

SH30 Tikitere to Whakatāne Speed Consultation

Submission

From

Lake Rotoiti Community Association



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Introduction - Submission

The Lake Rotoiti Community Association Incorporated, (LRCA), welcomes the opportunity to make this submission to Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency's timely review of East Rotoiti's speed limits.

Our association is a long standing charitable organisation which takes a leading role in representing a large community of interest in the Lake Rotoiti area. We acknowledge the ongoing support of local and national bodies in support of the interests and welfare of our community and the public.



We are pleased to submit that we fully support the reduction of the speed limit to 60kph from Moose Lodge to Hongis Track reflecting the current road side warnings and the population density risks.

We are very pleased to see the speeds on our road along the lakeside and through our community being made safer and being brought into line with roads around the East and North of Rotorua, the West of Lake Rotoiti and beside Lake Rotoma.

As NZ / Aotearoa and the lakes become more populated our roads will become more crowded and dangerous.

The 2 serious accidents during the consultation period, one in which a local was killed and another in which a truck and trailer rolled blocking the road for 16hrs, serve to reinforce the need for change.



Note: Ruato Bay is not where it is shown above but is immediately to the East of the 80kph section.

We are however submitting that the 1km section between Ruato Bay and Gisborne Point - where it is proposed that the speed limit be retained at 80kph - is also reduced to 60kph.

It appears to be the only section of SH30 being reviewed where a speed limit above 50kph has not been reduced!

We recommend the reduction to 60kph for the 1km section between Ruato Bay and Gisborne Point based on:

- The inherent risks in this section associated with access to the highway from hidden homes and service areas, lack of footpaths, limited vision and tempting passing opportunities without adequate vision - if the proposed 80kph limit is retained.
- The risk that the benefits of the 60kph reduction in the surrounding areas will be jeopardised by motorists continuing on into the two largest Eastern Rotoiti communities at speeds well above the new 60kph limit. Both the Gisborne Point and Ruato Bay communities have emphasised this concern.
- The enjoyment for all of the Eastern end of Lake Rotoiti will be substantially enhanced by maintaining a comfortable speed along the entire section.

We also note that in justifying the proposed new speed limits Waka Kotahi comments that: ***“People asked for more consistent and safer speeds to slow down traffic, to discourage drivers from accelerating and decelerating at tight corners and along the straights”.***

Support for 60kph from Moose Lodge to Hongi's Track

Road users of State Highway 30 between Moose Lodge and Hongi's Track face numerous road and roadside dangers.

Where there is limited population multiple hazards exist - such as sharp corners, rockfalls, slippery roads in icy and wet conditions, unforgiving borders either through large drop offs directly into the lake or into substantial tree trunks. The highway is peppered with signs warning that corners / windy road should be driven at 45kph, 55kph and 65kph, that it is slippery in icy or wet conditions and that drivers should watch out for rockfalls and pedestrians.

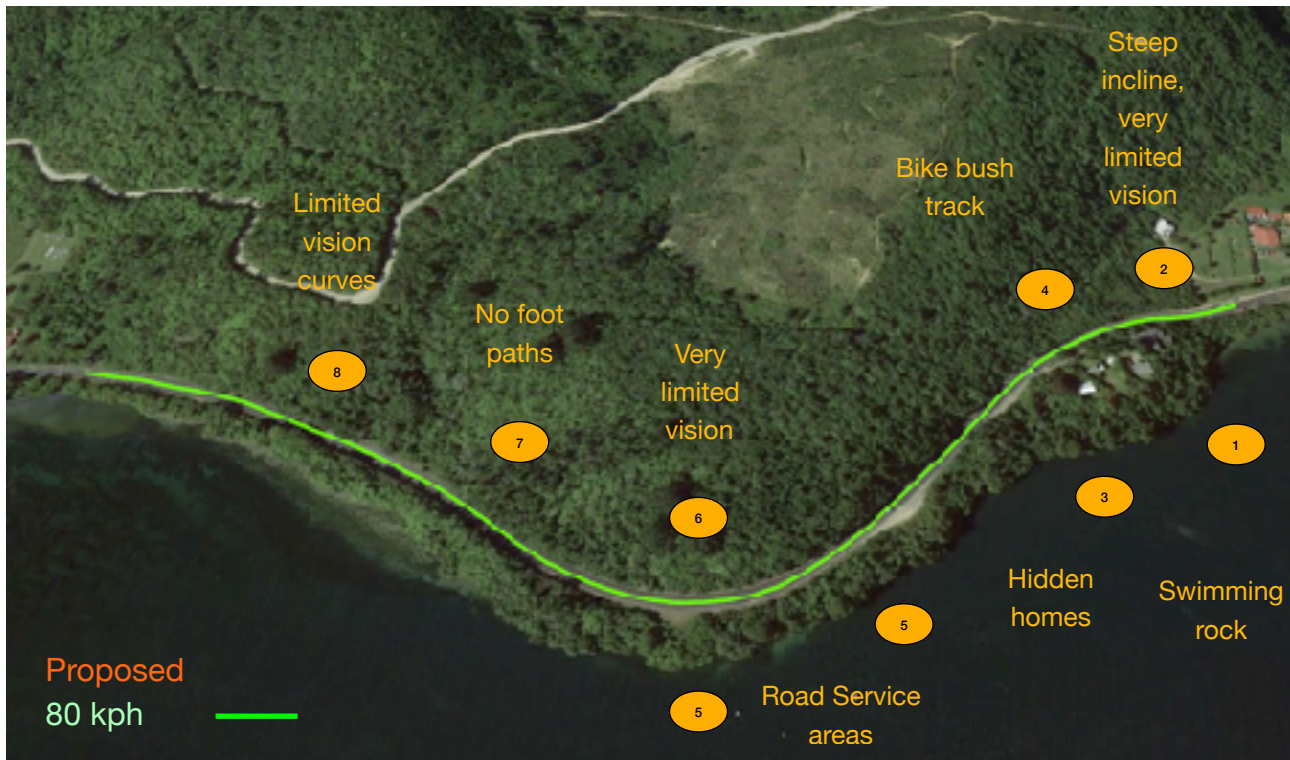


The road warning signs in these areas make it clear that driving at 60kph or less is advised and driving at 100kph is dangerous!

In the populated areas, difficult concealed roadside access to the highway, an assortment of sports and community organisations including 6 marae and a junior school, less manoeuvrable vehicles like large truck & trailer units and vehicles with boats and caravans in tow, pedestrians and drivers who may not be familiar with highway's dangers all combine to create a lethal cocktail!

60kph is far more appropriate than the current 80kph to protect the safety of the public who should be able to enjoy the beauty of the lake and its community in safety.

Risks of 80kph from Ruato Bay to Gisborne Point



Hazards

- 1, Children Crossing to Swim / Play
- 2, Steep Incline, Very Limited Vision
- 3, Concealed Entrances to Hidden homes
- 4, Bike Bush Track
- 5, Road Maintenance Service Areas
- 6, Very limited Vision Bend
- 7, No Foot Paths
- 8, Limited Vision Curves
- 9, Speed, Environmental and Maintenance

1, Children Crossing SH30 to Swim / Play & 7, No Footpaths



Route beside highway to rock



Entrance to pathway to rock - dangerous parking

Children need to cross back and forth across SH30 to enjoy the lake and grass picnic area which is immediately across SH30 from the community.

The only route to the popular swimming rock for children is to cross SH30 and walk along the edge of the highway into the proposed 80kph zone - there are NO footpaths. The only other option is by car but parking is dangerous with very limited verge on which to park.

2, Steep Incline, Very Limited Vision & 7, No Footpaths

The road up from the bay is steep with limited vision either way. There is no sign of the concealed entrance/exit to the houses just around the corner. The narrow verges without a foot path make it particularly dangerous to walk or bike this section.

A local comments: *“The absence of footpath forces pedestrians to walk in the drain or rough road verge, that is highly dangerous when traffic, particularly trucks thunder by at 80kph less than a meter away, with considerable buffeting / suction from the wind wave”.*



3, Concealed Entrances to Hidden Homes



Four homes are hidden from the road, providing no warning for motorists of potential cars, (and trailers), exiting or joining the highway - particularly for those coming up the hill who have no vision of what lies ahead - see picture below.



Vehicles following home owners up the hill tailgate them, and try to force them to go faster, unaware that they are about to have to do a 180 degree turn when they exit the highway.

Residents, (and their visitors), exiting and entering SH30 have very limited vision of vehicles approaching, especially those coming from the West up the hill.

Entering and exiting SH30 from here with boat trailers creates an additional risk! These properties have no water access for boats.



Vision to the East is particularly restricted meaning that motorists entering SH30, particularly if turning right, have very limited time in which to make their decisions - when looking left, right then left again - before proceeding on to the highway. Exiting when heading West and turning right off SH30 is equally hazardous.



This is an extremely dangerous area to be entering or exiting SH30 with a speed limit of **80kph**, especially when cars coming up the hill heading East have no indication what may be around the corner.

Visitors to these properties, both young and old, who are unfamiliar with the hazards, are particularly at risk.

4, Bike Bush Track

An additional risk at this same location is a concealed popular bike track into the bush opposite the entrance to the homes. Bikers and quad bikers are at risk entering and exiting and going to and from track on SH30.



5, Road Maintenance Service Areas



The views above are from the larger service area. The vision from the one on the bend is more restricted.

Road maintenance service vehicles have limited vision when entering and leaving these service areas, particularly from the corner one. Fully loaded large truck and trailer units with limited manoeuvrability are a particular risk.

6, Very Limited Vision Around Bend

With extremely limited vision around the bend heading both East and West those foolish enough to attempt to pass slower traffic near the corner would be seriously risking the safety of both themselves and other road users.



8, Limited Vision Ahead But Some Tempting Passing Sections

Whilst there is better vision ahead after the bend heading East, vision ahead is still too limited to pass vehicles safely. The danger is that the increased speed limit of 80kph over this section will encourage drivers to take the risk when it is not safe to do so.

As one local says: *“Most of the road between Ruato Bay and Gisborne Point is winding and unsuitable for overtaking. This will cause drivers to accelerate to well in excess of 80km/hr and likely cause accidents rather than stopping accidents. There should be no adjusting of the speed limit. It should be 60 km/hr. You should be doing it purely for safety. There is no point encouraging them to overtake by raising the speed limit”.*



9, Speed, Environmental & Maintenance Issues

Speed

The increase in speed by 20kph from 60kph to 80kph substantially increases the risk of injuries and fatalities resulting from car accidents. Kinetic energy at 80kph is almost twice that at 60kph and kinetic energy is a strong predictor of injury severity.



Waka Kotahi's supporting information for Road to Zero states that the chance of injury or fatality in an accident increases by 3% or 4 to 5% respectively for every 1 kph increase in speed. An increase in speed of 20kph from 60kph to 80kph will increase the chance of injury or fatality in an accident by 60% or 80 to 100% respectively.

Environment and Maintenance

Acceleration from 60 to 80kph up and breaking down the inclines at each end of the proposed 80kph section will harm the environment through increased emissions and tyre, brake and road wear around a lake where 100's of millions of dollars have been and are being spent to enhance the lake's water quality and condition.



This wear will have a detrimental effect on the safety of vehicles and this section of SH30 and increase maintenance costs.

Risks of 80kph Vehicles NOT Slowing to 60kph



Probability of 80kph Vehicles not Slowing to 60kph

At very least, all speed limit changes should be considered transition zones: drivers do not suddenly change from one speed to another.

A report by the National Cooperative Highway Research Program states: *“experience shows that many drivers do not sufficiently decrease their speeds through transition zones, and as a result, enter and travel through communities faster than they should”* (http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/docs/NCHRP15-40_AppendixB.doc).

This suggests that at very least, drivers will continue speeding past Te Puna Whakareia Marae and Waikohatu Marae.

A major concern of our members is that the increase in the speed between Ruato Bay and Gisborne Point to 80kph will make the the adjacent 60kph sections more dangerous - not safer.

In the SH30 proposed scenario - 60kph to 80kph to 60kph - drivers who have adjusted to driving at 60kph over the previous 5km will be jolted out of that by being encouraged to drive at 80kph for just 1 km. Just as they get used to 80kph being the limit they'll strike a sign expecting them to reduce to their speed to 60kph again.

Changes in speed zone detract from consistent driving habits.

Many drivers will be tempted to, (or accidentally), continue into the 60kph areas at the speed they have just been doing - **80kph! 33% faster than the speed limit with an exponential increase in the risk of accidents and serious injury in the 60kph areas!**

Gradient

The problem will be exacerbated by the downhill slopes at each end of this section of 80kph road. Particularly at the Ruato Bay end.



Locals Comment:

Ruato Bay

"I have lived here all my life and already had concern for the speed of TRUCKS AND VEHICLES through our community. The proposed 80kph speed between Gisborne Point and Ruato Bay will encourage drivers 80 speed through Ruato Bay and worse still encourage DANGEROUS manoeuvres like OVERTAKING. I have seen sooo many serious accidents and near misses over the years".



Speeding Truck & Trailer rolls at Ruato Bay blocking SH30 for 17 hrs

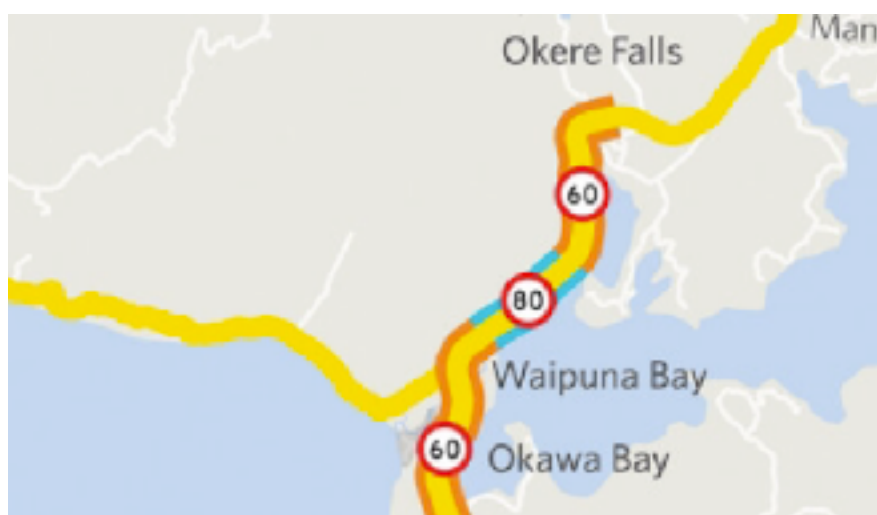
Gisborne Point

“ I do NOT support the retention of 80kph from east of Okataina road to west of Urumahue road. The speed of vehicles including trucks around the two sweeping corners at the western end and the often unsafe overtaking on the straight outside Te Punawhakareia Marae proves the current 80 Kph limit is too high.

The other reason for objecting to this 80 kph zone is that it is a very small section of the road squeezed between 2 lengthy 60 kph zones. This is ludicrous. All 3 should be 60 kph, not chopping and changing.

A horrific accident several years ago where a vehicle towing a horse float pulled out of the Marae, and was T boned by a motorist driving too fast, proves my point.”

Mourea to Okere Falls



“Observations from our members who live in the vicinity of SH33 between Mourea and Okere indicate that many vehicles including heavy transport traveling along the 850 metre section of 80kph highway between Whangamarino and Waipuna Delta continue at that speed for a significant distance before slowing to the 60kph speed limits required at either end.

A significant number of local residents from this area are known to have held a preference to reduce the speed on that area of highway to 60kph for its entire length.

Given the similar negligible advantage over the short distance of 60-80-60kph proposed for SH30 between Ruato Bay and Gisborne Point, it is strongly recommended that this be seriously reviewed in light of the afore-mentioned observations”.

Waka Kotahi in support of its proposal to reduce speeds comments:

“People asked for more consistent and safer speeds to slow down traffic, to discourage drivers from accelerating and decelerating at tight corners and along the straights”.

Risks of Vehicles Entering Ruato Bay at 80kph



Risks

1, Entrance to Marae and Home

The Waikohatu Marae entrance is just **75m** from proposed speed reduction sign. Often large numbers of whanau attend this site. If the 80kph section is not removed vehicles will speed past here.

2, Lake Okataina Intersection

This intersection is just **140m** from the proposed sign. It is a major intersection with many vehicles towing boats. As there is no accommodation at the lake all users must visit by this intersection. Vehicles continuing at 80kph will be a serious safety hazard.

3, Renowned Fishing Stream Mouth

This fishing stream mouth is famous for its huge trout. Fishers, mainly fish at night, in dark camouflage clothing and frequently cross SH30 between their cars and the lake.



Limited vision of what lies ahead ahead coming down hill into Ruato Bay

4, Marae and Ruato Bay Community

This community and the Hiukura and Waikohatu Marae should not have to suffer not knowing whether the next vehicle passing through will be doing 60 or 80kph.



Cars parked outside an Eastern Rotoiti Marae

5, Deceptive Corner

In spite of this corner being at the Western end of Ruato Bay it suffers a regular stream of accidents involving vehicles travelling West through Ruato Bay too fast. Speed limits must be introduced to reduce the likelihood of this continuing.

Risks of Vehicles Entering Gisborne Point at 80kph



Risks



Homes, Marae, intersections & Sports Club all concealed

1, Concealed Home Entrances

Whilst the road is relatively straight and possibly suitable for passing there is little hint that a significant residential area and community are just ahead on the left.



The residential area on the left at Gisborne Point begins just **60 to 70m** from the proposed sign signalling a drop to 60kph. It is highly probable that many vehicles will NOT reduce their speed from 80kph to 60kph in time.

The entrances to many of these properties are concealed limiting the vision of residents joining SH30 and motorists travelling East adding to the risk for both.

2, Te Punawhakareia Marae

Te Punawhakareia Marae's entrance is just **100m** on on the right and equally at risk.

3, Forestry & Te Uramahui Roads

Just a further **200m** on a major Forestry rd and Te Uramahui rd join SH30 from opposing sides.

4, Rotoiti Sports and Community Association

Rotoiti Sports and Community Association clubrooms and sports field is the home of Rotoiti Rugby Club and the venue for regular club matches and day and night time community events

5, Wharetoroa Drive

The Wharetoroa Drive entrance comes at the end of one of the longer straights beside the lake but is concealed by a right bend in the road. It services the bulk of Gisborne Point residences and the 2 major boat ramps at the Eastern end of Rotoiti. The ever increasing number of vehicles, (many with boat trailers on behind), entering and leaving Gisborne Point via Wharetoroa Drive result in a real risk for all road users if drivers on SH30 do not adhere to the 60kph speed limit.

One resident comments as follows: *“One element of that major concern is that vehicles may carry the 80kph (or higher) speed through past the sportsfield to the Wharetoroa Dr intersection. That is particularly dangerous both for vehicles pulling out right to travel to Rotorua, and those turning right into Wharetoroa Dr from Hinehopu. Both are blind turns and are vulnerable if eastbound cars and trucks are speeding”.*



Limited view when turning right
onto SH30

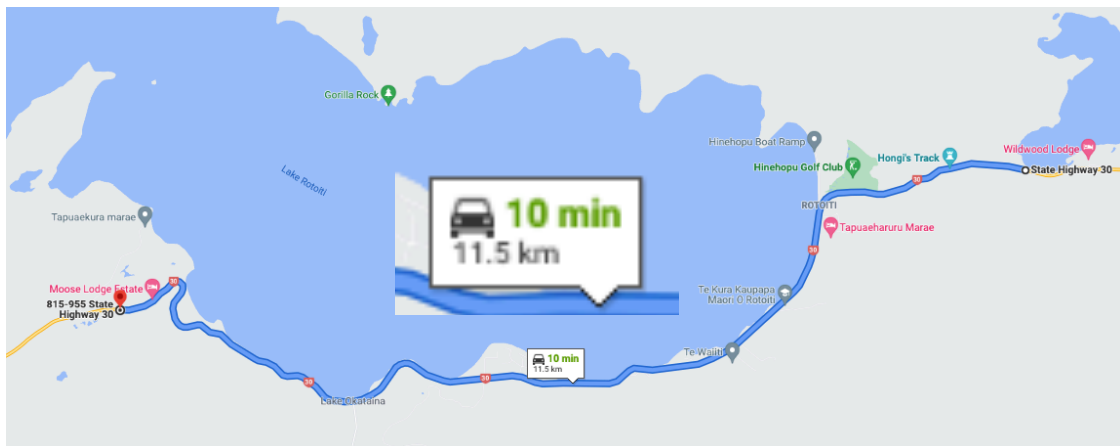


Limited view when turning right
off SH30



Limited view motorists heading east from 80kph section have when
approaching intersection

Present Actual Average Speeds



What is the average speed motorists currently drive the proposed 60kph section?

In the absence of a better alternative we used Google Maps.

Google Maps estimates travel time by looking at the distance between your current location and the destination and then:

- Applying speed limits along the route and any traffic details to the calculation.
- Traffic is another important consideration, and Google has data on the average traffic along major routes.
- Individual movement speed from phones to give a real-time view of the traffic along a route. Other Google Map users essentially help to provide you with a clearer idea of how long your journey will take and whether you'll run into traffic.

It uses past and current data to create a prediction. Most of the time, the prediction turns out to be highly accurate.

With current speed limits of 80kph and 100kph Google maps calculates the likely time a motorist will take to complete the 11.5km is 10 minutes meaning the average speed is **69kph.**

This suggests that while some motorists travel faster than an average of 69kph most travel at around this speed meaning that with the lack of passing opportunities they all average that speed.

To drive the section at an average speed of 60kph would take just an extra 90 seconds.

With ever increasing traffic loads and serious accident rates a speed limit for increased safety of 60kph seems very reasonable!

Submission Conclusion

We thank you Waka Kotahi for the opportunity to participate in your SH30 safety improvement program.

We note that many in our community have been very concerned about SH30 road safety for years and are fully supportive of this submission, but do not have a voice even now, because they do not have access to good internet coverage or the digital equipment or skills to make submissions in person.

Based on a complete review of the safety considerations Lake Rotoiti Community Association Submit that the speed limit of 60kph is applied to the full section of SH30 between 650m East of Curtis Rd and 950m West of Morehu Rd West.

We strongly agree with Waka Kotahi's proposal to reduce the speed limit to 60kph for the bulk of this section of SH30 to reflect the current roadside warnings, the dangers road users and local communities face along the route which need to be mitigated, and the overall increase in traffic and population density.

We thus also strongly submit that the speed limit for the section between Ruato Bay, (140m east of Lake Okataina Road and 366m west of Te Urumahue Road), and Gisborne Point communities also be reduced to 60kph.

This reduction is needed to mitigate the significant safety risks along this section and to prevent a disastrous flow on effect of this increase in speed on the safety improvements which should be realised when the adjacent sections of SH30 are reduced to 60kph.

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