



Wednesday 24 April

LTP Submission from the Kāpiti Coast Chamber of Commerce

Who is the Chamber:

We provide an independent voice on behalf of the Kāpiti business community and local livelihoods.

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We stand at the intersection of community, public service, and private enterprise.

We advocate for equitable decision-making, activate social learning spaces, and help build the relationships that enable our district's development.

Our work supports positive social, environmental, cultural and economic outcomes.

We are for business, by business.

Why we exist:

- Advocacy & Storytelling
- Learning & Development
- Networking & Engagement

Our whakapapa:

The Chamber of Commerce network supports 45 million businesses (and their people) worldwide. We are one part of a transformative organisation responsible for shaping global commerce and accelerating sustainability and social innovation.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, collectively, we are part of a 30-plus nationwide network that champions some of the 21st-century's most challenging societal gaps.

We collaborate with our Greater Wellington and Manawatū partners and extended connections across the motu, who provide our Kāpiti networks with additional capability, networks, and resources to advocate for—and uplift—a more equitable, democratic, human-centered engagement approach to economic development and prosperity.

We are part of a trusted international institution that champions transformation, policy innovation, dispute resolution, and leadership globally.

You can watch to learn more about our whakapapa and foundations here:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=LyTrVlcECdE

Our purpose:

Driving an equitable, independent voice for business on the Kāpiti Coast.

Our identity:

Not-for-profit: our only goal is the development and success of others. We keep things lean, needs-based, and inclusive.

Curiously detailed: we dive into the intricacies of effective decision-making so our members—and extended community— don't have to. We fill in the gaps and help make the local narratives that impact business more accessible.

Co-creators: we share knowledge, context, capability, and resources to become one part of a much stronger whole.

Building capacity: we are deeply experienced in building relationships with local leadership, mana whenua, private enterprise, and emerging talent.

Our people:—our organisation’s activities are primarily delivered by volunteers, with some paid part-time capacity.

OUR BOARD

- **Monique Leith (Paraparaumu + Ōtaki), Chair**—Urban & Environmental Planning. Access & Inclusion. Becoming good Treaty partners.
- **Bede Laracy (Raumati), Deputy Chair**—Retail Hubs and Urban Centres
- **Lisa-Jean Foote (Paraparaumu), Treasurer**—Financial Services, Sustainability & Business Planning
- **Jess Deacon (Waikanae), Secretary**—The Arts
- **Ben Jamison (Ōtaki)**, Te Ao Māori Engagement, Growth Advisory, and Partnerships
- **Brooke Ahern (Waikanae)**, Technology, Innovation, & Future Jobs
- **Heather Knewstubb (Waikanae)**, Women in Business, Customer & Community Service

OUR SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

- **Claire Mance (Raumati South + Waikanae)**, General Manager—Strategy & Partnerships—Creative Services & Community-led Engagement

OUR SUPPORT TEAM

- **Amber Ferguson (Otaihanga)**, Event Manager
- **Kathleen Clement (Raumati)**, Administration & Membership Services

OUR ADVISORS

- **Heather Hutchings (Raumati)**, Past Chair, Governance & Leadership

OUR COUNCILLOR APPOINTEE

- **Nigel Wilson (Waikanae)**, KC News, Media & Community Advocacy

Our reach:

LOCALLY

- 22 years in operation
- 389 business memberships
- 2,900 database + reach (and growing)
- Seven national alliance partners (Air New Zealand, Z Energy, Westpac, 2Degrees, NZME, Bunnings, Noel Leeming)
- 13 local key partners
- Part of the Greater Wellington Chamber cluster with Hutt Valley Chamber, Wellington Chamber, Wairarapa Chamber, and Porirua Chamber

NATIONALLY

- 30+ national Chambers
- 22,000 business memberships
- An executive board that straddles central government, local government, and kawanatanga + private entities

INTERNATIONALLY

- A global network representing 45+ million businesses
- Our international + national partner networks help facilitate \$10 trillion in trade annually
- The largest business network in the world

What we're asking for:

An equitable and sustainable business ecosystem on the Kāpiti Coast.

In order to go the distance (be resilient and sustainable), we need an equitable system.

The Kāpiti Coast Chamber of Commerce is uplifted to reach our full potential as a critical enabler and partner in that ecosystem.

We request that the economic development budget be allocated to the intended independent Trust and that the Chamber be represented on that Trust.

Why do we need this:

While the Council's current ratepayer budget allocation for economic development in Kāpiti is substantial, it could (and should) be maximised further.

There are ongoing examples (and qualitative evidence that we're keen to unpack) of unnecessary expenditure— alongside an overreliance on volunteers to fill the unfunded, undersupported gaps in our society.

There's also a noticeable gap in impactful engagement, effective communication, or urgency toward addressing and elevating significant issues. These factors have led to persistent frustration, disappointment, and diminished confidence among the business community.

As part of our district's long-term sustainability and future, we urge Councillors to urgently focus on the critical action required to ensure ratepayer expenditure is maximised in support of economic and social well-being. We urge Councillors to place their emphasis on the immediate partnerships available to the Council, uplifting an existing entity, and engaging the Kāpiti Coast Chamber of Commerce as a primary stakeholder that represents the needs of our business community, as an independent source of evidence, insight, and capability.

The current budget allocation for economic development requires a thorough examination to ensure it is being allocated, measured, and distributed equitably and effectively.

Together, we can pave the way for stronger economic growth by addressing unnecessary expenditures, building meaningful engagement, and working in partnership to provide the insights, resources, and inclusivity required to address some of our district's most pressing needs.

This shift to work under more independent and equitable values will encourage greater participation, contribution, and investment from our residents.

Empowering our community uplifts our collective sense of identity and belonging, building confidence and trust. It is about togetherness, future generations, and the distribution of power and wealth around a more innovative, equitable system here in Kāpiti.

What is the status quo?

Both visible and invisible inequities characterise the current system in Kāpiti. All budget authority currently resides with the Council, which allocates spending based on limited (or under-communicated) external input or evidence.

The Economic Development Kotahitanga Board's oversight feels limited (at least externally), leaving the Council's operational divisions with near-complete ownership of expenditure outcomes. While the (now expired) Economic Development Strategy and Implementation Plan offered guidance, it granted significant freedom and discretion at a high level.

Current business advocacy heavily depends on volunteers, community groups, and the not-for-profit sector, and the Kāpiti Coast District Council's advocacy is held back by the need to preserve strategic or internal relationships.

Why (and how) is this not best serving our business community?

Ratepayer financing goes much further when Council, community, and private enterprise intersect. This includes committed volunteers, extensive community networks, and private sector investment working together when the Council uplifts and enables them. Our communities, Paekakariki, Raumati South, Raumati, Paraparaumu, Waikanae, Te Horo, and Ōtaki, deserve to have their hard-earned money stretched as far as possible and the opportunity to contribute impactfully.

The examples below highlight several areas where change or improvements are needed to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. The Chamber has substantial qualitative data to support these examples—from across the district.

We need to work in partnership to unpack these learnings and case studies in order to create more effective customer (community) outcomes. But we cannot continue to expect volunteers and unfunded organisations to meet that need, without dramatically uplifting their capacity and resources.

Optimising Expenditure

Organic involvement by committed volunteers can stretch resources further, tapping into their networks, connections, and volunteer time. Additionally, combining ratepayer funds with private sector investment, such as sponsorships and revenue streams, enhances the impact of economic development initiatives. Duplication in expenditure, such as duplicated events and engagement efforts and paid Council staff at events (when volunteers are there anyway), highlight areas for streamlining and cost-saving measures.

Reduce Reliance on Volunteer Engagement

Volunteers play a vital role in economic development initiatives, but a balance must be struck to avoid overreliance. Clustering volunteer efforts and providing adequate feedback loops can optimise processes and outcomes and will strengthen the sustainability of volunteers' commitments—both at an operational and governance tier.

Addressing Leakage

Leakage within the budget, particularly in staff/contractor expenditure, poses significant challenges around fiscal accountability. Streamlining processes and reducing unnecessary expenses are essential to ensure funds are allocated effectively.

Enhancing Meaningful Engagement

Meaningful engagement with stakeholders is essential for informed decision-making and effective project implementation. However, current constraints, including time limitations, conflicts of interest, and competing commitments, have a significant impact on participation. Addressing these barriers is crucial to enabling a thriving business environment.

In order to ensure effective advocacy, it is crucial to recognise that the Council's operational division may face constraints in advocating strongly for business needs due to the necessity of balancing internal and external relationships.

Embracing an independent voice for businesses alleviates this conflict, benefiting both the business community and the Council. Moreover, an independent review of projects offers clarity often unattainable within the Council's internal framework, enhancing outcomes for initiatives such as with the Kāpiti Lights closure/works period and the Waikanae Bridge closure and traffic

management plans. The Chamber network has significant resources and relationships that we can draw on to support with effective stakeholder engagement outside the district.

Urgency in Problem Resolution

Timely and effective issue resolution to regulatory problems and effective communication on upcoming projects are imperative for addressing ongoing challenges. Failure to do so not only reduces stakeholder engagement but breeds frustration, disappointment, and diminished confidence amongst the business community.

Repercussions of Inaction

Business stakeholders feel undervalued and unsupported by some operational divisions of the Council, leading to diminished trust and repeated frustrations. Failure to address pressing concerns erodes confidence in the Council's ability to steward ratepayer funds and effectively address community needs.

Overall, the status quo does not best serve our business community. By proactively addressing these challenges, the Chamber can be uplifted, and the Council can demonstrate its commitment to supporting a thriving business environment and truly enabling the long-term sustainability of the community.

How will we get there?

The scope, structure and details can be delivered through the preparation of the new Economic Development Plan, which is currently being prepared as an extension/evolution of the questions posed in the recently consulted 'Direction of Travel' document.

The details of 'who delivers what' can be fleshed out as part of this process, but we need a commitment in principle from the Council under the LTP that this budget will be shared with the

Chamber in a manner that will financially empower us to be a key enabler in the business ecosystem and a key delivery partner.

The Chamber does not desire (or have the capacity) to deliver all aspects of economic development, but it is critical that the business community—from Paekakariki to Ōtaki—has a strong voice in preparing the next economic development plan.

The Chamber has the capability, relationships, channels, willingness, and drive to be that voice for local businesses, but it is inequitable for the Council to use ratepayers' money to fund a team of staff and contractors to prepare this document and expect this crucial voice for businesses to be provided for free (or, actually, business people are ratepayers, so they help pay for the staff and then have to pay again in their own time or to fund the Chamber).

In summary, we're asking for:

An equitable and sustainable business ecosystem on the Kāpiti Coast.

The Chamber being uplifted to reach our full potential as a critical enabler and partner in that ecosystem.

The economic development budget to be allocated to the independent Trust with Chamber representation on that Trust.

With warm regards,

Monique Leith, Chair, Kāpiti Coast Chamber of Commerce.

