



Karangahake and Waihi speed review

Consultation summary report

31 October 2025

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Executive summary

In August 2025, NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) consulted on proposed new speed limits on State Highway 2 (SH2), as part of a regional consultation process for several state highways in Waikato. As well as Karangahake and Waihi on SH2, also included in the consultation were Coromandel Peninsula (State Highway 25), variable speed limits outside 2 marae on State Highway 27 and State Highway 29, and an Intersection Speed Zone (ISZ) near Hamilton Airport (SH21/Raynes Road). The proposals to set lower speed limits were requested by the community under the Land Transport: Setting of Speed Limits Rule 2024 (the Rule).

On SH2, we reviewed 2 sections:

1. SH2 Karangahake towards Waikino (from near Albert Street, near Karangahake, to west of Waitawheta Road)
2. SH2 Waihi from near the SH2/Martin Road/Baber Street intersection to near Orchard Road. Current speed limit: 70km/h. Proposed speed limit: 60km/h. From near Orchard Road to near Dean Crescent Current speed limit: 100km/h. Proposed speed limit: 60km/h

We consulted for 6 weeks, between Friday 22 August and Friday 3 October. 294 individuals and organisations made submissions on the proposed changes:

- For Karangahake towards Waikino (from near Albert Street, near Karangahake to west of Waitawheta Road), we received 271 submissions, with 41% seeing benefits in the proposal to reduce the speed limit, and 57% having concerns. Some submitters thought the current speed limit is appropriate and should be retained because people drive to the conditions of the road. Other submitters supported a lower speed limit and felt a lower speed limit would make the intersections off this road including School Road, Moresby Street and Crown Hill Road, safer to use. Due to high volumes of visitors to the gorge reserve, especially in summer, some people thought a lower speed limit would help them navigate the tricky nature of the road, make it easier to get in and out of the car park and across the road when the car park is full.
- For SH2 Waihi we received 217 submissions, with 48% seeing benefits in the proposal to reduce the speed limit, and 50% having concerns. Submitters that support a lower speed limit felt it would be safer to use the busy Dean Crescent intersection, while other submitters believe the current speed limits are appropriate for the road sections and the road is safe. Some submitters shared other suggestions including only reducing the Orchard Road to near Dean Crescent section (current speed limit: 100km/h. proposed speed limit: 60km/h) to 70km/h, as they felt this was a more reasonable speed limit reduction in this section.

All the feedback received was reviewed alongside a range of technical and safety assessments, and economic impacts, to help inform the final speed limit recommendation submitted to the Director of Land Transport for approval.

Pending notification of approval from the Director of Land Transport, we'll inform the community and stakeholders of the speed review outcome (whether or not the proposed speed limit changes are approved and will be implemented), publish details on our website, and implement any new speed limits.

Context/background

NZTA received strong feedback from various communities that these sections of state highway would benefit from operating at a lower speed limit.

Changing speed limits is a legal process. The Rule allows NZTA to set speed limits for roads under its control where there is alignment with the intent and requirements of the Rule and there is strong community support and funding is available.

The state highways speed limits included in this review were:

SH2 Karangahake

Location: From about 1km east of Albert Street to about 1.7km past School Road (towards Waikino).

Length: 2.8km

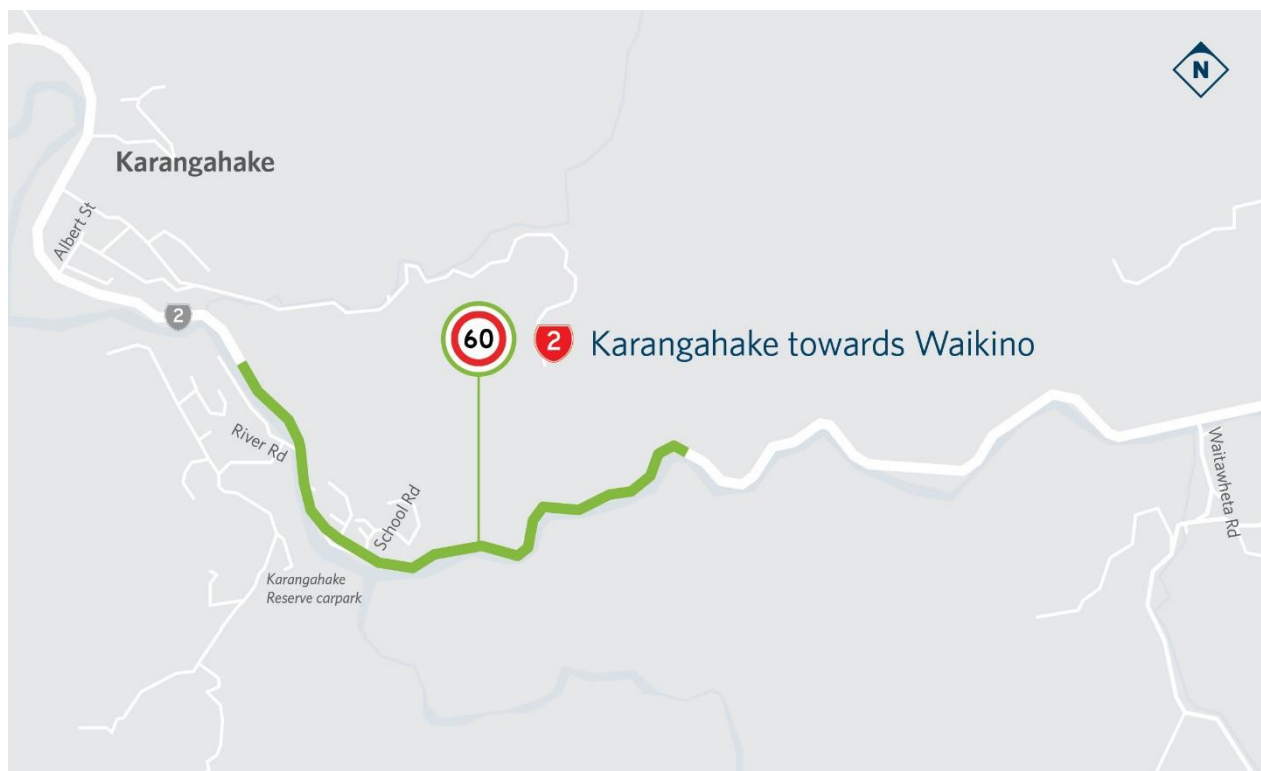
Proposal: Speed reduced from 80km/h to 60km/h

Road classification: Mountainous or hill corridor

The state highway in this area has many corners, narrow sections, side roads, accesses and car park entrances. Visitor activity and parked vehicles reduce visibility and increase safety risks.

Community concerns have been ongoing. In 2021, NZTA engaged with locals about SH2, including this area. Iwi raised concerns about speeding, children crossing, unsafe parking, and increased tourism. Here is the [link to a summary](#) of that engagement.

Karangahake School Board have told NZTA they support a speed reduction, especially near School Road. A petition from residents supported lowering the speed limit to 60km/h or less and requested safer crossings, turning bays, and double yellow lines.



SH2 Waihi (Parry Palm Avenue)

1. From near the intersection of SH2/Martin Road/Baber Street to near Orchard Road
Length: 0.95km
Proposal: Speed reduced from 70km/h to 60km/h
Road classification: Urban connector
2. From near Orchard Road to near Dean Crescent

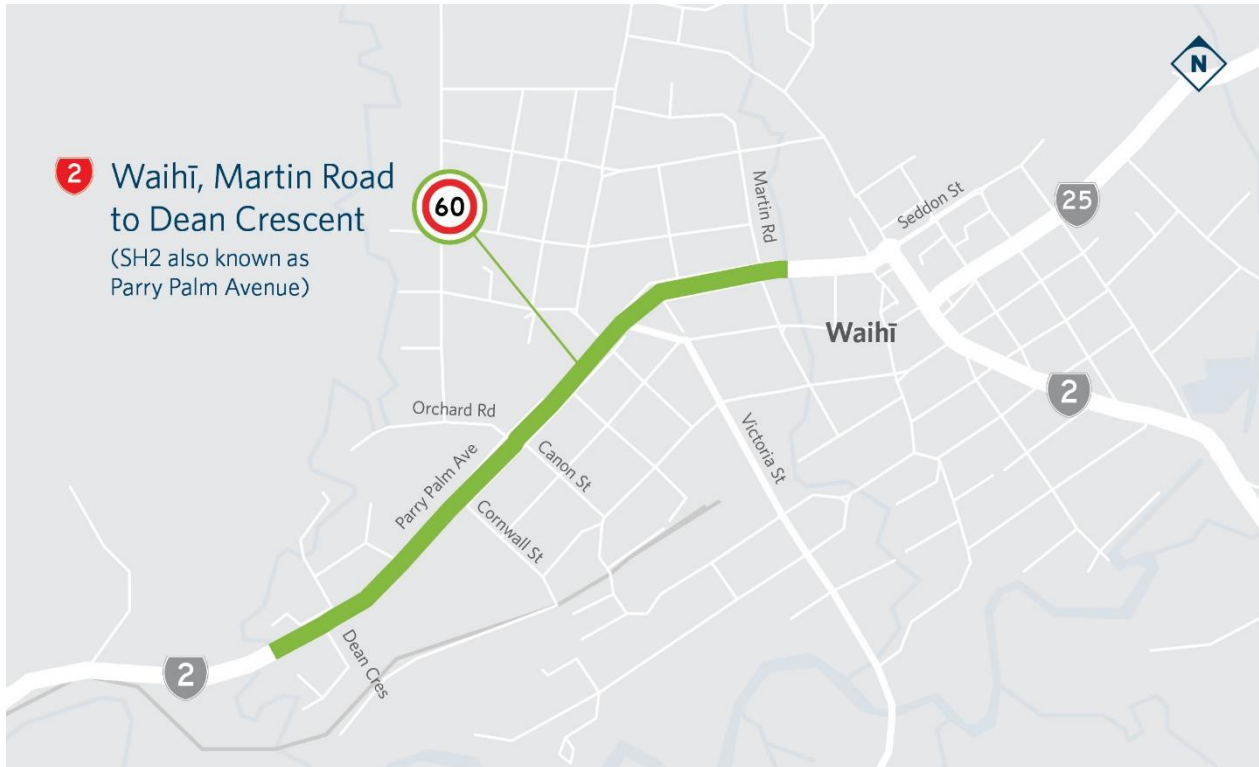
Length: 0.85km

Proposal: Speed reduced from 100km/h to 60km/h

Road classification: Urban connector

Waihi has grown significantly, including new housing, a retirement village, and play areas along SH2. Traffic has increased, especially at intersections with SH2. Dean Crescent sees heavy vehicle and high traffic volumes due to nearby businesses and the refuse station.

Community feedback includes a 2021 petition. Iwi also support lowering the speed to 60km/h. Pupils from the Waihi Central School sent NZTA letters, pictures and graphs supporting a speed reduction in the area.



Consultation

The purpose of consultation was to inform local road users including freight, community members, council partners, stakeholders and iwi, hapū and marae of the proposed speed limit changes on sections of SH2 and to provide people with an opportunity to give feedback on the proposals.

Partner and key stakeholder engagement

We contacted a range of partners and key stakeholders to inform them of the speed review consultation happening in the Waikato region, and provide the link to the online consultation survey:

- Council partners – communication with councils in all areas where the speed reviews were being undertaken (included Thames Coromandel, Matamata Piako, Hamilton City, Waipā and Hauraki Councils).
- Emergency Service partners
- Emails to NZ Police, Fire and Emergency NZ, Hone Hato St John
- Presentations and information to Waikato Regional Transport Committee
- Māori partners
- Emails, visits and phone calls to local marae and organisations focusing on those in close proximity to the locations of the proposed speed limit changes
- Other stakeholders; emails to other advocacy/interest groups engaged with recently

Public engagement activities

Methods to inform the public about the consultation included:

- flyers in local libraries, Council offices and distributed in various communities
- information provided for use in Council and community communication channels
- printed consultation forms supplied to some marae, Councils and communities
- print advertising in Coromandel Informer
- radio advertising on Coromandel FM
- digital advertising targeting locations of speed reviews
- media release issued and picked up by mainstream media
- social media posts on NZTA Facebook pages (including one reminder post just prior to consultation closing)
- multiple emails to submitter and subscriber databases
- inclusion in other NZTA e-newsletters with large databases in the Waikato region

Consultation questions

For each location submitters were asked whether they identified as one of the target user groups (listed in section 3.8(3)(c) of the Rule), or they could select 'other' and free-write to explain.

Submitters were then asked to indicate what they thought of the proposed speed limit change by ticking one of the following 3 statements:

- I can see benefits in the proposal
- I have concerns about the proposal
- Other

For each statement, submitters were asked a further question to explain what positive and/or negative impacts (if any) they thought the proposed speed limit would have on their community. To simplify this explanation submitters could use a list of check boxes with frequently used feedback themes (identified from other previous, similar consultations) or write a 'free text' answer instead in an open text box. Appendix 1 provides more details on the consultation questions.

What we heard

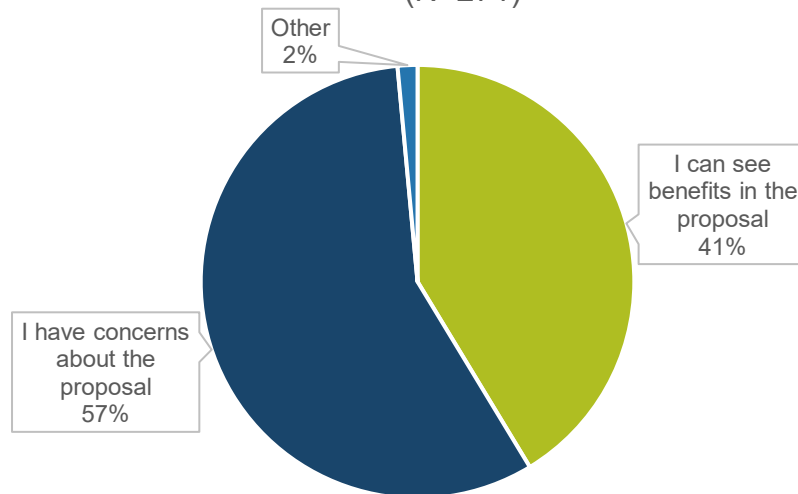
SH2 Karangahake towards Waikino

Sentiment

We received 271 submissions in total and 6 from key stakeholder organisations,

- 112 (41%) submitters felt the proposal had positive benefits
- 155 (57%) submitters had concerns with the proposal
- 4 (2%) submitters had other feedback.

Overall sentiment - Karangahake towards Waikino (N=271)

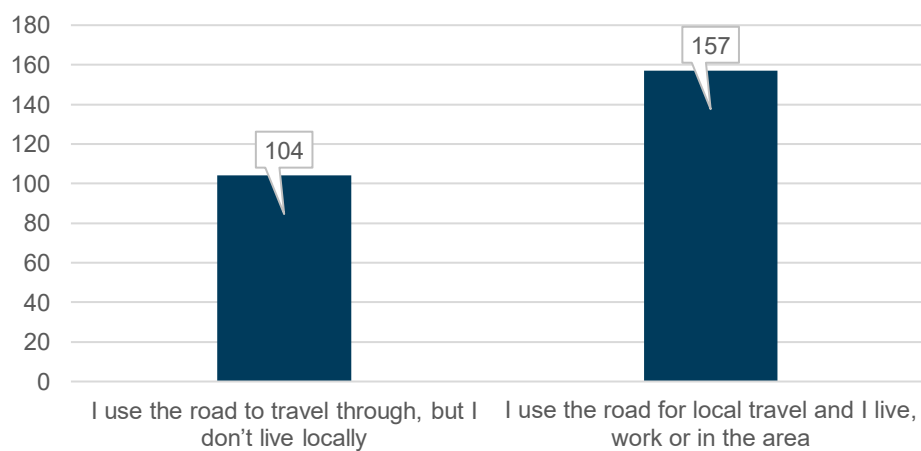


Base: All Karangahake respondents (271)

Interest in the road section

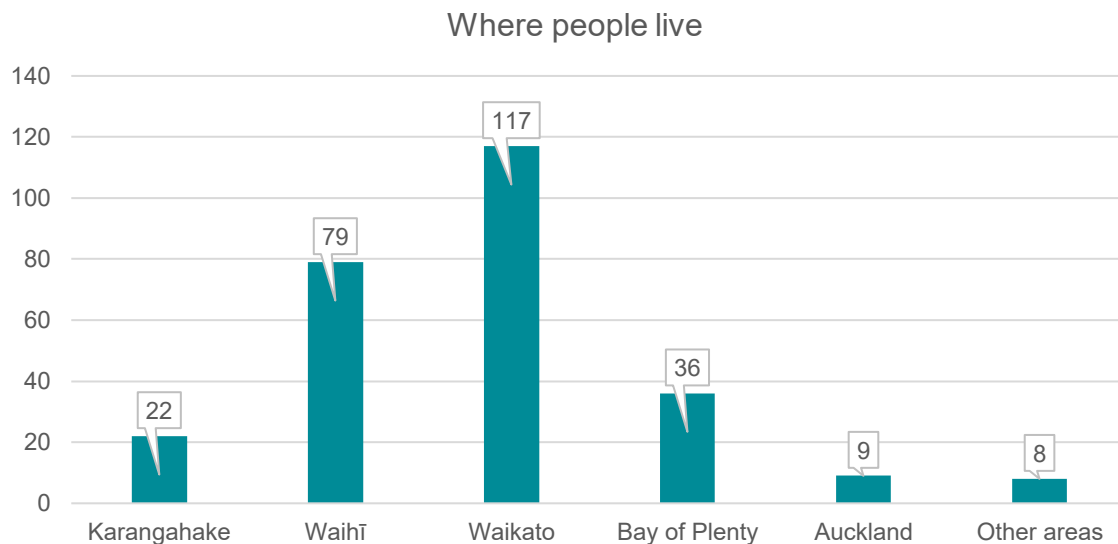
58% of submitters (157) travel on the road and live, work or go to school locally. 104 submitters (38%) use the road to travel through, but don't live locally.

Interest in Karangahake towards Waikino section



Base – Interest in the road section, 261 people responded to this question.

22 (8%) submitters live in Karangahake, 79 submitters (29%) live in Waihi. 117 submitters (43%) indicated they live in the Waikato region, and 36 (13%) in Bay of Plenty. The remaining submitters live in other areas.



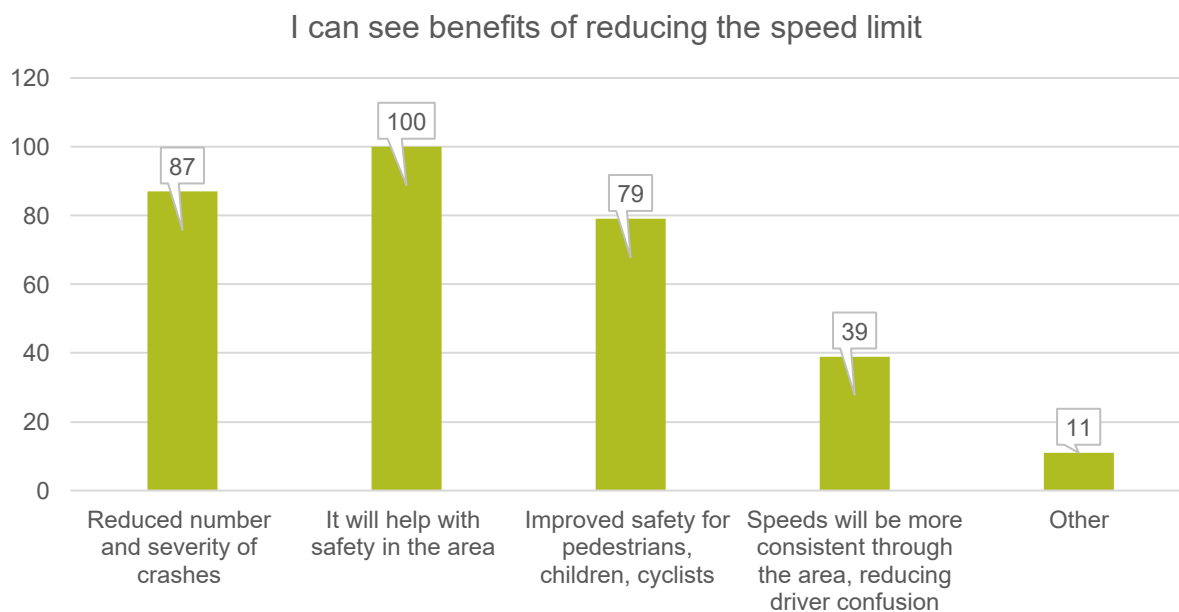
Base - Areas where submitters live, 271 people responded to this question.

Other submitters included transport user associations (3), district council and regional transport committee (2) and a community health organisation.

Feedback themes

41% (112) of submitters felt reducing the speed limit would have positive benefits.

The positive benefits submitters thought the proposed lower speed limit would have on the community, are shown in the chart below.

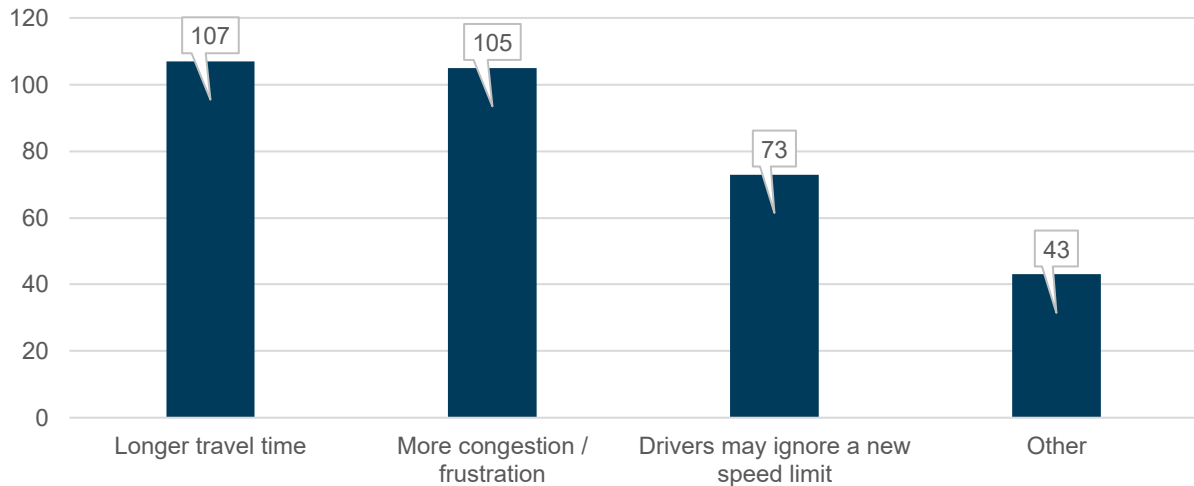


Base – Benefits selected by submitters, 112 people responded to this question.

Over half of submitters (57%, 155) have concerns with the proposal.

The concerns submitters thought the proposed lower speed limit would have on the community, are shown in the chart below:

I have concerns about reducing the speed limit



Base – Concerns selected by submitters, 155 people responded to this question.

People also shared other feedback and insights:

Other insights from feedback	Example quote	NZTA response
A lower speed limit will make it safer to use intersections off this road section including School Road, Moresby Street and Crown Hill Road.	<i>"It is difficult to pull out of side roads eg school rd, Moresby street with cars at 80kph and the one lane bridge off Crown Hill onto state highway"</i>	The lower speed limit will provide more time for people to judge distances and to see and register that other people (including pedestrians and cyclists) are using the road. This will be much safer for everyone, including residents entering/exiting their driveways.
It is a busy area, especially in summer. A lower speed limit would make the gorge reserve safer for those visiting and locals, helping them to get in and out of the car park and cross the road when the carpark is full.	<i>"This is a very important decision. This section of road is particularly busy. In the summer the Karangahake car park is always full to capacity. The traffic flow from the car park and adjacent roads is heavy."</i>	We agree.
The current speed limit of 80km/h is appropriate and should be retained because drivers adjust their speed to current conditions.	<i>"I find the current limits are good and people generally drive to the conditions. Traffic generally slows over the very windy part near the eastern portal of the tunnel."</i>	A lower speed limit supports safety from side accesses where traffic enters and exits the state highway. In a changing environment such as this, a consistent approach to speed is recommended. Lower speeds also support the smooth flow of traffic.
The road is narrow, windy with blind corners and a one lane bridge. It is close to cliffs and there can occasionally be slips / rockfalls on to the	<i>"Negotiating the very tight corners at a slower speed will benefit all. The area is also prone to slips and driver reaction to them at a slower speed will improve the outcome."</i>	Thank you for your feedback.

Other insights from feedback	Example quote	NZTA response
road. A lower speed limit will also help visitors safely navigate this area.		

Key stakeholder and partner submissions

Below is a snapshot of feedback received across the Karangahake towards Waikino section from partners, stakeholder organisations.

Organisation	Feedback summary
Hauraki District Council	<p>Hauraki District Council (HDC) supports the proposal to reduce the speed limit in this location.</p> <p>HDC also suggest extending the area through to the railway station at Waikino or alternatively the section between the Waitawheta Bridge to the railway station should separately be a 60km/h area as there is high side friction with cyclists/pedestrians at the pub, and vehicles accessing the station.</p> <p>In addition, there can be a buildup of traffic at the bridge causing safety issues and a speed limit reduction would go some way to reducing this.</p> <p>HDC additionally raised concerns with the interaction of Albert Street and SH2. They recommend moving the start of the 80km/h area before this blind intersection, closer to Rahu Road.</p>
Safekids Aotearoa	<p>Safekids Aotearoa support the proposal to reduce speed the limit in this location.</p> <p>They note this section of SH2 is high-risk, with sharp corners, limited visibility, multiple side roads, and heavy traffic volumes (including many trucks). The road environment is unforgiving for children, pedestrians, and cyclists. Reducing the limit will make the road safer for tamariki, whānau, and the wider community by lowering crash severity and giving drivers more time to react.</p> <p>Safekids Aotearoa also noted for a very small travel-time cost (seconds per trip), the safety benefit is significant and life-saving.</p> <p>Alongside the speed limit reduction, they also recommend implementing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safe pedestrian crossing points and refuge islands near School Road and key carpark/walking track entrances. - Improved access management and clearer signage/line marking to reduce unsafe overtaking and turning conflicts. - Targeted enforcement and communications, especially during peak visitor periods, to maintain compliance. - Post-implementation monitoring of accidents, including child and equity-stratified data, shared with kura, iwi partners, and the community.

Overall, Safekids Aotearoa see this proposal as a practical, evidence-based step to protect tamariki and whānau in the Karangahake–Waikino corridor and support the fastest feasible implementation.

Waikato Regional Transport Committee

The Waikato Regional Transport Committee support the proposal to reduce speed limits in this location, with an estimated 28% reduction in total crashes.

AA Waikato

AA Waikato District Council do not support the proposal to reduce speed limits in this location noting this stretch is already subject to significant speed management, with 2 speed cameras operating at 80km/h near the proposed section. Given this existing enforcement, further speed limit reductions or interventions seem excessive.

AA Bay of Plenty

AA Bay of Plenty District Council do not support the proposal to reduce speed limits in this location noting this stretch is already subject to significant speed management, with 2 speed cameras operating at 80km/h in close proximity to the proposed section. Given this existing enforcement, further speed limit reductions or interventions seem excessive.

Ia Ara Transporting New Zealand

Ia Ara Transporting New Zealand recommend NZTA reconsider whether this proposed speed reduction is warranted. The current mean operating speed of 65km/h is considerably less than the current posted limit (80km/h), which shows that drivers are already adapting their speed to the local conditions.

However, that current mean speed is marginally higher than the proposed reduction of 60km/h. They note that the CBDS shows majority of traffic on this route are heavy vehicles (8,414 vpd), which they assume has been transposed with the light vehicle figure (756 vpd). Despite the current mean speed, the proposed speed limit reduction is estimated to add 57 hours in additional travel time per day to all vehicles.

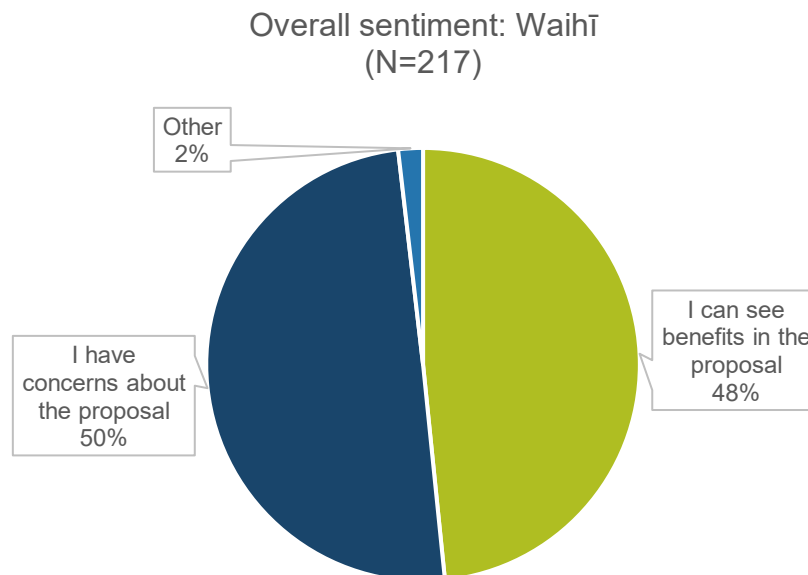
SH2 Waihi (also known as Parry Palm Avenue)

1. From near intersection SH2/Martin Road/Baber Street to near Orchard Road. Current speed limit: 70km/h. Proposed speed limit: 60km/h
2. From near Orchard Road to near Dean Crescent Current speed limit: 100km/h Proposed speed limit: 60km/h

Sentiment

We received 217 submissions in total, including and 6 from key stakeholder organisations

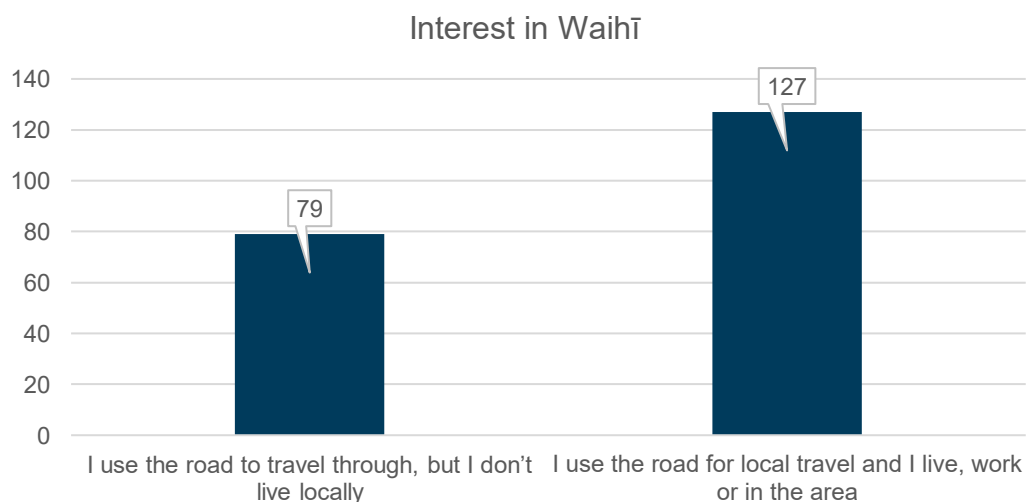
- 105 (48%) submitters felt the proposal had positive benefits
- 108 (50%) submitters had concerns with the proposal
- 4 (2%) submitters had other feedback



Base: All Waihi respondents (217)

Interest in the road section

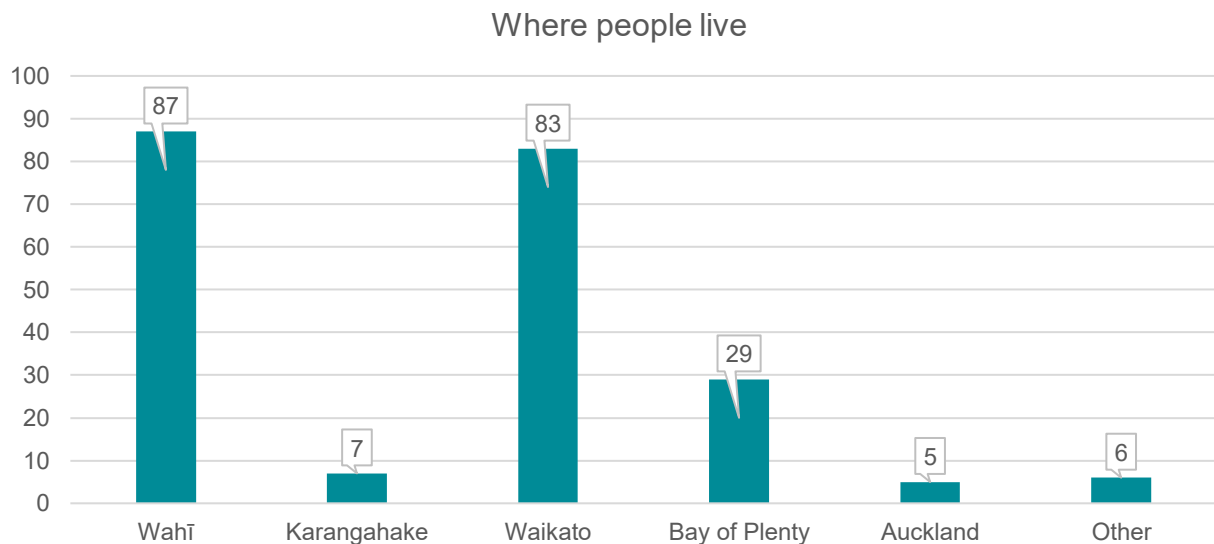
Over half of submitters (59%, 127) use the road for local travel and live or work in the area. 79 people (36%) use the road to travel through, but don't live locally.



Base – Interest in the road section, 206 people responded to this question.

87 submitters (40%) live in Waihi and 7 (3%) submitters live in Karangahake.

83 submitters (38%) indicated they live in the Waikato region, and 29 (13%) in Bay of Plenty. The remaining submitters live in other areas.



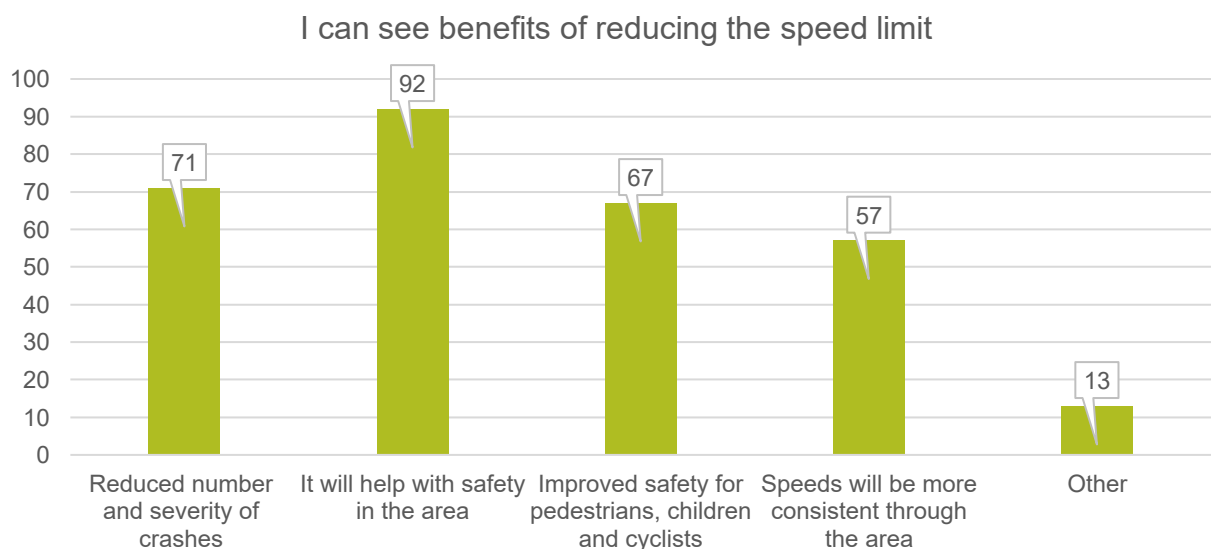
Base – Where people live, 359 people responded to this question.

Other submitters included transport user associations (3), District Council and Regional Transport Committee (2) and a community health organisation.

Feedback themes

48% of submitters (105) felt reducing the speed limit would have positive benefits.

The positive benefits submitters thought the proposed lower speed limit would have on the community, are shown in the chart below:

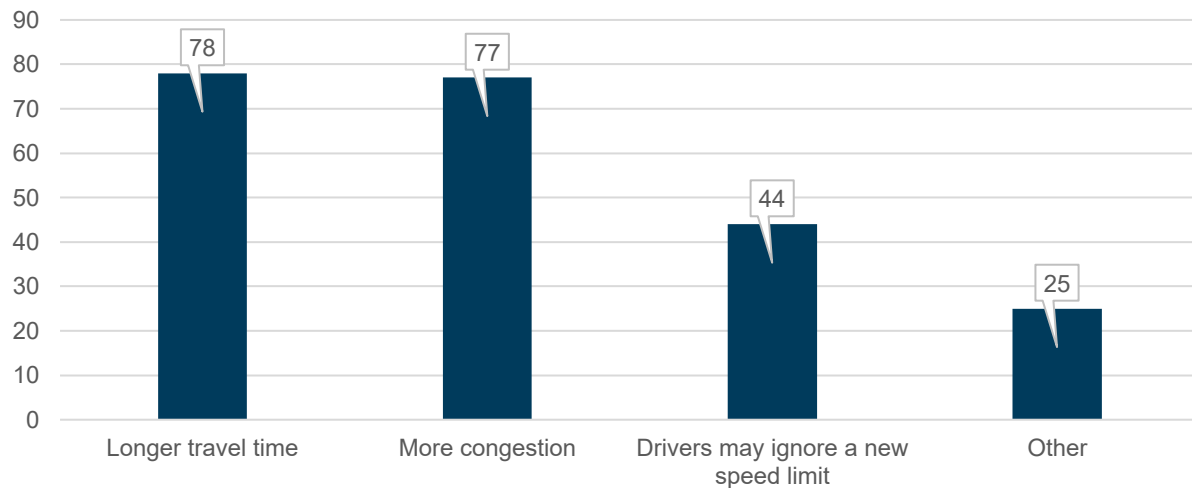


Base – Benefits selected by submitters, 105 people responded to this question.

50% (108) submitters have concerns with the proposal to lower speed limits.

The concerns submitters thought the proposed lower speed limit would have on the community, are shown in the chart below:

I have concerns about reducing the speed limit



Base – Concerns selected by submitters, 108 people responded to this question.

People also shared other feedback and insights:

Other insights from feedback	Example quote	NZTA response
A lower speed limit will make it safer to get in and out of side streets and the busy Dean Crescent intersection. This intersection is often used by large trucks and vehicles towing trailers visiting businesses such as Goldpine and the refuse transfer station.	<i>“Coming out of Dean Crescent onto SH2 at present is extremely dangerous with a speed limit of 100kph. Many of the vehicles are coming from the transfer station or timber yard and have trailers, making it even more hazardous to join the traffic travelling at 100kph.”</i>	Thank you for your feedback.
This area is residential in nature, becoming more built up and growing. A lower speed limit will make it safer for locals as there are many pedestrians crossing the road including children, as well as a popular playground and dairy on this road section.	<i>“I have been surprised that the Orchard Rd - Dean Cres section of SH2 has been 100 kph, as this is very much an urban area with houses and several side roads. I fully support dropping the speed limit to 60 kph. It would be consistent, then, to keep the 60 kph limit right through to the current 50 kph sign, especially given the Rocket Park playground which attracts many children and families.”</i>	This was one of the reasons the speed review was requested and undertaken.
The current speed limits are appropriate and should be retained because the road is safe and there are limited hazards.	<i>“It would be total overkill to reduce the speed to 60. It is a perfectly safe stretch of road, it is open, no houses are directly accessible and there is plenty of room to turn off and turn on to this stretch of road at the very small number of streets that have access to this road.”</i>	A lower speed limit supports safety in a changing environment such as this.

Partner and key stakeholder submissions

Below is a snapshot of feedback received across the Waihi section from key stakeholder organisations.

Organisation	Feedback summary
Hauraki District Council	<p>Hauraki District Council (HDC) supports the proposal to reduce the speed limit on these road sections.</p> <p>HDC mentioned the section from Orchard Road to west of Dean Crescent should be 60km/h as proposed as there have been serious accidents at this location. As well as heavy vehicles using this section, the Refuse Transfer Station attracts significant local traffic with “residential road users” exiting Dean Crescent onto a 100km/h section treating it as an urban road (50km/h) which is not safe.</p> <p>HDC also noted they been advocating for this change since the early 2000s.</p>
Safekids Aotearoa	<p>Safekids Aotearoa supports the proposal to reduce the speed limit on these road sections as there are a complex mix of land uses: residential areas, side roads, local businesses, and orchards all generating frequent vehicle turning movements and pedestrian activity. Current limits of 70km/h and 100km/h are unsafe for these conditions. The proposed 60km/h limit will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce the severity and likelihood of crashes, especially at busy intersections and driveways.• Better protect children, pedestrians, and cyclists moving between homes, schools, and community facilities.• Align travel speed with the semi-urban environment, where high vehicle volumes (including heavy trucks) mix with local road users. <p>Safekids Aotearoa also note the small increase in travel time is negligible compared to the potential to save lives and prevent serious injuries.</p>
Waikato Regional Transport Committee	<p>Waikato Regional Transport Committee supports the proposal to reduce the speed limit on these road sections with an estimated 33% reduction in total crashes.</p>
AA Waikato	<p>AA Waikato District Council supports the proposal to reduce the speed limit on these road sections noting the urban nature of the area.</p>
AA Bay of Plenty	<p>AA Bay of Plenty District Council supports the proposal to reduce the speed limit on these road sections.</p>
Ia Ara Transporting New Zealand	<p>SH2 Waihi (Parry Palm Avenue), from near the intersection of SH2/Martin Road/Baber Street to near Orchard Road.</p> <p>Transporting New Zealand question whether this proposed speed reduction is necessary given the current mean operating speed of 61km/h is less than the current posted limit (70km/h), and on par with</p>

Organisation	Feedback summary
	<p>the proposed new limit of 60km/h, which shows that drivers are already adapting their speed to the local conditions.</p> <p>There have only been minor or non-injury crashes in the past 5 years, and the proposed reduction is estimated to result in a modest 11% reduction in injury crashes, and reduce the current mean speed by 4km/h.</p> <p>SH2 Waihi (Parry Palm Avenue), from near Orchard Road to near Dean Crescent.</p> <p>Transporting New Zealand recommends that NZTA reconsider whether this proposed speed reduction is sensible. It proposes a 40km/h reduction in the current posted limit of 100km/h, albeit over a short distance. However, the current mean speed through this route is 79km/h, suggesting that drivers are already adapting their speed to the local conditions, albeit that the road is self-explaining a speed around 80km/h and not 60km/h without engineering treatments.</p> <p>There are also a substantial number of users on this route, at nearly 8000 vpd, who will incur an estimated 30 hours increase in travel time per day over this short distance. Transporting New Zealand suggest a proposed limit of 80km/h unless engineering treatments are applied to reduce average speeds further.</p>

How feedback was used

All submissions were reviewed by an independent analysis company and the detailed feedback categorised into themes. Submissions underwent a data cleaning process to check for the following:

- Duplicates in emails, with the understanding that some families use the same email address,
- which is why we also look at names and verbatim comments.
- Duplicates in IP addresses, with the understanding that some workplaces, public facilities etc may result in repeated IP addresses.
- AI or bot submissions, where repeated phrases or patterns are used.

A team of road safety engineers, members of the speed management team, and communication and engagement staff then convened to review and fully understand the themes alongside the results of technical, safety, cost benefit analysis and funding implications. The team also considered alignment to the Government Policy Statement and the government's overarching safety objectives.

The team's recommended outcome was then submitted to the Director of Land Transport for approval.

Feedback within the scope of the consultation that impacts on the work of our partners will be passed on and discussed with them. For example, feedback received on speed limit enforcement will be discussed directly with NZ Police and will help inform our approach going forward. Feedback that didn't directly sit within the scope of the consultation (e.g. feedback relating to speed cameras, or construction of footpaths) has also been captured and been passed on the appropriate team.

Next steps

When approval and certification from the Director of Land Transport has been received, we'll inform the community and stakeholders of the speed limit review outcome. This will include whether or not the

proposed speed limit changes are approved and if they are, when they will be implemented). We will publish details on our website and implement any new speed limits. We also use the feedback to understand what supporting information the community might need when we implement any approved changes.

The current speed limits remain in place until any needed signage changes have been made.

Appendix 1 – consultation survey questions

To help us identify if people matched the Rule's required targeted groups, respondents were first asked to identify if any of the following applied:

- I use the road to travel on, but I don't live locally
- I use the road to travel on, and I live, work or go to school locally
- I'm authorised to represent an iwi, rūnanga, hapū, stakeholder organisation, council. Please specify your role and the name of your group/organisation
- Other

We also asked where they lived, providing these options:

- Karangahake
- Waihi
- Waikato
- Bay of Plenty
- Auckland
- Other parts of NZ (with option for filling in their location)

For each proposed speed limit change, people were then asked what do you think about the proposed speed limit change.

They could then tick one of the following 4 statements and answer a further question explaining their reasons. To make it simple and easy for each respondent to explain their choice, a list of check boxes with frequently used feedback themes (identified from other previous, similar consultations) was supplied, or people could write a 'free text' answer instead in an open text box:

The proposed speed limit will have positive impacts

- Reduced number and severity of crashes
- It will help with safety in the area
- Improved safety for pedestrians, children and cyclists
- Speeds will be more consistent in the area
- Other (please specify)

The proposed speed limit will have negative impacts

- Increased travel times
- More congestion
- Drivers may ignore speed limits
- Other (please specify)

Those submitting could then respond to the free-text question: "Do you have any other comments about the proposal to reduce speeds in this area?"