



# SmartGrowth

Building our futures together

## ***Media release***

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### **Working together on transport issues in the western Bay**

SmartGrowth's three partner councils, Tauranga City Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council and Bay of Plenty Regional Council, are determined to work together better to address major transport issues facing the western Bay of Plenty.

Transport is the most complex and challenging form of infrastructure to integrate with urban growth. Anyone who has faced gridlock on Tauranga Harbour Bridge or beyond Bethlehem township understands that rapid population growth is placing some parts of our transport network under considerable strain. Investment is needed to sustain further growth, maintain quality of life for current residents and avoid constraining business growth.

Last week's SmartGrowth meeting adopted a unified voice in identifying key transport issues and a strong commitment to working together and with the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) and central government to find workable solutions for the sub-region.

The two council mayors and the regional chair will meet this month with the NZTA board to present that united front and explore ways of resolving the large transport issues here.

Mayors Garry Webber and Greg Brownless and Regional Chair Doug Leeder said that "tension exists between the current heavy reliance on new greenfields growth areas and a long-term desire for a compact city with a focus on sustainable transport. However, SmartGrowth partner councils must continue to support planned development of rural land for housing and business for at least the next ten years."

Work will focus on improving services in existing Tauranga urban areas, more road capacity and public transport for growth in the north, west and east, more investment in public and active transport and reviews of State Highways 2 and 29 projects.

Over time, the choices people make around where and how they live and move around the city will be influenced by these efforts. The ultimate goal is more sustainable and compact urban living.

Ends

For more information contact SmartGrowth Independent Chair, Bill Wasley on 027 471.