

Roading decision welcome but needs to deliver key factors for Kapiti economic health

Now that the roading decision has been made, the Kapiti Chamber of Commerce Chamber re-emphasises that the design must deliver the key factors for Kapiti's long term economic health.

The Kapiti Chamber of Commerce welcomes the NZTA decision, which brings some certainty to roading after decades of debate and indecision, and which will assist the regional economy.

“While it is great that the Minister has delivered on his promise to make the decision before Christmas, the risk for Kapiti with the ‘Sandhills’ route” says Chamber Chairperson Mark Ternent “is that our communities are divided and by-passed, to our long term detriment and cost - and hence the design of the road is still crucial”.

The essence of the Chamber's submission to the NZTA in October was that there are a number of factors which will drive the long term economic health and growth of Kapiti. These need to be allowed for in the roading design, no matter the route chosen. Chief among these from a roading perspective are:

- Local road connectivity between current and future commercial and residential districts;
- Good access to SH1, especially from the Airport development, surrounding commercial areas and the Town Centre / main retail area;
- Planning certainty and rapid construction of the road on the chosen route;;
- Kapiti is a good place to be. This will attract businesses and help retain a quality workforce.

Failure to allow for these factors in the roading design will likely have a negative long term impact on the Kapiti community's economic health. It will make it harder for Kapiti businesses to survive and compete, potentially driving wages down in relation to the broader Wellington region.

If the ‘Sandhills’ Expressway is not available to local traffic, then residents and businesses will not get a second local river crossing and continue having to use the longer route along the current SH1 to travel within the district. Longer distances travelled and time lost in travelling are costs which businesses must pass onto consumers.

“With its population, lifestyle, location and airport development, Kapiti can offer a lot more to the regional economy in the future than it has in the past” says Mr Ternent “but realising this economic potential requires an appropriate roading design and in particular good local roading connectivity and access to the SH1 Expressway”.

For more information and to access roading documents in the ‘Press Releases’ section of the Chamber website, visit www.kapitichamber.co.nz.

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