- St Paul - <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/public-works/traffic-lighting/speed-limits>
- Minneapolis - <https://www.minneapolismn.gov/government/programs-initiatives/visionzero/speed-limits/>
- St Anthony Village - <https://www.savmn.com/461/Speed-Limits>



- St Louis Park - <https://www.stlouispark.org/government/departments-divisions/engineering/speed-limits>

### Pedestrian and Bicycle Crash Analysis

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According to MnDOT crash reports, there have been 22 reported pedestrian/bicycle crashes involving vehicles in Falcon Heights since 2011. Reports included one serious injury, 7 minor injuries and 14 possible injuries. The majority of these were on County or State roadways with the exception of three incidents.

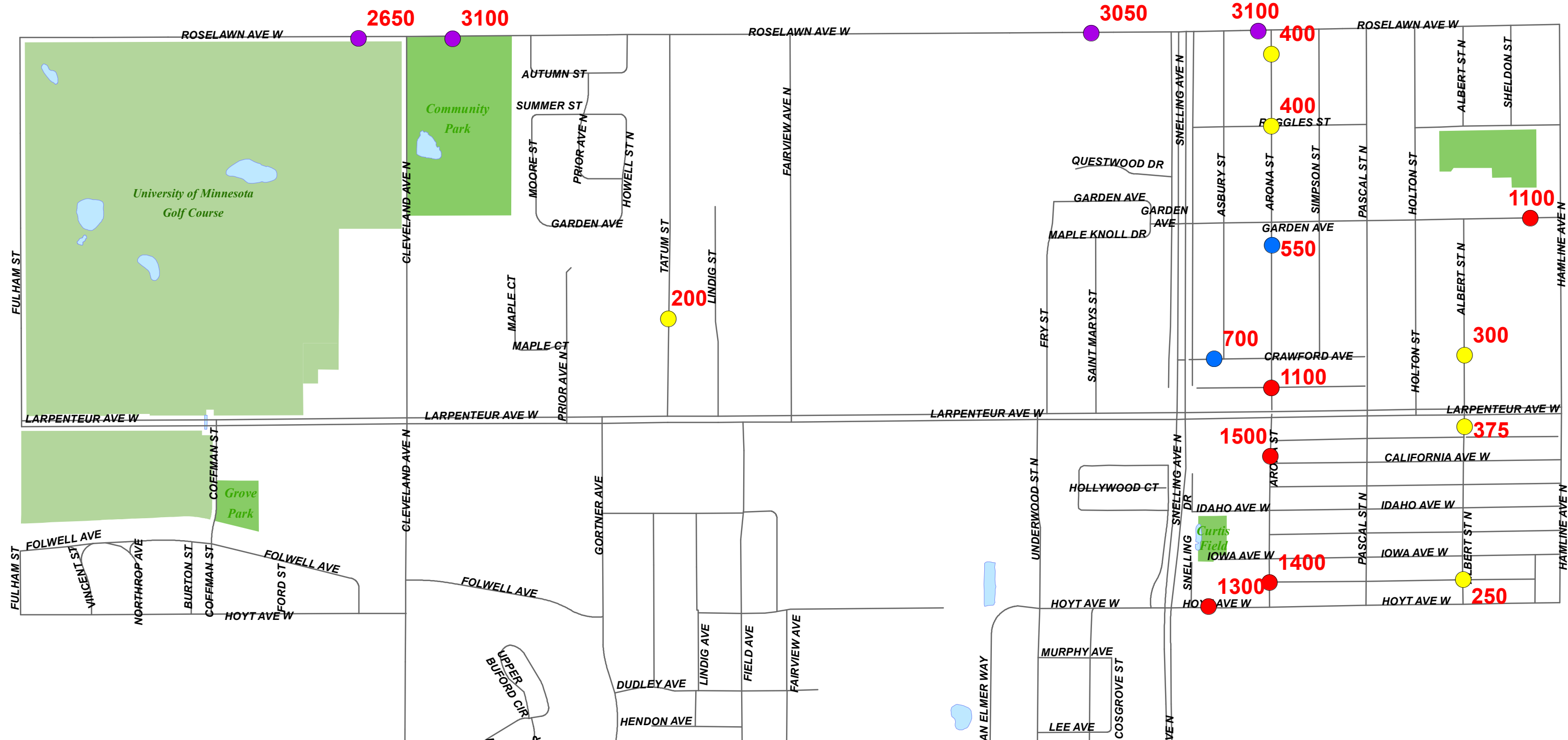
### Falcon Heights Traffic Speed Study

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Over the last ten years engineering staff has conducted numerous traffic count and speed studies on local roads. Data was typically collected for a minimum of 48 hours during the week but sometimes included 72 hour counts which included the weekend. The majority of the data points shown in the maps below are from 2017-2020. Data from State and County roads was not included in this report.

Some observations about the data.

- On the majority of roads, the vast majority of drivers are following the speed limit.
- On local roads, the 50th percentile speed is about 20 mph for most roads.
- For collector roads, such as Hoyt and Roselawn, measured speeds are higher.
- Roselawn Avenue measure speeds significantly higher than other local roadways.
  - This is likely due to the volume of traffic (3,100), which is 2.5 times higher than the next local roadway, and the major east west connection that allows vehicles to cross Snelling Avenue at a signal light. Roselawn Avenue from Eustis Street to Victoria Street is under jurisdiction of Lauderdale, Falcon Heights and Roseville.

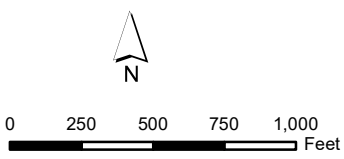


# Average Daily Traffic (ADT)

- 500 OR LESS ADT
- 501 - 1000 ADT
- 1001 - 1500 ADT
- 1501 OR MORE ADT



Prepared by:  
City of Roseville Engineering Department  
April 26, 2021

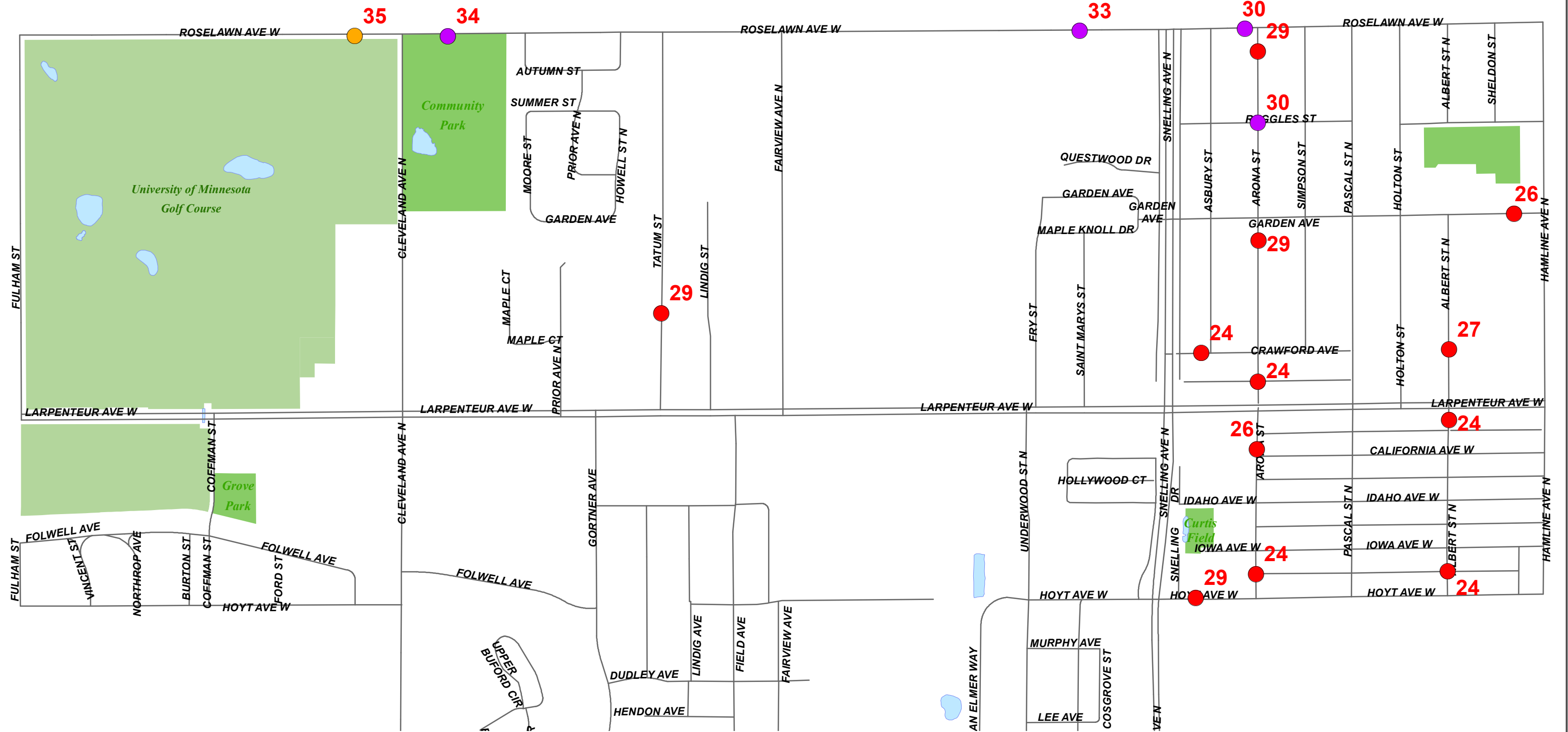


mapdoc: ADT.mxd  
map: ADT.pdf

Data Sources and Contacts:  
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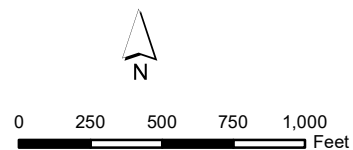




# 85th Percentile Speed



Prepared by:  
City of Roseville Engineering Department  
April 26, 2021



mapdoc: 85thPercentileSpeed.mxd  
map: 85thPercentileSpeed.pdf

- 25-29 MPH
- 30-34 MPH
- 35-39 MPH

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## Conclusions

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Based on the data collected and research conducted by other cities and agencies, the following speed limit conclusions from the evaluation are:

- Lower traffic speeds reduce both the likelihood of crashes and that those crashes will be severe or fatal.
- A majority of states have lower speed limits than Minnesota. All of Minnesota's neighboring states have a 25 mph default urban speed limit.
- Since Falcon Heights is a suburb directly adjacent to St Paul, it makes sense to have similar speed limit policies and procedures to St Paul.
- Similar to Saint Paul, for Falcon Heights a category approach to speed limits is most appropriate with 20 mph on local residential streets and generally 25 mph on collector and arterial streets.
- Lower speed limits prioritize public health and safety.
- Lower speed limits are reasonable given the clear differences in the design, context, safety, expectations, and operations of minor and major City streets.

## FALCON HEIGHTS SPEED LIMIT RECOMENDATIONS

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### Category Speed Limits

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Falcon Heights engineering staff recommend that the City Engineer set speed limits using a category approach to set speed limits. The recommended speed limits be set as follows;

- Minor streets, generally local, will be 20 mph unless otherwise signed.
- Major streets, generally collectors, will generally have speed limits of 25 mph and will be signed. Major streets are generally arterial and collector streets.
- Some major streets, Roselawn Avenue, will have speed limits higher than 25 mph based on specific conditions and will be signed.
- Alleys will retain speed limits of 10 mph.

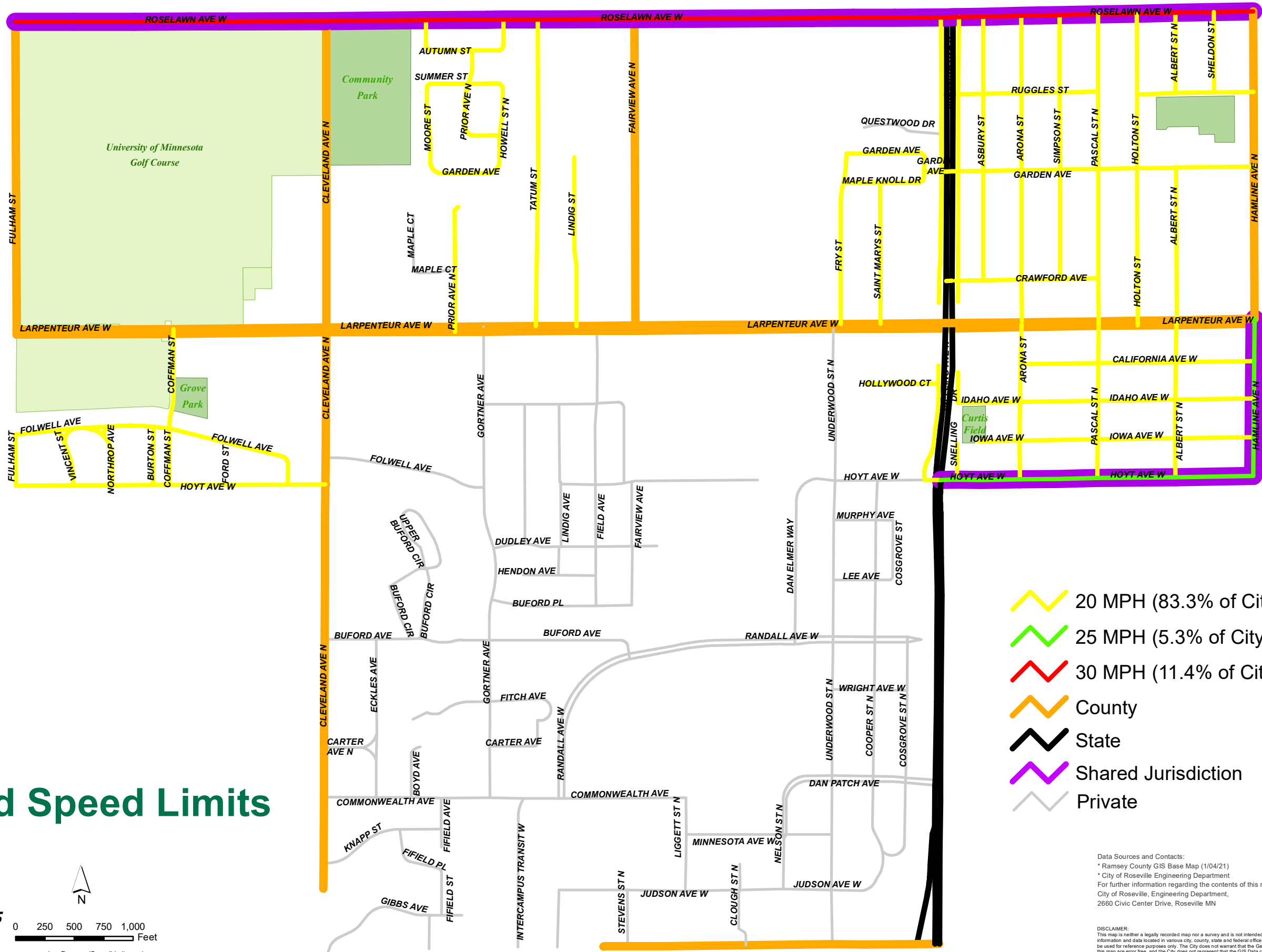
Staff recommends these category speed limits since they;

- Send a strong message to the driving public that "slower is safer" on all streets
- Align with St Paul's recommended speed setting approach, providing consistency in messaging to the traveling public
- Improve safety and comfort for people of all abilities walking, bicycling, and taking transit

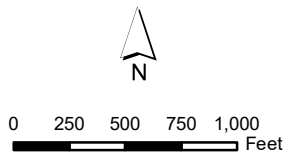
## Application

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The map of recommend speed limits on Falcon Heights jurisdiction roads is included below. For shared-jurisdictional streets, the speed limits match each city's current proposed posted speed limit. Based on the recommendations in the report, 89% of Falcon Heights jurisdiction roadways will have a reduction of speed. 83% of roadways will be 20 mph and 5% of roadways will be 25 mph. The only road not proposed to have a speed reduction is Roselawn Avenue, which will remain posted at 30 mph.



# Proposed Speed Limits



mapdoc: ProposedSpeedLimits.mxd  
map: ProposedSpeedLimits.pdf

Prepared by:  
City of Roseville Engineering Department  
March 4, 2021

Data Sources and Contacts:  
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## IMPLEMENTATION

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In order to adopt the new changes, Council will need to adopt a new ordinance. Staff recommends adopting similar ordinances to St Paul and Minneapolis having the City Engineer establish speed limits for consistency.

### Communication and Outreach

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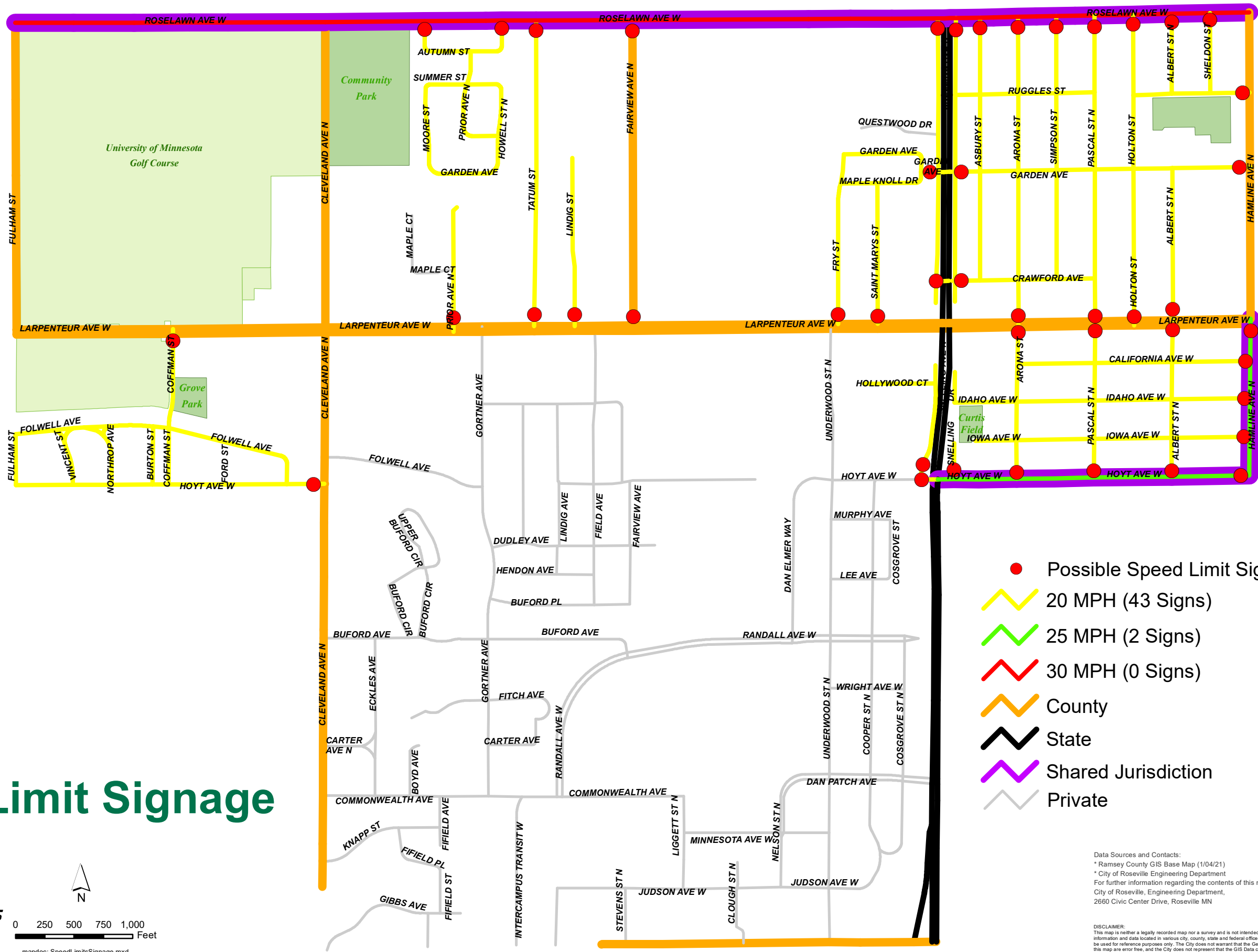
If new speed limits are adopted, the City will be proactive in communicating the proposed changes by utilizing social media, the city's website, weekly newsletters and other means necessary.

### Speed Limit Signage

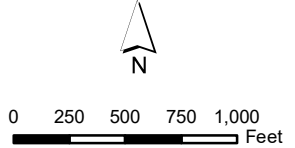
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Since Falcon Heights has relatively small amount of roads and connection points to adjacent cities, staff recommends signing all local streets at the entrance points from County or State Roads or other cities. This would result in the need for approximately 45 new signs. Some of these would replace existing 30 mph signage but some roads would be signed that previously were not.





# Speed Limit Signage



mapdoc: SpeedLimitsSignage.mxd  
map: SpeedLimitsSignage.pdf

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## Enforcement

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Staff will work with local law enforcement to help them educate and enforce the new speed limits established.

## Evaluation

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After implementation of new speed limits, staff conduct new speed studies and analysis as needed to see if additional changes are needed. As other cities adopt new speed limits or as development or redevelopment occur, it may be necessary to make changes. Additionally, changes in state law or new technology may necessitate additional changes.