

Waka Kotahi State Highway 56 Longburn village and Longburn to Palmerston North speed review

Submission from Palmerston North City Council

Palmerston North City Council (Council) thanks Waka Kotahi for initiating an unscheduled review of the speed environment for the Longburn-Palmerston North segment of State Highway 56 (SH56). While this is classified as an unscheduled review by Waka Kotahi, Council has previously signalled the urgent need for this review in order to support the development of Kākātangiata and Kikiwhenua.

Council supports a reduction in the speed limit set for this segment of SH56, as it:

- a) Represents an initial response to the management of SH56 by Waka Kotahi in order to address the city's growth and strategic land-use planning.
- b) Promotes greater walkability and reduced community severance for Longburn village.
- c) Provides cues to road users entering the city via a key southern gateway to Palmerston North.
- d) Is an important factor in influencing quality urban form outcomes for Kākātangiata, including Kikiwhenua, which is zoned residential in the District Plan.

While Council acknowledges the current rural environment between Longburn and Palmerston North, this part of the city is in the early stages of being urbanised and it is important that speed management decisions and infrastructure design reflect the long-term outcomes sought for Kākātangiata and Kikiwhenua, as opposed to the current function of this part of SH56.

This part of SH56 does not form part of the future inter-regional network signalled in the Palmerston North Integrated Transport Network (PNITI). SH56 ceases at the Mangaone Stream Bridge and provides no direct connections to key locations in the city for inter-regional freight traffic.

If Waka Kotahi persists with protecting the current function of this part of SH56, Council will never reach the position where it can achieve a functional urban environment at Kākātangiata and Kikiwhenua. It would be equivalent to the current urban parts of Napier Road (SH3) having a high-speed environment to maintain their inter-regional function.

Waka Kotahi decision-making regarding the future management of SH56 should be made in the best interests of the city, as opposed to protecting the inter-regional function of route that is not identified for that purpose in PNITI.

Specific Requests for this proposal

- a) Council supports a reduced speed limit at Longburn village to 50km/h.
- b) With regards to that part of SH56 between Longburn and Palmerston North, Council preference is a 60km/hr speed limit as it provides a high level of certainty to the future development of Kākātangiata and Kikiwhenua. At 60km/h or less, Council can support

residential development that is consistent with an urban street, and provides greater options for intersection upgrades or new intersections that would provide for safe walking and cycling

- c) Council is willing to offer conditional support to the proposed 80km/hr speed limit provided that:
- Waka Kotahi provide written confirmation to the Council that future Speed Management Plans will signal the need for further speed reductions at SH56 to support the continued development of Kākātangiata and Kikiwhenua.
 - Waka Kotahi support the design and staging of infrastructure upgrades at SH56 on the basis that further speed reductions will be required in the future to support the continued development of Kākātangiata and Kikiwhenua.
 - Waka Kotahi provide written confirmation that an 80km/hr speed limit enables the development of the Kikiwhenua Residential Area.
- d) If the three conditions in c) above cannot be provided by Waka Kotahi, Council seeks a 60km/hr speed limit.

Strategic context

PNITI is a recommended programme of interventions that seeks to manage planned economic growth, support the freight and distribution potential of the region, address safety issues and improve the liveability of residential areas and city centre. This will be achieved through:

- Better modal balance in the city.
- Better alignment of industrial land-use with key air, road, and rail infrastructure.
- Strategic investment in reliable public transport and cycling corridors.
- The development of a dedicated freight route that enables heavy vehicles to have efficient movements around the city rather than through it.

The speed environment for Longburn village and SH56 plays an important role in the future freight connections for the city. The long-term intention of PNITI is for there to be a road connection between SH57 and Kairanga-Bunnythorpe Rd, intersecting SH56 between Longburn village and Palmerston North. With the support of Waka Kotahi, Council propose to identify the preferred alignment of the regional freight ring road as part of a series investigations and business case scheduled in years 2 and 3 of the 2024-2034 Long Term Plan.

One of the success factors for PNITI is improved safety and access for new housing developments, including Kākātangiata, which has been signaled as a preferred urban growth area since the Residential Growth Strategy was first released in 2010. 24ha within the Kikiwhenua Residential Area was rezoned to enable residential development in 2020. Due to delays in providing the necessary transport and three waters infrastructure, Kikiwhenua has not been realised within the 2020-23 period. The city is currently facing a 22% projected housing shortfall in the 2024-27 period.¹

¹ Assuming 55% of the city's short term housing supply is met through infill subdivision, 5% is met through rural residential, and 18% is met through existing infrastructure-enabled greenfield land.

Council anticipates a community severance risk to 1300 new homes at Kākātangiata if safe and appropriate urban speeds are not established to facilitate access improvements for walking and cycling across SH56.

Council expects the state highway classification of this part of SH56 will be revoked when the regional freight ring road is established, or earlier if inter-regional freight traffic is redirected to use Rongotea Road and Tremaine Ave, instead of this part of SH56. This will enable the Council to manage this section of SH56 as part of the urban local network in order to respond to the needs of Kākātangiata. Such a change is consistent with the objectives of PNITI.

Longburn

Council supports the reduction of speed limit for Longburn from 70km/h to 50km/h. Longburn village is a well-established urban environment and a reduction to 50km/h aligns with the surrounding land-use. A 50km/h speed limit provides Waka Kotahi and the Council with greater options for supporting village planning and placemaking initiatives for the Longburn community. A 50km/h speed limit in Longburn village will reduce community severance issues.

Kikiwhenua

If supporting infrastructure is provided within the 2024-27 period, Kikiwhenua would provide for 25% of our short-term housing supply needs. Stage 1 (30 lots) is expected to be delivered next year. Stage 2 (250 lots) is expected to be developed in 2025, when water supply and wastewater services are expanded to Kikiwhenua.

Council's transport assessment for Kikiwhenua identified that an initial stage of development at Kikiwhenua could be achieved without requiring the need for an intersection upgrade. Council has a specific Long Term Plan programme for upgrading the intersection of Te Wanaka Road/SH56. Council can use this funding to install an initial upgrade to facilitate development at Kikiwhenua.

An initial intersection upgrade such as an Intersection Speed Zone (ISZ) for the Te Wanaka Road/SH56 intersection will enable short term housing supply at Kikiwhenua without compromising options for a permanent upgrade to support the development of Kākātangiata. An ISZ will positively impact safety in the short-term as travel demand exiting Te Wanaka Road increases.

Recommendations for future processes

- a) Notwithstanding the specific requests for this proposal identified above and the preference for an immediate 60km/hr speed limit, Council proposes the following staged approach to managing speed at SH56:
 - 80km/hr – conditional support (see above).
 - Include an Intersection Speed Zone around the SH56/Te Wanaka Road intersection in 2024 of the State Highway Speed Management Plan 2024-27 to enable stage two of Kikiwhenua and work with Council to enable the installation.
 - Include a permanent speed limit between the SH56/Te Wanaka Road intersection and Palmerston North to 60km/h or lower in 2025 of the State

Highway Speed Management Plan 2024-27 to be consistent with anticipated land-use change at the Kākātangiata and Kikiwhenua.

- Engage with the Council on whether any development or infrastructure triggers can be used so that the timing of speed reductions is consistent with anticipated changes in surrounding land-use.
- b) Council will submit on subsequent Speed Management Plan Reviews to request changes to further sections of SH56 between Longburn and Palmerston North to support the development of Kākātangiata and Kikiwhenua.
- c) The state highway classification of this part of the SH56 is revoked once the regional freight ring road is constructed, or earlier if inter-regional freight traffic is redirected to use Rongotea Road and Tremaine Ave, instead of this part of SH56

For further information on Council's submission, please contact Acting Principal Planner Keegan Aplin-Thane on 06 356 8199 or keegan.aplin-thane@pncc.govt.nz

Grant Smith
Mayor
Palmerston North City Council