

STAFF REPORT

TO: Chairman and Members, Engineering Services Committee

FROM: Steve Elkington, Asset Engineer Roads

REFERENCE: B953

DATE: 17 November 2008

SUBJECT: UPPER MOUTERE SPEED LIMIT REVIEW

1 PURPOSE

To recommend for public consultation, the proposal to lower the speed limit through Upper Moutere village from 70kph to 50kph.

2 BACKGROUND

The speed limit through Upper Moutere village is currently 70kph which it has been for many years. Over the years Council has received requests mainly from Upper Moutere School to have the speed limit lowered to 50kph.

Several Speed Limit Warrants have been undertaken at Upper Moutere all recommending a 70kph speed limit. Several speed surveys have also been undertaken over the years that show the level of compliance to be very good in respect to the 85th percentile vehicle speed closely matching that of the speed limit.

The main issue through the village is the close proximity to the live traffic lane of local roadside businesses and roadside parking (see photos below). The Upper Moutere School is situated on the corner of Supplejack Valley Road and the Moutere Highway and close to the local store. There is a kerb and footpath that runs along the frontage of the school where parking is not permitted. The road past the school and businesses appears narrow at 7metres. School parking appears to mainly occur either on Supplejack Valley Road or in the school carpark.



Looking North



Looking South

3 COMMENT

Speed Limit Warrant

A Speed Limit Warrant was undertaken in line with *Speed Limits NZ*, which is a requirement of the Land Transport Rule – “Setting of Speed Limits 2003”.

The average rating calculated for Moutere Highway through Upper Moutere village was approximately **7** which met that for a 70kph speed limit.

Under *Speed Limits NZ* the rating achieved to qualify for a 70kph speed limit is between 6 and 11. A rating higher than 11 would justify a 50kph speed limit. There is a section of the roadway surveyed that meets the rating for a 50kph speed limit this is between Supplejack Valley Road and the Upper Moutere Hotel carpark southern entrance.

Crash History

Since 2001 there have been nine reported crashes. Most of these crashes involve south (east) bound vehicles losing control on the bend at the southern end of the village or colliding with vehicles turning out of Supplejack Valley Road.

Why Review the Speed Limit

The speed limit was further reviewed after the Upper Moutere School Board wrote to the Council asking for it to consider a 50kph speed limit and noting a number of recent near misses.

Moutere Highway is an Arterial Road and therefore important in its function as a transport route carrying approximately 2000 vehicles per day.

It is important that higher trafficked through routes have appropriate speed limits set to achieve good compliance. However, it is recognised in the case of Upper Moutere village that there is a 200metre section of road in the vicinity of the school frontage, shops, fuel station and roadside parking that whilst meeting the requirements for a 50kph speed limit, does not meet the minimum required length of 500metres under the Rule.

Proposal

In support of lowering the speed limit to 50kph through the village, it is proposed to introduce several traffic calming techniques to encourage compliance. Whilst enforcement will encourage some compliance it is better that compliance is achieved voluntarily by drivers respecting the speed limit through recognising it as appropriate for the roadway environment or at least being coerced through reading the road layout ahead.

A road can be made dangerous through low levels of compliance with the speed limit. This increased danger is brought about by both a broader range of speeds and higher numbers of speeds above the speed limit. Whilst a lower speed limit of 50kph may achieve a greater number of drivers travelling below the previous higher speed limit of 70kph, the expectation from pedestrians and cyclists is that traffic in the main will be travelling near or below 50kph as expected in an urban road environment. Therefore a pedestrian or cyclist may be inclined to believe the road environment is safer and be less inclined to use the same cautious judgement as if it were a higher speed environment.

The proposed traffic calming techniques include:

- Enhance narrowness of carriageway by using thicker white edgelines (200mm in place of existing 100mm) to visually reduce lane width without compromising carriageway width and cyclist safety;
- Enhance township threshold signage by creating a 'gateway' effect.

This enhancement will reinforce the driver's visual cue of a change in the speed environment. This work will include planting areas around both threshold signs, marking of a centre flush median at the southern approach to the village as the carriageway width at the northern approach is insufficient, and marking an area of pavement in red to highlight the proposed "50" speed limit markings similar to Lower Queen Street in Richmond. See illustrated impression below of modified threshold.



7 RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Engineering Services Committee approve for public consultation, the proposal to lower the speed limit to 50kph through Upper Moutere.

Steve Elkington
Asset Engineer Roads