

Submission of the Kāpiti Coast District Council on the New Zealand Transport Agency Motorway/Expressway Proposals

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Kāpiti Coast District Council is committed to working constructively with the New Zealand Transport Agency to support the Minister of Transport's goal of better road transport options between Wellington Airport and Levin with a design horizon of 50 years. Further, the Council will work with NZTA to meet its strategy and priorities set out in its Statement of Intent 2009-2012.

The Kāpiti Coast District Council believes the most appropriate package of transport options is:

- 1. two-lane Western Link Road (WLR)**
 - to be built at the earliest possible stage to provide significant relief to State Highway 1 with maximum local connectivity (road and active transport modes), fully integrated with the surrounding centres and environment;
- 2. rail system**
 - support the efficiency of the road network through passenger and freight rail improvements to Ōtaki and Palmerston North;
- 3. improvements to State Highway 1**
 - generally along the current alignment, addressing safety issues and peak congestion; including four lanes as and when needed, median barriers, grade-separated or left in left out intersections, slip roads to manage direct property access, removal of traffic lights, and with operating speeds compatible with centres it passes through.

Introduction

1. The Kāpiti Coast District Council (The Council) welcomes the opportunity to submit on the New Zealand Transport Agency's (NZTA) proposed motorway/expressway options from Raumati to the north of Ōtaki.
2. The Council has commissioned considerable expert analysis and advice in the course of formulating its position on the NZTA proposals. Topics covered included traffic and transportation issues, economic impacts, urban design and land use issues, social and amenity effects and ecological effects. Additionally, consideration has been given to national, regional and local strategies and policies, as well as legislative requirements.
3. The Council has taken a strategic view in this submission. The focus has been on identifying the best long term outcome for the District that still meets the needs of the national transport corridor.

Acknowledgement of NZTA Objectives

4. The Council acknowledges and supports the Minister of Transport's desire for a Strategic Plan for the transport corridor between Wellington Airport and Levin and recognises its important national and regional function. The Council recognises the role of a Strategic Plan in identifying a programme to ensure the corridor's functionality, including safety, security of access to Wellington, and more efficient movement of freight, particularly as this affects the national economy.
5. The Council acknowledges the need to resolve peak congestion points at Ōtaki, Waikanae and Paraparaumu, over time, in a manner consistent with the Strategic Plan.

Road Design Standards

6. The Council considers the proposals, while described as motorway/expressway, are in fact a motorway standard. The Council considers the motorway/expressway standard design is unnecessary and inappropriate given the key issue is impediment to free traffic flow rather than fundamental State Highway capacity over the design horizon. In conjunction with the 2 lane Western Link, changes to the existing highway generally along the current alignment north of Poplar Avenue (excluding Ōtaki) will accommodate forecast traffic growth for 50 years.
7. A State Highway with no traffic lights, free flow of traffic, four lanes (as and when necessary), allowance for some areas of lower speed and some at-grade left in/left out access, offers a more pragmatic and flexible approach. It will achieve the intent of the Roads of National Significance programme more quickly, at less cost and not impose unnecessary and detrimental effects on the Kāpiti Coast community.

Economic Benefits

8. The Government Policy Statement on Land Transport Funding (May 2009) states land transport infrastructure investment should generate growth and productivity gains and enhance the economic efficiency of individual projects. The Council is of the view the proposals fail to demonstrate these issues have been addressed and that the economic rationale for the motorway/expressway standard road and the level of investment that requires is not supported by impartial analysis.

Integrated land use/transport planning

9. A significant issue for the District is the impact of the proposals on land use. The Council has a policy of limiting urban sprawl and consolidating development within clearly defined areas (Kāpiti Coast District Council Development Management Strategy 2007.) The western alignment options and the proposal for a full interchange at Peka Peka will encourage development pressure beyond the 'urban edge' north of Waikanae. The Council rejects options and intersection locations that are not consistent with land use policy.

South of Peka Peka

10. The Council's analysis of the proposals for south of Peka Peka compared the three scenarios:
 - ❖ Options 1 & 3 : the motorway/expressway along the western (avoids town centres) alignment or use of the Western Link corridor, together with use of the existing SH1 as a local road; and
 - ❖ Option 2: the motorway/expressway down the eastern alignment (following the rail corridor) and part of the two lane Western Link Road.
11. The Council is of the view that the adverse strategic impacts, immediate effects and poor connectivity of the western options (Options 1 and 3) are unacceptable. In comparison, while Option 2 offers some improved connectivity through construction of a length of the Western Link Road, there are still significant long term adverse effects, including effects on property owners.
12. Should NZTA choose to proceed, the Eastern Option including the full 2 lane Western Link Road is the least unacceptable alternative, *only if* there is significant mitigation of effects, including:
 - ❖ Immediate construction of the underpass at Te Moana Road to reduce peak congestion on the State Highway at the earliest opportunity;

- ❖ The proposed interchange at Peka Peka needs to be moved south (due to its impact on wider urban development and land use strategies) to Waikanae North and become the full interchange providing access at Waikanae;
- ❖ Connectivity (intersection numbers and locations) is reviewed to provide workable arrangements which support rather than degrade town centres;
- ❖ A significant focus on design quality, particularly for the town centres, to minimise the severance between east and west, and to assist adaptation to the new environment;
- ❖ The alignment between Paraparaumu and Waikanae is reviewed to minimise the unacceptable impacts on this section of the community;
- ❖ The speed limit is appropriate to the environment being passed through.

North of Peka Peka

13. The Council supports the proposal for a bypass of Ōtaki, generally on the alignment proposed, provided there is :

- ❖ Review of intersection arrangements to ensure there is adequate and full north/south access at the northern and southern edges of the town;
- ❖ Review of the design speed through the central area;
- ❖ Adequate investment in mitigation, including assistance for town centre area to adapt.

14. The Council does not consider a new motorway/expressway is necessary between Ōtaki and Peka Peka, but does not oppose the concept, subject to:

- ❖ Review of the need for four lanes;
- ❖ Review of alignment as it affects valuable horticultural soils;
- ❖ Adequate access at Te Horo is retained between east and west and to the old highway

KCDC's Preferred Package of Options

15. The Council believes the most appropriate package of transport investment actions is:

1. two-lane Western Link Road (WLR)
2. rail system
3. improvements to State Highway 1.

16. Kāpiti Coast District Council requests a full and transparent consideration of its preferred package of transport investment actions.