



Palmerston North to Ōpiki speed review



Safer speeds are safer for everyone

Feedback is open from
13 June until 5pm 11 July 2022

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency is working toward Vision Zero – an Aotearoa where no one is killed or seriously injured on our roads. We are reviewing speed limits on state highways in the Manawatū-Whanganui and Horowhenua regions – and across New Zealand – to help ensure that everyone gets where they're going safely.

The speeds on a road impact how safe other road users feel to walk, bike, or travel on that same road. There has been a high number of crashes on State Highway 56 between Palmerston North and Ōpiki and locals have told us that speeds on the road feel too high to be safe.

Our priority is to make SH56 a safer stretch of road, as soon as possible, so that everyone living on and using the road can get where they are going safely. We want to make sure that speeds are safe and right for this road, so we're reviewing the current speed limits on State Highway 56 between Palmerston North and Ōpiki.

Some of the local rural roads adjacent to SH56 are also being reviewed by local councils and some have already had safer speed limits set, such as those in the Horowhenua area which are now all set at 80km/h.

To reduce deaths and serious injuries on our roads we need to address every part of the system. We need safer vehicles, safer drivers, safer roads – and safer speeds. If we are going to have a serious discussion as a country about improving our road safety record, that discussion must include how fast we are driving.

What we know

- We've heard from the community that changes to this section of state highway are needed to make it feel safe and improve access for all road users.
- The safety features of a road and the speed vehicles travel on it influence both the risk of a crash and whether it is survivable. Speed limits need to reflect the risk of the road.
- The speed limit at present is 100km/h along the majority of the route, with 70km/h through Longburn and 80km/h through Ōpiki.
- Some sections of SH56 between Awapuni, Palmerston North and Ōpiki are in the top 10% deaths and serious injuries in New Zealand. In the five years between 2017 and 2021, there were over 100 crashes on this route, involving five people losing their lives. Many others were injured.
- SH56 through Ōpiki sits on top of an old swamp and it is known to be a bumpy drive. There are also roadside hazards including power poles, large trees and deep roadside drainage ditches meaning this road has an increased risk of run-off road crashes.
- This road is used for everything from commuting to freight, to getting to school each day. There are two school communities along the route, one with a direct entrance off the State Highway. Reducing the speed means other road users including pedestrians and cyclists will be kept safer.
- This section of road has been made safer over time through infrastructure improvements including installation of guardrail and widened sections of road where possible. We spend around \$150k per year on maintenance of the road and it receives regular surface levelling.
- These safety improvements will reduce the likelihood of someone having a crash, however, we know that even the best drivers sometimes make mistakes and reducing the speed also reduces the risk of death or serious injury when a crash does happen.
- There is a shared pathway from Palmerston North to Longburn used by walkers, runners and cyclists, and we are currently designing an extension to this to make more of the highway safer for pedestrians and cyclists as part of a wider regional cycle strategy. There is also rural/residential development on the urban edge of Palmerston North planned.
- Through the speed review process, we will work with the local community to gather and share information, and collaborate to ensure we understand your concerns.

Statistics are correct at the time they were produced.



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Tell us what you think

We are going to review the speed limit on SH56 – but we need your help to make sure we've got it right. We know that local people know their roads best.

Tell us what you think about speed on this road.

- Does it feel safe for the way people use it?
- What parts of the road do you think are dangerous and why?
- Is there anything we need to consider while we look at the speed limits?



Speed review process

The stages of the speed review process are:

Technical assessment

Technical assessment of the road is carried out to find out about crash history, average vehicle speeds, volume of vehicles and development and activity in the surrounding areas. This helps to determine what safe and appropriate speeds should be.

Engagement

We talk to local communities and stakeholders to understand how the road is being used, any safety concerns and get feedback on current speed limits.

Consultation

This stage involves sharing proposed new speed limits and asking people for any additional information that might impact the final decision. Consultation for any proposed speed limit change is about much more than asking if people are 'for or against' the proposal. It is about seeking valuable local and community input that might have an impact on the final decision.

Notification of speed limit change

Final decision and date any new speed limits will be enforceable are published on our website and stakeholders and the public are notified.

New speed limit on the road

New speed limit signs installed on the road.

How to have your say



Visit www.nzta.govt.nz/pn2opiki



Email SH56@nzta.govt.nz



Comment on our interactive map on the project website



Attend a drop in session:

Wednesday 29 June 3 - 4pm

Ōpiki School
566 Tane Road, RD4, Ōpiki,
Palmerston North, 4474

Thursday 30 June 3 - 6pm

Longburn School
Cary Street, Longburn,
Palmerston North, 4412

**Feedback
closes at
5.00pm on
11 July 2022**



Contact details

SH56@nzta.govt.nz

For information on other speed reviews visit www.nzta.govt.nz/safety/driving-safely/speed/setting-safe-speed-limits