

## Chamber roading workshop concludes Connectivity is key to Kapiti's long term Economic Health

"This is a huge issue for our community, and there has been a lot of confusion" says Chamber Deputy Chair Mark Terner "but one thing is for sure – we and our children will be living with the effects of this decision a long time after the road is finished."

A recent workshop held by the Kapiti Coast Chamber of Commerce aimed to give participants a perspective on today's roading issue by picturing Kapiti in 30 years time. Participants were asked to put themselves into the future, forget the debate of 2009, and identify the key factors that contribute to a healthy economic future for the community of the Raumati / Paraparaumu / Waikanae area. In rough order of importance these key factors were seen as being:

- Kapiti being perceived by residents to be an even better place to be than it is now
- The existence of an excellent Local Roothing Network providing local connectivity
- Good access to/from SH1 to town and commercial areas
- Planning certainty - which roading option can be delivered quickest
- A strong Kapiti Economic Growth Strategy
- Good Town Planning and appropriate land zoning supporting the growth strategy
- Positive perception of Kapiti by people who live outside the area

After discussion, the Workshop had participants 'score' the ability of each of the three NZTA roading options to deliver on each of the key factors for a healthy local economy.

The following key conclusions were drawn:

- Whichever Expressway corridor is chosen, an improved degree of connectivity of the local commercial and residential areas via a local roading network is absolutely crucial to the economic and social health of the area. The (local) WLR is better at providing improved local connections to meet the communities growing needs. Conversely if the WLR designation is used for a 100 kph Expressway, then local traffic would likely have less access to this important corridor.
- Whichever corridor is chosen, the location of the Expressway interchanges is crucial. In particular an interchange close to the Airport and the Town Centre / main retail / business areas is essential for economic health. Direct connectivity from the corridor to both Coastlands as our major retail centre and the approved developments at Paraparaumu Airport are critical to the future economic health of our community. Both Eastern and WLR corridors can provide this solution.
- Kapiti as a lifestyle "good place to be" is significant to future economic health. The Workshop found that using the eastern corridor is likely to be better in this regard, because it keeps the WLR designation free for local use and reduces the physical division of the community for the long term.
- Timing and certainty are important – make a decision and start building as soon as possible. Getting going as soon as possible is particularly important to the future of the airport and surrounding areas. The two lane WLR with local traffic bridge over the Waikanae River will be best in this regard.

**Overall Conclusion** - the Workshop found that keeping SH1 in the eastern corridor and using the western corridor for local traffic is more likely to provide the best environment for long term economic health in the Raumati / Paraparaumu / Waikanae area.

A more detailed summary of the Workshop can be obtained from the Chamber's website, [www.kapitchamber.co.nz](http://www.kapitchamber.co.nz) The Chamber encourages people to read this and put their own numbers into this format and see what option comes out as best, based upon their own judgements and use the results in their submissions to NZTA.

"There has been enormous confusion, personal anguish and unnecessary uncertainty in this current debate" says Chamber Chair Wendy Huston "and we will be living with the effects of whatever decision is made a long time after the road is finished, whenever that may be. We either have the choice to make a submission based on our personal views or live silently with the result, knowing we chose not to attempt to influence policy making. Now is not the time to be part of the 'silent majority'."