



SH30 TIKITERE TO WHAKATĀNE SPEED REVIEW

Engagement summary

WAKA KOTAHI NZ TRANSPORT AGENCY

SEPTEMBER 2021

SPEED REVIEW STATE HIGHWAY 30 TIKITERE TO WHAKATĀNE

Too many people are being killed and seriously injured in crashes on State Highway 30 between Tikitere and Whakatāne.

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency has been looking at how lower speed limits could help to reduce the likelihood and severity of crashes along this route. To help us fully understand the issues on these roads we asked locals to give us their views on speed on this road.

Between 2010 and 2019, 10 people died and 73 were seriously injured on State Highway 30 (SH30) from Tikitere through to Whakatāne¹. There have also been a high number of minor and non-injury crashes during this period. Most of the crashes have been run off road, rear end and head-on. Speed has been a factor in a great number of reported crashes. The safety features of a road and the speed vehicles travel on it influence both the risk of a crash and whether it is survivable.

We've heard concerns from the community about the speed people are travelling along SH30 which indicates the current speed limits are not safe for the way people use the road. During June and July 2021, Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency engaged with the local community and road user industry groups about the current speed limits on SH30 from Tikitere through to Whakatāne.

What we did

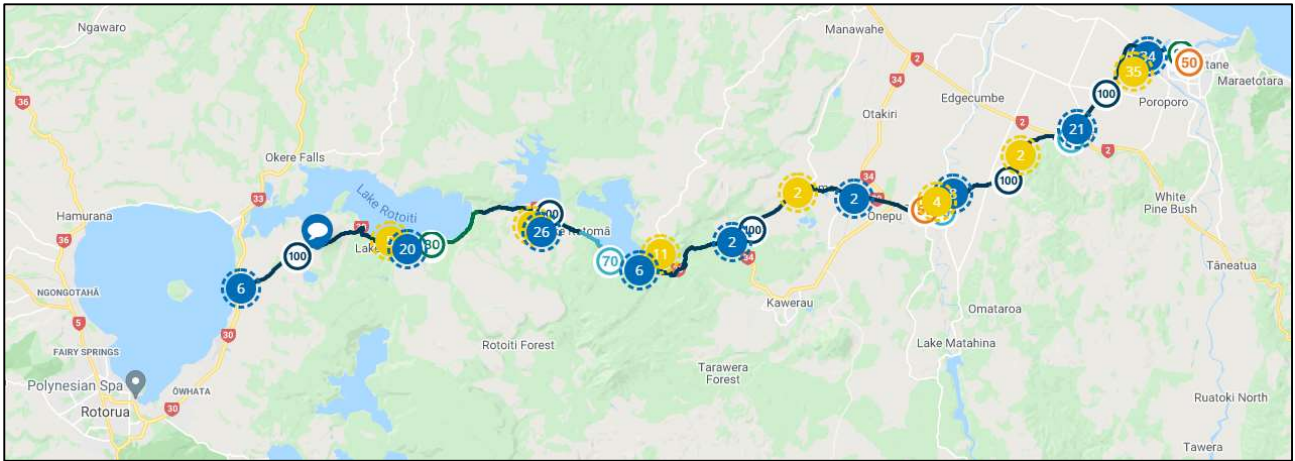
Prior to undertaking the engagement part of the speed review process, Waka Kotahi completed a speed management technical assessment for the project area. Through the engagement process we obtained 508 pieces of feedback which contained valuable local knowledge on how people use the road and their concerns. This, together with the technical assessment, will help determine if a speed limit change is the best approach to improve road safety; where new speed limits could begin or end; and if any other safety improvements might be required.

We received the following feedback through a range of engagement approaches:

- 304 written comments from three drop-in sessions held at Rotoiti, Whakatāne and Awakeri
- 43 emails
- 270 comments and suggestions on Social Pinpoint (online forum) with a further
- 552 interactions from people liking or disliking specific comments.

We also talked to businesses and organisations in the area at a stakeholder event, which included representatives from Whakatāne District Council, AA, freight industry, NZ Police, local community board, Awakeri School and cycling groups. We also engaged with representatives from local iwi, hapū and marae.

¹ CAS data for 2011 – 2020 indicates: 9 fatalities and 76 serious injuries



Comments and suggestions from Social Pinpoint (online forum)



Community drop-in session in Rotoiti

What we heard

When reviewing the feedback, there were very specific locations mentioned where speed or safety was a concern. To capture this feedback, we divided SH30 into nine sections. These are defined in **Table 1** below:

Table 1 SH30 Speed Management Priority Areas

Section	Location
0	SH30 in general
1	Whakatāne roundabout area
2	Whakatāne Shaw and Mill Road sections
3	Pacific Coast SH – Thornton Road intersection
4	Awakeri section
5	Te Teko section
6	SH34 / SH30 intersection
7	Lake Rotomā section
8	Lake Rotoiti section
9	Tikitere section

We heard that most of the community are in favour of lowering the speed limit across SH30, however many also want to see improvements to make the roads safer being implemented. Here are a few comments as received across the various road sections:

Section 1: Whakatāne Roundabout

“Build a new bridge. If planning for it starts now it might actually be completed before traffic congestion and road rage accidents become unmanageable.”

“Footpaths are too narrow for cyclists and pedestrians to share. Growing number of active users with high levels of growth and development to west of river. Needs clip-on shared use path.”

“The existing 80 km/h speed limit between the Gateway Drive and the town bridge is too fast for the existing environment.”

Section 2: Whakatāne Shaw Road and Mill Road

“The new subdivision has increased traffic at this intersection with SH30. It is difficult and dangerous for traffic to turn safely into Shaw Road.”

“100km/hour is definitely too fast here now, far too much traffic, the road is too thin, not enough room for turn ins to Shaw Rd from either direction! Maybe a roundabout here and at Mill Rd? Also extend the 80km/hour speed limit out to the Tauranga Turn off”

Section 3: Pacific Coast Highway – Thornton Road intersection

“People pulling out of Paroa Rd onto SH30 heading into Whakatane are stopping in the middle of the road and not merging. A few accidents here. My suggestion is a proper merging lane from Te Paroa Rd onto SH30 into town and reduction of speed coming from SH30 toward the intersection turn off to Tauranga that goes past includes and goes past Huna Rd to consider the Strawberry Farm traffic.”

“80 km/hr from Pacific Highway into town.”

“Widen road, two lanes all the way”

“Roundabout at Thornton Rd / SH30 intersection. Connect Paroa Rd to this roundabout as well.”

Section 4: Awakeri

“The main concern is for the kids at Awakeri School. Coming out of the school heading towards Whakatāne is dangerous, cars are already nearing 100 km/h before they even hit the sign and we have to speed up from 0 to 100 in 5/10 seconds!”

“Something needs to be done at this intersection every day I come past here from Awakeri to Whakatāne and cars constantly pull out in front of me and I’m sometime going 100km (which is the speed limit) maybe a merging lane and lower speed limit. But something needs to be done!!”

Section 5: Te Teko

“The school buses pickup and drop of kids outside and opposite the marae, and traffic is still travelling too fast transitioning down from 100km/hr from the east!”

“Why are the drivers driving that slowly? reducing it to 70 or 80- would only benefit the slow driver.”

“50km/h speed zone on eastern side of Te Teko on SH30 to be pushed further out to include the sports fields”

Section 6: SH34/SH30 intersection

“Highly dangerous intersection especially at rush hours with cars turning both ways. Either a roundabout or reduced speed limit required here”

“SH30 at SH34 and Te Teko should be 80 km/hr with warning that vehicles are crossing the road.”

Section 7: Rotomā

“I would support a reduction to 60 km/h right through Rotomā to at least the foot of the Rotomā Hills.”

“Because there are no footpaths on this section of SH30 foot traffic is high especially during the summer at this very busy beach. Cars also park on both roadsides causing great danger due to the reduced visibility for both drivers and pedestrians.”

“This is an incredibly dangerous corner (Rotomā Community Hall) with recent fatalities, something needs to be done to make it safer (speed or safety infrastructure)”

Section 8: Rotoiti

“Would it be possible to make a proper pavement to enable us to walk to Hongis Track from Morehu Rd?”

“This just increases driver frustration; this is a main route to get between Whakatāne and Rotorua. Also, this is the safest place to pass if required. Unfortunately, slow drivers don't pull over to allow people doing the speed limit to pass.”

Section 9: Tikitere

“Cars often park on the southern side in the median strip adjacent to the gravel pit, which is unsafe. It isn't wide enough to do this and dangerous for people getting in and out of cars.”

“Could the 80km signs be moved east past Brunswick Drive? Seems strange that they were put before the road as it would make it safer for vehicles coming in and out of Brunswick Drive.”

“The entire stretch from Curtis Road to just past the Hinehopu Golf Club should reduce all the way down to 60 km/h. The current 100 km/h to Ruatō is too fast and dangerous.”

Local iwi, hapū and marae representatives

The project team worked alongside mana whenua to understand their concerns. We heard from representatives from Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Te Rangiunuora, Ngāti Te Takinga, Ngāti Hineora, Ngāti

Tanateatutahi Kawiti, Ngāti Rongomai, Ngāti Hinekura, Te Tatau O Te Arawa, Te Pou O Taranui Ngāti Makino, Taurua marae, Whakareia marae, Hohowai marae, Tapuaekura marae, Te Waiti marae and Ngā Pumanawa marae.

Serious concerns were raised about the SH30 / Paroa Road intersection. High speeds and a high volume of traffic on SH30 make it dangerous and unsafe for students and their whanau to get to and from the Kura.

Along SH30 between Rotomā and Lake Ōkātina concerns raised were in relation to their tamariki, community connectivity, access to marae and traffic volumes in peak summer periods.

Specific concerns were raised in relation to the speed limit past the Kura by Lake Ōkātina, Te Kōhanga Reo o Te Hikuwai, Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Rotoiti and Lake Rotomā School. Iwi want to see lower speeds with variable speed signs implemented.

It was also mentioned that speed limits should be more consistent, such as 60km/h from Matahi all the way through the built-up areas and 80km/h alongside residential houses is too high.

The road currently cuts the community in two and makes it unsafe for tamariki to get around their community such as school, the lakeside, shop and sports club. There is a need for better footpaths and safer crossing points/pedestrian refuge islands.

There are seven marae along the route, six with direct access onto SH30. Events and tangi result in large gatherings, it gets very busy and cars park along the roadside. There's a need for temporary lower speeds and signage while these events are underway as current speed limits are unsafe.

Other concerns noted the volume of traffic is increasing, commercial and commuter traffic driving too fast through their communities and the Lake Ōkātina section being used as a 'drag strip'. This community sees a huge influx of people during the summer to enjoy the lake. People also mentioned access to Hinehopu Golf Club and the Rugby Club.

Whakatāne District Council and Bay of Plenty Regional Council

Council staff and elected members stressed the need for speed reductions as well as improved designs at various high traffic intersections due to higher demand. There were many comments about the need to work together to ensure all roads have safe speed limits and reductions aren't pushing more traffic on to side roads.

Local Schools

There are several schools along the corridor including Te Kura Kaupapa Māori O Rotoiti, Te Kura o te Teko, Lake Rotomā School, Awakeri School and Te Kura o te Paroa.

We heard from a number of the schools, and parents of school children, requesting speed limits be reduced near schools, drop off zones and pedestrian areas where children walk or bicycle to school. The need to implement variable speed signs and safer footpaths/shared paths for children along SH30 was also mentioned.

New Zealand Police

Police said driver behaviour and road conditions need to be considered along with speed reductions to make the road safer. Consistency across speed limits would assist with compliance. The need to place warning signs advising drivers of upcoming changes in speeds (e.g., slow down) would also assist, especially along the winding lakes areas and well before reaching a school, for instance.

Sentiments and key themes

- **Speeding / too high-speed limits**

Overall, the vast majority of people **support reducing speed** limits along SH30 at key areas. Many locations were described as almost impossible to safely travel at the posted speed limit. Some of the common themes about where and how speed needs to be reduced include:

- High speed stretches of road, dangerous intersections and bends where drivers take chances to turn on or off the road.

- Schools – child safety is a major concern, particularly during school drop off and pick up times outside the schools and at the bus stops located around the lakes. It's particularly concerning during the summer months when there is an influx of visitors. People would like to see variable speed zones introduced at the schools.
 - More consistent and safer speeds to slow down traffic, to discourage drivers from accelerating and decelerating at tight corners and along the straights.
 - Scenic locations along SH30 are popular for visitors. These include tourist spots and hiking trails where people randomly turn on and off the state highway where traffic is moving at high speed.
 - Lowering the speed limit in areas where there are houses, business and shops immediately alongside SH30, making it safer for people to turn on/off the state highway and to create more space for turning vehicles.
- Unsafe speeds at intersections, especially during peak traffic periods. People take chances to turn onto SH30, and then wait in the middle of the road for a gap in the traffic.

- **Driver Behaviour**

Many comments were made about driver behaviour, saying this is a big safety issue on SH30. Dangerous drivers are a concern, including:

- dangerous overtaking
- not observing/respecting the current speed limit (especially with various speed changes alongside the lakes)
- not driving to the conditions
- slow drivers causing others to become frustrated and more likely to take risks and overtake in unsafe locations (because of very few slow vehicle bays or slip lanes).

- **Other safety concerns and design improvements**

Many people told us that other improvements could be used to make the road safer. Design changes are supported by many at:

- Pacific Coast Highway Thornton Road / SH30 intersection.
- Shaw Road / SH30 intersection.
- Mill Road / SH30 intersection.
- Awakeri School.
- Awakeri shops.
- Te Teko Road / SH30 intersection.
- Rotoiti section.
- The Lakeside.
- Boat ramps.
- Rotomā.
- Tikitere – Brunswick Drive intersection.

- **Road condition and maintenance**

Several people expressed safety concerns about the condition and design of the road – particularly where it is narrow, such as alongside the lakes. There is a perceived lack of space for heavy vehicles to safely pull over or turn on and off the state highway.

People were also concerned about general wear and tear on the road, potholes and resealing being addressed on a more regular basis. Other safety concerns include potholes which fill with water during rain events, and surface flooding in high-speed locations such as the stretch along Awakeri.

- **Gazetted signage, policing and enforcement**

The current speed signs located near schools need to be further out, so people reduce their speed sooner. Concerns were raised about policing and enforcement, saying this is paramount so people adhere to the speed limits and drive to the road directions. Driver behaviour and education on road safety are also needed.

What's going to happen next?

Changing speed limits is a legal process and there are numerous steps we must follow under the Speed Management Guide and the Setting of Speed Limits Rule.

We've read all the feedback provided during this engagement phase. We are using these insights along with the technical analysis to finalise our recommendation for what the safe and appropriate speeds should be for this road. The next step will be to commence the required formal consultation with our recommendations. It is expected that the announcement of the consultation dates will be made shortly.

The consultation will give local communities, and other interested parties an opportunity to let us know if there are any other factors that we should consider when making our decision on the safe and appropriate speeds.

Information on this speed review, including future consultation, can be accessed via our website:

[Consultations | Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency \(nzta.govt.nz\)](https://www.nzta.govt.nz/consultations)