



SH5 NAPIER TO TAUPŌ SPEED REVIEW

Summary of the speed review consultation and
engagement

WAKA KOTAHI NZ TRANSPORT AGENCY

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1. BACKGROUND

Speed plays an undeniable role in the numbers of people being killed and seriously injured on our roads. Speed is the primary factor between people being killed or walking away unharmed from a crash.

It's also a controllable factor – when speed limits are safer and people drive within the speed limits, it makes crashes less likely to occur, and it reduces the severity of crashes when they do occur.

Implementing safer speed limits is a key part of New Zealand's road safety strategy, Road to Zero 2020-30, and the Safe System approach, which acknowledges even responsible people sometimes make mistakes when driving and aims to minimise the impact of those errors.

The Road to Zero strategy was developed in partnership with NZ Police, Te Manatū Waka Ministry of Transport, local government and WorkSafe, all of which adopt Vision Zero. It sets a target to reduce deaths and serious injuries on New Zealand's roads, streets, cycleways and footpaths by 40 percent over the next 10 years.

As part of this work, Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency has been reviewing speed limits on State Highway 5 between Napier and Taupō, which has been identified as one of the highest risk sections of road in the Hawke's Bay region and Taupō district.

This state highway is a busy route with large numbers of heavy commercial vehicles (16-20% of all traffic) and is the main tourist link between the two locations.

The corridor has three main sections:

- Rangitaiki Plains - relatively straight and flat as it travels through rural farmland and forest blocks. Has minimal shoulder width and no asset issues but is a notably high-speed rural environment.
- Waipunga to Glengarry - the corridor becomes more winding and passes through steeper / mountainous terrain. There are some small rural settlements along the western part of the corridor. There are also variable weather systems ranging from snow, ice, and heavy rain to extreme heat and wind.
- Eskdale – this is a similar environment to the Taupō end of the highway. Moderate curves and open environment.

Between 2010 to 2019 16 people were killed and 75 were seriously injured on SH5 between Napier and Taupō.

Since December 2019, there has been a spike in fatal crashes. Six fatal crashes have resulted in nine people dying on this road. All but one of these crashes happened on the Hawke's Bay section we are reviewing.

There has been significant media attention on this section of road. The prevalent theme of the concerns, including from the Mayor of Hastings District Council (HDC) and local AA is that the road surface is unsafe and there is not enough forward investment to improve this corridor.

After reviewing speed limits, Waka Kotahi consulted with the local community and road user groups on a proposed new 80km/h speed limit for SH5 from Rangitaiki to Esk Valley.

The consultation period was from Monday 12 April until Sunday 6 June 2021. During this time, we also asked for people's thoughts on speed along the remaining sections of SH5 on the Rangitaiki Straights and around Eskdale. This document summarises feedback from key stakeholders and the community.

Speed is just one part of improving road safety.

If we are to achieve Vision Zero, we must put the safety of people before efficiency and travel time. We will not apologise for putting the safety of people first.

We're applying the safe system approach to ensure infrastructure and speed work together to improve safety. We know there are other changes people want to see. Lowering speeds doesn't mean we can't make other changes in future, but it is one of the best things we can do right now to prevent people dying and being seriously injured on these roads.

Along with reviewing speeds on SH5 and SH51, we expect to invest \$14 million into maintenance and safety projects around the Hawke's Bay region this year.

We have resealed additional parts of SH5 in the 20/21 financial year and we have completed resealing the Titiokura Summit. We have also improved the safety of the entrance to the Tarawera Café. In the 20/21 financial year we spent an extra \$4 million on maintaining this corridor, above previously planned levels.

We are currently implementing safety improvements, including \$2.5 million for side barriers, road markings, signs and rumble lines along SH5.

We know that long-term planning is vital to SH5, as it's Hawke's Bay's critical link north.

In the 2021-24 National Land Transport Programme (NLTP) there are three opportunities to further improve safety and resilience of the remaining sections of the corridor; the SH5 Napier turn off to Hawke's Bay boundary and Rangitaiki to Taupō. If approved to progress, these works will be carried out over the 2021-24 and 2024-27 NLTP periods

Waka Kotahi is also seeking funding for a corridor business case that will explore improvements in addition to safety such as the resilience of the route. Currently this has probable status for funding in the current NLTP period. If approved, we will deliver this work in stages between 2021 and 2027.

Other initiatives that are underway include working with NZ Police, increasing investment on road safety, and working with Road Safe Coordinators on a roadside billboard campaign along SH5 – 'Stay alive on 5.'

2. CONSULTATION TIMELINE

Before starting the formal consultation process a technical assessment of the road was completed. 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.

We decided to go directly to consultation due to the high safety risks for the windy section of SH5. After we made this decision, we spoke with key stakeholders including emergency services and council, before launching formal consultation on Monday 12 April 2021.

At the same time, we ran engagement on the remaining sections of highway, asking people to share their thoughts on the current speeds along the Rangitaiki Straights and around Eskdale. This work was joined with the consultation on SH51 Marine Parade to Waipatu.

Consultation was initially open for four weeks and was due to close on Sunday 9 May 2021 but was extended for four weeks after some community members raised concerns about travel time calculations.

The consultation was on the Waka Kotahi website and was advertised on radio stations in Hawke's Bay and Taupō; in the Taupō Times, New Zealand Herald and online on both the New Zealand Herald and Stuff websites.

Mail drops were delivered to residents living along and near SH5.

A media release was issued on 13 April 2021 and resulted in online and print media coverage ([Stuff](#), [Hawke's Bay Today/NZ Herald](#)). A second media release was issued and there was online coverage ([NZ Herald](#)).

People were able to submit their views online, on hard copy submission forms which were available from locations such as the Taupō Council and Hastings Council, service stations, local schools, and via email hawkesbay.speed.reviews@nzta.govt.nz

When the consultation period was extended, the information sheet/consultation documentation and online collateral were updated to explain the travel time data and a second mail drop was made to those living along, and near the corridor, along with the advertising.

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 “**Please tell us if there are any other factors we should consider when making a decision on the speed limit changes proposed?**”

We consider all factors raised during formal consultation when making our decision on new permanent speed limits.

4. ENGAGEMENT QUESTION

While undertaking formal consultation on the proposed new speed limits from Rangitaiki to Esk Valley, we also wanted to understand public feeling about speeds on the remaining sections of SH5 – Rangitaiki Straights to Taupō, and Eskdale to SH2 intersection in Napier.

To decide whether the existing 100km/h speed limit in the remaining sections should also be lowered, we asked the public the following engagement question: “**Let us know what you think about speed limits in these areas. Do they feel safe for the way people use it?**”

We will consider the engagement feedback to decide whether to enter into formal consultation on speed limits in these areas.

5. SUMMARY AND RESPONSE TO SUBMISSIONS

During the consultation period we received 2012 pieces of feedback regarding SH5. A small proportion of general comments (192) were also made inclusive of both the SH51 and SH5 speed review.

This was across email, hard copy submission, social pinpoint and online survey results*. We appreciated the response from the community and thank all those who took the time to provide feedback.

While a number of submissions did include factors that are 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, current road improvements, and enforcement.

The key feedback themes across the speed review were:

- The majority of feedback **did not support** the proposed 80km/h speed limit between Rangitaiki and Esk Valley.
- People are **supportive** of speed being reduced through some residential areas and past intersections. There was some support for high-risk sections to be lowered, areas mentioned

repeatedly included Te Haroto, Te Pohue, Waipunga, Esk Valley and alongside the Tarawera Café and Tavern.

- **Many comments called for other approaches**, such as road safety improvements, enforcement, driver training, passing lanes and pull-over bays.
- Submitters do not perceive speed as the **main cause of crashes**, rather people see driver frustration at slow vehicles and dangerous overtaking as the main causes of deaths.
- Many comments stated **driver education and training** should be front of mind instead of a speed reduction.
- **Signage, policing and enforcement** measures were seen as important to get drivers to adhere to any future speed limit changes.

More than half of the submissions did not support the proposed speed change, with a third of the submissions supporting some speed changes if in combination with other road safety improvements.

Key factors expressed in the feedback from the public are summarised in the table below. It outlines the section of the road, along with the main factors people raised in their submissions.

Table 1 Public responses - consultation

Feedback on proposed 80km/h speed limit between Rangitaiki to Esk Valley

From 1160m south-east of Matea Road to 130m west of Waipunga Road.

Feedback themes	Comments EG Factors raised in consultation OR Issues/Concerns Raised
Supports speed reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little support of proposed speed reduction to 80km/h for safety • Support for a speed reduction to 90km/h on some parts of the SH5 • 80km/h could be the winter/wet weather speed limit or a temporary change until the road is upgraded • Support lower speeds for the safety of pedestrians and cyclists • Supports lower speed limits through small towns along SH5
Not in support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority don't support proposed 80km/h speed change • Concerns that lowering the speed will result in high driver frustration and low compliance with no reduction in accidents • Possible economic impact on the freight industry • Speed review seen as a 'band-aid' approach to safety • Little understanding of the safety benefits of lower speed • Driver training needed not a reduction in speed • Speed reduction can't be made on its own, infrastructure and safety improvements need to be made at the same time
Support in specific named locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people would like to see limits lowered in selected areas such as residential areas - Te Haroto, Te Pohue, Waipunga, and Esk Valley (suggested limits of between 60km/h – 80km/h) • Reduce speeds between Lucy Creek Bridge through to Napier/Wairoa turn off • 80km/h between Waipunga Gorge and just east of Tarawera's Tavern/Café • 60km/h for 1km either side of Tarawera Café • Widen road through Tarawera • A slow vehicle lane from the roundabout (Mitre 10 / Z station / SH 1) to Mountain Road. This is a steady climb that slower vehicles (trucks and towing vehicles) struggle with, and create traffic congestion at the start of the highway. • Should re-align the road from Te Horoto to Esk Valley as there are a few parts on that stretch that need attention. • Rangataiki Straights passing lanes • Esk Valley / SH2 intersection should have controlled lights as it is a dangerous intersection.

Feedback themes	Comments EG Factors raised in consultation OR Issues/Concerns Raised
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop sign on Kiddle Drive should be removed • 200m either side of the hairpin bend north of Tarawera should be reduced • From the Matea Road area through to Tarawera Forestry / works camp should be reduced to 80km/h. • Waitara Road intersection a shoulder to turn left is needed for south bound traffic. • Te Pohue a reduced speed limit of 70km/h through the settlement is appropriate. • Hill Road – turning bays for both directions.
Infrastructure improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority of feedback highlighted the need for road safety improvements, such as more passing lanes and slow vehicle lanes (especially on hills) and increased signage to notify the distance between passing/slow lanes • Widen the road, fix edges, fill potholes • Improve road camber (especially in Te Pohue) • Safe, separate cycling lane • Support for a four-lane highway • At least two northbound, and two southbound passing lanes are required to allow cars the opportunity to pass heavy vehicles between Taupō and Tarawera. One near the first hill, travelling eastbound, and one further along • Esk Valley Bridge needs to be widened to accommodate pedestrians, cyclists and large vehicles • Intersection into Loop Road at Te Pohue needs updating due to high risk of rear-endings • Lucky Hill Bridge needs widening and realigning • The passing lane heading towards Taupō (just after Eland Station) starts too late and needs to be lengthened to prevent dangerous overtaking • Pull off area just before Glengarry Road needs to be widened so cars can safely pass large vehicles • Designated turning lane for Tarawera Café and upgraded turning for Tarawera Tavern • Need to reinstate the turning lane for McVicar Road • Fix the ponding issue at the Ohurakura junction caused by a bund on the road • Add an extra lane for safety on Ohurakura Road junction
Other approaches to improve road safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase driver education and driver testing (International drivers and older people were highlighted by some respondents), and special tests for 'open road' drivers • Increase police presence and enforcement, including speed cameras, breath-testing, and increased fines • Reduce the hours of heavy transport usage • Amnesty period for heavy haulage if speed is changed while they get used to the new limits.

Table 2 Public consultation - engagement

While formal consultation was underway for Rangitaiki to Esk Valley, we also asked the public how they felt about speeds on the Rangitaiki Straights and around Eskdale to help us decide if we need to lower speeds in these areas too. Below are the comments from this engagement:

Location	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EG Factors raised in engagement OR Issues/Concerns Raised
Taupō to Rangitaiki: Suggestions on existing 100km/h section.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority of feedback in favour of keeping the existing 100km/h speed limit • Strong opposition to reducing speed • Increase the speed limit to 110km/h on the straights • Passing lanes, slow vehicle bays, yellow lines and median barriers needed • Four lanes along the straights • Better driver education • Upgrade the road – widen, improve pavement and camber • Eastbound passing lane needed at approximately 926 SH5, Maunganamu, Taupō • Ice warning signs needed along SH5 near Opepe Historic area, and just east of Rangitaiki Tavern (near Matea Road) • Taupō and Wairoa intersections need updating with roundabouts • Intersection of SH5 and Kiddle Drive needs a roundabout and pedestrian underpass • Seal the Esk Valley road with asphalt instead of chip to reduce noise pollution • Eskdale section needs widening and sealing to improve side road and driveway access • Rangitaiki Straights median barrier would reduce unsafe overtaking • Remove stop sign on Kiddle Drive intersection in Taupō
Esk Valley to State Highway 2 north of Napier: Suggestions on existing 100km/h section.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for keeping section between the Tarawera Café and Eskdale at 100km/h • Reduce speed at SH5/SH2 intersection through Bayview. Change it to 60km/h from just before Franklin Road through to Bayview, right up to the 100km/h sign on the south side of Bayview. • Reduce speed from SH5/SH2 intersection to 80km/h up to the existing 70km/h sign heading south before Franklins Road. • Reduce speed at the bridge north of Ellis Wallace Road on SH5 right up to the intersection with SH2.

Table 3 Stakeholder relationships

Party Engaged	Comments
Police	Supports the setting of speed limits to align with safe system principles and the need for our transport system to be forgiving in the event that a mistake is made, and a crash should occur.
Fire and Emergency NZ, & St Johns	Supports the changes proposed on SH5, with the following comments and suggestions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wonders if there is any mandate on education programmes/education of youth - Policing will be difficult, but in principle agree with this [proposal]
Road Transport Forum	Not supportive of the proposed SH5 changes and had the following comments/suggestions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concerns raised about the Waka Kotahi approach to speed limit reduction and that it is shifting responsibility onto road users to manage inherent risk. - The analysis does not appear to take into consideration any meaningful economic and/or social impacts on freight movements.

Party Engaged	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Across the network there seems to be an increasing variability in speed limits, and its causing confusion for drivers as they try and establish the applicable limit and puts them at risk of either receiving an infringement notice or being penalised by their employers. - Consideration of an amnesty period when changes occur. - Modelling of travel time is flawed and practical assessments undertaken by transport operator indicate the increases are typically higher. - Concerns raised about increase in freight costs due to the increase in travel times. - There will be opposition to this change in the transport industry. - Waka Kotahi does not appear to be undertaking rigorous or substantive analysis and the scope of analysis is siloed and does not fully consider the impacts on the freight movement and the impact on economy or wellbeing of New Zealanders. - Favour improved road design and conditions. - Seek support from Waka Kotahi of long-term investment to develop drivers in the freight section – Te ara ki tua/Road to Success traineeship programme. -
Road Transport Association	<p>Not in support of overall speed reduction on SH5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The proposal to reduce the speed limit is contrary to the interests of commercial road freight operators. - SH5 needs repair and improvements such as more passing lanes. - The reduction in speed for Heavy Motor Vehicles (HMVs) will have a significant adverse effect on commercial freight operators including an unjustified increase in the journey time and increased pressure on drivers who will be concerned about compliance with their logbook work and rest times under the Vehicle Dimension and Mass Work Time Rule 2016, given the longer journey time. - Staying under 80km/h for the 83km journey between Esk and Rangitaiki will make driving more difficult causing stress and frustration. - Do not support speed changes on any State Highways, favouring road improvements and if they speed is reduced to 80km/h believe there will be more enforcement required for it to work. - Accident statistics are refuted
AA (Automobile Association) – and Gisborne District Council (joint submission)	<p>Not in support of the speed reduction on SH5 from 100km/h to 80km/h, and had the following comments/suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gisborne District Council often hears complaints from its members who have had vehicles damaged as a direct result of the state of SH5. - Do not consider that speed reduction should be used as the default tool to improve safety and believe that improved engineering and maintenance would be far more effective, and these options require prioritisation when considering speed limits and safety. - Not happy with our stats found them misleading. - ‘Stay Alive on 5’ fairly recent education campaign, should look for more education opportunities like this. - AA national office crash data shows that over the 3 sections of SH5, in the past 10 years, there have been 69 fatal and serious crashes reported. A higher portion 68% of the crashes have occurred in the past 5 years. There appears to be correlation with this huge increase in crashes to the deteriorating condition of the highway over that time. - Called to improve the State Highway from Tarawera to Bay View immediately – including addressing flushing, rutting, corrugations, poor patching, potholes and slick shoulder widening and uneven pavement rehabilitation. - Reducing the speed limit down to 80km/h will lead to platooning of vehicles and is likely to increase driver frustration and lead to more unsafe manoeuvres in attempts to overtake slower traffic. - It will also impact on heavy vehicles momentum to negotiate the steeper gradients on the route. Heavy vehicle drivers often let their vehicles increase in speed leading to an incline to assist with negotiating it. - There are also calls to install more passing opportunities.
Hastings District Council	<p>Not supportive of SH5 speed changes.</p>

Party Engaged	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concerns that the strategic importance of the SH5 link has been undervalued and not adequately considered in determining a safe and appropriate speed. - Concerns raised that the technical assessments completed were desktop in nature and there was an absence of any site visits, validations and assessments. - Concerns with the lack of analysis of the recorded crashes and believe without this level of assessment it is impossible to conclude that the proposed intervention is appropriate and even more impossible to have confidence that it will drive the desired safety outcomes. - Concerns raised about the approach to public consultation and engagement, and it was not in accord with the Waka Kotahi guidelines with key affected parties not been afforded appropriate engagement and input into the process. - Within the community there is almost no support for the proposed speed reduction. - Concerns raised about the significant under investment in infrastructure along SH5 and believe that this under investment has directly contributed to the poor safety outcomes present on this route. - There is a need for significant and prompt action to upgrade this route to a level befitting of its Regional Strategic nature. - We believe that the only option to address the poor safety record of SH5 is to progress a more comprehensive corridor study to better define and evaluate the problem and to ultimately develop an intervention strategy that takes a holistic approach and achieves multiple outcomes for safety, efficiency, resilience and accessibility. - The release of mean travel time is misleading and does not accurately reflect the true travel time impact of the proposal. - Concerns raised about lack of signage on route. - Support speed management across some parts of the route, such as around Te Pohue and Te Haroto villages, we cannot support the proposal as it stands. <p>Some councillors have commented that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A corridor study should be undertaken with an improvement plan for the next 30 years - Certain changes may be required along the corridor, but a blanket 80km/h speed reduction isn't 'good enough' - A four-lane Hawke's Bay expressway is required to meet trade growth in the region – more funding is needed - What will the economic cost of a speed reduction be (e.g. to freight) - The speed review should wait until the Regional Land Transport Plan's proposed business case for SH5 is complete - Targeted safety campaigns are required to get poor quality safety vehicles off the roads -
<p>Napier City Council (NCC)</p>	<p>Not supportive of changes proposed for SH5 but does support the need for speed reductions in places. NCC had the following comments/suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supportive of speed limit reductions along sections of SH5 between Rangitaiki and Esk Valley, but to introduce an 80km/h limit along the whole route will result in low compliance, high levels of driver frustration (leading to driver errors) and unwarranted delays and is not considered to be the most appropriate response to the complex challenge that SH5 represents. - Council cannot support the proposal as it stands and urges Waka Kotahi to revisit the speed review at a more granular level and engage in a corridor safety business case to develop a whole of system programme of works to complement any speed limit changes. - It is felt that the approach to this speed review neither reflects the whole-of-system approach advocated by Waka Kotahi, nor the spirit of cooperation which has developed between the road controlling authorities of Hawke's Bay over the last two NLTP periods. - Seeks a corridor safety business case to develop a whole of system program of works to complement any speed limit changes. -
<p>Taupō District Council – staff submission not endorsed by councillors</p>	<p>Supports the speed reduction proposal for SH5, with the following suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need some thought around how to deal with passing lanes on SH5 and the straight sections of the road, where motorists may not see the speed limit as self-explaining

Party Engaged	Comments
Matariki 2.4D working group	<p>Neither in support nor opposed to speed proposal on SH5, as a group Matariki have no specific position on speed controls but had the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Driver licensing and education should be at the forefront of all initiatives for road safety in considering any changes designed to increase safety, incentivising and providing equitable access to driver training and licencing should be at the forefront. - Interested in the roads being improved and speed changes not applying in passing lanes.
Global Road Safety Partnership	<p>Supports speed reduction on SH5 to reduce severity of crashes, and suggests further enforcement is needed and suggested the introduction of demerit points on speed camera offences.</p>
Bike Hawke's Bay	<p>Strongly supports speed reduction on SH5. While travel efficiency is a valid concern, it should not trump peoples' safety. A mere savings of a few minutes is never worth someone's life. That said, speed limit reductions are only one tool in the Road to Zero toolbox and are unlikely to work if not used in tandem with other strategies.</p>
MP for Napier Stuart Nash & MP for Tuketuki Anna Lorck	<p>Supportive joint submission for changes on SH5 if it is part of an overall plan to reduce road deaths with the following comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our roads need to be designed and engineered in a more 'forgiving' way, then the number of fatal road accidents by drivers who make a mistake will drop significantly. - Both seeking to advocate for a much more sustainable and complete maintenance plan for SH5. - Agree with the feedback received from our respective communities that there are areas of SH5 which would benefit from speed reduction, including areas around Te Pohue, Te Haroto and Tarawera. - Not opposed to the proposal but believe there are better ways of making SH5 safer, such as better driver education and an improved road maintenance programme - Disappointed proposal fast tracked without critical public engagement.
Te Pohue School	<p>Do not support blanket proposed speed change, with the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not support blanket speed change to SH5 but do support a speed reduction through Te Pohue. - Requests the following safety improvements be made: - Create a right turning bay from SH5 to Te Pohue Loop Road for southbound traffic and an extension of this for right turning traffic out of Te Pohue heading south. - Flashing lights indicating a school zone to alert through traffic at school commuting times.
Te Pohue community (drop-in session feedback)	<p>Majority of community at the drop-in were not in support of any blanket speed reduction to 80km/h on SH5, despite some agreeing to the need for a safer road system. Raised concerns regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased travel time and possible impact on business and freight.

6. DECISION

The table below shows the recommendations Waka Kotahi formally consulted on

Location	New speed limits from 18 February 2022
SH5 Rangitaiki to Esk Valley (1140m south-east of Matea Road to 110m west of Waipunga Road)	80km/h

We also asked how you felt about speeds on the Rangitaiki Straight and around Eskdale. Engagement phase is now complete and consultation on proposed speed limits will take place at a later date.

Image 1: Map of speed limit changes



7. SUBMISSIONS

You can view the submissions we received for this speed review:

[SH5 speed review consultation submissions](#)