

REPORT 4
(1215/52/IM)

PROPOSED SPEED LIMIT REDUCTION: ISLAND BAY SHOPPING CENTRE

1. Purpose of Report

To seek the Committee's agreement to recommend to Council that it approves lowering the speed limit on parts of The Parade and Medway Street in Island Bay from 50km/h to 30km/h.

2. Executive Summary

The public consultation carried out in March and April 2010 showed strong support for the proposed speed limit reduction, which is now recommended to the Committee.

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

Officers recommend that the Committee:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Recommend to Council that it make a resolution under Part 6 of the Wellington City Consolidated Bylaw to set the speed limit as stated in the table below on the following lengths of road of Island Bay.*

Table 1: Proposed speed limit for Island Bay shopping centre

Island Bay shopping centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ <i>The Parade from its intersection with Avon Street southbound to 75 metres south of its intersection with Medway Street.</i>➤ <i>Medway Street from its intersection with Derwent Street east to its intersection with The Parade.</i>	<i>30km/h</i>
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3. *Note the results of the public consultation process:
In total, 380 submissions were received, of which 284 supported the lower speed limit, 68 were opposed to the lower limit and 28 submitters were conditional.*
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 Island Bay shopping centre 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.
- 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 Island Bay shopping centre (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 The Parade in the Island Bay shopping centre

Island Bay shopping centre	Total weekly volume (vehicle)	7 day average (vehicle)	85 th Percentile speed	Mean speed
	36,743	5,249	43km/h	35km/h

The mean speed through the Island Bay shopping centre is 35km/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 18 reported crashes in the Island Bay shopping centre over the past five years with eight injury crashes three of whom were pedestrians. Reducing the speed limit will reduce the incidences and severity of crashes. 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 at 50km/h.

4.4 Island Bay shopping centre – inappropriate speed

Island Bay shopping centre 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 and presence of 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. The local business community have made it clear to the council 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 further reduce the high end speeds of motorists, reduce the severity and incidence of crashes with little effect on travel time and therefore no inconvenience for the majority of drivers.

To accommodate the increased pedestrian movements in the Island Bay shopping centre, a pedestrian platform was installed at the Medway Street/The Parade intersection. The main reason for the platform was to improve safety by slowing vehicle speeds down. The safest environment for pedestrians and all road users is when the vehicle speeds are compatible with that environment. For

example, in a highly pedestrianised area such as Island Bay shopping centre the speeds of motorists have to be compatible to the needs of the pedestrian.

The research carried out so far on pedestrian platforms show they create a significant improvement in pedestrian safety.

5. Consultation

Public 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 and April 2010 on the Council's proposal to lower the speed limit. A summary of the submissions received is outlined below. From the 380 submissions we received, the majority support the proposed 30km/h speed limit.

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
Island Bay shopping area	284	10	28	68

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 the cinema complex at Mersey Street.
- **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 ten chose to do so. Submissions were presented to the Strategy and Policy Committee on Thursday 22nd April 2010:

- 1) Bernard O'Shaughnessy on behalf of BAB, CAT, HART, TINDO, Rats, Churches
- 2) Christopher Brown as an individual
- 3) Paul Warren as an individual
- 4) Paula Warren on behalf of Living Streets Aotearoa Inc.
- 5) Illona Keenan on behalf of Cycle Aware Wellington
- 6) Anne Brunt on behalf of the Island Bay Resident's Association
- 7) Ifor Owen as an individual
- 8) Alex Gray on behalf of the NZ automobile Association
- 9) Senior Sergeant Richard Hocken on behalf of NZ Police
- 10) Willemjin Vermaat as an individual

Six of the ten submitters were in support of lowering the speed limit to 30km/h.

Bernard O'Shaughnessy isn't in support of lowering the speed limit to 30km/h. He feels we should be setting a blanket 40km/h city wide and 20km/h around schools, rest homes and hospitals and have it apply from 7am – 7pm and then 50km/h outside these times. By doing this you wouldn't need to worry about having signage.

Christopher Brown isn't in support of lowering the speed limit. He has lived in Island Bay for a number of years and hasn't noticed speed being a problem through the shops. However, he is a resident on the corner of Avon Street and Clyde Street where speed is an issue. Clyde Street is currently used as a drag strip and local residents are concerned for the safety of the children in the area. Christopher is also concerned that if the speed limit is lowered through the shops to 30km/h it will encourage traffic to rat run along Clyde Street to avoid the slow zone. Christopher suggested having a stop sign installed on Clyde Street at the Avon Street intersection. He has been referred on to Council's Senior Traffic Engineer, Stuart Bullen to look into options to slow down traffic on this street.

Paula Warren supports lowering the speed limit to 30km/h. She believes that small centres are important now and will be even more important in the future.

Paula Warren on behalf of Living Streets Aotearoa Inc. advised they support lowering the speed limit to 30km/h. There is clear evidence that in slower speed environments pedestrian survival rates are a lot higher. A lower speed also makes it easier for pedestrians to judge what cars are doing. If we want to have a walkable city then we need to have attractive and vibrant town centres.

Illona Keenan on behalf of Cycle Aware Wellington strongly supports lowering the speed limit to 30km/h. It will increase road safety and it is good to see that these lower limits are progressively being rolled out over the city. Cycle Aware prefers a 30km/h speed limit to a 40km/h limit. They would also like to encourage Council to think about reducing speed limits around schools as well.

Anne Brunt on behalf of the Island Bay Resident's Association advised that the association and herself strongly support lowering the speed limit. They had a unanimous vote at the last meeting which was also supported by their large email group of approximately 420 people. Anne also asked if we would consider extending it beyond the library past Medway Street to incorporate the library, medical centre and toy library. The association also has a number of other traffic safety issues they have brought to Council officers attention which she is working on with Stuart Bullen.

Ifor Owen doesn't support lowering the speed limit to 30km/h through the shopping centre. Ifor has lived in Island Bay for 40 years and doesn't feel the number of accidents justifies this. He believes that the main danger for pedestrians and drivers are cyclists. He suggested creating a cycle lane between the cars and the pavement. Also to increase the broken yellow lines on the right side of The Parade turning out of Medway Street so you can see cyclists approaching. The bus stop on Avon Street also obscures your vision. Ifor

believes that the speed is only a minor part of the complex traffic problems faced in Island Bay and the whole picture needs to be looked at.

Alex Gray who spoke on behalf of the NZ Automobile Association doesn't support lowering the speed limit to 30km/h. It will be unenforceable; he referred to the newspaper article where this was quoted by Police. They also believe it will be confusing for motorists and advised there is no evidence that lowering the speed limit will encourage more walking and cycling. Lower speed zones need to be self enforcing, you can't just expect to put up a sign and cars automatically drive that speed without the environment being engineered to keep speeds down. Statistics he provided in a handout to Committee suggest there isn't a significant problem with accidents in the area.

Senior Sergeant Richard Hocken who spoke on behalf of the NZ Police advised they support the lowering of speed limits. However, they believe principally the area should be engineered for the required speed. Island Bay shopping centre is on the main arterial route and speeds through here have been high in the past. Although Council has re-engineered the area recently, speed limit signs alone won't be enough to slow the traffic speeds, so the gateway treatments used must be effective. He also commented that he didn't believe that the low speed limit zone would create a rat run to Clyde Street. He also referred to the Wellingtonian article written recently that suggested these short lower speed zones are unable to be enforced, and advised that the speed limits through the shopping areas will be enforceable.

Willemjin Vermaat spoke in support of lowering the speed limit and also gave a presentation on examples of shared spaces that have been used around the world and urged Councillors and officers to think about creating these sorts of areas in the future. She stressed that the shopping areas belong to the people not just car drivers and by lowering the speed limit it will be giving the area back to the community by creating a safer environment.

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

6. Implementation

Subject 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 July 2010.

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

7. Conclusion

The benefit of lowering the speed of vehicles through the Island Bay shopping centre is to improve pedestrian safety, encourage more active modes of transport such as walking and cycling and reduce crashes.

Officers, along with the Police do not recommend any extension of the 30km/h speed limit to Island Bay shopping centre. Legally we would have to undertake an additional four 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 centre and would then increase their speed entering the lower speed area. The overriding message from officers and Police is that lower speed limits are for the shopping centres only where there is a high 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.

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 Island Bay shopping centre 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 # CX171.

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.