

REPORT 2
(1215/52/IM)

PROPOSED SPEED LIMIT REDUCTION: LAMBTON QUAY AND WILLIS STREET

1. Purpose of Report

To seek the Committee's agreement to recommend to Council that it agree to lower the speed limit on Lambton Quay and part of Willis Street from 50 to 30 kilometres an hour (km/h).

2. Executive Summary

Following a recommendation by the Wellington District Coroner in July 2005 to lower the legal speed limit on Willis Street from 50 to 30km/h, and in line with the Council's own SaferRoads project, officers have developed and consulted on a proposal to lower the speed limit on the busiest pedestrian section of Willis Street together with Lambton Quay.

The result of public consultation and consultation with key industry stakeholders shows strong support for the proposal.

The proposed 30km/h speed limit fits the criteria specified in the Land Transport Rule: Setting of Speed Limits (2003).

The officers have followed the detailed procedural requirements of the Rule and the Council's Consolidated Bylaw: Part 14 (Speed Limits).

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1. Receive the information.*
- 2. Recommend to Council that it agree to make a resolution under clause 14.3.4 of the Wellington City Consolidated Bylaw to set a 30km/h speed limit on the following sections of road:*

<i>Willis Street</i>	<i>From a point 30metres north of its intersection with Boulcott Street to its intersection with Lambton Quay</i>
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<i>Mercer Street</i>	<i>From its intersection with Willis Street to a point 55 metres east of its intersection with Willis Street</i>
<i>Willeston Street</i>	<i>From its intersection with Willis Street to a point 25metres east of its intersection with Willis Street</i>
<i>Customhouse Quay</i>	<i>From its intersection with Lambton Quay to its intersection with Hunter Street</i>
<i>Lambton Quay</i>	<i>From its intersection with Willis Street to a point 30metres south of its intersection with Bowen Street</i>
<i>Lambton Quay</i>	<i>From its intersection with Whitmore Street to its intersection with Bunny Street</i>
<i>Bunny Street</i>	<i>From its intersection with Lambton Quay to its intersection with Thorndon Quay</i>
<i>Lambton Quay (Lambton Terminus)</i>	<i>From its intersection with Bunny Street to its intersection with Mulgrave Street</i>

3. *Note the results of the consultation process i.e. 143 Submissions were received, of which 101 supported the proposal, 30 were opposed while 12 agreed to a lower limit with some modifications.*
4. *Note that the process to change a speed limit as described in both the Land Transport Rule: Setting of Speed Limits (2003) and Part 14 (Speed Limits) of the Wellington City Consolidated Bylaw, has been followed.*
5. *Note that in accordance with the Land Transport Rule: Setting of Speed Limits (2003) and Part 14 (Speed Limits) of the Wellington City Consolidated Bylaw, the resolution will be recorded in a Register of Speed Limits and the relevant speed limits on the Council's Speed Limit Plans cease to have effect.*

4. Background

4.1 Setting Speed Limits

In February 2003 the Government introduced the Land Transport Rule: Setting of Speed Limits (2003). This Rule allows road controlling authorities to set enforceable speed limits, including permanent speed limits less than 50km/h, on roads within their jurisdiction.

In October 2004 a new speed limit setting Bylaw was approved by Wellington City Council. This was a requirement under the Rule and allows the Council to make amendments to speed limits by way of resolution on all roads under its control and in certain designated locations specified in the Bylaw.

4.2 Process

The process to change speed limits is defined in the Rule and Part 14 of the Bylaw. In summary, the process requires the following;

- A review of the area to determine the suitability of the proposed limits
- Consultation with affected parties and stakeholders
- Formal adoption by the road controlling authority, and
- Notification of the changes before the new limits take effect.

4.3 Setting Speed Limits on Lambton Quay and Willis Street

In July 2005 the Wellington District Coroner, Garry Evans wrote to the Council recommending that the speed limit on Willis Street be lowered. His recommendation followed an investigation into the death of a student on the Willis Street bus-only lane. As part of his investigation he looked at all reported pedestrian crashes along Willis Street and Lambton Quay and concluded that while not many vehicles exceed the posted speed limit of 50km/h, when they do so they are travelling at a speed where the survival rate of a pedestrian if struck is extremely low. Speeding is not only a major contributor to accidents but also increases the severity of injuries especially if the victims are pedestrians.

5. Discussion

5.1 Problem Definition

There have been a high number of reported crashes along Lambton Quay and Willis Street with 104 reported in the five year period from 2000-2004. Thirty three percent of these involved a pedestrian. There has been one fatal crash in the last five years.

The observed speed of vehicles in Lambton Quay and Willis Street shows that the mean speed is currently around 35km/h. The Land Transport Rule: Setting of Speed Limits (2003), allows for limits less than 50km/h to be set provided that the observed mean speed of passing vehicles is within 5km/h of the proposed speed limit.

5.2 Lowering the Operating Speed as a Critical Tool

The safest environment for all road users is when operating speeds are compatible with that environment, for example in a highly pedestrianised area, speeds need to be matched to the needs of the pedestrian. A combination of tools is required to achieve this, including the lowering of speed limits and traffic calming measures.

The relationship between speed and injury severity is particularly critical for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists. For example, pedestrians have been shown

to have a 90 percent chance of survival when struck by a car travelling at 30km/h or below, but less than 50 percent chance of surviving an impact of 45km/h.

Investigations have shown that for every 1km/h vehicle speeds are reduced, a two to three percent reduction in the number of crashes can be expected.

Pedestrian counts have shown that Lambton Quay is one of New Zealand's busiest streets. A lower speed limit will be more appropriate to the environment where large numbers of pedestrians are required to share the road corridor with substantial volumes of vehicular traffic, in particular buses.

Lowering the speed limit will be compatible with other planned reductions to speed limits being brought forward through the SaferRoads project. The speed limit reduction proposal has received strong support from key industry stakeholders, including the Police, Land Transport NZ and Greater Wellington.

Other engineering measures proposed to reduce the number of crashes along the route include raised crossing points at the intersection of side roads off Lambton Quay and reducing the distance pedestrians need to cross at traffic signals by extending the footpath out into the carriageway. This reduces the pedestrians' exposure to traffic and the time needed to cross the road. It also allows shorter signal phase times and reduced delays to traffic.

5.3 Proposal

It is proposed to lower the speed limit along Lambton Quay and part of Willis Street from 50km/h to 30km/h.

The proposed new speed limit will apply to Willis Street between Manners Street and Lambton Quay; Customhouse Quay between Lambton Quay and Hunter Street; all of Mercer Street and all of Lambton Quay including the Lambton Bus Interchange. To enable the signs to be installed in sensible positions, short sections of the side roads will also need to be restricted. The speed limit on Bowen and Whitmore Streets will remain at 50km/h. It is therefore proposed to stop and start the Lambton Quay 30km/h restriction either side of the intersection.

The proposed restriction will apply to all vehicles at all times, as current legislation does not allow for part time restrictions in this type of environment.

The total distance affected by the proposed new speed limit is approximately 1300 metres. The roads affected by this proposal are under the jurisdiction of Wellington City Council.

5.4 Consultation

Consultation was carried out in accordance with clause 7.1 of the Rule. A four week period of community consultation was carried out during November 2005. In total, 143

submissions were received, of which 101 supported the proposal, 30 were opposed while 12 agreed to a lower limit with some modifications.

Copies of all public submissions are reproduced in Appendix 1.

The following table summarises the responses received:-

Do you believe vehicles travel too fast along Lambton Quay and Willis Street?	Yes	No			
	100	41			
Do you believe it is appropriate to reduce the speed limit on Lambton Quay and Willis Street to 30km/hr?	Yes	No			
	99	44			
If no, then what speed limit do you feel is appropriate?	5km	20km	30km	40km	50km
	1	2	1	9	30

The results demonstrate a strong community support for the proposed changes.

Submitters were also given an opportunity to have their submission heard and nineteen chose to do so. However only the five submitters below presented their submission to the Committee on Thursday 9 March 2006:

- 1) Alex Grey representing the NZ Automobile Association
- 2) Paula Warren who spoke as a public transport user
- 3) Alistair Smith representing Cycle Aware Wellington
- 4) Mike Mellor representing Living Streets Aotearoa
- 5) Thamil Ramasamy a small business owner.

All five submitters supported the proposal to lower the speed limit, but each emphasised that it needed to be coupled with engineering and enforcement. Some spoke about the need for Council to allow for improved access for pedestrians and cyclists while others thought the whole area could be improved aesthetically.

The 30 submitters who objected to the proposal had a number of reasons, a common theme for objection was that it is buses that cause the problems and that their speed should be limited and not penalise all motorists. Others felt that if vehicle speeds were reduced then pedestrians would be encouraged to cross the road away from the formal crossings. A third point that was noted was that it did not make sense to have the limit apply at all times when the problem only exists during the day.

In addition to the public consultation, councils are required to consult with key stakeholders and this was undertaken during February 2006. As a result, favourable support has been received from New Zealand Police, Land Transport New Zealand and the New Zealand Automobile Association. The Wellington Regional Road Transport Association do not support the proposal, as they believe their members will be adversely affected when making deliveries off peak as it will slow them down.

These submissions have been reproduced in Appendix 2.

Officers do not believe the objections would justify not proceeding with the changes.

Legal advice

Advice from Phillips Fox was sought as this is the first resolution for a change to a speed limit to be passed under the Speed Limit Bylaw. They advise that the process followed is correct.

5.5 Implementation

Subsequent to approval by Council, there are a number of procedural requirements to be followed before the new speed limit can be introduced. Before the speed limit takes effect the Council must notify the Director of Land Transport New Zealand and the Commissioner of Police. A public awareness campaign targeting the change to the limit will also take place. Areas to which the bylaw speed limit applies are required to be marked by notices and signs in accordance with the requirements of clause 14.3.7 of the Bylaw and as required by the Land Transport Rule: Setting of Speed Limits (2003). These are expected to take around 4 to 6 weeks once the Council has resolved to change the Bylaw and the new speed limit is expected to be operative by the end of May 2006.

The speed limits will continue to be enforced by the Police.

6. Conclusion

The benefits of lowering vehicle speeds to reduce the number of crashes along Lambton Quay and Willis Street have been established.

The process for setting speed limits is defined in the Land Transport Rule: Setting of Speed Limits (2003), and in the Council's Bylaws: Part 14 (Speed Limits). This process has been followed throughout. The proposed speed limit satisfies the criteria set by the Rule.

Consultation with the public and key stakeholders shows strong support for the proposed speed limit change. A change in the speed limit will be accompanied by a public awareness campaign. The change will be recorded in a Register of Speed Limits and the relevant speed limits on the Council's Speed Limit Plans will cease to have effect.

The Committee is therefore requested to agree to recommend to Council that it agrees to the proposed change to the legal speed limit on Lambton Quay and part of Willis Street as detailed in the recommendations.

Contact Officer: *Paul Barker – Road Safety Manager*

Supporting information

1) Strategic fit/Strategic outcome

The proposal supports **Outcome: 2.1 Safety**
To ensure that people in Wellington feel safe at any time

2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

CX445 – SaferRoads. The proposed changes to speed limits will be covered under current budgets

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

None identified

4) Decision making

This is not a significant decision. The consultation process showed that the majority of respondents were in favour of reducing speed limits.

5) Consultation

There is a formal consultation process which has carried out for this project

6) Legal implications

Changing a speed limit has significant legal implications for motorists. Consequently the Council is required to carry out a rigorous procedure to change a speed limit.

7) Consistency with existing policy

This report is consistent with existing policy