

IMPROVING TRANSPORT IN WELLINGTON REGION WORKSHOP

Local Government Commission (LGC)

Kāpiti, 4 July 2016

Attendees:

Name	Organisation
Liz Koh – Chair	Chamber of Commerce
Robert Binney – CE	Kāpiti Coast Airport Holdings Ltd
Lyn Sleath	Secretary, Kāpiti Cycling Inc
Jason Russell	Airport manager

Views on the draft problems identified by LGC and councils' work on transport

Integration/alignment

- Examples of lack of integration in the Kāpiti area were identified:
 - Ōtaki is out on a limb in terms of transport – if it is considered part of the region it should have better transport connections. Ōtaki is a growth area as it is an affordable area for younger people to live but it is difficult to access
 - Timetable linkages between buses and trains are not working well – there is a need for a seamless transport system
 - There is no evidence that transport planning has taken into account connections with the airport, which would help the airport to grow. Current public transport from the railway station does not align with the timetable for flights. Therefore, customers rely on private cars rather than public transport, with implications for congestion at peak times
 - Decisions are made after a Cost Benefit Analysis on an area by area basis. But there is a need for some cross-subsidisation to make the region work together.
- Challenges with connecting the new expressway to the local network:
 - Concerns about integration of signage, access to the town centre, how current SH1 will operate once it becomes a local road
 - A lack of confidence in the 'Town Centres and Connectors' project was expressed. There were concerns that council staff working on the project are out of their depth – there has been a lot of consultation but it is unclear where the council stands.

Capacity/capability

- Local expertise, from a consenting point of view, is thought to be uneven. Consultants appear to be brought in to fill gaps.
- Capability issues are linked to staff turnover within KCDC due to growing work demands. NZTA staff turnover has also been observed.

Other problems

- There are concerns that the Kāpiti Coast District Council (KCDC) does not represent the full range of views of the community on various matters.
- Barriers to transport access: There are currently transport barriers for young people to access education and employment. A recent survey showed that transport is one of the biggest issues for young people in terms of enjoying their lives.
- Comments were made about the lack of a strategic approach by KCDC to matters such as population growth in the area. There is a perception that forward planning is based on current

level of vehicle movements, and is not factoring in the likely impact of current State Highway roading developments, which are likely to drive population growth on the Kāpiti Coast.

- Road improvements could result in Kāpiti becoming a dormitory suburb of Wellington, like Porirua/Lower Hutt.
- Currently, Kāpiti population is the “small business capital of New Zealand” – predominantly tradespeople – with a lifestyle focus. Need to balance lifestyle with employment, e.g. service sector (cafes, rest homes etc.), to keep spending within the area.

Views on the draft options for change

General

- Potential for improved planning – there was a query about whether placing decision-making at a “higher level” than individual councils would improve planning.
- Concerns were raised about the potential for replicating problems with WREDA i.e. problems with funding and how it operates. Any new organisation needs to be funded in a balanced way.
- Need to retain expertise within the council to identify local needs and to address local level issues e.g. cycleways, footpaths. Support for “hub and spoke” approach, with centralised leadership (from a “technocratic” rather than political perspective) and local communication and responsibility for lower level decisions.
- Local service centre needed to listen to community boards, and ensure the gap between people and decision-making is not too wide.

Option D – Wellington Roads

- Comment that this could be a good place to start, with progressive implementation towards option E.
- Option seen as similar to the current situation, where KCDC outsources roading work (e.g. design), but with more potential for quality outcomes (e.g. better briefs, value for money, certainty of delivery of projects).

Other points

- Comments that there was a need to communicate transport decisions strategically, and not to leave it to local body politicians. Concerns about how the original “super city” proposal was communicated – LGC should ensure better communication in future.
- Public consultation: LGC noted that any potential changes to delivery of transport in the region would involve full community consultation.