



SH33 PAENGAROA AND SH33/30 ŌKERE FALLS TO ROKOKAWA ROAD SPEED REVIEW

Summary of the speed review consultation

WAKA KOTAHI NZ TRANSPORT AGENCY

MARCH 2020

1. BACKGROUND

Between August and September 2019, Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency consulted with the local community and road user groups on the safe and appropriate speed limits for State Highway 30 (SH30) / State Highway 33 (SH33) Rural Rotorua and Paengaroa in the Bay of Plenty region.

Waka Kotahi has reviewed the speed limits on this route as it was one of the highest risk roads in the region.

A safety improvement project has been underway to make the road between Paengaroa and the SH30/SH33 intersection near Rotorua safer, but we also needed to review the current speed limits.

We reviewed the speed limits to make sure they are safe and appropriate for this road. No matter what causes a crash, speed is always a factor in the severity. Put simply, the speed of impact can be the difference between walking away or being carried away from a crash.

This state highway is in the Bay of Plenty, between Tauranga and Rotorua, and covers areas with high levels of economic activity, involving heavy commercial vehicles using the Port of Tauranga (the largest Port in NZ), and domestic and international tourism. The current speed limits vary from 100km/h along the rural open road sections to 70km/h through the rural towns of Paengaroa, Ōkere Falls and Mourea. Traffic volumes, including heavy vehicles, have been increasing, especially in areas where people live and try to go about their day-to-day business. There are also hazards like narrow road shoulders and steep drop-offs or ditches on the roadside.

2. CONSULTATION PROCESS

Prior to undertaking the formal consultation process, we completed numerous steps, including a speed management technical assessment of the road. This identified the various existing speed limits on the road were not safe and appropriate for the current road characteristics and roadside environments along this corridor.

Between 2016 and 2019, initially as part of the safety improvement project along SH33, we engaged with local stakeholders including Rotorua Lakes Council, Paengaroa Community Association, Lakes Community Board, local Iwi, schools, the Police, the Automobile Association (AA) and other road user groups. Engagement provided us with feedback and local knowledge on how people use the road and their concerns. This helped us to decide if a speed limit change was the best thing to do to improve road safety, where new speed limits could begin or end, and if any other safety improvements might be needed.

On 19 August 2019, Waka Kotahi started formal consultation on proposed new speed limits for SH30/SH33 Rural Rotorua and Paengaroa. Consultation was open for four weeks and closed on 16 September 2019.

Consultation materials provided evidence that supported the proposed safe and appropriate speed limits. This included current travel speeds and the characteristics of the road.

The consultation was advertised on radio stations, through social media, on Waka Kotahi's website and in the Rotorua Daily Post, Rotorua Review and Te Puke Times publications. A media release was issued on 20 August 2019 and resulted in online and print media coverage ([NZ Herald](#), [Te Puke Times](#), [SunLive](#), [Daily Post](#)).

People were able to submit their views through the electronic form; hard copy submission forms which were available from locations such as the Rotorua Lakes Council, service stations, local schools; and via email or by ringing 0800 44 44 49.

3. CONSULTATION QUESTION

The consultation phase is used to seek any additional information from stakeholders or the public that will help inform the decision about the proposed speed limit changes.

During formal consultation we proposed new speed limits and asked the public the following question “**Are there any other factors that we should consider when making our decision?**”

The factors that were taken into consideration when proposing the new speed limits are communicated in this document.

4. SUMMARY AND RESPONSE TO SUBMISSIONS

We received 109 submissions. We appreciated the response from the community and thank all those who provided their feedback.

While a number of submissions did include factors that were taken into consideration when setting the new permanent speed limits, a proportion of the submissions expressed only a general opinion about speed reviews. These included issues about driver behaviour, traffic volumes and enforcement.

The relevant factors that were expressed in the feedback from the public are summarised in the table below. The table outlines the section of the road, along with the main factors people raised in their submissions and our comments.

	Factors	Waka Kotahi comment
Paengaroa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend where the speed changes (either to the north or the south) away from the town. Implement 50km/h instead. Disagreement with the proposed limit of 60km/h for the township environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current speed thresholds (location where the change in speed signs are installed, usually at either side of the township), provide a boundary for the rural/township areas. Moving these points further into the rural area would unlikely be effective. Many rural areas do not provide the visual cues (i.e. footpaths, commercial buildings, parking, housing) that drivers need to associate with lower speed limits. For most drivers to comply with speed limits, the land use and surrounding environment where the speed changes must be an obvious point of difference, so they can understand why they need to change their speed. Recent safety improvements have been designed and implemented to emphasise the 60km/h speed environment, to differentiate between the adjacent higher speed rural sections.
Ōkere Falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend the speed reduction further to the north (mainly to Maniatutu Road). Adopt a 50km/h through Ōkere Falls. Have a single consistent speed limit of 60km/h (not specifically relevant to this section). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extending the reduced speed limit to the north was not supported as this is a rural area and quite different in nature to the Ōkere Falls settlement. Many rural areas do not provide the visual cues that drivers need to associate with lower speed limits. For drivers to comply with speed limits there needs to be a significant change in the road, land use and/or the roadside environment, so they understand why they need to change their speed. Planned safety improvements through Ōkere Falls are expected to support a lower speed limit through the settlement. Ōkere Falls, much like Mourea and Paengaroa, is a rural settlement and is different in terms of roadside development

Factors	Waka Kotahi comment
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and environment to an urban residential street where a 50km/h speed limit is typically used.

<p>Ōkere Falls to Waipuna Bay</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a single consistent speed limit such as 60km/h. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A consistent 60km/h was considered between Ōkere Falls and Mourea during engagement with stakeholders and the speed management technical assessment. The area is uninhabited and rural in nature with a completely different roadside development and environment from Mourea and Ōkere Falls. Compliance with a possible 60km/h limit in this location is problematic without significant engineering work to reinforce this environment so it's similar in look and feel to Mourea and Ōkere Falls. Drivers are unlikely to comply with 60km/h through this section, and likely to not comply through Mourea and Ōkere Falls. • The approach put forward during consultation is to relocate the existing speed thresholds at positions where there is still an obvious change to the roadside development/environment (higher intensity of properties and land use change). It is believed, on balance, this provides the best safety outcomes for a rural environment. • The new threshold signs and pavement marking changes at the 60km/h speed limit change points will reinforce the change in speed limits and help make drivers aware when the speed limit changes. • Speed limit signs will be repeated within Mourea and Ōkere Falls to reinforce the new speed limits and remind drivers of the speed limit change.
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<p>Mourea</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similar to the Ōkere Falls section regarding the consistent speed limit. • Other issues included a 50km/h or extending the limit to the south further. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer above to the <i>Ōkere Falls to Waipuna Bay</i> response.
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<p>Mourea to SH33/SH30 Te Ngae Junction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similar to Ōkere Falls regarding the consistent speed limit. • Other responses wanted 70km/h. • General opposition based on safety issues caused by driver frustration (this is consistent across the other sections but raised more often for this section). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with a possible 60km/h limit in an obviously rural area will be unlikely. A significant amount of work would be needed to make the roadside and environment feel more urban and this is not practical. • With the speed limit change, we should see drivers travelling at more consistent speeds, reducing the need for overtaking. More consistent travel speeds can also improve traffic flow, as well as reducing crashes. • Safety improvements (eg wide centreline and barriers at high risk locations) through this section has been completed to support the 80km/h speed limit. • Improving everyone's driving skills would have a positive impact on the speeds people travel and the harm done on our roads. Speed is one risk that good drivers can minimise. While poor driving behaviour has resulted in crashes, more crashes are a result of mistakes and even the most experienced "perfect" driver among us drops the ball sometimes. These mistakes shouldn't result in loss of life or serious injury. • Speed is the difference between a correctable mistake and a fatal error. Every extra km/h increases the likelihood of someone having a crash. Regardless of what causes a crash,
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speed always plays a part. Everyone makes mistakes, but simple mistakes should not cost lives.

- To make New Zealand's roads safer, we are working on a "Safe System". The Safe System approach requires considering and strengthening all parts of system – roads and roadsides, speeds, vehicles and road use. To ensure that no one is killed or seriously injured on our transport network. By taking a system approach, if one part fails, other parts will still protect the people involved. Designing to protect people from crash forces means creating forgiving roads and roadsides; speeds where collisions are survivable; safer vehicles that prevent errors and protect the people inside and ensuring that all people on the road has the skill, knowledge and focus required to travel safely.

Intersection Speed Zone (ISZ) SH33/SH30 Te Ngae Junction

- Requests for the Intersection Speed Zone (ISZ) to apply to the side road approach on SH30.
- Others wanted a 70km/h for the ISZ, felt 60km/h was too slow.
- Consistent speed limits were also a consideration here.
- Others simply didn't think it would be adhered to or it wouldn't be effective.

- We are still reviewing the feedback received on the proposed Intersection Speed Zone. A decision on this will be made public later.

SH33/SH30 Te Ngae Junction to Rotokawa Road

- Of note in this section is the request for a Variable Speed Limit (VSL) to support the Kura and Rotokawa School.
- Other submissions for this to be consistent with adjoining areas i.e. reduce the number of different speed areas.
- Others had concerns with how the passing lane would operate under the lower speed limit – however this wasn't a significant number.
- Many submissions we received did not understand why we needed to reduce the speed along this section of the road. Some submitters thought 100km/h was safe and appropriate.

- Rotokawa School is not directly within this section of speed review. The new Road to Zero 2020-2030 strategy is a sector-wide plan to reduce deaths and serious injuries on New Zealand's roads, cycleways and footpaths by 40% over the next ten years. The strategy adopts Vision Zero, where no-one is killed or seriously injured in road crashes, and where no death or serious injury while travelling on our roads is acceptable. As part of Road to Zero, the Government announced its Tackling Unsafe Speeds package which changes how councils and Waka Kotahi carry out speed management and requires road controlling authorities (RCAs) to adopt safer speed limits around schools. The Ministry of Transport is currently consulting with the sector on how this package will be implemented.
- The Kura and School are not directly accessed from SH30, there is no pick-up/drop off directly on the highway and consequently drivers would likely not comply with the variable speed limit as they would not see an obvious change in roadside development or environment. This can be monitored following the implementation of the new 80km/h limit to determine if the existing issues remain.
- Vehicles will be travelling at a more consistent speed that will reduce the need for overtaking and improve traffic flows, as well as reducing crashes. Where vehicles are being overtaken at the passing lane at the lower speed the time to overtake, and exposure to any possible speeds in excess of the speed limit, will be reduced.

- We will continue to monitor the existing passing lane under the new speed limit.
- In accordance with the Setting of Speed Limits Rule 2017 when considering a new speed limit, a road controlling authority must have regard to the form and function of the road, the safety metrics associated with that section of road, and the risk rating of the existing infrastructure. Given the higher risk associated with the adjacent roadside hazards, the frequency of property accessways, the volume of traffic, and the severity of crashes that have occurred along this section of highway, and other factors that a road controlling authority must take regard to, the technical assessment of the safe and appropriate speed determined this to be 80km/h.

5. DECISION

The table below shows the recommendations Waka Kotahi formally consulted on between 19 August 2019 and 16 September 2019.

The submissions did not identify any issues that Waka Kotahi had not already considered.

The outcome of the speed review was in line with the proposed speed limit changes, and the permanent speed limits outlined below will come into effect on Monday 29 June 2020.

During consultation, at SH33/SH30, an intersection speed zone (ISZ) was proposed. We are still reviewing the feedback received on the proposed ISZ. A decision on this will be made public later.

Stakeholders will be notified by letter and the public are being notified via media release, newspaper and radio advertising, and social media ahead of the new speed limits signs being installed and the new speed limits taking effect.

When the new speed limits take effect, the area will be monitored to ensure the new permanent speed limits and supporting treatments are working effectively and to determine if any further changes are required.

The following new speed limits will apply from Monday 29 June 2020:

SH30/SH33 Rural Rotorua and Paengaroa	New speed limits from 29 June 2020
SH33 Paengaroa From 120m north of Lemon Road to 110m south-west of Partridge Lane.	60km/h
SH33 Okere Falls From 390m north of Trout Pool Road to 1.57km south of Trout Pool Road.	60km/h
SH33 Okere Falls south to Waipuna Bay From 1.57km south of Trout Pool Road to 703m north-east of Hamurana Road.	80km/h

SH33 Waipuna Bay, through Mourea, to Okawa Bay

From 703m north-east of Hamurana Road to 64m south of Okawa Bay Road.

60km/h

SH33 Okawa Bay to Te Ngae Junction

From 64m south of Okawa Bay Road to the SH33/SH30 intersection.

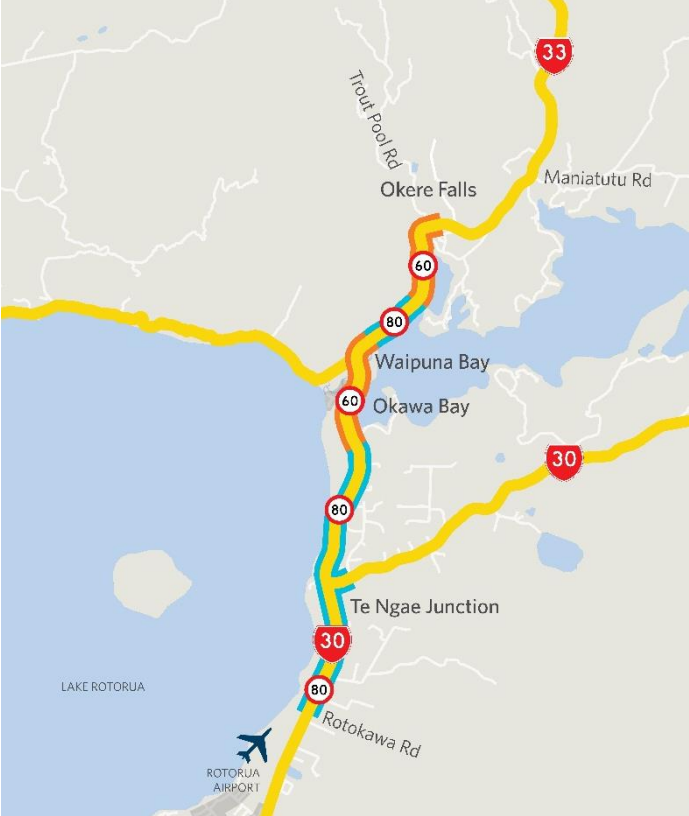
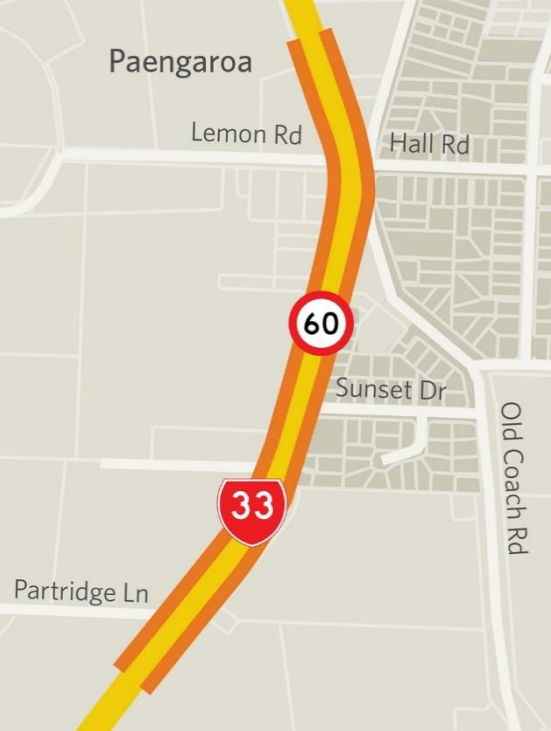
80km/h

SH30 Te Ngae Junction to Rotokawa Road

From 353m east of the SH33/SH30 intersection to 140m north of Rotokawa Road.

80km/h

Map showing the permanent speed limits



6. SUBMISSIONS

You can view the submissions we received for this speed review [here](#).