



SH3 NAPIER ROAD - SPEED MANAGEMENT REVIEW AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Community Engagement Summary

APRIL 2022

1. BACKGROUND

Palmerston North is currently experiencing sustained growth in residential and commercial activity with the area to the east of the city centre, Kelvin Grove, being one of the fastest growing areas. As a result, there are increasing issues related to safety, and access on State Highway 3 (SH3) Napier Road between Palmerston North and Ashhurst.

Speed report – key findings

Crash Analysis System data outlining the number of reported crashes, and death and injuries that emerged from these crashes is presented in the Table 1 below:

10-year SH3 Crash Statistics – Palmerston North to Ashhurst	
10-year Period Start	2011
10-year Period End	2020
Total crashes	158
Total Injuries – All	83
Total Injuries – Fatal	3
Total Injuries – Serious	15
Total Injuries – Minor	65

Table 1: 10-year SH3 Crash Statistics – Palmerston North to Ashhurst

Safety improvements

The safety improvements planned for the SH3 Napier Road project consists of two components - the speed review which covers a 12 km corridor from Palmerston North to Ashhurst (Figure 1) and proposed infrastructure improvements which cover a 3.66 km corridor from Keith Street to just east of Stoney Creek Road (Figure 2). These are detailed in the sections below.

Speed management review

This 12 km road corridor under review is predominantly two lanes with a passing lane in each direction and is well-travelled year-round by commuters and people travelling between Manawatū and Hawke's Bay. It is a regional route located south of the suburb of Kelvin Grove. The small community of Whakarongo is located approximately halfway along the corridor and Whakarongo school is located at the intersection of SH3 and Stoney Creek Road with the entrance off the local road.

The speed limits on SH3 Napier Road between Palmerston North and Ashhurst are under review to ensure that the speeds are safe and appropriate for the various users who travel between Palmerston North and Ashhurst.

This is the first time speeds on this corridor have been formally reviewed.

The current speed limits along SH3 Napier Road are shown in Table 2.

	State Highway	Length (km)	Physical description	Existing posted speed limit (km/h)
1	SH3	1.2	To Roberts Line intersection	80 (temp)
2	SH3	8.5	Roberts Line intersection to Ashhurst	100
3	SH3	1.1	Ashhurst Township	80 (temp 50)
4	SH3	0.9	Ashhurst to SH57 intersection	100

Table 2: SH3 - Existing posted speed limits



Figure 1 Map Showing current speed limits along SH3 Napier Road

Infrastructure improvements

Alongside reviewing speed limits, safety improvements for SH3 Napier Road between Keith Street and Stoney Creek Road are being designed. These safety improvements include:

- Traffic signals at the SH3 Napier Road / Roberts Line intersection
- Cycling and pedestrian facilities along SH3 between Keith Street and Roberts Line.
- Pedestrian refuge island to help cross SH3.
- Stormwater facilities to better capture and treat water running off the road.

An urban speed limit from Roberts Line on approach into Palmerston North, and a school variable speed limit for Whakarongo school during school start and finish times, are also being considered.

As part of the infrastructure project, Waka Kotahi has been engaging stakeholders and the public about safety along this route since 2017. There is a 'Make Napier Road Intersections Safe' Facebook page which is periodically active. Safety issues are of high public interest, particularly to Kelvin Grove residents.

The proposed safety improvements between Keith Street and Roberts Line are shown below in Figure 2.



Figure 2 Map showing proposed infrastructure improvements between Keith Street and Roberts Line

2. ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Rangitāne O Manawatū

Two formal meetings have been held with Rangitāne O Manawatū focusing on infrastructure improvements. Key areas of interest include lagoon water quality, path connections to the lagoon, history, amenity and learning and future naming opportunities.

Stakeholders

Engagement notification letters were sent to national stakeholders (Automobile Association (AA), NZ Police, and la Ara Aotearoa Transporting) on 23 February 2022. These letters included information on the speed review, infrastructure improvements and the community engagement period. National stakeholders were also invited to attend the stakeholder workshop.

A workshop was held on 17 February 2022 for all project key stakeholders.

The workshop provided key stakeholders with a project update, overview of the proposed infrastructure works and speed review, proposed project timelines and provided an opportunity to ask questions and give feedback. The workshop was attended by the following organisations:

Automobile Association	Palmerston North District Council – Staff and Councillors
Heavy Haulage Association	Higgins
Road Transport Association	Fire and Emergency NZ (FENZ)
Manawatu District Council	St Johns Ambulance New Zealand
Sport Manawatu	Massey University
	Greasy Chain Charitable Trust (Cycle group)

Community

It is important to give the community and stakeholders an overview of the various interventions being planned along SH3 Napier Road to improve safety.

Community engagement took place between 23 February – 11 March 2022 with a range of methods to engage with stakeholders and the community being used. These methods included:

- Direct access to the project team via a dedicated project email address.
- Dedicated project webpage that contained an overview of the project, links to key resources, feedback forms, FAQs, and updates.
- Information booklet which provided an overview of the proposed infrastructure improvements and speed review, speed review process, updates on key milestones, ways to give feedback or access information, and details about the community drop-in session.
- Community drop-in session which provided information and opportunities for discussion.
- Media releases and social media updates.
- Social Pinpoint to gather comments.

Thank you to everyone who came along to one of the events or who used the interactive online feedback opportunities.



3. SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

We received 221 pieces of feedback during the engagement period. Most comments focused on the section of SH3 Napier Road between Keith Street and Stoney Creek Road. Feedback was fairly evenly split between speed and infrastructure.

The interactive online map (Table 3) was a popular way for those who were unable to make the drop-in event to have their say, with 368 visits to the website. Most feedback was focused on the Palmerston North end of the corridor – refer to Figure 3.

Total site visits	368
Comments / survey responses	66
Average time on site	2:46 min
Percentage of comments	
Speed review	27%
Signals	9%
Shared use path	3%
School variable speed limit	6%
Ideas and suggestions	27%
Other	27%

Table 3: Interactive map feedback

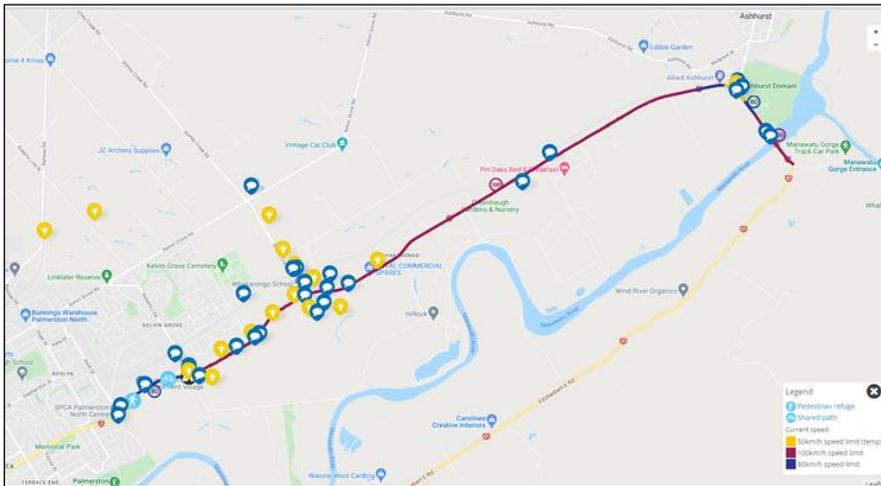


Figure 3 Interactive map – distribution of feedback

Other feedback - Some of the feedback we received raised matters that were outside the scope of the speed review or the current scope of infrastructure changes. Requests for better intersection lighting, improved cycling infrastructure between Palmerston North and Ashhurst, and further safety improvements at other intersections along SH3 Napier Road, were common.

Where possible, we've passed this feedback on to the relevant Waka Kotahi internal project team or local authority.

We've summarised some of the major themes expressed from the public engagement below.

Feedback: speed review

To Roberts line intersection (Temporary 80km/h)

- Majority of feedback supported a speed reduction well below the current temporary 80km/h.
- Key reasons given for a reduced speed limit included:
 - Increased vehicle volume.
 - Changing land use, especially at the Palmerston North end of the corridor.
 - High number of vulnerable users – school children and aged care residents.
 - The corridor feels too fast and therefore unsafe.
 - Increasing difficult to turn on and off SH3 Napier Road.
- Submitters also noted that SH3 Napier Road is well used by cyclists and a lower overall speed limit would increase safety for this road user group.

Roberts Line intersection to Ashhurst

- Mixed support for a lower speed limit between Roberts Line and Stoney Creek Road. Some people felt that 100km/h was safe while others expressed a strong desire for a lower speed limit. Suggested speed limits included 50km/h, 70km/h, and 80km/h.
- There was far less feedback on the stretch of road from Stoney Creek Road to Ashhurst. However, of those who provided feedback, some people felt that this section of road was clear and straight, had good visibility, good passing opportunities, is in relatively good condition, and is safe at 100km/h. Others suggested a reduction in speed to 80km/h.

Whakarongo School variable speed limit

- Strong support for the proposed variable speed zone for Whakarongo School.

- Some submitters noted that they supported a variable speed zone on Stoney Creek Road but not SH3 Napier Road. Submitters noted that there are already too many different speed limits on this corridor and the new drop-off/pick-up zone on Stoney Creek Road makes a speed reduction on SH3 Napier Road redundant.

Ashhurst Township (currently 80km/hr and Temp 50km/h)

- Support for a permanent 50km/h speed limit through Ashhurst township.
- It was noted that traffic will increase once Te Ahu a Turanga opens.

Ashhurst to SH57 intersection (Currently 100km/h)

- Feedback on this section of the corridor predominantly focused on cycle safety. We heard that people would feel safer in a lower speed environment.

Feedback: infrastructure

Traffic signals at Roberts Line

- Most feedback supported the proposed infrastructure improvements at Roberts Line intersection. Key reasons for support included:
 - Better access on and off SH3 Napier Road - Many people noted that they re-route to avoid the intersection, especially right turns onto SH3 Napier Road.
 - Pedestrian safety, especially for school children.
 - Cyclist safety.
 - Increased residential development between Roberts Line and Stoney Creek Road which will result in more traffic, pedestrians, and cyclists.
- Of those who did not support the proposed traffic lights, the disruption to the flow of traffic, especially at peak times was the main reason given.
- Another common opinion was a preference for a roundabout at the Roberts Line intersection. The stop-start nature of traffic lights compared to a roundabout was the primary reason given for this feedback.
- Other infrastructure improvement:
 - There were many requests for improvements to other intersections along the corridor, in particular Main Street, Keith Street, James Line and Stoney Creek Road intersections.
 - Better lighting was requested at Keith Street, Main Street, Roberts Line and Stoney Creek Road intersections.

Shared path

- There was strong support for the proposed shared path and many requests for further investment in cycling infrastructure along the corridor. Common requests included:
 - Extension of the shared path to James Road or Stoney Creek Road / Whakarongo School.
 - On-road cycle lanes to Ashhurst.
 - Completion of the 'missing link' next to the river.

Pedestrian Refuge Island

- There was very strong support for the proposed pedestrian refuge island, especially from residents of the nearby Riverstone retirement village. Submitters also requested better access and parking to the Te Matai River path.

Rangitāne O Manawatū

An online hui regarding the Speed Review specifically was held with Rangitāne O Manawatū. The iwi is supportive of safer speed limits on SH3 Napier Road.

Stakeholders

Submissions were received from the following stakeholders:

Stakeholder	Feedback
National stakeholders	
NZ Police	<p>NZ Police stated that they support any speed review that promotes safer roads.</p> <p>NZ Police support the setting of speed limits in alignment with the Safe System principles and the need for our transport system to be forgiving should a mistake be made that ends in a crash.</p> <p>NZ Police further support engineering and infrastructure improvements that reduce the likelihood of serious crashes occurring.</p>
Ia Ara Aotearoa Transporting New Zealand	<p>Ia Ara Aotearoa Transporting New Zealand noted that they support the aspiration of Road to Zero and understand the benefits that traffic signals bring in the appropriate environment.</p> <p>Transporting New Zealand do not support the use of raised platforms in relatively open road environments.</p> <p>Transporting New Zealand support the provision of cycling facilities along SH3 between Keith Street and Roberts Line and support the variable speed limit outside Whakarongo School on the proviso that the surrounding environment is changed to provide appropriate cues to drivers that reducing speed is sensible.</p> <p>Transporting New Zealand asked several questions which have been responded to by Waka Kotahi.</p>
Automobile Association	<p>Infrastructure</p> <p>The AA opposes the suggestion for traffic lights at Roberts Line intersection. The AA views a roundabout as the most appropriate intersection control that affords the safest and best level of service for this important arterial route.</p> <p>Variable speed limit</p> <p>In principle the AA supports variable speed limit restrictions past schools where the school has either pupil catchment that need to cross the road or pupil access to the school is from the road either as pedestrians or pick-up/drop-off by car or busses. None of that is applicable at Whakarongo School.</p> <p>Speed review</p> <p>The AA noted that the timing of changes to SH3 are key. It was stated that once a proper ring road is in place the function of</p>

Napier Road changes fundamentally, however until the ring road is in place, no premature (anticipating development/growth that has yet to occur) changes to State Highway 3 should be made if they are detrimental to the arterial function.

It was suggested that safety improvements should be achieved by infrastructure upgrades to meet immediately foreseen demand rather than simplistic speed limit changes.

The AA noted that much of this route is a straight, relatively wide state highway without significant roadside hazards, side roads or accessways. The AA believes this is not an environment that will naturally explain to drivers as an 80km/h road and this will lead to poor compliance with it, and therefore less safety benefits.

The AA recommended lowering the speed limit from Sutton Place to just east of Roberts Line and at Ashhurst from Custom Street to south of Ashhurst Domain entrance. All other current speeds to remain.

Other stakeholders

Palmerston North City Council (PNCC)

PNCC support the proposed signalisation of the Roberts Line intersection and the proposed shared path along the state highway corridor.

Existing safety issues along the corridor and the continued residential growth along the north side of SH3 Napier Road were the key reasons given for supporting the speed review and infrastructure improvements.

PNCC also noted that the share path proposal aligns with the current Government Policy Statement on Land Transport priorities.

Sport Manawatū

Sport Manawatu noted that the current speed limits do not feel safe when cycling on SH3 Napier Road, particularly at intersections where motorists and cyclists are trying to navigate a busy road with fast moving traffic.

Sport Manawatū noted that extending the shared path to Stoney Creek will help reduce risks on the highway.

Palmerston North Active Transport Advocacy Group

The Palmerston North Active Transport Advocacy Group noted concern about the safety of the proposed pedestrian refuge island.

The Group supported the shared path but noted concern about whether cyclists will use it. The Group emphasised that cyclists want the shortest route to their destination.

The Group requested improvements to the marked cycle lane on the southern side of the highway.

4. NEXT STEPS

Speed review

Now that the community feedback has been analysed, the speed review project team will make a formal proposal regarding the speed limits between Palmerston North and Ashurst. This proposal is part of the legal process necessary to change the speed limits on a state highway as the road controlling authority.

Formal consultation is being planned to take place on the proposal from 6 April – 6 May 2022 and stakeholders and the community can make formal submissions on the proposal.

Infrastructure

The infrastructure project team will use the community feedback received to help shape the final design of the infrastructure improvements.

Over the next month, the team will plan to obtain more ground investigation data on site, including road pavement, water quality, contamination testing, and archaeological investigations. The team will continue to work with Rangitāne O Manawatū and project stakeholders, as well as potentially affected landowners and services providers.

We will consider the approach for consenting infrastructure improvements, and we will look to update the community again by mid-2022.

To stay up to date with what's happening on SH3 Napier Road, we encourage people to sign up to project updates. You can do this on the project webpage <https://nzta.govt.nz/projects/sh3-napier-road-speed-review-and-infrastructure-improvements/>