
Thursday, 13 May 2021

Te Hui o Te Kaunihera ā-Rohe o Heretaunga

Hastings District Council

Operations and Monitoring Committee Meeting

Kaupapataka

Agenda

Te Rā Hui:
Meeting date: **Thursday, 13 May 2021**

Te Wā:
Time: **1.00pm Supplementary Agenda**

Te Wāhi:
Venue: **Council Chamber
Ground Floor
Civic Administration Building
Lyndon Road East
Hastings**

Te Hoapā:
Contact: **Democracy and Governance Services
P: 06 871 5000 | E: democracy@hdc.govt.nz**

Te Āpiha Matua:
Responsible
Officer: **Group Manager: Corporate - Bruce Allan**

Operations and Monitoring Committee – Terms of Reference

Fields of Activity

The purpose of the Operations and Monitoring Committee is to ensure consolidated and complete reporting and monitoring of all financial and non-financial information and performance measures against the Annual Plan, Long-Term Plan and Council Strategies, Goals and Priorities.

Membership

- (Mayor and 14 Councillors).
- Chair appointed by Council.
- Deputy Chair appointed by Council.
- 1 Heretaunga Takoto Noa Māori Standing Committee Member appointed by Council.

Quorum – 8 members

Delegated Powers

- 1) Authority to exercise all of Council's powers, functions and authorities (except where prohibited by law or otherwise delegated to another committee) in relation to all matters detailed in the Fields of Activity.
- 2) Authority to exercise all of Council's powers, functions and authorities (except where prohibited by law) at any time when the Chief Executive certifies in a report that;
 - the matter is of such urgency that it requires to be dealt with
 - the matter is required to be dealt with, prior to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.
- 3) Monitor the performance of Council in terms of the organisational targets set in the Long Term Plan and Annual Plan – both financial and nonfinancial.
- 4) Monitor operational performance and benchmarking.
- 5) Undertake quarterly financial performance reviews.
- 6) Develop the Draft Annual Report and carry forwards.
- 7) Monitor and review the performance of Council Controlled Organisations and other organisations that Council has an interest in.
- 8) Monitor and review tender and procurement processes.
- 9) Monitor major capital projects.
- 10) Recommend to Council on matters concerning project decisions where these are identified as a result of the committee's project monitoring responsibilities.
- 11) Writing off outstanding accounts for amounts exceeding \$6,000 and the remission of fees and charges of a similar sum.
- 12) Settlement of uninsured claims for compensation or damages where the amount exceeds the amounts delegated to the Chief Executive.
- 13) Guarantee loans for third parties such as local recreational organisations provided such guarantees are within the terms of Council policy.
- 14) Authority to exercise the Powers and Remedies of the General Conditions of Contract in respect of the Principal taking possession of, determining, or carrying out urgent repairs to works covered by the contract.
- 15) Grant of easement or right of way over Council property.
- 16) Approve insurance – if significant change to Council's current policy of insuring all its assets.

Thursday, 13 May 2021

Te Hui o Te Kaunihera ā-Rohe o Heretaunga

Hastings District Council

Operations and Monitoring Committee Meeting

Kaupapataka

Agenda

<i>Mematanga:</i> Membership:	<i>Koromatua</i> Chair: Councillor Geraldine Travers
	<i>Ngā KaiKaunihera</i> Mayor Sandra Hazlehurst Councillors: Councillors Bayden Barber, Alwyn Corban, Malcolm Dixon, Damon Harvey, Tania Kerr (Deputy Chair), Eileen Lawson, Simon Nixon, Henare O’Keefe, Peleti Oli, Ann Redstone, Wendy Schollum, Sophie Siers and Kevin Watkins Mike Paku - Heretaunga Takoto Noa Māori Standing Committee appointee
<i>Tokamatua:</i> Quorum:	8 members
<i>Apiha Matua</i> Officer Responsible:	Group Manager: Corporate – Bruce Allan (Lead) Group Manager: Asset Management - Craig Thew Group Manager: Strategy & Development – Craig Cameron Financial Controller – Aaron Wilson Chief Information Officer – Andrew Smith
<i>Te Rōpū Manapori me te Kāwanatanga</i> Democracy & Governance Services:	Christine Hilton (Extn 5633)

Te Rārangī Take

Order of Business

9.0	Council Submission on Waka Kotahi HB State Highway Speed Limits Proposals	7
-----	---	---

Thursday, 13 May 2021

Te Hui o Te Kaunihera ā-Rohe o Heretaunga
**Hastings District Council: Operations &
Monitoring Committee Meeting**

Item 9

Te Rārangi Take

Report to Operations and Monitoring Committee

Nā:
From: Craig Thew, Group Manager: Asset Management

Te Take:
**Subject: Council Submission on Waka Kotahi HB State Highway Speed
Limits Proposals**


1.0 Purpose and summary - *Te Kaupapa Me Te Whakarāpopototanga*

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask the Operations and Monitoring Committee to formally ratify the Council submission on Waka Kotahi's speed limit proposals for State Highway 5 and State Highway 51 which was submitted to Waka Kotahi on 7 May 2021.
- 1.2 The submission dated 7 May 2021 was signed by the Mayor, Chief Executive, Group Manager Asset Management and Transportation Manager and sent to Waka Kotahi on 7 May.
- 1.3 The Mayor and Deputy Mayor have requested that the submission be put to the Committee for formal ratification.
- 1.4 Officers will be present to answer questions at the meeting.

2.0 Recommendations – *Ngā Tūtohunga*

- A) That the Operations and Monitoring Committee receive the report titled Council Submission on Waka Kotahi HB State Highway Speed Limits Proposals dated 13 May 2021.
- B) That the Committee formally ratify the Council Submission dated 7 May 2021 to Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency on SH5 and SH51 Hawke's Bay Speed Limit Consultation.

Attachments:

- 1  State Highway Speed Limit Submission dated 7 May 2021 CG-16-4-00118



If calling ask for Nigel Bickle

File Ref: TR-8-21-10012

7 May 2021

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency
National Office
PO Box 6995
Wellington 6141

SH5 and SH51 Hawke's Bay speed limit consultation

Thank you for the opportunity to submit on your two speed limits proposals. While, our submission relates to both SH5 and SH51, we have chosen to elaborate on SH5 as this proposal has significant impacts on the social and economic performance of our and neighbouring regions.

SH5 Speed Limit Submission

As you will be aware HDC has been a strong supporter of speed management when applied appropriately and following extensive engagement of affected parties. Within Hastings we have adopted speed management approaches across a large part of our network and only recently, early 2021, we implemented speed reductions across approximately 70 roads within Hastings. This approach demonstrates our commitment to Road to Zero and shows our willingness to utilise speed management as part of the toolbox in achieving this outcome.

However, with respect to the proposed speed limit reduction on SH5 we **oppose this proposal** as it currently stands. We have real objections to the process adopted by Waka Kotahi and the recommendations made and we are concerned that there is inadequate evidence and/or analysis to support the proposals. Our concerns are detailed within this letter and are summarised as follows:

- We are concerned that the strategic importance of this link has been undervalued and not adequately considered in determining a safe and appropriate speed for SH5. We believe the impacts of the proposed change have been significantly underestimated in determining the proposed outcome.
- In reviewing the technical assessments completed we have concerns with the desk top nature of the analysis and the absence of any site visits, validations and assessments. We are particularly concerned 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.
- We strongly believe that the approach to public consultation and engagement is far from acceptable and does not accord with Waka Kotahi's own guidelines. We believe there are significant issues associated to the approach adopted by Waka Kotahi and that the public and affected parties have not been afforded appropriate engagement and input to the process.

HASTINGS DISTRICT COUNCIL
207 Lyndon Road East, Hastings 4122 | Private Bag 9002, Hastings 4156
Phone 06 871 5000 | www.hastingsdc.govt.nz
TE KAUNIHERA Ā ROHE O HERETAUNGA

- We have heard our community loud and clear and believe that there is almost no support for the proposed speed limit reduction. The concerns raised by the public are numerous and consistent and demonstrate a lack of understanding from Waka Kotahi as to the perceptions and expectations of the local community and the wider affected stakeholders.
- We remain concerned with 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.

Strategic Importance of Link

As you are aware the SH5 (Napier to Taupo) corridor is a 122km long Regional Strategic corridor located in the Taupo and Hastings Districts. The corridor has relatively flat and straight/moderately curved sections at either end where open pastures and forestry blocks are prevalent and more constrained winding sections within the middle portion of the route.

You will also be aware that the SH5 corridor plays a significant role in the economic contribution to both Hawkes Bay and Waikato through its critical roles in both tourism and freight transport. Forming part of the 'Thermal Explorer Highway' SH5 accommodates national and international visitors travelling between the tourism hotspots of Rotorua, Taupo and Hawkes Bay.

From a freight perspective this route provides a critical link to the forestry and agricultural operations located along the route and at either end of the route in both Waikato and Hawkes Bay. It provides a key linkage for exports via the Napier Port and forms part of the critical courier network serving the large distribution centres within the central north island (notably Taupo).

With observed daily traffic volumes of over 4,000 vehicles per day and with 20% heavy vehicle representation, any proposed reduction in speed on this route could have significant economic implications for local and national industry. We are concerned that these impacts have not been appropriately nor adequately assessed.

Within the consultation flat sheet associated to this proposal, Waka Kotahi identify an increase in mean travel time of 41 seconds. This travel time impact has been reiterated by Waka Kotahi on numerous occasions within local and national media in response to growing public concerns and outcry associated to this proposal. We share similar views to a number of those submitters in that the suggestion of a 41 second impact is misleading and does not accurately reflect the true travel time impact of the proposal.

The 41 second impact seems to have been coarsely calculated based on the assumption that the proposal will simply reduce the average speed from its current number of 81km/h to the proposed speed limit of 80km/h – a 1km/h impact. This would only be true if current users were able to travel the extents of the route at a steady speed of 81km/h. Given the winding nature of the route this is not possible, meaning current speeds fluctuate far above and far below the average on any given

route section. There are numerous tight corners and bends along the route which dictate traffic speeds well below the proposed 80km/h speed limit with many examples of bends signposted with advisory traffic speeds between 35km/h and 75km/h. Traffic travelling through these bends will currently reduce speeds well below the average 81km/h observed mean speeds meaning that they must be travelling the straighter sections at speeds far above this number (in order for the average to be 81km/h).

Should the proposal progress, there is unlikely to be any change in travel speeds around the tighter bends along the route given traffic is already slowing through these sections. As such, the majority of the impact will be on the straighter sections of the route where travel speeds will need to reduce far more to meet the 80km/h speed limit. As a result the mean operating speed should be expected to decrease well below the 80km/h posted speed limit (given you can't travel this speed around the winding sections of the route). This is contrary to the information Waka Kotahi has provided to the public and therefore doesn't bear any resemblance to the true impacts of the proposal and doesn't accurately reflect the real travel time impact of the changes.

Furthermore, having reviewed both the technical report prepared by Urban Connection and the associated Internal Speed Limit Review documentation prepared in support of this proposal we have found no evidence nor suggestion of a 41 second impact associated to this proposal. To the contrary, the internal documentation notes a travel time impact of between 5:47 and 18:22 minutes depending on whether you assess the impact against the current mean speed or the current speed limit. Whilst we recognise that the internal paper includes consideration of the impact associated to all 6 route sections (and not solely sections 2 to 5), it is reasonable to conclude from this information alone that the impact associated to sections 2 to 5 will be far greater than the 41 seconds suggested in the consultation materials (given this makes up over 60% of the total route length).

As a result, we know that the true impact of the proposal has potential to result in significant and detrimental impacts to local and national industry and economies and we remain concerned that these haven't been adequately assessed in forming a view on the *'safe and appropriate'* speed for SH5.

Waka Kotahi Technical Assessment

We have reviewed both the Technical Assessment Report completed by Urban Connections and the Internal Engagement documents. We note that all assessments have been undertaken via a desktop study only with no site visits/assessments completed. Within the Executive Summary of the Technical Assessment report Urban Connection clearly recommend a site visit to 'verify and confirm the results of the desktop assessment'. However, the report goes on to say that NZTA determined 'no further technical assessment was required'.

HDC are perplexed as to how a proposal of this scale with anticipated significant impacts on both the local community and national industries could be progressed without visiting the site. Site assessments and validation forms an important part of the speed setting process and is critical to ensure that the desktop findings and recommendations suit the receiving environment. Furthermore, the site investigation should help determine more accurately whether speed management is the appropriate solution or if more suitable infrastructure responses are required to target specific risks.

Waka Kotahi have stated on numerous occasions, within both the consultation documentation and the subsequent responses to media concerns, that speed management is just one piece of the puzzle

in achieving improved road safety on SH5. We agree wholeheartedly with this sentiment but question as to how Waka Kotahi have deemed it appropriate to progress a speed limit reduction in isolation without undertaking site visits to test whether infrastructure responses are more applicable to the risks observed along the route.

Further to the above we also note that the vast majority of the technical assessment seems to come down to just 3 metrics. Primarily the team have considered travel speeds, corridor risk and crash history. Unfortunately, the crash history has been assessed at only a macro level with no detailed analysis of the individual crashes. As such, the relationship between the travel speeds and the crash outcomes specific to this corridor are not well defined and have therefore not formed part of the assessment for the corridor. HDC are concerned that the absence of this level of detail means that it is impossible to infer that the proposed speed limit reduction will achieve the safety outcomes desired.

As indicated above HDC have completed a number of speed limit reviews in recent years with the most recent reviews resulting in speed limit changes across almost 70 roads within Hastings District – as such we are well placed to understand the level of assessment justified to inform the best outcomes. In completing the HDC review we conducted detailed technical assessments at both a macro and micro level to better understand the current crash trends which ultimately helped us to understand the need for, and associated benefit of, speed limit reductions. During the consultation exercise Waka Kotahi responded to HDC and ‘congratulate(d) Council on the quality of the proposal, the ease of navigation and simple access to explanatory notes. It is one of the best presented proposals Waka Kotahi has received’. This acclaim came from our transparent approach of comprehensively assessing each route and reviewing historic data in detail to ensure the proposed solution addressed the inherent risks. Where crashes not associated to operating speed had erroneously driven Safe and Appropriate Speed (SAAS) recommendations we were able to clearly identify these and ensure due consideration was given to the appropriate SAAS in light of the crash risks.

Given the scale of the proposed change and the large and negative implications it will have on local communities and national industries we remain concerned that the level of technical assessment followed for SH5 is not fit for purpose. It is impossible to confidently conclude that the proposed treatment is the most appropriate solution for this corridor given the lack of evidence presented and the absence of detailed analysis of the available information. We believe Waka Kotahi has a duty to reconsider their position and invest additional time in a more detailed and comprehensive assessment of the corridor in order to develop an integrated corridor response which adequately balances the safety and economic drivers for the route through a combined infrastructure and speed management response.

Consultation and Engagement Approach

HDC have serious concerns with regards to the lack of consultation and engagement completed with key stakeholders and affected parties. Whilst HDC (and the Regional Transport Committee) were afforded a very brief presentation by Waka Kotahi on 8th April and 9th April respectively, this cannot be considered engagement by any means. Concerns and questions raised by each party were left unanswered prior to the public consultation commencing just 3-4 days later. In effect this presentation was simply a heads-up in regard to what was coming. While appreciated, it was not consultation, nor should it be relied on as being consultation. In addition, it is not clear whether any of the broader key stakeholders were engaged prior to the public consultation.

Waka Kotahi's own guidelines are clear on the expectations and requirements associated to the setting of speed limits but in this instance it appears short cuts have been taken. The Technical Assessment completed by your consultants confirms the classification of the route as a combination of 'Engineer up' and 'Challenging Conversations'. The 'Challenging Conversations' classification highlights that a speed limit reduction may be warranted and that it is highly likely to be contentious and require extensive evidence and engagement in order to achieve acceptance from affected parties.

Section 2.1.5 of the Speed Management Guide is clear in stating that 'lowering limits can often be challenging... careful and sometimes extended community engagement and consultation is warranted'. The guide goes on to provide extensive examples of effective community consultation and engagement and recognizes that 'gaining community engagement in and gaining support for speed management is crucial'.

Waka Kotahi have simply ignored this advice and not implemented the recommended approach to speed limit setting as detailed within the Speed Management Guide. Rather, Waka Kotahi have shown poor judgement in rushing through this public consultation without effectively engaging with the local community and other affected stakeholders. This risk was clear and was even recognised by the Waka Kotahi team during the internal review which, in Section 8.9, captures the sentiment that 'Point(s)...above reflects the need to ensure robust engagement is completed prior to formal consultation'.

Given the above it's quite frustrating to read the concluding recommendation from the internal review to 'go straight to consultation on SH5, with some light, targeted engagement immediately prior. Reflecting the desire to have an expedited process...'. Waka Kotahi have seriously misjudged the public's position with respect to this proposal and in shortcutting Waka Kotahi own recognised approach to speed management Waka Kotahi have removed the opportunity for meaningful engagement with those most affected by the changes.

HDC believe the consultation and engagement approach adopted by Waka Kotahi is inappropriate and unacceptable. Arguably, due process has not been followed and we encourage Waka Kotahi to seriously consider their position prior to progressing these recommendations any further.

Community Feedback

The local community and other affected parties have made their voices clear during this consultation process and it is apparent they are not satisfied with the proposal as it stands. There is real resentment across these affected parties and a belief that they're not being heard and their requests are being ignored. Feedback via the Te Pohue community meeting, Waka Kotahi social pinpoint site and the HDC Facebook page in addition to specific emails and letters to Councillors shows a very consistent message. In addition, media coverage and stories from local affected parties follows similar themes and shows a lack of support for the proposal and a real desire for infrastructure responses to counter the ongoing lack of investment in this critical transport link. Below provides just a short synopsis of some of the feedback received via various channels and demonstrates the consistent concerns of the local communities and other affected parties:

- Te Pohue Community
 - The community told us loud and clear that the issue was not speed and that they want Waka Kotahi to demonstrate that they are investing in the road.

- An 80km/h speed limit will make passing of vehicles (even at passing lanes) impossible and increase frustration and therefore increase risky overtaking.
- The community strongly contests the suggestion that this change will add only 41 seconds to travel times with a heavy vehicle driver noting it would reduce his income by 25% due to a reduction in the number of trips he could make.
- Hawkes Bay Today
 - Chris Whiteman, who travels the route once a month commented that the speed limit reduction will frustrate people and will make the situation worse (Published 28th April 2021).
 - Sandra Hazelhurst, Mayor, Hastings District Council; Tania Kerr, Deputy Mayor, Hastings District Council; and Martin Williams, Chair, Hawke's Bay Regional Transport Committee have commented as follows:
 - State Highway 5 is literally our lifeline connection to the north, and a critical freight route on which the regional economy depends.
 - Speed reduction on State Highway 5 is not the right answer when the real issue is years of under investment in undeniably essential improvements to the corridor.
 - We cannot let road safety be used as an excuse to avoid the real problem here, at everyone's expense but the Transport Agency's, and to the detriment of our regional economy.
 - The consultation process has been "fast tracked", cutting out a public engagement step, so that the move can be Gazetted by Government after "formal consultation" closes on 9 May 2021.
 - Councillor Malcolm Dixon commented that reducing speeds on SH5 would increase frustration and that major maintenance and realignment is what's needed (Published 30th April 2021).
 - The father of a daughter who died in a car crash on SH5 called the proposal a band aid solution to open-heart surgery. Mr Sanders referenced the poor condition of the road as the major contributor to crashes and a speed limit change would not deal with the problem (Published 3rd May 2021).
- Hastings District Council Facebook Page
 - Lack of investment over the years and traffic growth is the primary reason for accidents.
 - Reducing the speed limit won't help, adequately maintaining and improving the road and more overtaking areas would provide a better outcome.
 - Lowering the limit won't fix the problem, it's just a band aid.
 - Waka Kotahi need to improve the roads and educate drivers.

- Waka Kotahi Social Pinpoint
 - Lowering the speed limit will cause frustration and result in drivers taking more risks (a theme repeated consistently across submitters).
 - SH5 has been neglected and the evidence and impact is obvious and significant.
 - Commentators stating that they've never seen a State Highway in such poor condition (with so much damage).
 - The road plays a vital role in the economy of Hawkes Bay and the broader North Island and the proposed speed reduction will have significant and detrimental impacts on travel times and therefore freight efficiency concluding with a negative economic impact for New Zealand.
 - Regardless of whether the speed limit is reduced or not, the road is in desperate need of investment to address the long term deterioration that has been witnessed along this route. Waka Kotahi should take a more comprehensive approach to this corridor which better balances infrastructure and speed management.

Route Investment

It is clear that this proposal is a result of significant underinvestment in maintenance and safety solutions particularly with regards to road and seal condition, route alignment and edge protection but also with regards to low cost solutions such as road marking and signage. In the last 20 years there has been only one substantial realignment project progressed on this section of SH5 with the road and supporting infrastructure left to deteriorate during this period.

Waka Kotahi seems set on following the same approach of underinvestment along this critical transport link in favour of a speed reduction solution which is neither appropriate nor acceptable. The absence of any site visits during the speed limit assessments and the complete lack of any assessment of the infrastructure along the route in concluding that a speed limit reduction is appropriate is at best concerning and at worst negligent.

Having only been afforded 8 working days to review and consider the technical assessments and internal Waka Kotahi review information prior to submitting our response, our team has had limited opportunity to complete a more detailed review of crashes and/or infrastructure along the corridor. Nonetheless, and whilst this should have been undertaken by the Waka Kotahi team through the review process, our team has been able to source and review detailed crash data and route infrastructure for some parts of the route.

The findings of our team raise a number of questions and support the concerns of Council that Waka Kotahi have proposed a solution without full consideration of the crash causes and infrastructure, and the inherent relationship between the two. As an example, the Infrastructure Risk Rating (IRR) for the SH5 section within the HDC boundary is medium over the full length which makes 80km/h the recommended Safe and Appropriate Speed (SAAS) within the Waka Kotahi MegaMaps tool. Our team observed that the land-use category within the tool and across the entire HDC section is 'Rural Residential' and this factor is driving the medium risk rating. Where the land use was changed to 'Remote Rural' the IRR would drop to low medium resulting in a SAAS recommendation of 100km/h. For completeness the land-use descriptors are identified below:

Rural residential	Rural area with accesses present to private dwellings and farms. There may be the occasional industry/factory present. Some pedestrian and cyclist activity may also be present, particularly at certain times of the day, but with few crossing movements.
Remote rural	Only occasional accesses and intersections are present. Surrounding land is rural with few houses and almost no industry.

FIGURE 1 – Road Classifications, Speed Management Guide

As you can see the SAAS recommendations are directly related to the inputs within the tool which, with only minor tweaks and alterations, can have significant impacts on the outputs. A site visit by the technical team would likely have confirmed as such and may have driven a different recommendation with regards to speed limits.

It is noted that in the technical assessment summary, the lane widths and shoulder widths have been adjusted for some sections, which changes the recommended SAAS from 100km/h to 80km/h. It is unclear how the assessment team have determined a reduced width compared to the data in MegaMaps without a site visit.

As per the Waka Kotahi requirements, the speed limits should be self-explaining which can only be determined by understanding the relationship between the road and the adjacent land-uses. Had Waka Kotahi adopted a more detailed approach to the assessment we expect that the recommendation would have been for some sections of the route to reduce to 80km/h (where increased land-use activity is present) whilst large parts of the route would remain at 100km/h.

In addition, our assessment of the crash data for one of the sections shows that over half of the crashes in that section are 'loss of control on bend'. As a bare minimum we would have expected that a review of curve signage and delineation has been completed. Worryingly, our brief review of on-site infrastructure shows delineation which is lacking and would not be acceptable across large parts of the State Highway network. Most alarming is that this infrastructure is relatively low cost and should be the first response to safety interventions to ensure a consistent route treatment is provided. As an example, RP204/3.30 has an uphill left hand curve in a passing lane with no curve signage present at all. The next 2 or 3 curves are of a very similar nature and also lack the most basic of signage intervention. The images provided below show this deficiency and should have been considered in the context of identifying the appropriate solution to address the safety issues present along this route.



FIGURE 2 – Lack of Signage Infrastructure on Route

These are important matters which should have been considered as part of the assessment. Our review of crash data showed common threads with regards to road condition contributing to safety performance. For example, one of the crashes with Section 3 was noted as 'travelling too fast for conditions'. However, on review of the data the travel speed was noted as 75km/h with icy conditions being a factor in the crash which suggests an 80km/h speed limit would not have impacted this outcome. Furthermore, the location of the crash shows a right hand bend with no delineation measures which, once again, is a consistent theme along the route. A further photograph is provided which was the site of 2 crashes in wet weather and shown both poor road surface and, unusually, the absence of an advisory speed on the chevron.



FIGURE 3 – Lack of Signage Infrastructure on Route

Our team also identified that there are a number of crashes present within the current passing lanes along the route. As identified within this response there is significant concern from route users and local communities as to the potential for increased frustration for drivers of the route and specifically the possibility that this results in unsafe passing movements. Given the crash history within the current passing lanes we share similar concerns and particularly wonder how the passing lanes will be able to operate effectively under an 80km/h operating environment where vehicles will be unable to overtake heavy traffic (with the exception of steep uphill grades).

In selecting to reduce speed limits, and given the lack of supporting information or evidence, Waka Kotahi can have no real confidence that the speed reduction will deliver the safety benefits desired. Moreover, the insufficient technical assessments completed and the lack of recognition or consideration of the surrounding land-uses and the current condition/presence of infrastructure should be cause for real concern.

It is our opinion that Waka Kotahi would be remiss to adopt reduced speed limits at this time without stepping back and adopting a more detailed assessment of the route which adequately reflects the robustness of analysis required to justify a change of this scale. There are clear gaps in the approach adopted and we have real concern that it is driving an inappropriate outcome for the route.

HDC Recommendation

Our submission is clear that HDC oppose the proposed speed limit reductions in their current form. We have formed this view based on the serious concerns we hold with regards to the technical assessments completed, the community and affected party concerns, the scale of the economic impact on local communities and national industry and the lack of any consideration of the infrastructure condition and response required for this route.

We strongly believe that the consultation and engagement approach adopted is both inappropriate and inadequate. We support our community voice and share their concerns with regards to the potential negative safety implications of a proposed speed limit reduction across this length of network combined with the significant and detrimental time and economic impacts this change would have.

Our own technical assessment of the corridor shows serious gaps in the work completed by Waka Kotahi and demonstrates that there is significant opportunity for infrastructure to play a part in this safety response, some of which is at the most basic level of intervention. Furthermore, our findings suggest that the Waka Kotahi assessment has not adequately considered the land-use and environment of the route and have not tested whether alternative options would better serve the desired outcomes.

We ask that Waka Kotahi do not progress the speed limit change at this time. Whilst we 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. We request that Waka Kotahi complete a comprehensive corridor study along the SH5 route which considers a combination of speed management and significant infrastructure improvements in addressing the safety risks present along this route. We would like to understand the short, medium and long term vision and investment plan for this corridor to better understand the appropriateness of each solution and how they complement each other. We are happy to be involved in scoping this work and would be happy for our team to be involved in contributing to the study and the study outcomes. We also request that proactive and enhanced consultation and engagement with local communities is embedded within the route study to aid buy in of the ultimate solution.

SH51 Speed Limit Submission

Hastings District Council have previously indicated its position to Waka Kotahi regarding the State Highway 51 speed limit through the Waipatu area – sections 6 & 7 in the Technical Assessment. During our recent speed limit review on the local roads in Waipatu, it was considered important that the side roads be aligned with the State Highway 51 speed limit and as such we developed the speed limit changes for the adjoining roads based on this position, being 50km/h from Kenilworth Road to St Georges Road, and 60km/h through to the Karamu Stream Bridge (see plan below). With the exception of Elwood Road, the local road speed limit changes are now in place.



It was disappointing that the speed limit review of SH51 was delayed and unable to be aligned and integrated with our speed limit review as indicated by Waka Kotahi in 2019. It is also noted that both the Technical Assessment and Internal Review were completed prior to the corridor improvements and urbanisation project. The designs used in the assessment and review have since been superseded, and now include a limesand shared path from St Georges Road to Ruahapia Road.

Council support the proposed speed limit reductions on SH51, with the following exceptions:

Section 7 (Kenilworth to St Georges)

Hastings District Council is in support of a speed limit reduction on State Highway 51 through Waipatu to complement the transformational works and urbanisation of the road through the settlement, however it is the view of Council and the community that a 60km/h speed limit would be too high on this now urban section of Waipatu (Kenilworth to St Georges) and that the proposed speed limit reduction should extend beyond Waipatu Settlement Road and the busy Bay Espresso

café. The geometric design for the corridor improvements and urbanisation project used a design speed of 50km/h, which was assumed based on the existing SAAS in MegaMaps.

The section from Kenilworth Road to St Georges now has kerb and channel both sides, a concrete shared path on the southern side and pedestrian refuges to be built as part of this project. There is also an increase in development in the area; Papakainga housing is being built currently, with more to be built in the near future, and the intersection with Bennett Road will see a significant increase in traffic volume when Kura is opened within the next few years.

The default SAAS for this section is 50km/h, and with the corridor improvements this remains the case when the length of the section is extended to include the above. Council agree that the safe and appropriate speed through this section is 50km/h, and ask that Waka Kotahi adopt a 50km/h speed limit from Kenilworth to beyond Bay Espresso café.

Section 6 (St Georges to Karamu Stream Bridge)

It is disappointing that Waka Kotahi have ignored the findings of the Technical Assessment in this section by deciding not to propose a reduction in speed limit.

With the transformational works being undertaken up to Ruahapia Road, the Karamu Stream Bridge becomes a natural threshold where a speed limit change is logical, as this section differs significantly to the section to the east (section 5). Running alongside the road is now a limesand shared path, where in some places lane separators are required due to insufficient shoulder width. The road widening to allow for a flush median also moves the traffic lanes closer to roadside hazards, which were assessed as severe in the Technical Assessment.

Council agree with the findings of the Technical Assessment that the SAAS for this section is 60km/h, and would like to understand why Waka Kotahi have deviated from the technical advice in this instance.

Yours sincerely,



Nigel Bickle,
Chief Executive



Sandra Hazlehurst,
Mayor



Craig Thew,
GM Asset Management



Jag Pannu,
Transportation Manager

Copy to: Hon Stuart Nash, Hon Meka Whaitiri, Anna Lorck, Hon Michael Woods, Sir Brian Roche, Nicole Rosie.