

Frequently Asked Questions

Questions about the consultation and review process

When does Consultation start and end?

We are undertaking speed reviews across Northland in a staged process. We will keep this page updated with new areas that we are consulting on. We will also ensure that each Council web page is kept up to date with speed limit consultations.

Far North District Council		
Road catchment area	Consultation opens	Consultation closes
Okaihau – Kaeo – Waimate catchment area	21 October 2019	22 November 2019
Springbank School Zone (Waimate North Road)	21 October 2019	22 November 2019
Te Rangi Aniwanuiwa School Zone (Quarry Road Kaitaia)	21 October 2019	22 November 2019

You can find the Statement of Proposal and other information on the above speed reviews by following the link below:

<https://www.fndc.govt.nz/speedlimitsbylaw>

Who manages the consultation?

The Speed Limit Review process is managed by the Northland Transportation Alliance (NTA) as a regional project, covering Far North, Whangarei and Kaipara Districts.

Each Council manages the consultation process for roads in their District according to that Council's established consultation processes and systems.

Who is the NTA?

The Northland Transportation Alliance (NTA) is a collaboration between local government and the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) to deliver joined up services for roading and transportation in Northland. Members of the alliance include NZTA, Northland Regional Council, Kaipara, Whangarei and Far North District Councils.

How do I make a submission?

Council's website advises on the best way to have your say and make a submission. Submissions can be made online using Council's website.

You can find the Statement of Proposal, Submission Form and other information for Far North District Speed Reviews by following the link below:

<https://www.fndc.govt.nz/speedlimitsbylaw>

Submissions can also be emailed or posted to:

Speed Limit Bylaw

Far North District Council
 Memorial Avenue
 Private Bag 752
 Kaikohe 0440

OR

Email to: Submissions@fndc.govt.nz with "Speed Limit Bylaw Submission" in the subject line.

OR

You can make a submission online at www.fndc.govt.nz/speedlimitsbylaw

The location of service centres can be found on Council's website.

How were roads with proposed changes to the speed limits decided on?

We have prioritised the areas that we are undertaking speed limit reviews based on evidence-based risk profiles. The risk profile indicates areas where a speed limit or management review will provide the greatest road safety benefits by reducing the number and severity of serious injury and fatal crashes.

In addition to risk assessments, we have also considered feedback received from the community, police and other key stakeholders, including Council road engineers.

Can I make a submission on a road not in the current review?

Yes, you can. We will record the feedback you provide and consider it when that area is reviewed. We would however prefer that you focus on the areas currently under review.

Are we reviewing every road in the District?

Yes. We are required to review speed limits on all roads in the district. This will be undertaken in a staged process over time, with the highest risk areas reviewed first.

When will my road or area be reviewed?

We are reviewing speed limits across the district in a staged process. During 2020, we are expecting to review the following areas:

Road catchment area	When?
Kaitaia – Awaroa Road	Early 2020
Aucks Road - Russell	Mid 2020
Kawakawa - Old Russell Road	Mid 2020

We will keep this page updated as we programme other areas for speed reviews. You can find more information on our ongoing speed review programme by following the link below:

www.fndc.govt.nz/speedlimitsbylaw

Some questions people ask

How are speed limits set?

Speed limits are set using a local council Speed Limits Bylaw. The Speed Limits Bylaw is made under the Land Transport Act 1998. The matters that need to be considered when setting a speed limit is set out in the Setting of Speed Limits Rule 2017 and the National Speed Management Guidance 2016.

You can find out more about the Setting of Speed Limits Rule and National Speed Management Guidance by following the links below:

<https://nzta.govt.nz/resources/rules/setting-of-speed-limits-2017/setting-of-speed-limits-2017>

<https://www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/Safety/docs/speed-management-resources/speed-management-guide-first-edition-201611.pdf>

The principle aim is to set a safe and appropriate speed limit that reflects the road environment whilst balancing the need to get to our destinations. The overall goal is to reduce the number of serious injury and fatal crashes on our roads.

Why are 70 km/hr speed limits not included?

70km/h speed limits are a legacy from when speed limits were either 50km/h, 70km/h or 100km/h. We now have a greater choice of speed limits so that we can better match the speed limit to the road environment to encourage safe and appropriate speeds.

National Speed Management Guidance encourages changes in speed limits at 20km/h steps. This is because a smaller step, for example 10km/h, is difficult for a driver to perceive. We can still have 70km/h speed areas, but these are discouraged in favour of either 80km/h or 60km/h speed zones.

What is a safe and appropriate speed?

Safe and appropriate speed is a travel speed that reflects what the road is used for (eg: arterial or local access), how the road is designed (is it narrow and winding with limited shoulder area), safety and use.

Not all roads are created equally, and a safe and appropriate speed is not always the posted speed limit. In setting a safe and appropriate speed limit, we are attempting to match the speed limit with the road environment.

Some of the speed limits are to be dropped from 100 km/h to 60 km/h, this seems a big drop?

In some cases, we are proposing to drop the speed limit from 100km/h to 60km/h. Generally, this drop is on unsealed roads that are narrow and winding. These roads can be utilised by logging trucks, dairy tankers, as well as private vehicles.

The actual speed driven on these roads is often between 40km/h and 60km/h. Matching the speed limit closer to the actual speed vehicles are currently driving will reduce the top end unsafe speeds that some attempt on these roads.

Why lower a speed limit at all – we've managed fine with the speed limit as it is?

Actually, we haven't.

In Northland, between 2014 and 2018; 39 people died (37 fatal crashes); 238 people were seriously injured (186 serious injury crashes) where inappropriate speed was a significant factor.

Between 2014 and 2018, there were 7409 reported crashes in Northland. The travel speed (going to fast) was a significant factor in 20.23% of those crashes. That's 1499 crashes that were principally caused by someone not travelling at a safe and appropriate speed for the road. When the same crash factor is applied to all serious injury and fatal crashes, inappropriate speed is a significant factor in 30.83% of those crashes.

These statistics do not include all the non-injury crashes that occur around our region that are not reported through NZ Police, including single vehicle crashes where a car has been dragged out of a ditch after taking a corner too fast.

Will this just lead to more enforcement of the speed limits?

No. Speed limits on all New Zealand's roads are enforced by NZ Police. They will be updated with the process and any changes to speed limits. Council does not enforce the speed limits and Council does not obtain any revenue from speed limit enforcement.

Common things people say

When it comes to public debate about speed limits, we recognise that there are a lot of different opinions out there, and not all of them are based on sound research, evidence or our legal responsibilities. We want to encourage robust evidence-based community debate about speed management issues.

When we engage the community about road safety and speed management, we often hear similar statements. We would like to address some of them here.

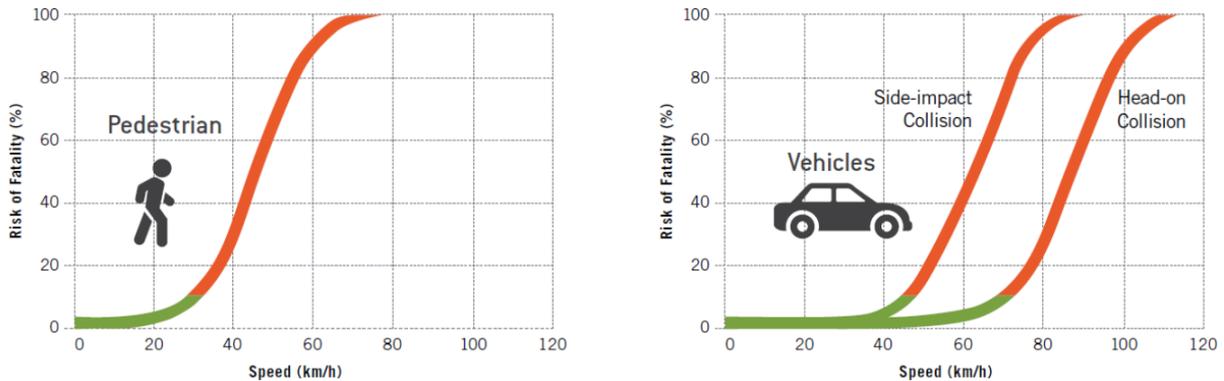
Going a few kilometres faster or slower doesn't make any difference to safety

Actually, you would be surprised at how much difference it does make.

A slower speed limit will significantly reduce the chance of you having a crash. If you are involved in a crash, a slower speed limit will dramatically increase the chances that you will walk away.

Wherever the speed limit has been reduced, even by a small amount, the number of speed related crashes has reduced significantly.

If you are in a head on collision at 100km/h the chances of surviving are about 5% -10%, but in the same collision driving at 80km/h your chance of survival rises to about 80%.



Source: Austroads Balance between harm reduction and mobility in setting speed limits: a feasibility study (2005)

Figure 1: Crash survivability: Vehicles v Pedestrian/cyclist and Vehicle v Vehicle

Over a 5km journey, the difference in journey time between 100km/h and 80km/h is about 45 seconds. A few seconds will significantly increase your survivability of a crash; or avoid one in the first place.

Aren't you just trying to lower speed limits to gather revenue?

The short answer is no. Council sets the speed limits under national guidance. Council does not enforce speed limits, that is the job of NZ Police. Fines and penalties for speeding do not go to Council. They do not go to NZ Police either. In fact, it costs more to enforce speed limits than is collected in fines and penalties.

The purpose of road speed enforcement is to ensure the safety of all road users and that you get to your destination.

Lowering the speed limit will make the journey take ages to get anywhere

Have you ever had someone overtake you dangerously when you have been driving at a good speed, only to pass them later on when they are stopped at a set of lights, or in traffic?

It is surprising how little the overall journey time is affected by a lower speed limit that reflects the safe and appropriate speed for the road environment. When we compare the actual speed of an average driver, it is often much slower than the posted speed limit. This is because the road may have many corners, is narrow or unsealed. Most people naturally go slower in these circumstances.

Setting a speed limit that is safe and appropriate for the road environment better matches the actual speed that most people drive at (averaged across their entire journey). The effect of setting a safe and appropriate speed will reduce the top end of the speed spectrum; but will not normally impact on the average speed most people drive at. This creates a much safer driving environment for everyone.

The table below shows different journey times at different speeds. The differences in time assume you are driving at the maximum speed for the entire journey. However, we all know that often you are driving at a slower speed than that posted.

Distance Travelled	Time at max 100km/h	Time at max 80km/h	Difference in time
2km	1min 12sec	1min 30sec	18sec
5km	3min	3min 45sec	45sec
10km	6min	7min 30sec	1min 30sec
15km	9min	11min 15sec	2min 15sec

In Northland, most journey's on local roads are less than 10km, as the driver normally accesses the State Highway network to reach destinations further away.

Within the urban area, the typical speed limit is 50km/h. but your average journey speed ranges between 26km/h and 33km/h, and even slower during peak times in some of our Northland towns.

Reducing the speed limit to 40km/h in parts of these towns, will have no real impact on your overall journey time, but reduce the likelihood of a pedestrian or cyclist fatality from 85% at 50km/h to 30% at 40km/h.

It is the road that causes the problem, not the speed

Our crash statistics show us that our speed limits are too high for many of our roads. Northlands crash statistics also show that drivers often do not drive at a safe and appropriate speed for the road environment.

The local roads in Northland are often narrow, winding and have little forgiveness for driving errors or misjudgements. Many of our roads, particularly in the Far North and Kaipara are unsealed. The posted speed limits on our roads reflect the legacy of either 50km/h, 70km/h or 100km/h speed limit options. The current posted speed limit does not reflect an appropriate speed limit for many of our roads.

"Engineering up" our roads to a higher standard would cost billions of dollars. The geographic nature of some roads in Northland mean that "engineering up" is not an option. We are therefore left with the option of matching our speed to the road environment. We can do this by setting safe and appropriate speeds that reflect that type and standard of the road.

I am a good driver and can drive fast safely

A good driver will drive at a safe and appropriate speed for the road environment and the conditions at the time. No matter how good a driver you think you are, there are plenty of other drivers out there that make mistakes. Those mistakes should not be fatal to you or to them.

A slow driver will drive even slower, causing more frustration and crashes

The evidence suggests that a driver going 80km/h in a 100km/h zone perceives the safe and appropriate speed for that road environment as 80km/h. Matching the speed limit to the actual safe and appropriate speed does not change the road environment. The slower driver will still perceive the safe and appropriate speed as 80km/h and continue driving at about that speed.

A driver that is currently driving at an unsafe speed for the road environment will slow down to better match the posted speed limit.

Matching the speed limit closer to the road environment and design speed of the road will result in more drivers driving at a similar speed. This results in less dangerous overtaking manoeuvres and less overall aggressive driving, significantly reducing the risk of crashes.

It's the slow drivers that cause the crashes

The short answer is no they do not. It is the aggressive driver that is determined to drive at an unsafe speed that causes the crashes, whether it is from losing control on a corner or making an unsafe or dangerous overtaking manoeuvre.

If you or someone else makes a mistake or mis-judges a safe distance because you or someone else is driving at an unsafe speed for the road environment, the risk of a crash, or a fatality increases significantly.

Waiting for a safe place to overtake a slower driver has a minimal impact on your overall journey time; but enables you and everyone else to get to their destination.