

18 May 2007

SUBMISSION TO PROPOSED CHANGE 73, PARAPARAUMU AIRPORT

The Kapiti Coast Chamber of Commerce Incorporated represents about 150 members and is the primary independent business support organisation on the Kapiti Coast.

The Kapiti Chamber strongly supports the above application on the basis that the extensive positive benefits the development of the Airport will bring to the community at large will far outweigh any negative aspects.

The development of the Airport as proposed is of a high quality which has a low impact on open space and will also enhance the area as visually. It has the potential to significantly improve the Airport's current haphazard and sub-standard appearance.

The Paraparaumu Airport has been an operational airport for over 60 years and changes in aviation in recent times has left it languishing. Indeed it is commonly known that the airport operation is currently operating at a loss.

The successful commercial airports of today all cross subsidise their extremely high capital costs by developing a strong commercial income stream, based on associated and related businesses.

It is imperative that Paraparaumu Airport also develops in this way or its future as an operating airport will be in jeopardy. Wellington Airport is now limiting landings at certain times and this will present further opportunities for Paraparaumu to develop as a viable regional airport into the future.

The current zoning has allowed a large number of low cost buildings to establish down Kapiti Road and also provides an open door for extensive residential housing within the present airport boundaries. Such low cost commercial development and encroaching housing development is definitely not in the best interests of the local community long term.

The Current Situation in Kapiti

The Kapiti Coast area has grown considerably in the past 20 years, however business growth has lagged behind and has been mainly centred on the building and retail and latterly the retirement industries. There are in excess of 6000 commuters per week travelling up to one hour each working day to Wellington and the Hutt Valley areas. The cost of this travel, along with the time wasted and the resources consumed, is a significant cost to the local community and indeed the whole country.

The Chamber has calculated that if a quarter of these people had satisfactory jobs in Kapiti there would be a saving of over 18,000 hours per annum, or the equivalent of 500 workers output for no cost to the Community!

If we really want Sustainable Development in our Community we need to look at the potential benefits such a paradigm shift would bring!

Kapiti's business unit growth currently lags some 300% behind the overall growth in the population of the area as shown in a recent BERL performance indicator. The present contribution to local rates by businesses in the area is a very low 5% as measured on the national scale, and major business expansion will have the roll-on effect of reducing the proportion made up by residential rates.

Increased Job Opportunities

Previous experience in other developing areas has shown that the effect of creating 100 new jobs can have a flow-on effect of between 4.5 and 7 times this number of related new jobs for the rest of the community.

This means that, as the airport proposal has the potential to develop 3500 jobs over 20 years, then 3500×4.5 is 15,750. Over 20 years this indicates 787 jobs per year. Some will criticise these numbers, but you only have to look

at the development of Coastlands over 20 years to see the increase in staff employed there and the benefit that has brought to the rest of the Community.

In terms of the creation of jobs, the planned commercial development of Paraparaumu Airport provides the Kapiti Coast area with the greatest opportunity it may ever get!

Do we have the Infrastructure?

In the recent times water supply and sewage disposal facilities have been developed to a level we are advised by Council will meet the District's requirements for the next 20 to 30 years, based on development projections which include the airport land.

In addition, recent moves have confirmed that the District's major roading initiative, the Western Link Road, now has the funding required and that this new road can proceed in the next 3 years. This, together with other associated works such as the proposed Ventnor Drive linkage to State Highway 1, will go a very long way towards resolving the current road congestion problems around the Paraparaumu Town Centre and Paraparaumu Beach.

Also, the Paraparaumu Airport proposal includes the extension of Ihakara Street through to the western end of Kapiti Road, at the Airport Company's cost.

Quality Development and Open Space

The rezoning as proposed will allow a high quality commercial development to take place with generous spacing around all buildings, and the extensive associated wetland and reserve development, along with access pathways, will permanently enhance the whole area.

Indeed the total site coverage is estimated at only 25%. View shafts through to Kapiti Island also feature in the overall design.

The Kapiti area already has extensive open spaces. Queen Elizabeth Park, Whareroa Farm, the Paraparaumu Golf Course, Waikanae River Esplanades, Kapiti Island, our continuous sandy beaches, rolling foothills and the easily accessible Tararua Forest Park are all spacious and iconic open spaces, far in excess of those available to many other, less fortunate communities. Add to these the open spaces proposed within the Paraparaumu Town Centre and along both sides of the Western Link Road, and all of the other public parks within the district, and you will see that the open space areas available to the residents of the Kapiti area are considerable.

The Future

The growth of business is the "engine room" of any community and the jobs this creates and the wealth that results gets fed back into the community.

In order to grow and prosper as a community, Kapiti therefore has to "make opportunities happen", especially those that have the potential to impact as much as this proposed rezoning and development proposal.

The specific benefits this proposal offers include:

- Increasing the rating base
- Increasing the current low business proportion of overall rates
- Major new job creation
- The saving of valuable resources though reducing commuting worker numbers
- Establishing new aviation-related industries
- Establishing other new commercial industries
- Enhancing Kapiti Road as an attractive thoroughfare
- Extending Ihakara Street to Paraparaumu Beach at no cost to the community.
- Establishing a Conference Centre.

Two hotel operators have also expressed an interest in developing a new hotel complex within the airport development site. This opportunity has the potential to further develop tourism and visitor numbers to the area.

Conclusion

The Kapiti Coast Chamber of Commerce is fully supportive of proposed Plan Change 73 and the subsequent proposed development.

We believe that the plans put forward by the Applicant will ensure the retention of Paraparaumu Airport, without which the supporting development referred to above would be unlikely to proceed within the foreseeable future.

This proposal will also change the current low quality face of Kapiti Road, bring extensive job opportunities to the area, and provide additional community facilities without capital cost to ratepayers.

It also has the potential to lift the current low level of commercial activity and rate take in the Kapiti area.

Kapiti Coast Chamber of Commerce Inc

Mike Olsen
Chairman

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