

**REPORT 5**  
*(1215/52/IM)*

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## **PROPOSED SPEED LIMIT REDUCTION: ARO STREET SHOPPING AREA, TE ARO**

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### **1. Purpose of Report**

To seek the Committee's agreement to recommend to Council that it approves lowering the speed limit on part of Aro Street, Te Aro from 50km/h to 30km/h.

### **2. Executive Summary**

For a number of years there have been requests from local residents, Aro Street businesses, Aro Valley Community Council and the Police for a reduction in the speed limit through the Aro Street shopping area.

The public consultation carried out in August and October 2009 showed strong support for the proposed speed limit reduction, which is now recommended to the Committee.

Two of our key stakeholders, the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) and the New Zealand Police gave strong support for lowering the speed limit to 30km/h subject to appropriate gateway treatments at the start and end of the speed zone to acknowledge the change in environment.

The proposed speed limit reduction complies with the criteria specified in the Land Transport Rule: Setting of Speed Limits (2003).

### **3. Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1. Receive the information.*
- 2. Recommend to Council that it make a resolution under Clause 6 of the Wellington City Consolidated Bylaw to set the speed limit as stated in the table below on the following section of Aro Street, Te Aro.*

**Table 1: Proposed speed limit for Aro Street**

<b><i>Aro Street Shopping Area</i></b>	<b><i>Aro Street from its intersection with Upton Terrace to its intersection with Lewisville Terrace</i></b>	<b><i>30km/h</i></b>
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3. *Note the results of the public consultation process: i.e., 179 submissions were received for Aro Street of which 153 supported the proposal, 38 agreed to lower speed limits but would like to see the area extended; 2 agree with lowering the speed limit but only to 40km/h not the proposed 30km/h and 23 are opposed to the lower speed limit.*
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 6 (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 6 (Speed Limits) of the Wellington City Consolidated Bylaws, the resolution will be recorded in the Register of Speed Limits and the relevant speed limits on the Councils Speed Limit Plans cease to have effect.*

## **4. Background**

### **4.1 Setting speed limits**

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

The speed limit bylaw 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.

Approval to consult on lowering the speed limit in Aro Street was given at the Strategy and Policy Committee meeting held on 11 June 2009.

### **4.2 Process**

The process to change speed limits is defined in the Rule and Part 6 of the Bylaws. In summary, the process requires the following:

- A review of the areas to determine the suitability of the proposed speed limits.
- Consultation with affected parties and stakeholders.
- Formal adoption by the road controlling authority and notification of the changes before the new speed limit takes effect.
- Notification of the changes before the new speed limit takes effect.

### **4.3 Traffic survey and Crash history**

Traffic surveys were carried out through the Aro Street shopping area (as shown in Table 2 below) in April 2009. The recorded traffic volumes and speed data will be used to determine the success of the proposed measures in reducing traffic speed.

**Table 2: Traffic volumes and speed data on Aro Street.**

<b>Aro Street shopping area</b>	<b>Total weekly volume</b>	<b>7 day average AADT</b>	<b>85<sup>th</sup> Percentile Speed</b>	<b>Mean Speed</b>
	71,764	10,252	42km/h	34km/h

The mean speed through the Aro Street shopping area is 34km/h. The proposal is to reinforce these low speeds by reducing the legal speed limit from 50km/h to 30km/h. The appropriate education, enforcement and engineering measures will be required to coincide with any change to the current speed limit.

There have been 17 reported crashes in the Aro Street shopping area over the past five years with one serious injury to a 12 year old pedestrian and eight other reported injury crashes. By reducing the speed limit to 30km/h, research has shown that the likelihood of a pedestrian being seriously injured when hit by a car travelling at 30km/h is significantly less than when a pedestrian is hit by a vehicle travelling at 50km/h.

#### **4.4 Aro Street shopping area– inappropriate speed**

Aro Street shopping area presents a range of challenges for all road users. Shoppers are crossing the road at various points, parked vehicles are allowed on both sides of the road, delivery vehicles servicing the businesses, cyclists on a key commuter route, at risk pedestrians such as children and elderly. All this is happening in a very narrow confined road carriageway width.

It is especially important that drivers take all necessary care to ensure both they, and other more vulnerable road users are safe. This is not always the case in part because of the current permitted speed limit.

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. We are conscious that the local business community have made it clear to the officers that they value the availability of parking in the area and any gateway treatment should not be at the loss of any on- street parking in this location.

Although it might be argued that current speeds in these areas are already low enough, bringing the legal limit down to 30km/h will reduce the severity and incidence of crashes with little effect on travel time and therefore inconvenience for most drivers.

## **5. Consultation**

Public consultation was carried out in accordance with clause 7.1 of the Setting of Speed Limits Rule. A three week period of community consultation was carried out during August and October 2009 on the Council's proposal to lower the speed limit. A summary of the submissions received is outlined below. From

the 179 submissions we received, the majority support the proposed 30km/h speed limit.

Copies of all public submissions are included in Appendix 1.

Do you agree with the entire proposal to reduce the speed limit to 30km/h?	Yes	Yes, but extend the proposed section	Yes, but to 40km/h	Disagree
Aro Street	154	38	2	23

**Please note:**

- **Yes** = Submitters agreed with the entire proposal and support the speed limit should be reduced to 30km/h.
- **Yes, but extend the proposed section** = Submitters agreed with the proposal but wanted the speed limit to be extended, this was especially prevalent in extending the reduced speed limit to Ohiro Road.
- **Yes, but to 40km/h** = Submitters agreed with lowering the speed limit but only to 40km/h, not the proposed 30km/h.
- **Disagree** = Submitters were against the entire proposal to reduce the speed limit to 30km/h.

The results demonstrate strong community support for the proposed changes.

Submitters were also given an opportunity to have their submission heard and eight chose to do so. Submissions were presented to the Strategy and Policy Committee on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2009:

- 1) Mike Mellor representing Living Streets Wellington
- 2) Julian Boorman representing Cycle Aware Wellington
- 3) Senior Sergeant Richard Hocken representing Wellington Central Police Station
- 4) Alex Gray representing the Automobile Association.
- 5) Denis Welch on behalf of Aro Valley Community Board.
- 6) Alistair Smith who spoke as a resident of Aro Valley
- 7) Karen McIntyre who spoke as a resident of Aro valley
- 8) Paula Warren who spoke as an individual
- 9) Graeme Speden who spoke as an individual

Eight of the nine oral submitters were in support of lowering the speed limit to 30km/h.

Mike Mellor supports the speed limit being lowered to 30km/h and would like to see Council go further and develop it into a shared space.

Julian Boorman supports lowering the speed limit to 30km/h as this will enhance safety for all road users; currently there is no room for error for cyclists through this area.

Senior Sergeant Richard Hocken supports lowering the speed limit to 30km/h subject to there being appropriate gateway treatments implemented.

AA is not in support of lowering the speed limit to 30km/h. AA feels the environment doesn't fit such a low speed limit and would be in favour of lowering it to 40km/h subject to appropriate gateway treatments to acknowledge the change in environment.

Denis Welch spoke in support of the 30km/h speed limit but requested it be extended to Ohiro Road.

Alistair Smith spoke in support of the 30km/h speed limit but requested it be extended to Willis Street. Mr Smith spoke of the difficulties cyclist have particularly when vehicles try passing cyclist the narrow road width creates conflict with oncoming traffic.

Karen McIntyre spoke in support of the 30km/h speed limit but requested it be extended to Ohiro Road.

Paula Warren spoke as a local resident thinks that this is a great proposal. She suggested it should also include kerb extensions to change the feel of the shopping area.

Graeme Speden spoke in support of the 30km/h speed limit and noted parents no longer allow their children to walk along streets unsupervised because of the risk to safety by speeding motorists.

All 154 submitters who agreed with the entire proposal felt that the proposed speed would create a much safer environment for all road users.

There were 38 submitters who agreed with lowering the speed limit but would like to see it extended further than what the officers are proposing. A common request amongst the 38 submitters was to start the 30km/h speed limit further east starting at Ohiro Road. The feedback received was that by extending the 30km/h speed limit it will include the pedestrian crossing next to Aro Park and would enhance the safety for school children and other users using this pedestrian crossing.

There were two submitters who agreed with lowering the speed limit but thought that 30km/h was going too far and that 40km/h would be more appropriate.

The 23 submitters who objected to the proposal had a number of reasons. A common theme was that the new limit 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, Council is required to consult with the stakeholders and this was undertaken during August 2009. As a result,

responses were received from the New Zealand Police, Automobile Association and the New Zealand Transport Agency.

The New Zealand Police are in support of the proposed lower speed limit as long as it is implemented with consistent gateway treatments to acknowledge the change of environment.

The AA is not in support of the proposed lower speed limit as there is a low pedestrian accident record and they do not see 30km/h through the shopping area as being appropriate for Aro Street with regard to its current function, nature and its surrounding environment. They advised they would support a 40km/h speed limit with appropriate gateway treatments.

NZTA supports lowering the speed limit to 30km/h and believes this should be backed up with coloured pavement markings to mark the start and end of the lower speed zone.

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

## **6. 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 NZTA and the Commissioner of Police.

A public awareness campaign explaining the change to the speed limits will also take place. Areas where the new speed limit applies are required to be marked by notices and signs in accordance with the requirements of clause 6.3.7 of the Bylaw and as required by the Land Transport Rule: Setting of Speed Limits (2003)

These requirements are expected to take approximately six weeks once the Council has resolved to change the speed limits under the Bylaw, and the new speed limit is expected to be operative by the end of January 2010.

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

## **7. Conclusion**

The benefit of lowering the speed of vehicles through the Aro Street shopping area is to improve pedestrian safety and encourage more active modes of transport such as walking and cycling.

Council officers along with the Police do not recommend the extension of the 30km/h speed limit to Ohiro Road. Legally we would have to undertake an additional three week consultation process with the affected residents and key stakeholders. A concern Police and Council officers have if the lower speed limit area was extended is that motorists would see little pedestrian activity before approaching the shopping area and would then increase their speed entering the shopping area. The overriding message from Council officers and Police is that

lower speed limits are for the shopping areas only where there is high demand of pedestrian movement.

The process for setting speed limits is defined in the Land Transport Rule: Setting of Speed Limits (2003), and in the Councils Bylaw: Part 6 (Speed Limits). This process has been followed throughout. The proposed speed limits satisfy the criteria set by the Rule.

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

Lowering the speed limit acknowledges the long standing concerns of the local communities.

The Committee is requested to recommend to the Council that it approves the proposed changes to the lower speed limit through the Aro Street shopping area as detailed in the recommendations.

Contact Officer: *Stuart Bullen Senior Traffic Engineer.*

## **Supporting Information**

**1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome**

The project supports the overall goal that Wellington will seek to improve the safety and security of its citizens as they move around the city and region.

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

The project is contained in the Council Plan # CX445.

**3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations**

There are no direct treaty considerations

**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 WCC policy