



PAPAIOEA
PALMERSTON
NORTH
CITY

PALMERSTON NORTH CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA

COUNCIL

SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM

9:00 AM, WEDNESDAY 5 MARCH 2025

COUNCIL CHAMBER, FIRST FLOOR
CIVIC ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
32 THE SQUARE, PALMERSTON NORTH

MEMBERS

Grant Smith (Mayor)	
Debi Marshall-Lobb (Deputy Mayor)	
Mark Arnott	Leonie Hapeta
Brent Barrett	Lorna Johnson
Rachel Bowen	Billy Meehan
Vaughan Dennison	Orphée Mickalad
Lew Findlay (QSM)	Karen Naylor
Roly Fitzgerald	William Wood
Patrick Handcock (ONZM)	Kaydee Zabelin

AGENDA ITEMS, IF NOT ATTACHED, CAN BE VIEWED AT

pncc.govt.nz | Civic Administration Building, 32 The Square
City Library | Ashhurst Community Library | Linton Library

Waid Crockett

Chief Executive | PALMERSTON NORTH CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

5 March 2025

ORDER OF BUSINESS

REPORTS

22. Classification of Roads for Setting Speed Limits

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Memorandum, presented by Peter Ridge - Senior Policy Analyst
and James Miguel - Senior Transport Planner.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council

MEETING DATE: 5 March 2025

TITLE: Classification of Roads for Setting Speed Limits

PRESENTED BY: Peter Ridge - Senior Policy Analyst and James Miguel - Senior Transport Planner

APPROVED BY: David Murphy, General Manager Strategic Planning

RECOMMENDATION(S) TO COUNCIL

1. That the Council note the further clarification provided about road classifications.
2. That the Council classify Tennent Drive, Bypass Road, Tennent On-Lane West Drive, Tennent Off-Lane East Drive, and the lower part of Summerhill Drive (as shown in Attachment 2 in the report titled Speed Limit Reversals presented to the Strategy and Finance Committee on 26 February 2025) as:

Either

- a. Urban Connector, and note that this would mean that the speed limits for these roads will be reversed to 70km/h.

Or

- b. Peri-urban, and note that this would mean that the speed limits for these roads would remain unchanged and not be required to be reversed.

3. That the Council classify Railway Road (as shown in attachment 3 in the report titled Speed Limit Reversals presented to the Strategy and Finance Committee on 26 February 2025) as:

Either

- a. Urban connector, and note that this would mean that the speed limit for this road will be reversed to 70km/h and 100km/h.

Or

- b. Urban street (for the section from just past the intersection with The Cutting Way until just past the intersection with El Prado Drive) and rural road (for the section from just past the intersection with El Prado Drive until just past the intersection with Roberts Line), and note that this would mean that the speed limits for these roads would remain unchanged and not be required to be reversed.
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1. ISSUE

- 1.1 On 26 February 2025 the Strategy and Finance Committee was asked to confirm speed limit reversals required by the new Land Transport Rule: Setting of Speed Limits 2024 (the Speed Limits Rule). The Committee made a decision in respect of Tennent Drive, but a second motion in respect of Railway Road failed for lack of a majority.
- 1.2 The purpose of this memorandum is to provide some clarity regarding the way that roads are classified. While this information was contained in [the officer's report presented at the Committee meeting](#)¹, it may be helpful to clarify this process so that elected members are fully informed of the way that speed limits are set.
- 1.3 The officer recommendations provided in the report to the Strategy and Finance Committee remain our best advice on how to respond to the requirements of the Speed Limits Rule. Nevertheless, we recognise that this may present a frustrating situation for elected members who are trying to balance the obligation to follow the legal requirements of the Speed Limits Rule and the need to ensure that speed limits are safe for all road users.
- 1.4 If elected members are dissatisfied with the recommendation of the Strategy and Finance Committee, then officers would recommend that they consider the alternative interpretations of the other road classifications. For instance:
- Tennent Drive could be classified as "**peri-urban**" if it was believed that it is a road that primarily provides access from residential property in the urban fringe, where the predominant land use is residential at a lower density than in urban residential locations.
 - Railway Road could be classified in two sections. The first could be classified as an "**urban street**" if it was believed that it is a road that is residential or a neighbourhood street, providing access to and supporting businesses, shops, on-street activity and services. The second could be classified as a "**rural road**" if it was believed that it is a road that primarily provides access to rural land for people who live there and supports the land-use activity being undertaken.
- 1.5 To facilitate decision-making, we have provided these alternatives as options for the Council to consider moving, if it is not satisfied with the recommendation from the Committee.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 26 February 2025 the Strategy and Finance Committee considered a report that set out the requirement to reverse certain speed limits by 1 May

¹ https://palmerstonnorth.infocouncil.biz/Open/2025/02/SAFC1_20250226_AGN_11268_AT.PDF

2025. The report identified two roads that met the criteria set out in the Speed Limits Rule: Tennent Drive (including the roads comprising the Tennent Drive interchange, and the lower section of Summerhill Drive) and Railway Road. The report recommended – based on the classification of these roads as “urban connectors” – that the Council confirm reversal of their speed limits to the speed limits in effect on 31 December 2019.

- 2.2 The Committee discussed the details of the report and debated an alternative motion from the floor – to classify both roads as “rural connectors.” If classified as “rural connectors” these roads would not be required to have their speed limits reversed. The motion failed for lack of a majority.
- 2.3 A second motion was put, to confirm the classification of both roads as “urban connectors”. The motion was taken separately for each road. The motion in respect of Tennent Drive was passed. The motion in respect of Railway Road failed for lack of a majority.

3. CONSEQUENCES OF THE COMMITTEE’S RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 If the Council confirms the Committee’s recommendation as it stands, then officers will notify NZTA that only one road (Tennent Drive, including the roads comprising the Tennent Drive interchange and the lower section of Summerhill Drive) has been classified as an “urban connector”, and is therefore required to be reversed.
- 3.2 As Council has not made a decision in respect of the classification of Railway Road, officers would not be required to notify NZTA about the classification of that road. The speed limit for Railway Road would therefore remain unchanged.

4. CLARIFYING THE PROCESS FOR CLASSIFYING ROADS UNDER THE SPEED LIMITS RULE

UNDERSTANDING ROAD CLASSIFICATIONS

- 4.1 The Speed Limits Rule 2024 includes a set of road classifications which are different from the One Network Framework that we have used previously. The road classifications in the Speed Limits Rule 2024 are specific to the setting of speed limits.
- 4.2 The Council, as the road controlling authority, must use this classification system to identify the speed limit (or range of speed limits) that apply to any given road.
- 4.3 The full list of road classifications was included in attachment 1 to the officer’s report to the Strategy and Finance Committee. The list is also provided below:

Table 1 - the full list of road classifications and the description of the features of roads that can fit within those classifications. Any roads which we classify as fitting into the highlighted categories must have their speed limits reversed.

Class of road	Description
Urban streets	Residential and neighbourhood streets, and streets that provide access to and support businesses, shops, on-street activity and services
Civic spaces	Streets mainly intended for localised on-street activity with little or no through movement
Urban connectors	Streets that provide for the movement of people and goods between different parts of urban areas, with low levels of interaction between the adjacent land use and the street
Transit corridors	Urban motorways and corridors that provide for movement of people and goods within an urban environment
Peri-urban roads	Roads that primarily provide access from residential property on the urban fringe or in a rural residential area, where the predominant adjacent land use is residential, but usually at a lower density than in urban residential locations
Stopping places	Rural destinations that increase activity on the roadside and directly uses the road for access
Rural roads	Roads that primarily provide access to rural land for people who live there and support the land-use activity being undertaken
Rural connectors	Roads that provide a link between rural roads and interregional connectors
Interregional connectors	Roads that provide for movement of people and goods between regions and strategic centres in a rural context
Expressway	State highways that are median divided, with two or more traffic lanes in each direction, grade separated intersections, access controlled, with a straight or curved alignment
Beaches	Beaches to which the public have access
Unconventional, low-volume or low speed road types	Parking areas, beach access points, riverbeds, cultural and recreational reserve or similar
Unsealed rural roads	Rural roads that are unsealed
Urban streets with significant levels of pedestrian and/or	Residential and neighbourhood streets, and streets that provide access to and support businesses, shops, on-street activity and services that have significant levels of

Class of road	Description
cycling activity	pedestrian and/or cycling activity
Urban streets with no footpaths	Residential and neighbourhood streets with pedestrian activity and no footpaths
Urban intersection speed zone	Intersections that have a history of high risk crash types
Rural intersection speed zone	Intersections that have a history of high risk crash types
Mountainous or hill corridors	Roads where the alignment is tortuous

4.4 For the purposes of the required speed limit reversals, only roads which we have classified as urban connector, transit corridor, or inter-regional connector must be reversed. The other road classifications that must be reversed – local streets with a 30km/h speed limit set because of a school in the area, or rural connectors – don't apply to us. We have set no 30km/h speed limits since 1 January 2020, and the requirement to reverse speed limits on rural connectors only applies to NZTA.

HOW WE APPLIED THE ROAD CLASSIFICATIONS

4.5 In Attachment 1 of the officer's report to the Strategy and Finance Committee we set out each of the roads where the speed limit was changed since 1 January 2020, and we showed the road classification that we identified as most closely fitting the description of the road.

4.6 Of the 32 roads where we changed a speed limit since 1 January 2020, only the roads associated with Tennent Drive and Railway Road met the definition for "urban connector." All the rest were identified variously as peri-urban, rural, urban, or rural connector. As such, those other roads were not required to have their speed limits reversed.

Tennent Drive

4.7 We considered two possible classifications for this road (and the associated roads): urban connector and peri-urban. The description of "urban connector" is "streets that provide for the movement of people and goods between different parts of urban areas, with low levels of interaction between the adjacent land use and the street". This seemed the best fit because the section of roads in question provide a connection between two different urban areas (primarily, between the main city north of the Fitzherbert Bridge and the urban areas of Massey University and Summerhill). For the section of Tennent Drive in question, there are few interactions between the adjacent land use and the street (for instance, vehicle crossings).

4.8 The alternative we considered was “peri-urban” which is described as “roads that primarily provide access from residential property on the urban fringe or in a rural residential area, where the predominant adjacent land use is residential, but usually at a lower density than in urban residential locations.” We didn’t think this provided a good fit because the roads in question are not primarily providing access from residential property (there are very few residential properties directly accessed from the road), and little of the adjacent land use is residential.

Railway Road

4.9 We considered the same options for Railway Road, and many of the same arguments apply. As the North-East Industrial Zone has become further developed, it can be argued that Railway Road is providing for the movement of people and goods between different parts of urban areas (the “urban connector” description). While the level of interaction between the adjacent land use and the street is increasing, there remain few vehicle crossings along this stretch of Railway Road. The lack of residential property adjacent to this road made it less likely to be considered “peri-urban.”

4.10 We considered whether this stretch of Railway Road could be classified in two parts - the first part of Railway Road could be considered “urban street”, with the later part considered a “rural road”. However, we believed this was an overly complex solution when the “urban connector” classification was an adequate description of the road as a whole. If this split classification of the road was adopted, then it would not be required to be reversed and the current speed limits could be retained.

ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATIONS

4.11 Officers acknowledge that the descriptions of these road classifications are subject to interpretation. The Speed Limits Rule does not provide any further definition of many of these terms, and therefore it becomes a matter for Council to interpret how these road classifications should be applied.

4.12 Elected members may disagree with officer advice about the most appropriate classification for these roads. Applying a different classification to Tennent Drive (and the associated roads) and Railway Road may mean that they would not be subject to reversal.

4.13 However, if NZTA has reason to believe that we haven’t complied with the Speed Limits Rule, then they have powers to act under [Rule 9.1](#). NZTA can:

- Give the Council notice in writing and give the Council a reasonable opportunity to respond.
- If not satisfied by the Council’s response, NZTA may issue directions to the Council regarding the matter to be addressed.

- NZTA may direct the Council to set a speed limit in accordance with NZTA's directions, or review or change procedures used by the Council to set speed limits.
- If the Council doesn't comply with the directions of NZTA as above, then NZTA can exercise the same powers to set a speed limit and install, modify or remove a speed limit sign.

4.14 **Officers note that if NZTA steps in to set a speed limit as above, then the Council is not permitted to change the speed limit for that road for three years without approval from NZTA first.**

FURTHER ACTION THE COUNCIL CAN TAKE IF SPEED LIMITS ARE REVERSED

- 4.15 If one or more roads are required to have their speed limits reversed as a result of their classification, then these "reversals" must be implemented by 1 July 2025.
- 4.16 If the Council wants to return these roads back to the current speed limit, then it must set a new speed limit. However, it cannot do this until the reversals have been made and given effect. This includes meeting all the costs associated with reversing the speed limits. The report to the Strategy and Finance Committee estimated the cost as \$10,000 for both roads.
- 4.17 To set a new speed limit for these roads, the Council would need to prepare a proposal, including the required cost-benefit disclosures required by the Speed Limits Rule, and consult the community. It could do this either as a standalone proposal or as part of a larger project to change speed limits (including the new requirement to implement by 1 July 2026 variable speed limits arounds schools).

5. COMPLIANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Does the Council have delegated authority to decide?	Yes
Are the decisions significant?	No
If they are significant do they affect land or a body of water?	No
Can this decision only be made through a 10 Year Plan?	No
Does this decision require consultation through the Special Consultative procedure?	No
Is there funding in the current Annual Plan for these objectives?	Yes
Are the recommendations inconsistent with any of Council's policies or plans?	Yes
If the Council decides to reverse the speed limits for either or both of these roads, then the increase of the speed limit will likely decrease safety for road users. This is inconsistent with the purpose of the Transport Plan, which includes making sure that the "transport network is integrated with land use planning and is safe for all users".	

<p>The inconsistency is caused by the Speed Limits Rule, which was signed by the Minister of Transport. It directs road controlling authorities (RCAs) to reverse these speed limits and does not permit the RCA to take any other action except to reverse the speed limit for roads which are classified as urban connector, transit corridor, or interregional connector.</p> <p>There is no intention to amend the Transport Plan to accommodate this inconsistency. Safety for all road users remains a key outcome for the Council.</p> <p>While the Council cannot set a different speed limit for these roads before 1 July 2025 it can follow the Speed Limits Rule to set a new speed limit after it has been reversed. The Council will be receiving information at a workshop on 19 March 2025 about the process for setting speed limits. Following that workshop the Council could decide to return the speed limits to their current setting as a matter of urgency after 1 July 2025, or it could decide to include these roads in a wider project to develop a speed management plan.</p>	
<p>The recommendations contribute to: Not applicable Whāinga 1: He tāone auaha, he tāone tiputipu Goal 1: An innovative and growing city</p> <p>Whāinga 2: He tāone whakaihiihi, tapatapahi ana Goal 2: A creative and exciting city</p> <p>Whāinga 3: He hapori tūhonohono, he hapori haumarū Goal 3: A connected and safe community</p> <p>Whāinga 4: He tāone toitū, he tāone manawaroa Goal 4: A sustainable and resilient city</p>	
<p>The recommendations contribute to this plan: Not applicable</p>	
<p>Contribution to strategic direction and to social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being</p>	<p>The recommendations do not contribute to the Council's strategic direction or any of its plans. The recommendations are required to be made as a result of the Setting of Speed Limits Rule 2024, signed by the Minister of Transport. The recommendations are inconsistent with the purpose of the Transport Plan, which includes making sure that the "transport network is integrated with land use planning and is safe for all users".</p>

ATTACHMENTS

Nil