

Chamber says ‘big box’ a myth

The Kapiti Chamber of Commerce told the airport hearing commissioners last week that it did not support major retail development on the airport land, beyond what was necessary to service the airport.

Questioned by the panel, however, the chamber’s secretary, Wilson Lattey, agreed the airport faced major costs to upgrade the airport.

He agreed a balance had to be reached between development permitted at the airport to make it viable, and development needed to keep the Paraparaumu town centre vibrant.

The chamber’s submission on the Paraparaumu Airport Plan Change 73 attacked points raised in cross submissions, especially those raised by the Paraparaumu Airport Coalition. “In our view the presumption the airport is to be covered with big box retail and high rise

buildings is nothing more than a myth perpetuated through the media,” he said.

Mr Lattey said any significant extension of retail business would make economic sense only if it was located either along Te Roto Drive or closer to the town centre.

On the coalition’s criticism that any new jobs would likely to be for low paid retail workers and service station attendants, Mr Lattey said it had never been suggested that the development would be made up of large retail areas.

He said some of the workforce would be “lower end” jobs and this was part of the urban dynamic.

He said there was a shortage of such opportunities at present. He said the developer’s vision for employment included those with intermediate and senior skills

and this would provide opportunities for those currently commuting to Wellington to “relish the opportunity to work closer to home and family”.

Mr Lattey said his organisation stood by their statement that the infrastructure, like water supply and sewage disposal needs for the next 20 to 30 years, was in place – their confidence based on information from the Kapiti Coast District Council.

On roading he said the applicant had always stated it would provide the Ihakara Street link at its own cost, once the Western Link Road was approved. “That approval has happened and the WLR is underway.”

Mr Lattey said improvements to Kapiti Road would be covered by the airport developers, with council playing a major part.