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INTRODUCTION

Winchester has conducted multiple SmartStat traffic studies along the Route 44 corridor and other high-volume areas. The data shows extremely high speeding rates, with thousands of vehicles exceeding the limit daily including some traveling more than **100 mph**. In response, the Town is evaluating **Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE)** as a safety tool.

Below is a **detailed Q&A** explaining the data, the law, how speed cameras work, and what residents can expect.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q: Why is Winchester looking into speed cameras now?

A: Because the numbers are alarming. Recent studies show:

- **33,301 vehicles** recorded in one week — **25,303 were speeding (75.9%)**
- Maximum speeds reached **148 mph** in a 50 mph zone
- At another RT 44 location, **55,751 vehicles** were recorded — **38,589 were speeding**
- A third site saw **43,049 vehicles**, with **29,868 speeders**
- Two of these routes have posted limits of **30 mph**, yet recorded speeds as high as **113 mph** and **98 mph**

These levels of speeding are not “occasional offenders” — they represent **systemic, dangerous behavior**.

Q: What is the goal of adding speed cameras?

A: Public safety. ASE aims to:

- Reduce severe crashes
- Lower speeds on high-risk roadways
- Free up police for other calls
- Increase safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and first responders
- Improve school zone safety

It is **not** designed to punish drivers — it is designed to change behavior.

Q: Is the Town allowed to use speed cameras under Connecticut law?

A: Yes. Connecticut passed new ASE legislation allowing speed cameras in:

- School zones
- Work zones
- Locally designated safety corridors with documented speeding problems

Winchester’s speeding data clearly meets this threshold.

DATA-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Q: What locations were analyzed and what did the data show?

1. RT 44 at Dry Dam Road (50 mph zone)

- Vehicles recorded: **33,301**
- Speeders: **25,303** (75.9%)
- Maximum speed: **148 mph**
- 85th percentile: **60 mph**

- Average speed: **53 mph**

2. RT 44 Northbound (30 mph zone)

- Vehicles: **43,049**
- Speeders: **29,868**
- Maximum speed: **98 mph**
- 85th percentile: **38 mph**

3. RT 44 Southbound (30 mph zone)

- Vehicles: **55,751**
- Speeders: **38,589**
- Maximum speed: **113 mph**
- Average speed: **31–32 mph**

These numbers represent **hundreds of speeders per hour**, sometimes thousands per day.

Q: Why is the 85th percentile speed important?

A: The **85th percentile** is a national engineering standard. It shows the speed at or below which **85% of drivers travel**.

- On RT 44, the 85th percentile in a 50 mph zone is **60 mph**.
- In a 30 mph zone, it is **38 mph**.

This confirms consistent and predictable speeding — not random outliers.

HOW SPEED CAMERAS WORK

Q: How does an automated speed camera actually function?

A: ASE systems use radar or lidar to:

1. Detect a speeding vehicle
2. Capture the license plate
3. Log the time, location, and speed
4. Issue a **civil** citation by mail

No points. No criminal record. Not reported to insurance.

Q: Do cameras take a picture of the driver?

A: No. Connecticut requires that only the **rear license plate** be photographed.

Q: Will the cameras run 24/7?

A: Possibly, but with clear rules:

- Cameras may run continuously **or** only during designated hours
 - They must issue **warnings first** during the legally required education period (30days)
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TRANSPARENCY & FAIRNESS

Q: Will residents know where cameras are placed?

A: Yes. CT law requires:

- **Public notification at least 30 days in advance**
- **Warning signs well before each camera**
- Clear marking of the enforcement zone

The goal is **compliance**, not surprise.

Q: How much are the fines?

Under state law:

- **1st offense: Up to \$50**
 - **2nd offense: Up to \$75**
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Q: Will this be a “money grab”?

A: No, for several reasons:

1. Fines are **low** by state design.
2. Revenue is **restricted by law** to traffic safety improvements — not general operations.
3. If drivers slow down, **revenue drops to zero**, which is the best outcome.

ASE programs succeed when **less** money comes in.

IMPACTS ON THE PUBLIC

Q: Will this affect local drivers more than out-of-towners?

A: RT 44 has very high commuter and pass-through traffic.
Anyone who speeds will receive a citation — resident or not.

Most residents who follow the speed limit will **never** receive a ticket.

Q: Will this reduce police presence?

A: No. It allows officers to:

- Focus on more serious calls
- Conduct targeted traffic enforcement when needed
- Improve nighttime and weekend safety without increasing manpower

ASE is a **force multiplier**, not a replacement.

Q: Does ASE improve safety?

A: Yes. National research shows:

- 20%–60% reduction in speeding
- Up to 40% reduction in fatal or serious crashes
- Fewer pedestrian injuries
- Better school zone compliance

When speeds drop even 5–10 mph, crash survival rates dramatically improve.

Q: What about people who claim cameras are inaccurate?

A: CT requires:

- Regular equipment calibration
- Documented maintenance logs
- Human review before any citation is issued

Citations can be contested, just like any parking ticket.

LEGAL, APPEAL, AND PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS

Q: How do I appeal a citation if I believe it's wrong?

A: You may request:

- Administrative review
- Evidence review
- Hearing before a neutral municipal officer

The process is similar to contesting a parking citation.

Q: Do speed cameras violate privacy?

A: No. Cameras record **public roadway behavior**, which courts have consistently ruled is not private.

Only:

- Date
- Time
- License plate
- Speed

...are recorded.

Q: Will cameras create traffic backups or safety issues?

A: No. ASE does not stop or chase vehicles, and cameras do not flash in ways that distract drivers.