



# SH3 NAPIER ROAD SPEED REVIEW

Community consultation summary  
May 2022

**Contents**

- 1. BACKGROUND ..... 1
- 2. CONSULTATION PROCESS ..... 2
- 3. CONSULTATION QUESTION ..... 3
- 4. SUMMARY AND RESPONSE TO SUBMISSIONS ..... 4
- 5. DECISION ..... 8
- 6. SUBMISSIONS..... 9



# 1. BACKGROUND

Safer speed limits are a key part of Road to Zero, New Zealand's road safety strategy for 2020–2030. This strategy sets us on a path to achieve Vision Zero, an Aotearoa where no one is killed or seriously injured on our roads.

It calls on all of us to make good choices when we travel, but accepts that as humans, we make mistakes and crashes will happen. But these crashes should not result in us losing our lives or being seriously injured.

That is why Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency has been reviewing speed limits on State Highway 3 Napier Road from Palmerston to Ashhurst.

The 12 km road corridor under review is predominantly two lanes with a passing lane in each direction and is well-travelled year-round by commuters and people travelling between Manawatū and Hawke's Bay. It is a regional route located south of the suburb of Kelvin Grove. The small community of Whakarongo is located approximately halfway along the corridor and Whakarongo School is located at the intersection of SH3 and Stoney Creek Road. The school entrance is located off Stoney Creek Road.

This corridor has recently undergone significant change, with considerable development in Palmerston North leading to an increase in the volume and type of vehicles using SH3 Napier Road. Additionally, the use of the alternative route (Saddle Road) from Ashhurst to Woodville has resulted in increased traffic and safety impacts on this corridor through to Ashhurst.

Between 2011-2020, reported crash statistics show a total of 159 crashes, of which three people were killed, 13 seriously injured and 67 walked away with minor injuries (CAS data extracted March 2022). Last year there were a further 12 crashes and 8 people obtained minor injuries. There has been a further two deaths along this corridor in 2022.

Reducing current speed limits will be one of the most effective ways to improve safety and save lives and prevent debilitating injuries.

## **Speed is just one part of improving road safety.**

A safe transport system recognises people make mistakes and is designed so these mistakes do not cost us our lives. Safer speed limits on our roads is one part of creating a safe system, and right now, ensuring speed limits are appropriate for this road environment is the quickest and most effective way we can save lives. But we know there are other changes people want to see.

To reach our Road to Zero target, Waka Kotahi has five focus areas, including infrastructure and speed, vehicle safety, work-related road safety, road user choices and system management.

SH3 infrastructure improvements, aimed to improve safety and reduce crash risk, are in the detailed design phase with construction/implementation planned for 2023. These infrastructure improvements include:

- Traffic signals at the SH3 Napier Road / Roberts Line intersection.
- Cycling and pedestrian facilities along SH3 between Keith Street and Roberts Line.
- Pedestrian refuge island to help people cross SH3.
- Stormwater facilities to better capture and treat water running off the road.

To support the new safe speeds, Waka Kotahi will also be adding new signage, improving existing signage as well as painting new and enhancing existing line markings on the highway which all helps to create a safer road environment.

## 2. CONSULTATION PROCESS

Prior to undertaking the formal consultation process, we completed numerous steps.

### TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT

Before we spoke with the community about speed on SH3, we undertook a technical assessment of this road. This considered crash history, average speeds people are travelling, the number of vehicles on the road and the development of surrounding areas to help us determine whether changing the speed limits would be the best thing to do to make the road safer. We also looked at where new speed limits might begin or end, and if any other safety improvements might be needed.

The technical assessment found existing speed limits on the road were not safe and appropriate for the current road characteristics and roadside environments.

### ENGAGEMENT PHASE

The next step was to engage with the community and ask for people's insights on the existing speed limits so that we could better understand how people use the road, where people felt safe and where the road environment could be improved. This engagement process with partners, stakeholders and the community took place between 23 February - 11 March 2022. A separate report summarising the engagement phase feedback has been finalised and is available for the public to view on the project website <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/sh3-napier-road-speed-review-and-infrastructure-improvements/>

Feedback from the engagement phase was then considered alongside the technical assessment to propose safer speed limits along the corridor.

### CONSULTATION PHASE

The next step was to share the detailed proposal with the community through a formal consultation period which took place from Wednesday 6 April to Friday 6 May 2022. Consultation materials provided evidence that supported the proposed safe and appropriate speed limits.

Ahead of public consultation, the project team met with Rangitāne O Manawatū to discuss proposals.

Letters outlining the speed proposal were then sent to key national stakeholders including NZ Automobile Association (AA), NZ Police, and la Ara Aotearoa Transporting. Information and an invite to provide feedback was also sent to project stakeholders which included regional and local government, emergency service providers, local businesses, educational institutions, and road user groups representing freight, cyclists, pedestrians, and motorcyclists.

Consultation material included a project webpage, information pamphlet, e-newsletter, media release and print, radio, and digital adverts.

Information pamphlets (which included the consultation feedback form) were provided to Ashhurst School, Ashhurst Community Library, Whakarongo school, Palmerston North City Council Customer Service Information Center, and Bupa Riverstone Retirement Village.

Consultation was advertised through the Manawatu Standard and Manawatu Guardian; and promoted through local radio stations with a reach of 68,500 people, and online via digital ads. A media release was issued by Waka Kotahi on 6 April 2022.

A Q&A session with Bupa Riverstone Retirement Village was held on 19 April 2022.

Submissions were accepted on hard copy forms, by email to the Waka Kotahi project inbox ([pn2ashhurst@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:pn2ashhurst@nzta.govt.nz)) and via an online survey on the project webpage.

### 3. CONSULTATION QUESTION

The purpose of formal consultation is to share a detailed proposal with people and to ask for any additional information that might have an impact on the final decision.

In proposing new speed limits, we asked:

**“Are there any other factors we should consider when making a decision regarding the proposed speed limit changes on State Highway 3 Napier Road?”**

We consider all factors raised during formal consultation when making our decision on new permanent speed limits.

## 4. SUMMARY AND RESPONSE TO SUBMISSIONS

Across the four-week consultation period, a total of 48 submissions were received, including:

- 23 email submissions.
- 24 online survey responses
- 1 submission form hand delivered.

Stakeholder submissions were received from NZ Police, Palmerston North City Council and Horizons Regional Council.

Submissions provided specific feedback on sections of SH3 as well as general feedback relevant across the entire corridor from Palmerston North to Ashhurst. Submissions contained opinions and views on the proposed speed limits, future residential growth and its impact on traffic volumes, safety concerns entering and exiting SH3, comments around road improvements, driver behaviour, driver education and enforcement. A high percentage of the feedback was focused on the section of SH3 between Palmerston North and Whakarongo.

We acknowledge the time and effort that went into these submissions and thank every person and organisation who contributed to the speed review process.

We remain engaged with Rangitāne O Manawatū throughout the Speed Review process. The iwi is generally supportive of safer speeds on SH3 Napier Rd.

### RESPONSE

While a number of submissions did include factors that were taken into consideration when setting the new permanent speed limits, a proportion of the submissions expressed only a general opinion about speed reviews. These included raising other issues about driver behaviour, traffic volumes and enforcement.

The relevant factors that were expressed in the feedback from the public are summarised in the table below. The table outlines the section of the road, along with the main factors people raised in their submissions and our comments.

Table 1: Key themes and response

Location	Themes/Ideas/Concerns	Waka Kotahi Comments
	Lower speeds are needed to make this corridor safer for all road users.	Speed limits need to reflect the risk of the road. We want everyone who uses our roads to get where they are going safely, and to save lives and prevent serious injuries we are setting some safer speed limits on this road.
	Invest more in road infrastructure such as signage, intersections, merging facilities and pedestrian and cycling facilities.	<p>Infrastructure improvements and speed management make up one of our focus areas under our Road to Zero strategy.</p> <p>We are designing infrastructure improvements for SH3 Napier Rd including traffic signals at the Roberts Line intersection; cycling and pedestrian facilities between Keith Street and Roberts Line; a pedestrian refuge island; and improved stormwater facilities.</p> <p>To support new safe speeds, we will add some new signage, improve existing signage, and enhance line markings on the highway.</p>
	Speed limits need to drop to support the proposed infrastructure improvements.	<p>We are required to review speeds based on the current state of the road, but we do consider the future state in our thinking and decision making.</p> <p>When infrastructure improvements are constructed (subject to funding), we can review speed limits again. The traffic lights we are designing will support a 60km/h speed limit.</p>
	SH3 Napier Road is a wide, open, and mostly straight corridor.	<p>Some people perceive this road to be safe, but it is important to note it has high traffic volumes, and has a risk of high-speed, head-on and loss-of-control crashes. Roadside hazards include powerpoles, ditches, and fences. Too many people have been killed or seriously injured on this stretch of road.</p> <p>We need to adapt to changing road safety standards, which involves reviewing speed limits to ensure they continue to be appropriate for the road.</p>
	SH3 from Main Street to Ashhurst is an important transport link and should not be compromised by Adhoc subdivisions and planning decisions. This corridor should be four-lanes.	Widening the road would take a long time to plan and complete and would come at a significant cost. The benefits would not likely match the level of investment required, which are assessed against many criteria and prioritised against much higher traffic volume roads around New Zealand. We know the risk is high on this corridor. We need to move quickly to take the actions that we know will help prevent deaths and serious injuries.
Palmerston North to Roberts line intersection	There are safety concerns at the Roberts Line intersection.	We are addressing safety concerns at this intersection by designing traffic signals to be constructed as soon as possible (subject to funding approval). Traffic signals would also support an even lower, e.g., 60km/h, speed limit.
	There is a lack of safe pedestrian crossing points and poor footpath and cycling facilities	The proposed infrastructure improvements also include cycling and pedestrian facilities along SH3 between Keith Street and Roberts Line and a pedestrian refuge island to help cross SH3.
	<p>A lower speed limit is needed between Palmerston North and Roberts Line (50km/hr or 60km/hr) because of increased traffic volume / vehicle speeds / access onto and off the highway / changing land use from rural to residential.</p> <p>There are safety concerns for vulnerable road users – senior citizens, cyclists, pedestrians, and school children.</p>	We have carefully considered whether we could implement a speed limit lower than 80km/h on this section of road however the road environment along the section is not developed enough to warrant a 50km/h or 60km/h speed limit. The road is mostly wide, with wide shoulders, not dissimilar to the other proposed 80km/h sections in the area. Currently it is classed as an 'interregional connector in the One Network Framework and the standard speed for these roads is 80km/h. Waka Kotahi will re-assess the speed limit through this section if the environment changes. For example, due to growth or development changing the way the road



		<p>is used, or if there are traffic signals, footpaths, driveways, or cycleways constructed making it more urban.</p> <p>We will change the permanent 100km/h speed to 80km/h now, and we can review the speed limit again when the infrastructure improvements are constructed (subject to funding approval). The traffic lights we are designing will support a 60km/h speed limit.</p> <p>Additionally, we will look at extending the current 50km/h zone further on SH3 Napier Rd past the retirement village as soon as possible. We acknowledge there is a clear change of environment in this section of road and there are vulnerable road users in the area.</p>
	The current 50km/hr speed zone could be extended east along Napier Road so that it includes the Bupa Retirement Village entrance.	We consider this a good suggestion as there is good rationale for extending the 50km/hr zone and a clear change in environment beyond this point. In order to make this change we are legally required to consult on this, which we will do as soon as possible.
Roberts Line intersection to Whakarongo	The speed limit should be lower than the proposed 80km/hr e.g., 60km/hr because of continued residential development between Palmerston North and Stoney Creek Road.	We are required to review speeds based on the current state of the road. Waka Kotahi will re-assess the speed limit through this section if the environment changes. For example, due to growth or development changing the way the road is used, or if there are traffic signals, footpaths, driveways, or cycleways constructed making it more urban.
Whakarongo School	There is a need for increased safety around Whakarongo School through a speed reduction and variable speed limit.	<p>We want to make the SH3/Stoney Creek Road intersection as safe as possible for the Whakarongo School community, tamariki, their whānau or caregivers, and school staff.</p> <p>The 60km/h variable speed limit, and the electronic speed limit signs, will reinforce driver expectations of the likely presence of children if they enter Stoney Creek Road.</p> <p>Palmerston North City Council have advised us they also intend to review the speed limit on Stoney Creek Road where the school is located and we will to continue to work with them to improve safety for everyone who uses this intersection.</p>
	The speed limit should be further reduced outside Whakarongo school.	<p>We know most children travel to school by car and are inside a vehicle at this intersection, rather than on foot. The speed reduction to 60km/h on school days, during peak school traffic times, should be sufficient to protect the students in the event of a crash when they are inside a vehicle.</p> <p>Palmerston North City Council have advised us they also intend to review the speed limit on Stoney Creek Road where the school is located and we will to continue to work with them to improve safety for everyone who uses this intersection.</p>
Whakarongo to Ashhurst	<p>The speed limit should be reduced to 80km/hr because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A reduced speed limit will enhance safety for cyclists.</li> <li>• There are many driveways, ROW's, and side roads along the highway. Access onto and off SH3 Napier Road is difficult and dangerous.</li> <li>• Continued residential growth between Palmerston North and Ashhurst.</li> <li>• A reduced speed limit will create a safer environment for school children.</li> <li>• Traffic will continue to Increase as Te Ahu a Turanga and the KiwiRail regional freight hub come online.</li> </ul>	<p>Regarding this stretch of road, we are balancing what we know from our technical assessment with how the community and stakeholders feel about the current speed limit. We know 80km/h is the safe and appropriate speed for this stretch of SH3 Napier Road. However, during the engagement phase of this speed review, we heard from the community that a speed reduction is not wanted, and we wish to talk further with our local stakeholders to better understand this stretch of road. We want to develop a shared understanding of what this state highway might look like in the future and work out what the best approach is to ensure it is safe.</p> <p>Additionally, there are passing lanes on this stretch of road, and we need to carefully consider how these would operate with vehicles travelling at 80km/h.</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficult for vehicles traveling east at 100 km/hr to suddenly slow down to 60km/hr as they approach Whakarongo School.</li> </ul>	We will have an opportunity to review this speed limit again when we construct infrastructure improvements on the corridor (subject to funding).
	The current 100km/hr speed limit should be retained.	<p>Our technical assessment shows 80km/h is the safe and appropriate speed limit for this stretch of road because of the high traffic volumes, crash history, risk of high-speed, head-on, and loss-of-control crashes.</p> <p>Thankfully, there no one was killed in crashes on this section of SH3 Napier Road between 2011-2020, however there were crashes resulting in serious injury. Our vision is an Aotearoa where no one is killed or seriously injured on our roads.</p> <p>We will leave the speed limit as it is on this section for now as we want to talk further with our local stakeholders about this stretch of road as described above. We will be able to review the speed again when infrastructure improvements are constructed (subject to funding).</p>
<b>Ashhurst township</b>	The speed limit should be lower through this section of the corridor e.g., 60km/h or 50km/hr.	<p>We considered whether we could propose 50km/h for SH3 through Ashhurst township, however this speed limit is suited to a highly urbanised town centre. The current road environment on SH3 through Ashhurst is not built up enough to warrant this level of reduction.</p> <p>We believe people will comply with a 60km/h speed limit and it is a safe and appropriate speed for this road at present.</p>
	The 60km/hr zone at Ashhurst township should start west of Hacketts Road.	The roadside development is part of what determines the speed environment and the subsequent posted speed limit. The section of SH3 around Hacketts Road does not have much development when compared with the section running through Ashhurst, so does not warrant a 60km/h speed limit.
	People are still using York Street to exit off the highway and this is concerning	Waka Kotahi and Palmerston North City Council have put in measures to reduce the traffic using York Street. We are confident the small amount of traffic at this intersection should be able to operate safely.
	Speed indicators would be helpful at Ashhurst township	Waka Kotahi will review the speed through Ashhurst after the new speed limit is implemented and can install these if necessary.
	<p>There will be noise concerns /engine breaking with a speed reduction.</p> <p>The start of the 60km/hr zone is too close to the residential area.</p>	We find the noise from trucks is more commonly from rattling and standard braking from older truck models, rather than engine breaking. We will monitor this and consider installing an 'advanced 80 ahead' sign if noise continues to be an issue.
	General concern for pedestrians and cyclists using this stretch of SH3 Napier Road.	A lower speed will provide more time to make decisions, judge distances and to stop if necessary. This means the road will be much safer for everyone, including pedestrians and cyclists.
<b>Ashhurst Bridge</b>	It does not make sense to reduce the speed limit between Ashhurst and the SH57 intersection when the speed limit on SH57 is 100km/h.	The speed limits on SH57 Ashhurst to Shannon will likely also be reviewed in the future.

## 5. DECISION

The table below shows the recommendations Waka Kotahi formally consulted on between 6 April and 6 May 2022.

The submissions did not identify any issues that Waka Kotahi had not already considered. A number of submissions were about the extension of the 50km/hr speed limit at the Palmerston North urban boundary along SH3 Napier Rd. We consider this a good suggestion as there is good rationale for extending the 50km/hr zone and a clear change in environment beyond this point. In order to make this change we are legally required to consult on this, which we will do this as soon as possible.

The outcome of the speed review was in line with the proposed speed limit changes, and the permanent speed limits outlined below will come into effect on Thursday 23 June 2022.

Stakeholders will be notified by letter and the public are being notified via media release, newspaper and radio advertising, and social media ahead of the new speed limits signs being installed and the new speed limits taking effect.

When the new speed limits take effect, the area will be monitored to ensure the new permanent speed limits and supporting treatments are working effectively and to determine if any further changes are required.

The following new speed limits will apply from 23 June 2022.

In addition, we intend to run a separate consultation as soon as possible on extending the Palmerston North urban boundary along SH3 Napier Rd, past the retirement village entry to extend the 50km/hr speed limit.

Approximate location	Existing speed limit	New speed limit
Palmerston North to Roberts Line intersection (20m north of Sutton Place to 190m east of Roberts Line).	100 / 80 (temp)	80km/h
Roberts Line intersection to Whakarongo (190m east of Roberts Line to 200m west of Stoney Creek Road).	100km/h	80km/h
Whakarongo School (200m west of Stoney Creek Road to 280m east of Stoney Creek Road).	100km/h	80/60 VSL
Ashhurst Township (350m east of Hacketts Road to 500m south of Cambridge Avenue Street).	80 / 50 (temp)	60km/h
Ashhurst Bridge (500m south of Cambridge Avenue to 160m northwest of State Highway 57).	100	80km/hr

Table 2: Existing and new speed limits

### 3 Napier Road new permanent speeds



## 6. SUBMISSIONS

You can view the submissions we received for this speed review [here](#).