

2 Mangatarata to Katikati



Too many people are being killed and seriously injured on State Highway 2 (SH2) from Mangatarata through to Katikati and we want to make it a safer road for everyone. Between 2010 and 2019, 21 people died and 95 were seriously injured on this road.

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency has been looking at how lower speed limits could help to reduce the likelihood and severity of crashes on this road.

To help us fully understand the issues on this road, we asked locals to give us their views on the current speed limits.

What we did

We had many useful conversations with local people at drop-in sessions held in March and April 2021 in Katikati, Mangatarata, Paeroa, Waihi and Ngatea.

These sessions helped us to understand community concerns in relation to safety and speed in the area. The community were also able to provide feedback online via social pinpoint, or through email or letter.

We received:



224

written comments at the drop-in sessions.



29

emails



45

comments and suggestions on Social Pinpoint (online forum)



25

letters and drawings from Waihi Central School children



2

petitions with a total of 154 signatures



We also talked to businesses and organisations in the area, including local councils, AA, Road Transport Association, NZ Police and Fire and Emergency NZ. We also had discussions with local iwi and schools.

What we heard

There was both support and opposition for reducing the speed on the highways in this review.



'Please reduce the speed all the way from Waihi to Katikati and beyond, I no longer visit my daughter in Tauranga for fear of being in a car crash. I can no longer risk my life, I have had too many close encounters of vehicles dangerously overtaking and also crossing centre line.'



'We wish for the speed limit within the town 50km/h area to be lowered to 40km/h during school drop offs and pick up times. We feel that the speed of the through traffic is way too fast at times mainly from people not obeying speed limits. We feel it is only a matter of time before someone will get hurt due to a speeding vehicle. The speed of some trucks at pick up time is quite scary.'

'Straight and good road don't reduce speed.'



'80km/h is a dawdling speed which encourages distraction and dangerous driving. For example, greater risk of phone usage and tailgating. Why widen the road if only to reduce the speed?'

A petition was received from 46 residents who strongly support a speed reduction in Karangahake. The key themes from the petition included; support for reducing the speed to 60km/h or less, speed concerns near tourist spots and the school, requests for double yellow lines, turning bays and safer crossing points.

Karangahake School Board of Trustees

'In favour of the proposed speed reduction along the stretch of road starting at Rahu Rd in Mackaytown and along past School Road through Karangahake Gorge. The area surrounding School Road should be marked as the most important as there is a blind corner. Reduce to 60/50km/h and consider marking this area as a school zone. Tourism near the trail have increased the number of traffic accidents including fatalities. This can be attributed to multiple side roads and entrances to carparks along the small stretch and driver inattention.'

There was also a gathering of local community members, Hauraki District Councillors and the Deputy Mayor in Waihi in February 2021, to protest about the lack of progress in speed reductions for Waihi. The community demand for a speed reduction in this area is due to the increase in traffic, housing developments and children's play areas along the state highway through Waihi. A petition with 108 signatures was presented to Waka Kotahi following the protest.

Local iwi

Specific concerns were raised about the Karangahake Gorge area including speeding, children crossing the road, people parking dangerously and the increase in tourist numbers. There is also a risk of increased use of Old Tauranga Road, which is less safe. There was support for 50 km/h or 60 km/h through the gorge, a reduction through Ngatea from 70km/h to 50km/h, extend the 90km/h along SH2 down to the SH2/SH25 Mangatarata intersection and reduce to 60km/h coming into Waihi.

NZ Police

Supportive of speed reductions but asked for consistency so the speed limits were self-explaining, therefore more people would comply. We must work with district councils to ensure we don't encourage more people to take less safer routes.

Fire and Emergency

The road layout needs to be considered at the same time as speed reductions to allow emergency vehicle access. They have concerns around the use of the side roads if the main highway speeds were reduced.

Automobile Association

The Waikato AA were not supportive of any speed reductions and believe the roads have good visibility and noted the speed through both Athenree Gorge and Karangahake Gorge has already been reduced. They also commented that varying speeds along the corridor, create confusion for their members.

Road Transport Association

The Road Transport Association commented that signage needs to be adequate and the roads need to be self-explaining. Having 40km/h through some townships is causing issues and confusion for road users.

Local councils

Council staff and councillors stressed on the need for speed reductions through townships and near schools – particularly the Karangahake Gorge, Paeroa and Waihi. There were many comments about the need to work together to ensure all roads have safe speeds and reductions on the state highways don't push more traffic on to local roads.

Local schools

We heard from a number of schools, pupils and parents. All asked for reduced speed limits near schools, drop off zones and areas children use to walk, bike or scooter to school.

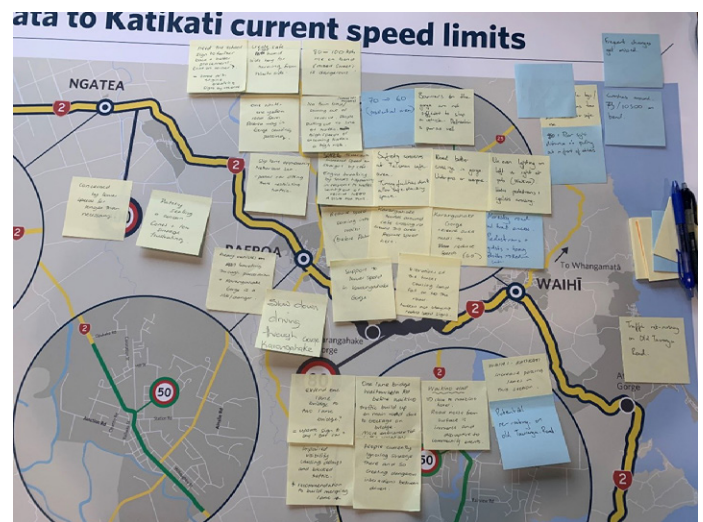
General public

The general public main feedback themes were the speeds through townships were too high. The main townships mentioned were Waihi, Karangahake, Ngatea and Netherton. Other concerns raised included high speeds put vulnerable road users, ie children and the elderly, at risk.

'50km/h from much further back is needed in Waihi township. You have a playground, school traffic, a subdivision and a retirement village through there.'

There were also consistent comments about slowly reducing the speed as local townships are approached.

'Gradient speed reductions please - no 100-50km.'



Area	Key feedback received
Mangatarata	There was a small amount of support for leaving the speed at 100 km/h here. While others would prefer to see it reduced to 90 km/h but not for it to be lowered to 80 km/h.
Ngatea	For those who supported a speed limit reduction, there was preference for this to happen as vehicles entered the township as opposed to changing the open road speed limit.
Kerepehi	There were concerns raised here about the junction causing lots of crashes so a reduction in speed could help. For those who did not support a speed reduction there was one comment made that the road should be made safer first and if this is not possible then a reduction to 90 km/h was preferred.
Netherton	Support for reducing the speed limit. There were concerns raised about speeding near the school. A request was made to include a school speed zone with electronic signage. Reducing the speed to 90 km/h outside the town was suggested.
Paeroa	Support for reducing the speed limit. For those who did not support a speed reduction there was a preference to retain the 100 km/h speed outside of the township. There were also suggestions made about slowly reducing the speed instead of the speed being 100 km/h to 50 km/h
Karangahake	There was support for a speed limit reduction through this area, particularly in relation to the stretch of road past the gorge and the school. A speed of 60 km/h was suggested for this stretch of state highway. There were also suggestions made to improve the road such as removing or creating more turning bays, adding more double yellow lines, improved signage in the area and including a school speed zone. Due to the busy tourist nature of this area, parking of vehicles was also commented on as creating more safety issues in regard to visibility.
Waikino	There was support for a speed limit reduction here, with a suggestion made to lower the speed to 50/60 km/h coming in the township. There were also concerns raised about the noise the current road surface creates.
Waihi	There was support for a speed limit reduction, so that the 70 km/h area was instead reduced to 50 km/h. This was because of the playground, school traffic, subdivision and retirement village that are located in this area. A suggestion was also made to extend the existing 70 km/h area so that it starts earlier on this part of the state highway. A request was also made to include safer crossing points in Waihi particularly near Rocket Park.
Athenree Gorge/ Tanners Point	There was a mix of those who would and would not support a speed limit reduction through here. Concerns were raised about safety in the area particularly around Athenree Gorge where a speed limit of 80 km/h was suggested. There was support for greater investment in other safety and intersection improvements.

Area	Key feedback received
Tahawai	There was strong concerns raised about speeding through this area. Comments were made about a greater police presence being required and a reduction in speed would also be supported. Congestion can be an issue at the intersection, and it was noted that vehicles accessing driveways is a dangerous concern.
Katikati	There was a mix of comments from those who would and would not support a speed limit reduction. For those who supported a reduction 90 km/h was suggested instead of 100 km/h with 70 km/h coming into the township and then 50 km/h in Katikati township.

Some Waka Kotahi responses to feedback

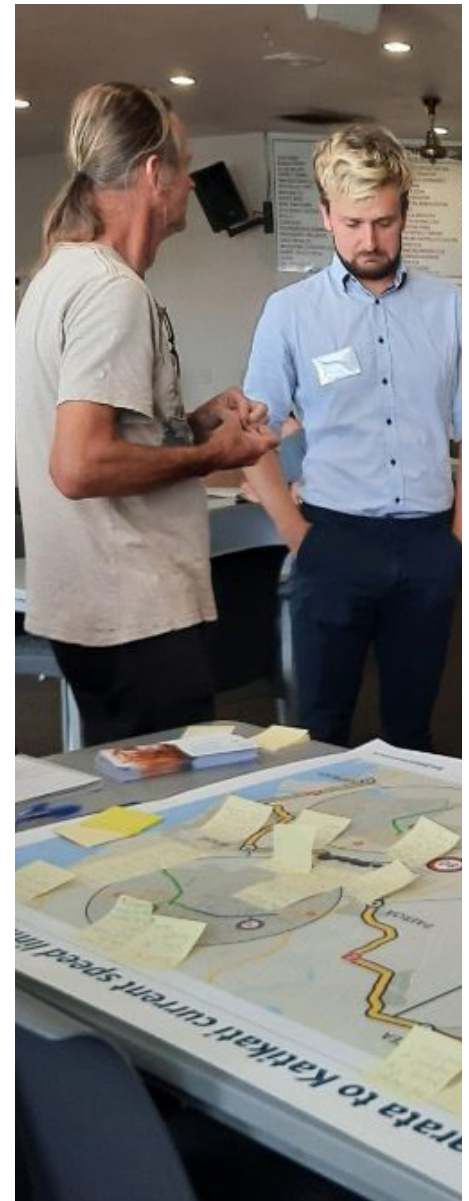
- There have been 21 deaths and 95 serious injuries between 2010 and 2019 along State Highway 2 between Mangatarata and Katikati. We want to make State Highway 2 between Mangatarata and Katikati safer for everyone.
- Community members in Ngatea, Paeroa, Waihi and Katikati have expressed their concerns regarding high speeds through their townships. This is affecting safety and comfortability accessing businesses, schools, community venues and homes. By reviewing these speeds we hope to resolve these concerns.
- Poor parking discipline, unsafe turning and high traffic density have increased road safety concerns in Waikino and Karagahake. Following COVID-19 changes, this has transitioned from seasonal concerns to year-round issues.
- Speed limit reductions may cause trip diversions which are of concern to township businesses. These diversions may lead travellers to less safe local roads.

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 you have 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 locals, and others who are interested and affected, 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 at www.nzta.govt.nz/about-us/consultations or by emailing waikato.speed.reviews@nzta.govt.nz

