



Staff Report

Operations

Report To: Transportation Committee
Meeting Date: May 12, 2022
Report Number: CSOPS.22.047
Title: Side Rd. 21 Sample Traffic Counts and Preliminary Analysis
Prepared by: Adam Fraser, Transportation Master Plan Project Coordinator

A. Recommendations

THAT the Transportation Advisory Committee receive Staff Report CSOPS.22.047, entitled "Side Rd. 21 Sample Traffic Counts and Preliminary Analysis";

AND THAT the Transportation Advisory Committee recommend to Council to direct staff to conduct additional traffic counts on Side Rd. 21 during summer 2022 to capture summer vehicle traffic volumes and speeds;

AND THAT the Transportation Advisory Committee recommend to Council to defer considering speed limit changes or other traffic management interventions on Side Rd. 21 until after the completion of the Transportation Master Plan.

B. Overview

This report is to provide the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) with traffic data, a preliminary analysis, and recommended next steps regarding speed limits on Side Rd. 21.

C. Background

Mr. Peter Franklyn wrote to staff on August 17, 2021 with concern for traffic and speeding on Side Rd. 21. Though this was not his first correspondence with staff on this subject, the letter provided in Attachment 1 details his concerns. In summary, Mr. Franklyn has requested that the speed limit of Side Rd. 21 be lowered from 80km/h to 50km/h for the entire length of Side Rd. 21 west of the Loree Trailhead to Grey Road 2, and have increased police enforcement, both for the intended effect of reducing vehicle speeds and deterring through-traffic.

At the October 18, 2021 Council meeting, Council passed a resolution supporting the recommendation from the Transportation Advisory Committee as follows:

THAT, with respect to Item C.2 Newsletter Circulated by Peter Franklyn Re 21 Sideroad Speeding Issues, the Transportation Committee receives the newsletter and correspondence and refers the same to the Transportation Master Plan consultant for

consideration and requests Council direct staff to review the issues and solutions identified by Mr. Franklyn, and evaluate the recommended solutions with follow-up to Council.

AND THAT Council directs staff to review the issues and solutions identified by Mr. Franklyn, and evaluate the recommended solutions with follow-up to Council

Since that time, several other comments have been received regarding speed limits on Side Rd. 21 from other self-identified residents of Side Rd. 21. The public comments collectively express differing opinions on whether the current speed limits of Side Rd. 21 should remain as-is, or whether they should be lowered and/or that other speed management approaches be explored.

In a related matter, the Town of The Blue Mountains (Town) began the development of a Transportation Master Plan (TMP) in spring 2021, which includes a comprehensive speed limit review within its scope of work. The TMP is also anticipated to recommend that a traffic calming policy be developed which would support a streamlined and consistent process to manage speed-related concerns on Town roads. The TMP is anticipated to be complete in late-summer 2022.

D. Analysis

To better understand the existing traffic characteristics, staff deployed two mobile traffic counters on Side Rd. 21 indicated in Figure 1 in from March 2 to March 14, 2022. Due to some required firmware updates, Location 2 had a delayed start to data collection resulting in 10 full days of overlapping data collection.



Figure 1: Side Rd. 21 Traffic Counter Locations

Location 1 is approximately 300m east of 7th Line on a section of road with a speed limit of 80km/h, which is the default speed limit for unposted rural areas under the *Highway Traffic Act*. Location 2 is approximately 800m east of 6th Line on a section of road with a steep grade and a posted speed limit of 50km/h.

Figures 2 through 5 are provided in Attachment 2 to demonstrate daily volume and daily 85th Percentile speeds for Location 1 and Location 2. For reference, 85th Percentile is a value for assessing what most drivers feel is an appropriate travel speed, meaning 85% of all vehicles travel at or below the indicated speed. The Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) indicates that when speed limits are to be posted, that they should be +/-10km/h of the 85th Percentile speed¹. The Transportation Association of Canada offers that a variance of +/- 10km/h is considered good, and +/-20km/h is considered fair². The +/- 10km/h tolerance for acceptable variance between the speed limit and 85th Percentile speed is commonly used in road operations analysis, though some examples such as the Municipality of West Lincoln³ have different treatment between urban and rural tolerance in their speed limit review policy, with urban +/- 10km/h and rural at +/- 20km/h.

The following summarizes volume and speed for both locations:

For Location 1, Figures 2 and 3 (unposted speed limit of 80km/h):

- Daily volume ranges from 150-300 vehicles per day (total of both directions);
- There is an outlier event on March 6 involving dozens of vehicles traveling on Side Rd. 21 over a short period of time before sunrise;
- Weekend Saturday volume was modestly greater than weekday volume;
- Daily 85th percentile ranged from 77 to 92 over study timeframe. This observation is within expectations;
- 85th Percentile Speed of vehicle the March 6th outlier was around 60km/h; and
- Rate of speed appears highest on the observed Fridays and Saturdays.

For Location 2, Figures 4 and 5 (posted speed limit of 50km/h):

- Daily volume is very similar to Location 1 with a range of 125-300 vehicle per day (total of both directions);
- The same outlier event observed at Location 1 is also observed at Location 2;
- Weekend Saturday volume was modestly greater than weekday volume;
- Daily 85th Percentile ranged from 80 to 95 over the study timeframe. This result exceeds expectations as it is similar to the 85th Percentile speeds at Location 1, which has a speed limit of 80km/h; and
- 85th Percentile of the March 6th outlier was around 40km/h.

¹ <https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/HTM/2003r1/part2/part2b1.htm#section2B13>

² <https://www.tac-atc.ca/sites/tac-atc.ca/files/site/doc/Bookstore/revisions-e.pdf>

³ <https://pub-westlincoln.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=733>

- Rate of speed appears highest on the observed Fridays and Saturdays

Location 2 may warrant further observation due to the higher than expected 85th Percentile speeds. The steep grade for westbound vehicles (downhill) is a possible explanation for the observed speeds, however eastbound vehicles also maintain an 85th Percentile at or above 80km/h over the observed timeframe. Town staff have notified the local Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) dispatch of these observations and have requested increased enforcement in this area.

Volume on Side R. 21 is consistent with its rural road classification, which is generally low in volume and primarily intended to connect road users to and from rural residences or businesses to higher-order roads, rather than for through-traffic. Side Rd. 21 is somewhat unique for hosting access to the Loree Trailhead, which is understood to cause seasonal increases in traffic volume. However, the seasonal increases in traffic volume are not anticipated to exceed the intended road class and function of Side Rd. 21 within the Town's road network. From regional traffic perspective, it is unlikely that Side Rd. 21 attracts traffic away from Grey County roads or Highway 26 because it does not offer a short cut or competitive connection between major destinations.

Staff are committed to deploying traffic counters again in summer 2022 to understand the degree of difference in road use between winter and summer. Parking concerns have been raised around the Loree Trailhead, however that topic goes beyond the scope of this preliminary analysis.

OPP data on collisions between 2015 to the end of 2020 indicate two collisions took place in the subject area. These collisions were classified as Collisions with a Wild or Domestic Animal, both in the vicinity of Location 1.

The data gathered in this preliminary analysis does not suggest there is an existing, urgent safety issue for which a lower speed limit would resolve. The existing 50km/h speed limit area seems to be located toward the most apparent safety needs which are related to the Loree Trailhead parking area as well as horizontal and vertical road curvature in the vicinity.

Considering that the TMP is anticipated to be completed in late summer 2022, that there is relatively low traffic volume and low occurrences of collisions on Side Rd. 21, and that public comments received on this subject offer no consensus, staff see no compelling reason or urgency to recommend any action be taken in advance of the TMP study completion. However, if a speed limit change were to be pursued by Council, then staff would recommend it be supported by an appropriate, defensible technical study following guidelines provided by the Transportation Association of Canada.

Staff anticipate that completion of the TMP and fulfilling related recommendations such as the anticipated traffic calming policy will provide improved guidance for how the Town can effectively and consistently respond to certain traffic concerns.

E. Strategic Priorities

1. Communication and Engagement

We will enhance communications and engagement between Town Staff, Town residents and stakeholders

2. Organizational Excellence

We will continually seek out ways to improve the internal organization of Town Staff and the management of Town assets.

3. Community

We will protect and enhance the community feel and the character of the Town, while ensuring the responsible use of resources and restoration of nature.

4. Quality of Life

We will foster a high quality of life for full-time and part-time residents of all ages and stages, while welcoming visitors.

F. Environmental Impacts

None.

G. Financial Impacts

Staff's recommendation has no financial impact. If TAC and Council instead proceed to direct staff to explore a speed limit change or other traffic calming measure in advance of the TMP completion, there would likely be financial impacts to consider.

H. In Consultation With

None.

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has not been the subject of a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required. However, any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Adam Fraser, Transportation Master Plan Project Coordinator ttmp@thebluemountains.ca.

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J. Attached

1. Attachment 1: Council Resolution Oct 18 2021 Franklyn Side Rd. 21 Speeding
2. Attachment 1: Side Rd. 21 Volume and Speed March 2022

Respectfully submitted,

Adam Fraser
Transportation Master Plan Project Coordinator

Shawn Carey
Director of Operations

For more information, please contact:
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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	CSOPS.22.047 Side Rd. 21 Sample Traffic Counts and Preliminary Analysis.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment 1 Council Resolution Oct 18 2021 Franklyn Side Rd. 21 Speeding.pdf - Attachment 2 Side Rd. 21 Volume and Speed March 2022.pdf
Final Approval Date:	May 3, 2022

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Shawn Carey - May 3, 2022 - 9:01 AM



**The Town of The Blue Mountains
Council Meeting**

Title: C.1.3 Transportation Committee Report dated at August 17, 2021
Date: Monday, October 18, 2021

Moved by: Councillor Bordignon
Seconded by: Councillor Matrosovs

THAT Council of the Town of The Blue Mountains acknowledges receipt of the August 17, 2021 Transportation Committee recommendation as follows:

THAT, with respect to Item C.2 Newsletter Circulated by Peter Franklyn Re 21 Sideroad Speeding Issues, the Transportation Committee receives the newsletter and correspondence and refers the same to the Transportation Master Plan consultant for consideration and requests Council direct staff to review the issues and solutions identified by Mr. Franklyn, and evaluate the recommended solutions with follow-up to Council.

AND THAT Council directs staff to review the issues and solutions identified by Mr. Franklyn, and evaluate the recommended solutions with follow-up to Council.

The motion is Carried

To 21st Sideroad residents regarding traffic/speeding issues

Hi there

I hope you are all well and staying healthy as we are {hopefully} approaching a stage where we can think about the pandemic in the past tense.

I am reaching out to you regarding an issue that has been one of increasing concern over the past year or so- increased traffic flows and excessive speeding on 21st Sideroad.

I have raised my concerns regarding this issue with TBM staff and the TBM

Transportation Committee on several occasions over the past year or so but to no avail.

I'd be happy to share details of my correspondence with TBM with any of you that are interested. Just let me know.

In summary the concerns I have relate to the following:

- a substantial increase in usage of 21st SDRD. I suspect some of this relates to a substantial increase in visitors to the Loree trails (I expect that some of you living in close proximity to Loree are acutely aware of what I mean). However I believe our road is increasingly also being used as a major access road for traffic traversing the escarpment which is a function of numerous factors possibly including (i) elevated numbers of visitors to the area, (ii) a reduction in speed limits on Hwy 26 which is diverting traffic to routes that go around or over the escarpment, (iii) the 60/70 kph speed limit on Grey 119 (between Banks and Ravenna) which makes 21st with its 80kph speed limit (other than in the immediate vicinity of Loree) an attractive and faster alternative (more on that below);
- the fact that unlike Grey 119, which is wide, divided, with ample paved shoulders and most of which subject to a 60 kph speed limit, 21st SDRD is relatively narrow, undivided, without a shoulder on either side, hilly/undulating with numerous blind/hidden driveways and intersections and but has a higher 80kph speed limit (other than in the immediate Loree vicinity).

- an almost total lack of enforcement of the existing speed limits.

To be clear, I am not advocating turning 21st into a divided road, which in my view might only increase traffic further.

My suggestion to TBM is simpler and far less costly than that- simply extend the 50kph speed limit that currently exists in the immediate vicinity of Loree to the entire length of 21st Sideroad, install appropriate signage and take steps to actively enforce that speed limit.

I suspect that this simple change will not only discourage use of our road as a major thoroughfare (ie Hwy 26 and GR119 would again become more attractive options, relatively speaking) but will also hopefully encourage those that do use the road to travel at a more appropriate and safer speed.

I don't pretend that this is the only solution that might address this issue and I am certainly willing to discuss other/supplementary ideas.

I would encourage any of you that are concerned about this issue and would be willing to add your names to a petition or other submission to our elected representatives (I am prepared to do the heavy lifting) to please get back to me by return email.

Regards

Peter Franklyn



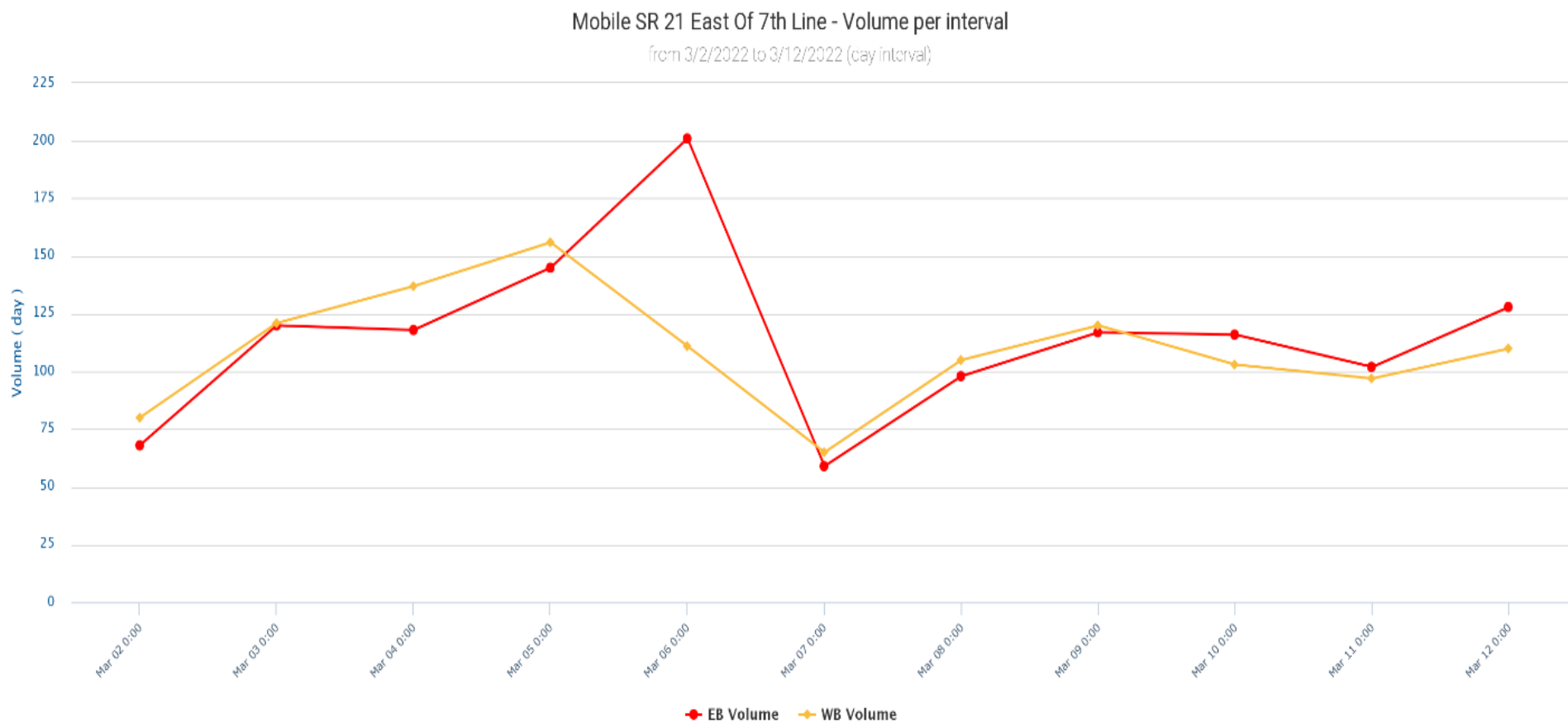


Figure 2: Location 1 Daily Volume, March 2 to March 12, 2022

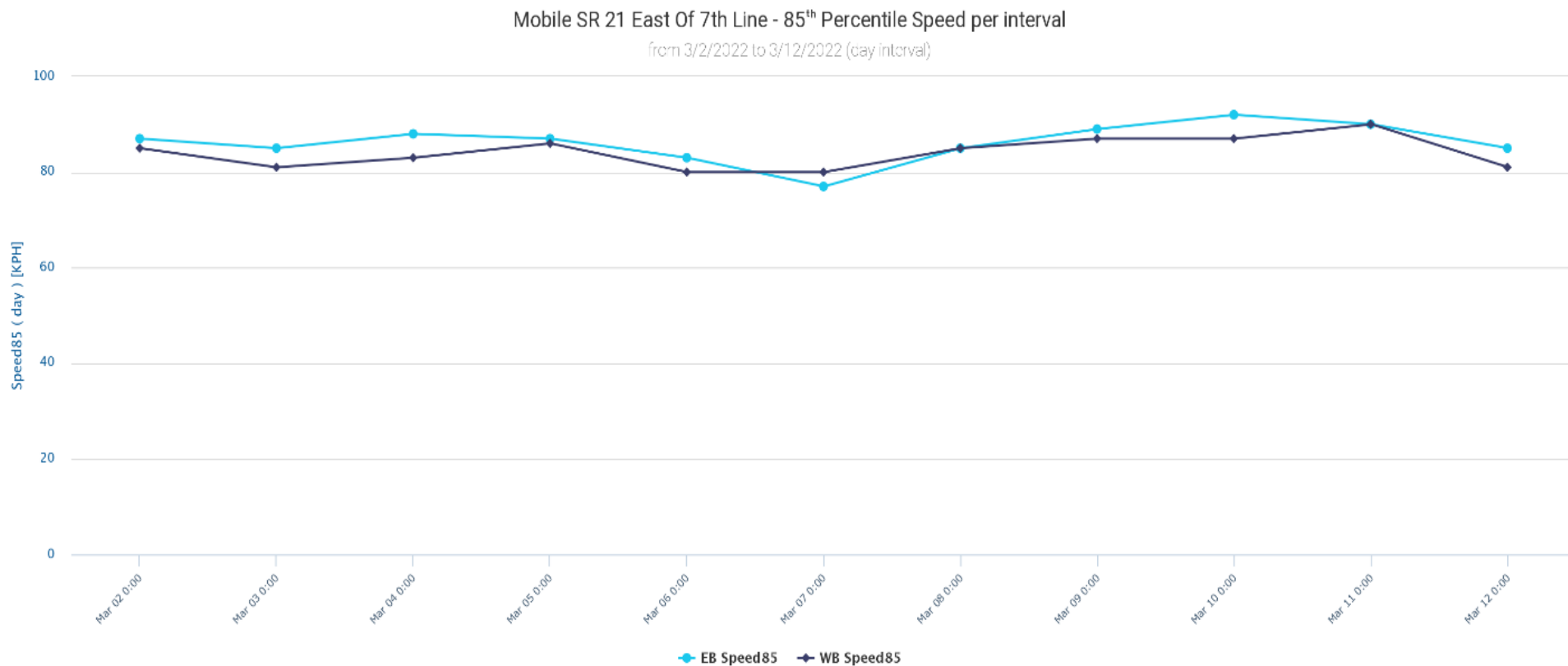


Figure 3: Location 1 Daily 85th Percentile, March 2 to March 13, 2022

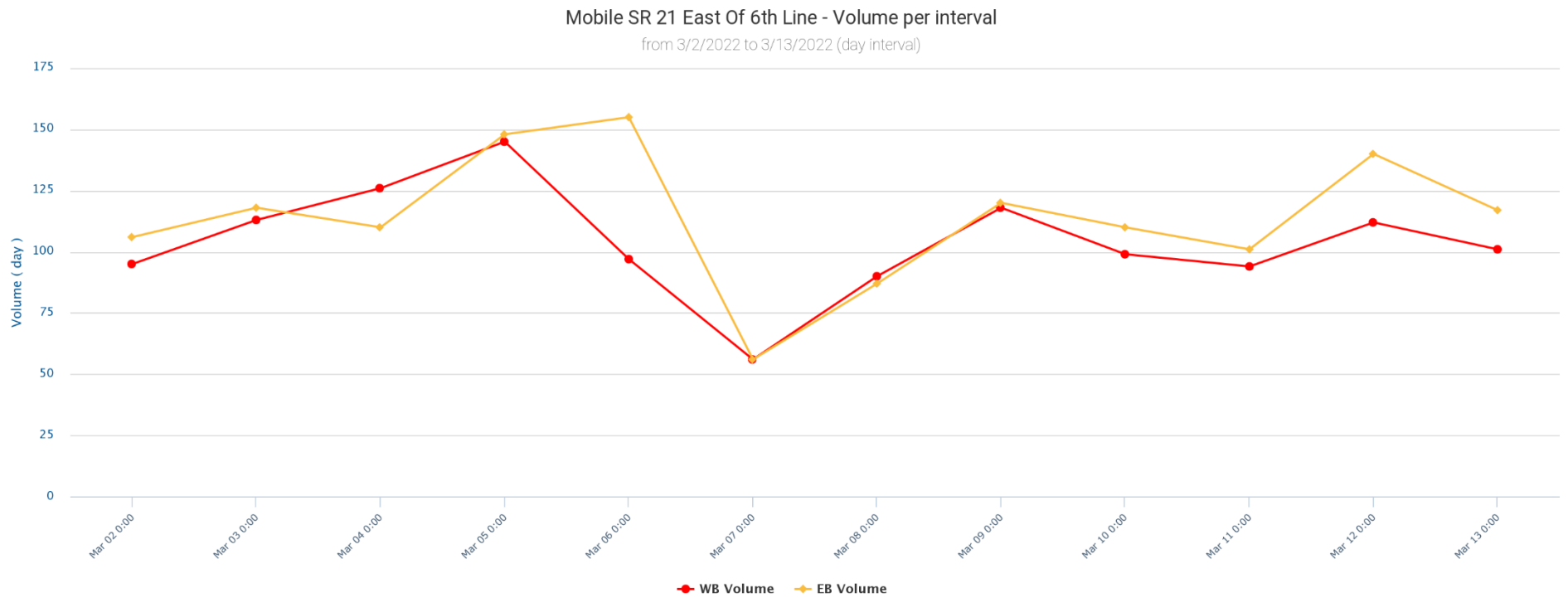
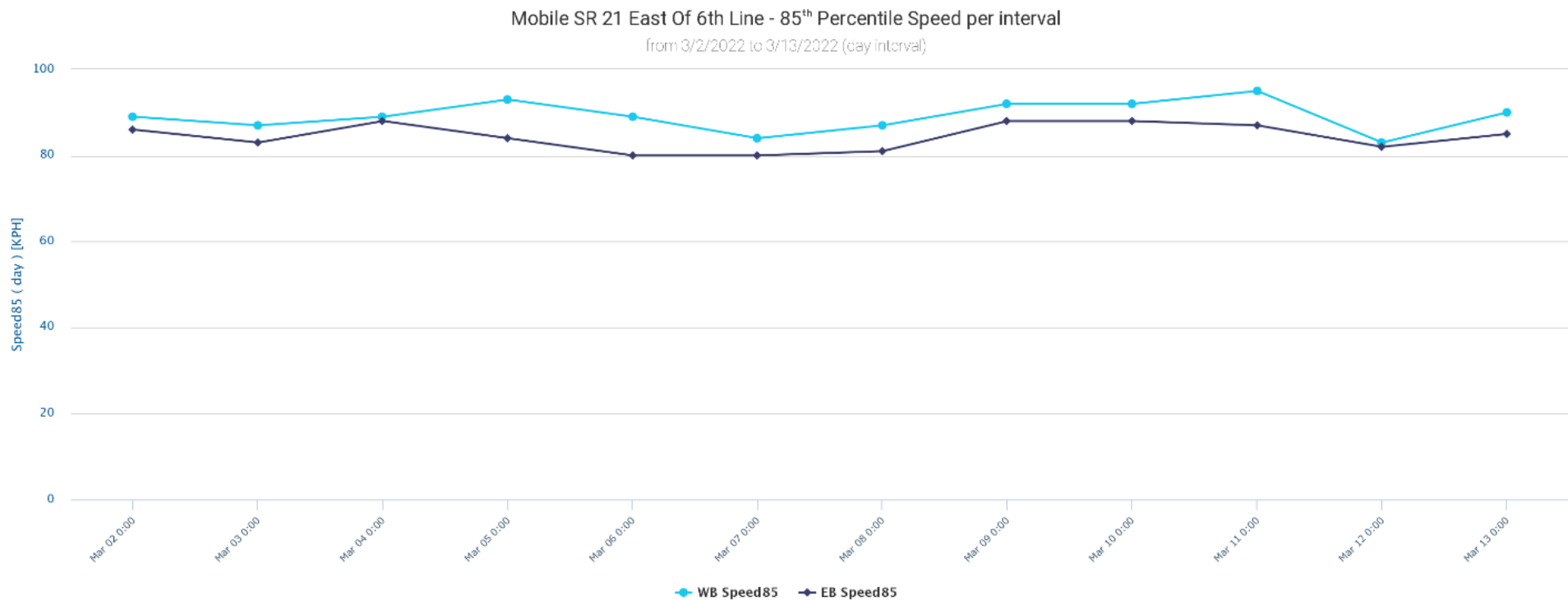


Figure 4: Location 2 Daily Volume, March 2 to March 13, 2022

*Click and drag to zoom in. Hold down shift key to pan.



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Figure 5: Location 2 Daily 85th Percentile, March 2 to March 13, 2022