

Safer speeds in central Riccarton

- Additional information for submitters

- Background and reasons for the proposal
- Options considered
- Consultation process

Background and reasons for the proposal

The Riccarton Road Bus priority and wastewater renewal project included a package of traffic engineering measures intended to improve safety and operational efficiency of this section of the road network. This also included the goal of establishing an enhanced streetscape environment to provide a better place to shop, work and visit.

An intrinsic part of the new Riccarton Road layout is the provision of a kerbed median situated between the intersections of Matipo Street and Straven Road. This provides clear physical separation for opposing traffic streams, reinforces the effectiveness of some turning restrictions and in turn, maintains efficient traffic flows through this busy area.

The associated safety audit for this project referred to the suitability of the existing speed limits in this area. At present, all streets within the central Riccarton area are subject to a 50 km/h speed limit. As a consequence of the project, the speed limits for this section of Riccarton Road, Rotherham Street and Division Street are proposed to be reduced. Whilst not directly part of the wastewater project, the residential area east of Riccarton Bush is also proposed to have a reduced speed limit, to coincide with the aforementioned group of speed limit changes.

The reason for the recommended speed limit selection for each street/area is set out as follows:

Riccarton Road

As already described, the road layout has substantially changed with the presence of a kerbed median, which channels drivers to use a single lane. In the west bound direction, buses operate in a dedicated nearside lane that may be shared with cyclists.

A 30 km/h limit is recommended here, since the scheme design safety audit prescribes this, primarily due to the effect of the new median upon driving conditions, as well as the following reasons:

A 30 km/h limit would result in only a 10% probability of a fatal or serious injury between a car and pedestrian or cyclist. This section has a high amount of pedestrian activity, especially where bus passengers congregate and may suddenly cross the road. Many businesses operate late in the evening and all weekend, attracting pedestrians.

Cyclists need to manoeuvre alongside buses and other passing traffic. A 30 km/h speed provides a safer environment for shared driving space.

Drivers are often searching for on-street parking spaces or drop off opportunities, given the intensive shopping environment.

Drivers are often slowing down as they parallel park along this section.

This street section is consistent with the 30 km/h high street sections in Woolston and Sumner that generate similar levels of shopping and visitor activity throughout the week. Riccarton attracts substantially more bus passenger activity in comparison.

Speed data collected for this section of Riccarton Road prior to the project indicated an average speed of 40 km/h throughout the day. The new kerbed median highly constrains safe vehicle speeds and 30 km/h is considered to be an appropriate speed within the driving space available.

The comparative delay of 30 km/h and 40 km/h for a 400m length of road is calculated to be 10-20 seconds which is considered to be insignificant. Consequently the safety benefits are considered to outweigh the insignificant additional delays.

Rotherham Street

This street is situated adjacent to the main Westfield mall entrance and accesses to the associated multi storey car parks. The street has multiple frontages including bars, restaurants and cafes which attract intensive on-street parking and drops offs as well as families walking with children. It includes an intensively used zebra crossing connecting the Westfield entrance and a mini-roundabout connecting with the multi storey car parks.

A 30 km/h limit is recommended here, since:

This has a very high amount of pedestrian activity, notably at the zebra crossing and at other locations where jaywalking frequently occurs.

There are popular bars and restaurants with outdoor seating as well as ground level shops that attract groups of pedestrians throughout the day, walking at or near the kerb edges.

Traffic is often congested due to the high car parking demands and driving speeds are already as slow as 30 km/h for most of the day.

Division Street

This is a short (80m) section of street with shops on one side and on-street parking on both sides and access to two small staff car parks. It also includes a pedestrian access to Westfield mall, with limited distance available for acceleration. A footpath is only available on the east side.

A 30 km/h limit is recommended here, since:

Driving speeds are already as low, possibly 30 km/h or lower, due to the short length of the street and that it is not a through route.

Pedestrians often walk in the street, especially if they have parked on the west side, where no footpath is available.

Kauri Street, Totiki Street, Rata Street and Rimu Street

A 30 km/h limit is recommended here, since:

This limit ensures that, in comparison with a higher speed limit, drivers perceive no advantage in an eastbound short cut to Straven Road.

The streets are residential and are known to be used by students walking between the school and the Riccarton shops or bus stops.

A consistent speed limit with the proposed 30 km/h limit on Riccarton Road eases comprehension and compliance, compared to changing speed limits in a short area.

Some traffic calming devices which reduce speeds already are in place including an all stop intersection, speed tables and road narrowing.

Alternative Options Considered / Ētahi atu Kōwhiringa

The preferred option proposes a 30 km/h limit for all of the four areas described. Three other options have been considered (Options 2, 3 and 4), as evaluated below:

Option 2: 40 km/h for all four areas.

Option 2 advantages : Provides consistency of speed limit which improves comprehension and compliance

Ensures that eastbound drivers do not perceive Kauri and Rata Street as a 'faster' short cut to Straven Road.

Is perceived to be less of a delay (<10 secs) on Riccarton Road compared to the existing 50 km/h limit

Gives some additional safety for pedestrians and cyclists (40% probability of death or serious injury for a pedestrian or cyclist v car) compared to 80% for a 50 km/h limit.

Option 2 disadvantages: Is not consistent with the 30 km/h speed limits adopted at similar, less busy, high street locations in Christchurch (central city, Woolston and Sumner)

40 km/h is higher than the existing operating speeds on Division and Rotherham Street; anticipated to be higher than Riccarton Road where the kerbed median has been installed.

Option 3: 40 km/h on Riccarton Road, 30 km/h on Division, Rotherham and the residential streets.

Option 3 advantages :Is perceived to be less of a delay (<10 secs for a 400m road length) on Riccarton Road compared to the existing 50 km/h limit

Gives some additional safety for pedestrians and cyclists (10-40% probability of death or serious injury for a pedestrian or cyclist v car) compared to 80% for a 50 km/h limit.

30 km/h is consistent with existing speeds on Rotherham and Division Street

Option 3 disadvantages: The mixture of speed limits, 30/40/50 within a 0.5km area confuse drivers and could affect comprehension and compliance

The additional safety benefits do not significantly affect Riccarton Road where most of the walking and cycling takes place.

Is not consistent with the 30 km/h speed limits adopted at similar, less busy, high street locations in Christchurch (central city, Woolston and Sumner)

Option 4: 30 kmh on Riccarton Road, Division Street and Rotherham Street; 40 km/h on the residential streets (the original proposal as consulted on, as referred to in Attachment C).

Option 4 advantages: As per the preferred option

40 km/h for the residential streets is consistent with other residential 40 km/h zones recently introduced (eg Longhurst/Knights Stream, Prestons, St Albans / DEMP Safer Speed Areas)

Option 4 disadvantages: The mixture of speed limits, 30/40/50 within a 0.5km area confuse drivers and could affect comprehension and compliance

May cause eastbound drivers to drive through Kauri and Rata Street as they perceive a 40 km/h limit here as a more attractive short cut to Straven Road.

Consultation process and summary

Staff held a seminar to introduce and discuss the proposals with the Community Board in late 2020, and during Riccarton Road community information sessions at the end of November.

The original proposal was for

- Riccarton Road, Division Street and Rotherham Street to have a speed limit of 30 km/h.
- The residential streets including Kauri Street, Titoki Street, Rata street and Rimu Street to have a speed limit of 40 km/h.

The three-week consultation period inviting comment on the proposals was open until 10 February 2020.

Online Have Your Say consultation was supported by hand delivery to 120 properties in and surrounding the project area, and sent to absentee owners in central Riccarton as well as key stakeholders and service centres.

Ten people attended an information drop in session at Rārākau: Riccarton Centre on Tuesday 28 January 2020, along with three Community Board members as observers and several representatives of the Riccarton Bush/ Kilmarnock Residents Association. There was general support for the 30 km/h proposal, but concern from residents in the proposed 40 km/h area that people would try to avoid the 30 km/h in Riccarton Road, and that shortcutting and related issues in the side streets would increase. Other issues raised were likelihood of confusion with three different speed restrictions in the area, requests for more data to support the proposal e.g. traffic counts, accident and injury rates, and a reminder of congestion around Riccarton Bush area especially school and market related.

Staff also attended a Community Network meeting at Rārākau: Riccarton Centre on Thursday 30 January along with eight others representing Riccarton West neighbourhood Gardens, Neighbourhood support, Oak Development Trust, Central Riccarton Residents Association, Canterbury Fiji Social Services Trust and Ilam Seventh Day Adventists. These people were more interested in the street layout and how to manage speed in the 30 km/h section, and issues were raised about traffic speed, aggression and numbers of vehicles in streets to the east of central Riccarton eg Division Street east and the Division St/Blenheim Road intersection.

One hundred and nineteen organisations and individuals gave written feedback on the proposals. Full comments and submissions are available on Council's Have Your Say webpage via the link provided at the end of this report.

Approximately two thirds of submitters (82) support slowing speeds in Central Riccarton, with a range of requests to increase the restricted speed areas and further reduce the speed limits for both proposals. Sixty indicated that they support both the 30 km/h and the 40 km/h proposals.

Key reasons for support were safety for all road users – we need to share our roads and make safe and usable for all – not just cars and other motor vehicles. Zero Carbon goals were also raised.

Thirty three oppose the 30 km/h proposal including all 26 submitters also opposing the 40 km/h proposal. The remainder did not state a preference.

Support for the 30 km/h proposal

Approximately two thirds of submitters (82) support slowing speeds in Central Riccarton, with a range of requests to increase the restricted speed areas and further reduce the speed limits for both proposal. Key reasons for support were safety for all road users – we need to share our roads and make safe and usable for all – not just cars and other motor vehicles. Zero Carbon goals were also raised.

Full support came from Christchurch Police, NZ Trucking Association, Blind and Low Vision New Zealand, Disabled Persons Assembly, Fiji Social Services Trust, Julia Saulsbury Optometrist, Kauri Motel, TFT Properties, John Wong and Associates Ltd and Dr Malcom McKellar LTD. Fox and Ferret specifically supported the 30km/h Rotherham Street, with further suggestion for periodic pedestrian only closures in this street. There were no objections from Emergency Services.

Suggestions to extend the 30 km/h

Twenty one submitters support the slower speeds but prefer a speed limit of 30 km/h instead of 40 km/h for the side streets. The Riccarton Bush /Kilmarnock Residents' Association qualify their approval for the central Riccarton 30 km/h proposal with this change. (A number of individuals belonging to this organisation including the president also provided individual feedback to the proposal and several others supported this approach). They consider a higher speed limit on the side streets would encourage more rat- running, not less, and the association requests traffic in the Kauri cluster is monitored closely and speed limits enforced, once work on Riccarton Road is completed. They advise that if necessary, Council should consider further measures in the Kauri Cluster area to deter speeding and short-cuts, including the possible closure of Kauri Street, north of the access lane.

Other suggestions included extending the 30 km/h speed limit further into other areas, ranging from minimal extension of the existing proposal to make the change more visible and allow time to change speeds, to all the way from Hagley Park to Hansons Lane on Riccarton Road (SPOKES), and to Kotare and Puriri and Blenheim Road including Clarence Street. Several requested more middle ground extension ie on Riccarton e.g. Puriri/Ratray to the West to Mandeville/ Picton to the east

Twenty eight of the 43 who gave Riccarton addresses indicated support for the 30 km/h proposal and 20 ticked yes for 40 km/h on the side street.

Concerns about the 30 km/h proposal.

General concerns raised by those who opposed the 30 km/h in Central Riccarton included:

- 30 km/h– layout and speed reduction will only cause more congestion
- Keeping traffic flowing is also important, and people need to be aware
- Will put people off coming to Riccarton
- Confusing with too many changes of speed, too many signs
- Businesses will damaged even further following ongoing loss during construction
- Speeds are not the issue –it's the inappropriate street layout

ECAN –Interim response: will slow buses, especially outside hours of 7am to 7pm. Suggests making the whole area 40km/h instead of 30/40 km/h.

ChristchurchNZ considers the traffic is already slow during retail hours. They are concerned that safety will be compromised by changes to the roading design that won't be reduced by limiting speed.

Westfield Riccarton including Pak N Save management share with MacDonald's franchise owner concerns that slower speed on Riccarton Road will deter shoppers and be detrimental to their businesses. They are concerned that traffic will self-manage during the peak and doesn't need to be slowed outside these hours. People will think it is a 'hassle' to get to these businesses and their shopping behaviour will change.

40 km/h in side streets

There was very strong support for slowing the speeds in the side streets – 59 supported the 40km/h proposal and a further 21 would like to see it slowed to 30 km/h. There were several suggestions to make the whole area 40 km/h to help improve consistency, and a number of other different suggestions for varying extensions of both the 30 km/h and 40 km/h as covered in the summary above. CDHB requested 30 km/h on surrounding side streets (see attachment).

SPOKES, along with several other submitters, recommends extending the slower speed reduction further on surrounding and southern streets including Matipo and Clarence, Maxwell and Dilworth. This has been forwarded to the transport planner – sustainable transport.

General positive comments

- As above 30 km/h
- Need to make it safer to manage congestion around Riccarton bush – school kids - pedestrians, cyclists, Riccarton market

General concerns/suggestions :

- Will the speed limits be enforced?
- Why not just enforce the existing speed limits?

Staff have evaluated all responses received by submitters and considered whether the consulted proposal should be amended. Since improving the safety of all road users was considered paramount, the proposed 30 km/h speed limit was still considered to address the concerns of the local business community on Riccarton Road, Division Street and Rotherham Street and has not been changed from the original proposal.

Staff recognise that lower speeds delay traffic. However, speed data on Riccarton Road along this section demonstrated that the average speed was already 40 km/h before the project started. The presence of the kerbed median affects driver speeds throughout the day and the difference between a 40 km/h and 30 km/h speed is calculated to cause delays of only 10-20 seconds on the 400m section between Matipo and Clarence Street. This is considered insignificant and the concerns expressed cannot be justified by associated delays occurring because of the change.

In the case of the residential area between Riccarton Road and Straven Road, the original, consulted proposal was to reduce the speed limit from 50 km/h to 40 km/h. This has since been revised to 30 km/h, resulting in the Plan for Council Approval. This change:

Reduces the perceived benefit of traffic on Riccarton Road taking a 'short cut' towards Straven Road.

Creates a safer environment for local residents or students who may be walking and cycling through this area.

Achieves consistency with a 30 km/h limit on Riccarton Road, which reduces the frequency of speed limit change within a relatively small area.