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Moutere Hills Residents Association Submission to the Tasman District Council

2015 Speed Limit Review

Recent Activity

This submission is a continuation of the dialogue being held between the Moutere Hills Residents Association (MHRA) and the TDC regarding speed limits in the neighbourhood of the Mahana School and along the Moutere Highway adjoining the Moutere Hills Community centre.

Since our last submission we have had an informal meeting at Mahana between Mayor Kempthorne and local members of the MHRA, which included a drive around the relevant roads.

This was followed by a meeting at the TDC chambers between MHRA members and Mayor Kempthorne, Lindsay McKenzie, Dennis Bush-King and Gary Clark.

We felt these meetings were constructive and informative and allowed for a sharing of views and information in a way that has been lacking in the formal and often confusing submission process.

Specifically, this was the first occasion where the MHRA could gain some understanding of the reasons behind the TDC speed limit decisions, and the use of the Speed Warrant Process.

It emerged at the meeting with TDC staff that the formula used to calculate appropriate speeds under the Speed Warrant Process is weighted towards the number of access ways on to the road, with less attention paid to the character of the road (sealed or not, sharp corners etc). This rigidity of process has led in the past to numerous submissions based on common sense being turned down, and without explanation other than that the Speed Warrant Process did not produce a positive response.

There was however some suggestion from the TDC staff at this meeting that this rather limited view on road safety may be changing, and accordingly we submit the following:

1) Old Coach Road from Dominion Road South to the Moutere Highway

A driver heading south on Old Coach Road from Dominion Road would be in 60kph zone for 1700 metres through Mahana and then enter an 80kph zone just prior to being advised of two 45kph corners, a difficult intersection, a further nearly blind corner and then 300 metres to the Moutere Highway junction. We feel it would be less confusing and better from a road safety point of view to continue the 60kph zone through from the Dominion Road junction to the Moutere highway. Having the preliminary 80kph zone from the Moutere Highway and through the 45kph corners allows for acceleration past the corners only to be restricted again shortly at the Mahana 60kph zone. We feel that this is contributing to the poor observance of the speed restriction through Mahana.

2) School Road Mahana

A driver heading west down School road Mahana past the school towards Carlyon Rd will travel 220 meters in the 60 kph zone before encountering an 80 kph sign. There follows a small strait leading into three dangerous bends, where there have been previous accidents. These bends cannot be taken safely at greater than 40-

50kph. It is not a road suited to driving at 80 kph and is quite likely to be used by children walking or cycling to and from Mahana School. In addition there are four residential driveways accessing this narrow gravel road.

We consider the proposed 60kph limit on School Road should logically be applied over the full one kilometre distance from the junction with Old Coach Road to the junction with Carlyon Road.

3) Apple Valley Road

We consider 80kph on any gravel road in the Moutere Hills is unwise because of the narrowness of the roads, the bends and undulations preventing clear vision, and the lack of traction. On Apple Valley Road and many others in the Moutere Hills not only is it dangerous for motor vehicles but also for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists. In addition it creates health hazards in terms of dust and flying stones to all users and residents alike. A driver turning off Old Coach Road (60kph and paved) onto Apple Valley Road (a gravel road) is immediately confronted with an 80kph sign just prior to four residential entrances, two blind corners, and a steep incline in the first 150 metres.

We have been told on a number of these occasions that “drivers should drive to the conditions”. Obviously they should, but if that is regarded as some sort of palliative, the question must be asked - what is the reason for differential speed limits, if not to give some sort of indication of the speed which is deemed suitable for the conditions of a particular road – as is the case with advisory signs on some corners?

4) Moutere Highway at the Moutere Hills Community Centre

The problem here is traffic danger to children at times when the center is busy, but not so busy as to warrant a traffic management plan in operation (eg Saturday morning sports). Many children leave the centre on foot or bike– or come out between cars parked on the road - into traffic travelling in a 100kph zone. The Northern end of the straight has poor visibility; the southern end is relatively open but the bend allows for greater speed.

The risk is greater if there are cars parked along the roadside, particularly on the south side, with children running across.

We had previously suggested a solar electronic warning sign for these conditions but we were informed by TDC staff that they are too expensive.

We have two suggestions:

- a) Post-mounted flip-down signs stating “WARNING – EVENT” (or other suitable words) on the roadside at suitable positions north and south of the Community Centre, to be operated by MHCC staff or person in charge on busy days. We believe that carrying out portable signs along the road side on these occasions would be dangerous.
- b) An area of signed “no parking” along the south verge opposite the Centre, to reduce the problem of children coming out between cars and running across, to or from the centre. Also, this would reduce traffic congestion on busy days when cars stop in the road waiting to turn right into the entrance, while cars are parked on the south verge halting through traffic.

We note that the panel considering our previous submissions requested that the Council staff work with the Moutere Hills Community Centre Committee to improve safety at the entrance to the centre.

About the MHRA

The Moutere Hills Residents Association (MHRA) is an incorporated society that represents members from throughout the wider Moutere Hills area.

The MHRA aims to promote interest in the social, environmental, economic and cultural life in the Moutere Hills area; to determine the consensual opinion of residents and ratepayers on the development of the Moutere Hills area; and to act as a channel of communication between the Tasman District Council and any other statutory bodies and the residents of the Moutere Hills area on matters relevant to the community.