TR45-26 Aotea Quay Speed Limit Change FAQs (updated 24 March 2026)

1. A 50km/h speed limit will create a backlog of traffic onto the motorway. There are also safety issues entering a 50km/h zone from a 100km/h zone.
The New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) has advised that there is a moving vehicle queue during the weekday morning peak periods. This backlog of traffic is related to traffic volume delays and is typical of peak period congestion on the major thoroughfares in the city. NZTA mitigate the queuing using managed motorway controls including variable speed signs. They have been unable to confirm if there has been any change in queue length since the temporary speed limit of 50km/h was installed in 2023. There is sufficient stopping distance for vehicles travelling from State Highway 1 (SH1) to the speed limit change on the off-ramp. There is also sufficient forward sight distance to the speed limit change sign.
2. There are roundabouts on roads which have higher speed limits than 50km/h which drivers can navigate without issues - for example on Cobham Drive 70km/h, and on 100km/h roads. Why doesn't this apply to Aotea Quay?
These roundabouts have been designed and constructed for a higher speed limit than 50km/h. The key design issue here is ensuring that the high-sided, heavy trucks manoeuvring and turning at the roundabout are travelling slow enough to not roll-over in accordance with the design speed.
3. Can the roundabout be redesigned to match the 70km/h speed limit or can the intersection be reverted back to traffic signals? Can it be redesigned to include slip lanes?
The roundabout was designed and constructed with the existing diameter due to site constraints and land availability. To redesign the roundabout to a higher speed would require more land acquisition which is not practical due to available land to purchase and budget limitations. The roundabout was designed and constructed as part of the Let's Get Wellington Moving (LGWM) Thorndon Quay / Hutt Road project. The primary purpose of the roundabout is to improve ferry terminal access from SH1, provide turning opportunities for heavy vehicles and reduce the effects of heavy vehicle traffic growth on Hutt Road and Thorndon Quay. Reinstalling the traffic signals would not achieve these outcomes. In the feedback for TR133-22 -Aotea Quay, Pipitea – proposed roundabout consultation, a southbound slip lane was suggested in the feedback. The option was considered but rejected for safety reasons.
4. Aotea Quay feels like a 70km/h road - there are few pedestrians, cyclists and driveways, and it is a main road into Wellington in an industrial area with good visibility and four lanes.
As in response 2, the key issue is that high-sided, heavy trucks are able to manoeuvre and turn safely at the roundabout as per the design speed of the roundabout at 50km/h.

5. A roundabout already slows down drivers as they approach so it seems the proposed 50km/h speed limit is unnecessary for the entire length of Aotea Quay. Can the speed limit be higher than the proposed 50km/h, with an advisory speed sign to slow vehicles on approach to the roundabout?

The roundabout was designed for a 50km/h speed limit and is unsafe to navigate at a higher speed limit. If an advisory speed sign is installed, the advisory speed would have to be 45km/h as these signs are regulated to end in '5'.

The proposed 50km/h speed limit ensures that vehicles negotiate the roundabout within the design speed instead of relying on the speed warning signs to advise drivers to negotiate the roundabout at 45km/h.

There is also the potential risk that a high sided vehicle (a truck) travelling in the left lane could obscure the 45km/h advisory speed sign for another heavy, high sided vehicle travelling in the right lane, leading to the roundabout being navigated at an unsafe speed.

The proposed speed limit on Aotea Quay of 50km/h is consistent with the rest of the Quays. However, the option of 60km/h with an advisory 45km/h around the roundabout is also being considered under this new traffic resolution TR45-26.

6. Can the speed limit be kept at 70km/h but have a 50km/h speed limit for a short section of road either side of the roundabout?

Wellington City Council must comply with the legislation in the Land Transport Rule: Setting of Speed Limits 2024 (Rule). This Rule sets out the minimum lengths for speed limits. The minimum length for 70km/h is 700m and the minimum length for 50km/h and 60km/h is 500m.

Extending the 50km/h length either side of the roundabout would mean that both the length southbound from the existing speed limit sign at the SH1 off-ramp to the roundabout, and northbound to the SH1 on-ramp speed limit sign would be less than 700m. This is not compliant with the Rule.

7. Why was the roundabout designed for a speed lower than the existing speed limit and why was a lower speed limit not consulted on during the TR133-22 roundabout proposal consultation in 2022?

More land acquisition to accommodate a larger roundabout was not possible due to land availability and budget constraints. Further information about the land acquisition which influenced the diameter of the roundabout has been excluded from the public. See report 'Vote to Enter Public Excluded 2022-12-15' on the Wellington City Council website for details.

A 50km/h speed limit was considered in Regulatory Processes Committee (RPC) meeting on 24 August 2022, report 'Let's Get Wellington Moving – Aotea Quay Roundabout Notification and Traffic Resolution Approval' where Councillors agreed, in response to feedback in TR133-22, to note that speed limits will be reviewed as part of the Speed Management Plan. The draft Speed Management Plan was revoked and so the speed limit is now being reviewed by officers. The proposed 50km/h speed

limit was consistent with the draft Speed Management Plan at the time and the roundabout was designed accordingly.

8. Have there been any accidents since the roundabout and temporary 50km/h speed limit was installed and does a lack of accidents mean a lower speed is unnecessary?

There has been a similar rate of accidents before and after the roundabout and temporary speed limit were installed, however the severity of the crashes has reduced. Speed increases severity of accidents – the human tolerance to force dictates the safe speed conditions. Risk of serious and fatal crashes increases over 50km/h for side impact (intersection) crashes and hitting stationary objects.

Common crashes on Aotea Quay include crashes which are from merging/changing lanes, rear ending stationary vehicles and losing control on corners which ends in hitting barriers. A lower speed limit will help to reduce the potential severity of these crashes.

9. Will Wellington City Council benefit from speeding infringements on Aotea Quay if the speed limit changes?

Speeding infringements are paid directly to the Police, Wellington City Council does not receive any funds from these infringements.

10. Will lower speeds discourage people from coming into Wellington and reduce business?

Changing the speed limit to 50km/h will increase individual travel time by approximately 10 seconds, which does not significantly impact individual overall travel journey into Wellington.

11. If 60km/h Speed Limit is approved, can this be extended around to Hinemoa Street?

60km/h is not achievable on the existing corner where Aotea Quay meets Waterloo Quay without extensive carriageway changes and safety measures. This is due to the following:

- The corner was previously 70km/h with high loss of control crash rate. It was reduced to 50km/h in the late 90s and since then the crash incidents have dropped significantly.
- The geometrics of the existing corner is a crossfall of <3% and a radius of approx.110m, allowing a max design speed of 52km/h.
- The current geometric standard for a 60km/h posted speed limit requires a crossfall >5% and a radius of 150m.
- The cost to bring it up to a standard to achieve 60km/h would be significant and have ongoing high maintenance costs as it would require high friction surfacing that would potentially need replacement every 8-12 years due to high traffic volume and heavy vehicle corridor.

Additionally, we would also advise against a 60km/h over this short length with multiple advisory speeds required for the corner and roundabout. Varying the posted speed limit with multiple advisory speeds over such a short length would be impractical, create inconsistency and would likely result in poor compliance increasing the risk of speed related loss of control crashes.

12. What is the National Speed Limit Register (NSLR)?

The National Speed Limit Register (NSLR) provides an online, maps-based, central source of speed limits for roads in New Zealand.

Please refer to the attached link for more information:
https://www.nzta.govt.nz/safety/partners/speed-and-infrastructure/speed-limits/national-speed-limit-register