
REPORT 3
(1215/52/IM)

PROPOSED SPEED LIMIT REDUCTION: RURAL SPEED LIMIT FOR MAKARA, OHARIU VALLEY AND GLENSIDE

1. Purpose of Report

To seek the Committee's agreement to recommend to Council that it agrees to lower the speed limit on a number of rural roads in Makara, Ohariu Valley and on Middleton Road in Glenside.

2. Executive Summary

For a number of years there have been requests from the local communities in Makara, Ohariu Valley and Glenside, for a reduction in the rural speed limit (100km/h) in these areas. This could not be achieved due to the speed limit setting criteria laid down by central government. However, these national criteria have now been relaxed to allow for lower speed limits to be set on those rural roads where 100km/h is clearly not safe or appropriate. Greater weighting is now being given to safety factors and existing driver behaviour including vehicle speeds.

Following adoption of the new speed limit setting criteria by Land Transport New Zealand (LTNZ), Council staff have worked with LTNZ in surveying the rural roads in Makara, Ohariu Valley and Glenside. A set of new lower speed limits has been developed using the new national criteria which are being trialled around New Zealand. The proposed new speed limits have been publicly advertised and consultation has taken place with local communities and key industry stakeholders following the detailed procedural requirements of the Speed Limit Rule and the Council's Consolidated Bylaw: Part 14 (Speed Limits).

The result of public consultation and consultation with key industry stakeholders shows strong support for the proposed speed limit changes, which are now recommended to the Committee.

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 the speed limits as stated in the tables below on the following sections of road in Makara, Ohariu Valley and on Middleton Road in Glenside.*

Table 1: Proposed speed limits for rural road sections between Johnsonville and Karori

South Makara Road	<i>For its entire length</i>	50km/h
Makara Road	<i>From a point 520 metres northwest of its intersection with Terawhiti Terrace to a point 1085 metres northeast of South Makara Road</i>	50km/h
Makara Road	<i>From a point 1085 metres northeast of its intersection with South Makara Road to a point 225 metres south of its northern end</i>	60km/h
Opau Road	<i>For its entire length</i>	50km/h
Takarau Gorge Road	<i>From a point 215 metres south from its intersection with Rifle Range Road to its intersection with Makara Road</i>	60km/h
Takarau Gorge Road	<i>From its intersection with Rifle Range Road to a point 215 metres south of its intersection with Rifle Range Road</i>	50km/h
Rifle Range Road	<i>For its entire length</i>	50km/h
Ohariu Valley Road	<i>From a point 345 metres north of its intersection with Takarau Gorge Road to its northern end</i>	60km/h
Ohariu Valley Road	<i>From its intersection with Takarau Gorge Road to a point 345 metres north of its intersection with Takarau Gorge Road</i>	50km/h
Boom Rock Road	<i>For its entire length</i>	60km/h
Ohariu Valley Road	<i>From its intersection with Ironside Road to its intersection with Rifle Range Road</i>	50km/h

Table 2: Proposed speed limits for Middleton Road

Middleton Road	<i>From its intersection with Willowbank Road to a point 250m south of its intersection with Willowbank Road</i>	50km/h
Middleton Road	<i>From a point 700 metres northeast of its intersection with Glenside Road to a point 250 metres south of its intersection with Willowbank Road</i>	70km/h

3. *Note the results of the public consultation process i.e. 132 submissions were received, of which 27 supported the proposal, 8 were opposed while 97 agreed to the lower limits 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 now allows road controlling authorities to set enforceable speed limits.

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.

Also, in 2005 the Government introduced rural speed zones as part of the *Road Safety Strategy to 2010*, which aims to reduce the annual road toll to no more than 300 fatalities and 4,500 hospitalisations by 2010.

Rural speed zoning is also part of the government's speed management programme announced in December 2004. This zoning is designed to encourage motorists to drive at speeds appropriate for road conditions and road safety risks.

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 in Makara, Ohariu Valley and Glenside

Wellington City Council has been working with communities in the city's rural areas for some time to address concerns about excessive speed. The communities want more appropriate speed limits in their areas.

For over 50 years speed limits in New Zealand have been based to a large degree on the type and intensity of frontage development. This meant that all sections of road with little or no commercial or residential development in rural areas, were allocated a speed limit of 100km/h.

Because many of these rural roads are not designed for speeds of 100km/h they tend to exhibit higher than average accident rates, and can appear unsafe to people who use them. While most drivers use their judgement and drive at a lower, more appropriate speed, others believe the 100km/h speed limit signage is an indication that it is safe to drive at 100km/h and do so – sometimes with serious consequences. The result is that there are considerable differences in vehicle speeds on such roads. This makes it difficult for pedestrians to cross, and for drivers entering or crossing the road, to correctly judge the speed of approaching traffic.

Speed related crashes are also occurring when drivers do not recognise road features that require them to slow down. Specific signs warning of the danger, including advisory speed signs, can be used. However, where a road continuously requires a driver to drive slower than the legal speed limit, a lower speed limit is more appropriate. This is the case for the rural roads in Makara, Ohariu Valley and Glenside.

LTNZ has now recognised that the previous speed setting rules are inflexible and do not always meet the community needs. They have also noted that overseas jurisdictions are increasingly moving away from land-development based criteria to ones that encourages motorists to drive at speeds appropriate for road conditions and road safety risks. Because of this LTNZ have developed a new set of criteria which is called rural speed zoning and is currently being trialled on rural roads in a number of areas in New Zealand.

4.4 LTNZ Rural Speed Zoning Trial

Land Transport New Zealand is leading a project that will assess rural speed zones sites across the country. The project will help determine a robust and consistent method of determining speed limits for these zones and establish whether road safety and sustainability benefits can be attributed to rural speed zoning.

Over the past 12 months, road controlling authorities (RCAs) around New Zealand have identified sites in their jurisdiction for assessment. These include both state highways and rural open roads where the current speed limit is 100 km/h. LTNZ has assessed each site to determine its suitability for rural speed zoning and has recommended a new speed limit. Once sites are approved, RCAs go through the formal process of setting speed limits for their individual sites.

LTNZ will monitor these rural speed zones over the next two years to determine if:

- a) rural speed zoning will help minimize road fatalities
- b) the national criteria outlined in the draft policy on rural speed zoning is appropriate, before changing the existing Speed Limits Rule.

Wellington City agreed to participate in the trial and nominated the rural roads west of the city between Johnsonville and Karori as well as Middleton Road in Glenside as candidates for inclusion in the trial.

LTNZ has recently completed a study to determine the appropriate speeds on the above rural roads (see Appendix 1) and has requested Wellington City Council as RCA to formally approve and implement their new calculated speed limits to enable them to complete their evaluation of the new methodology. Upon completion of the trial, if it is decided by LTNZ that rural speed zoning will be used to determine speed limits throughout New Zealand, the officers believe it would be appropriate at a future date to use this new methodology to also review speed limits for other rural roads in Horokiwi and Takapu Valley.

5. Discussion

5.1 Problem Definition

Over the past five years there have been 35 reported crashes in the Makara and Ohariu Valley area with 71 percent of these being vehicles having lost control on a bend and 14 percent having lost control on a straight road. There has been one fatal crash in the last five years.

In Glenside on Middleton Road, there have been 19 reported crashes in the past five years along the 100km/hr section of Middleton Road with 84 percent of these being vehicles that have lost control on a bend.

These statistics, together with persistent and long standing expressions of concern from the local communities, indicate that the current speed limit on these roads is too high for the road conditions.

Appendix 1 shows LTNZ's reports on existing speeds and proposed speed limits. The reports show that 85 percent of drivers currently drive at a speed whereby they would be unaffected by the proposed limit.

5.2 Lowering the Operating Speed as a Critical Tool

Research shows that the more that operating speeds vary between the slowest and fastest vehicles, the higher the crash rate. By setting a speed limit close to what most drivers feel safe driving at, and reigning in the faster drivers, there will be a reduction in the number of crashes.

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.

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 the Automobile Association.

5.3 Proposal

LTNZ staff and Council Officers have worked together to develop a speed limit regime for the rural roads covered in this report. The proposed speed limits should meet the community needs and meet the criteria being trialled.

It is proposed to lower the speed limits in Makara and Ohariu Valley from 100km/h to 50km/h and 60km/h and on Middleton Road in Glenside from 100km/h to 70km/h and 50km/h as set out in Tables 1 and 2. (see Section 3) They will apply to all vehicles at all times.

The roads affected by this proposal are under the jurisdiction of Wellington City Council as Road Controlling Authority.

5.4 Consultation

Consultation was carried out in accordance with clause 7.1 of the Setting of Speed Limits Rule. A four week period of community consultation was carried out during March 2006. In total, 132 submissions were received, of which 27 supported the proposal, 8 were opposed while 97 agreed to a lower limit with some modifications.

The 97 submitters who agreed that the current speed limit needed to be reduced with modifications generally felt that a blanket 50km/h, 60km/h or 70km/h speed limit throughout Makara and Ohariu Valley would be better to avoid confusion.

Copies of all public submissions are included in Appendix 2.

The following Table 3, 4 and 5 summarise the responses received:

- Do you believe the existing 100km/h speed limit is appropriate?

Table 3: Response to the question “do you believe the existing 100km/h speed limit is appropriate?”

	Yes	No	Conditional
Non residents	3	7	27
Glenside residents	0	6	14
Makara/Ohariu Residents	5	14	56

- If no, please specify what speed limit you feel is appropriate in the table below:
(see following page)

Table 4: Proposed speed limits for road sections on the rural roads west of Wellington City between Johnsonville and Karori.

Road	From	To	Proposed speed limit	Speed that submitters thought appropriate							
				30km/h	40km/h	50km/h	60km/h	65km/h	70km/h	80km/h	100km/h
Ohariu Valley Road	Johnsonville urban traffic area	Takarau Gorge Road	50km/h	0	1	80	9	1	11	2	8
Takarau Gorge Road	Ohariu Valley Road	Makara Road	60km/h	0	2	35	50	1	14	2	8
Makara Road	Makara Road	Makara	60km/h	0	1	31	55	1	13	3	8
Makara Road	Makara township		50km/h	0	1	87	7	1	6	2	8
Makara Road	Makara	Karori urban traffic area	50km/h	0	1	76	12	1	10	3	8
Ohariu Valley Road	Takarau Gorge Road	Boom Rock Road	60km/h	0	0	38	50	1	12	2	8
Ohariu Valley Road	Boom Rock Road	End	60km/h	1	0	38	52	1	10	2	8
Boom Rock Road	Ohariu Valley Road	End	50km/h	1	1	71	17	1	11	2	8
Rifle Range Road	Ohariu Valley Road	End	50km/h	2	1	47	40	1	10	2	8
Makara Road	Takarau Gorge Road	Makara Beach	60km/h	0	0	36	53	1	11	3	8
Opau Road	Makara Road	End	50km/h	0	1	86	5	1	9	2	8
South Makara Road	Makara Road	End	50km/h	0	1	84	6	1	10	2	8

Table 5: Proposed speed limits for Middleton Road.

Road	From	To	Proposed speed limit	Speed that submitters thought appropriate				
				50km/h	60km/h	70km/h	80km/h	100km/h
Middleton Road	Johnsonville urban traffic area	250m south of Tawa urban traffic area	70km/h	14	17	53	7	8
Middleton Road	250m south of the Tawa urban traffic area	Tawa urban traffic area	50km/h	82	1	5	3	8

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

Submitters were also given an opportunity to have their submission heard and nine chose to do so. However, only the four submitters below presented their submission to the Committee on Wednesday 24 May 2006:

- 1) Claire Bibby representing Glenside Progressive Association
- 2) Ms L Anne Harris who spoke as a resident of Ohariu Valley
- 3) Arnold Blades who spoke as a resident of Makara Beach
- 4) Ted Smith on behalf of 21 residents of north Makara Village.

The above four oral submitters supported the proposal to lower the speed limit, but each emphasised that it needed to be coupled with enforcement.

Claire Bibby would like to see the proposed limit of 70km/h on Middleton Road lowered to 60km/h as she believes that this will be safer and drivers will be able to lower their speed more safely and faster when required.

Anne Harris spoke about how fast the traffic travels and would like to see a blanket 50km/h limit put in place. She also spoke about the need for more appropriate signage such as "Keep Left" signs, the possibility of painting the speed limits on the road and the need for improved sealing of the roadsides.

Arnold Blades supported the entire proposal as he believes this will make it a much safer environment for all road users.

Ted Smith requested that the 50km/h limit be extended through the village north past 478 Makara Road. This has been considered by officers and is being put forward as part of this recommendation.

All 27 submitters who agreed with the entire proposal felt that the proposed speeds would create a much safer environment for all road users.

The eight submitters who objected to the proposal had a number of reasons. A common theme was that the new limits would be impossible to enforce and that most drivers already currently drive to the conditions. It was also expressed that the few that already speed will not change their driving behaviour anyway. Others felt that the reduction was not necessary and that more driver education is required.

In addition to the public consultation, Councils are required to consult with key stakeholders and this was undertaken during April 2006. As a result responses were received from, LTNZ and the New Zealand Automobile Association (NZAA).

LTNZ is in support of all of the proposed limits.

NZAA is in support of the proposed limits on both sections of Middleton Road and are in general agreement with Makara and Ohariu Valley. They felt that the 50km/h limit was only necessary around the town areas on Makara Road from Takarau Gorge Road to Makara Road and on Ohariu Valley Road from Takarau Gorge Road to Boom Rock

Road. Also they consider a 60km/h limit on the remainder of the rural roads would be acceptable.

These submissions have been included in Appendix 3.

Officers do not believe the objections received would justify not proceeding with the proposed speed limit changes.

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 limits take effect, the Council must notify the Director of LTNZ and the Commissioner of Police. A public awareness campaign explaining the change to the limits 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 requirements are expected to take around four to six weeks once the Council has resolved to change the speed limits under the Bylaw, and the new speed limits are expected to be operative by the end of July 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 in Makara, Ohariu Valley and Glenside, and to acknowledge the long standing safety concerns of the local communities, 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 limits satisfy the criteria set by the Rule and the draft LTNZ Rural Speed Zoning policy.

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

Approval of the speed limits as described in Table 1 will assist LTNZ in evaluating the rural speed zoning criteria.

The Committee is therefore requested to agree to recommend to Council that it agrees to the proposed changes to the legal speed limits in Makara, Ohariu Valley and Glenside 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 was 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

APPENDIX ONE

PROPOSED SPEED LIMIT REDUCTION: RURAL SPEED LIMIT FOR MAKARA, OHARIU VALLEY AND GLENSIDE

APPENDIX TWO

SUBMISSIONS TO THE PROPOSED SPEED LIMIT REDUCTION: RURAL SPEED LIMIT FOR MAKARA, OHARIU VALLEY AND GLENSIDE