



30 June 2017

Local Board Plans  
Auckland Council  
Freepost Authority 232 621  
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Auckland 1142

**Business North Harbour Inc, Submission:  
Upper Harbour Local Board Plan 2017-18**

Introduction

Business North Harbour is a commercial and industrial BID area, representing over 4,500 commercial property owners and businesses within the North Harbour area.

Our businesses comprise of a mix of Small Medium Enterprises (SME), multinational organisations representing sectors such as ICT, business services, specialist manufacturing and light – medium warehousing. In addition to the businesses, we have key educational institutions such as Unitec, Pinehurst, Kristin, Albany Junior High School and Albany Primary – plus additional vocational institutions, all within an industrial estate, which is on average less than 20 years old. North Harbour has been identified as an area of strategic growth to both Auckland and New Zealand.

Our primary interests are those decisions within the Upper Harbour Local Board Plan 2017-18 which:

- support or will restrict business growth opportunities
- impact on the cost of business – across a short to medium timeframe
- impact on economic development and the ability to leverage value from location
- impact on access to both regional and localised transport hubs
- impact on R&D and investment – sector development and capability
- provide the scope to leverage natural assets for economic development across leisure and tourism sectors

Our submission follows.

Yours faithfully

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## Question 1: Do you think the UHLB is on the right track with their proposed local board plan?

- We partially support the priorities published for *Upper Harbour Local Board* which are non-contentious.
- However, we suggest that the absence of any local economic initiatives is a major oversight given that the area incorporates one of Auckland's major commercial hubs – Business North Harbour, delivering local employment to more than 28,000 Auckland residents.
- Business North Harbour would welcome the opportunity to work with Upper Harbour Local Board, and Auckland Council to develop and deliver an economic infrastructure growth strategy relevant for the Upper Harbour area.

### UHLB's Priority One: Empowered, engaged and connected communities

Accepting that the UHLB area, as at the 2013 Census had a high percentage of its population (43%) born overseas, Business North Harbour seeks further direction from UHLB as to how they intend to support these residents, provide pathways for business ownership and employment, and what allowances they have made to meet the demands for changes within recreational preferences.

Business North Harbour requests that a portion of increased Local Community Services 2017-18 budget \$2,748,000 (\$2,554,000, 2016/17) is allocated from the supply of community facilities towards youth employment and resources for multi lingual social and commercial purposes.

### UHLB's Priority Two: Efficient and effective transport links

Business North Harbour supports the board's advocacy for the PT Review – North and Albany P&R expansion. We request specific timeframe for the introduction of the new Public Transport service as this has already been delayed from 2017 to 2018.

We request timelines for the delivery of the Albany P&R expansion and for the scale of this expansion to be of a significant scale, to provide a level of future planning, which accommodates the known population growth. Adequate planning to accommodate increased PT patronage is critical if we are to avoid the current commuter park and ride behaviour, and the impact of this behaviour on local commercial operations.

Business North Harbour withholds our support for the Rosedale "P&R" until further details are released concerning traffic generation and the impact on local roads.

Business North Harbour supports UHLB's focus on improved efficiency along Constellation Drive, and between Greenhithe, Hobsonville and Westgate. However, we suggest the board may have more impact regionally by collaborating with neighbouring local boards to reduce the congestion caused by northern growth, rather than those areas just within their catchment area. Need to invest in developing an overall strategy to manage the impact of population and commercial growth across the North Harbour area if congestion is to be effectively contained.

We note the board's focus on congested intersections appear to be largely within residential areas, not commercial. Business North Harbour requests UHLB commissions

investigative research through Auckland Transport, to increase the speed at which signalisation of key commercial intersections/roundabouts, can occur through the deployment of funds available through the Upper Harbour Local Board Transport Capital Fund (\$1,537,858 as of June 2017).

### UHLB's Priority Three: Healthy and active communities

Business North Harbour supports the need for open spaces and recreational facilities to support the growing population. We accept and appreciate the importance of recreational facilities to a growing population.

Business North Harbour supports the investment by central and local government in the Northern Corridor Improvement (NCI) Project. However, the traffic generation impact of NCI project through sports and recreation facility growth needs to be managed. Congestion is driving local employers out of the region.

Business North Harbour requests access to research which demonstrates the wider community's priority for additional sporting fields and recreational facilities over commercial efficiency. We are interested to see the bias towards recreation over local employment.

### UHLB's Priority Four: A thriving local economy.

Business North Harbour fully concurs with UHLB's research that it is important to provide the opportunity for people to work close to home.

We support the UHLB's need to protect and provide adequate commercial land to enable employers located within North Harbour, and the wider UHLB catchment area, to increase their footprint and operational capacity within the same geographical area.

We seek further clarification regarding the growth capacity for key locations - namely the Albany Metropolitan area. Growth within the Albany Metropolitan area impacts on the wider NHBID. Businesses located adjacent to the Metropolitan area are recording drop in their business efficiency and capacity due to increased congestion and reduction in access.

Business North Harbour recognises the importance of identifying high network sectors – but question the focus on international education growth due to the traffic this activity generates. Or at least, we question the timing of this growth – the Public Transport Review North service needs to be in place to mitigate the impact of these additional trips on current roads at capacity.

### UHLB's Priority Five: Valued, protected and enhanced environment

We accept that the board's focus is on the impact on the physical environment, not providing a commercial environment that is valued, protected and enhanced. However, consideration should be given to the impact of reductions to recycling and waste minimisation services currently provided by Auckland Council to the region.

Proposed cessation of services such as the kerbside cardboard collection from 1 July 2017, will have a negative impact on landfill if business or commercial operators cannot absorb the additional costs of privatisation of this previously supplied service.

It is difficult to justify a 2.5% business rate increase, with an additional hidden rate increase through the pause in the business rate differential realignment, against a reduction of services provided by the council.

## UHLB's Financial priorities:

The UHLB board states they can have existing resources to deliver on the proposed key initiatives of the 2015-25 plan (Draft UHLB 2017 Budget, pg10).

Business North Harbour seeks clarification as to whether the existing resources have been adequately scaled to reflect the population growth and subsequent demands.

Business North Harbour believes the funds allocated to **Local planning and development expenditure** is completely inadequate.

This activity section covers 'local business area planning, local street environment and town centres and local environment and heritage protection. These activities include economic, environmental, heritage and spatial projects, and enable, plan for and deliver great local places with the level of service statement being 'develop local business precincts and town centres as great places to do business'.

The projected budget of \$759,000 for 2017/18 includes the North Harbour Business Improvement District targeted rate of \$657,734. Therefore, the extent of the proposed local board investment in economic development and the planning of local business precincts and town centres – across the entire UHLB area, is just \$202,000. Business North Harbour requests increased transparency as to how those funds will be allocated and what projects will take priority.

## Question Two: What is the one thing you think is missing in the Upper Harbour area, which you feel is extremely important for the future

- a) Lack of a regional strategic masterplan to manage the impact of growth amongst key stakeholders.

There does not appear to be a cohesive stakeholder plan for managing growth across the UHLB area. 64.4% population growth expected across the board's catchment area vs. 34.6% expected across Auckland (source: 2013 Census).

Business North Harbour supports the UHLB view expressed that *'this rapid growth in outpacing the area's ability to service new communities, e.g. insufficient and overburdened transport links, lack of on-street and park and ride parking'*. (Draft UHLB 2017 Budget, pg17).

*Infometrics* in their *Regional Hotspots Report* (November 2016), state an expected population growth for the Orewa/Albany area of 53% between 2013 -2023. Add to the Orewa/Albany's growth, *Infometrics* prediction that 'despite some development having already occurred at Hobsonville, the area is set to really take off over the next five years, with population growth of more than 250% in the decade to June 2013.' (Regional Hotspots Report (November 2016, pg7). Business North Harbour recognises that Hobsonville area will create capacity for a level of local employment (expected job generation of 4000), however with over 8,000 households expected to be completed by 2023, there will be excess demand for employment created. The North Harbour Business Improvement District will be an attractive destination for these employees – providing the transport and infrastructure investment provides efficient and effective access for these commuters and business owners.

Business North Harbour's evidence is that the enormity of the scale of growth on infrastructure is not being adequately funded.

Business North Harbour questions the value of the 'new funds based on our increasing population' and the detail as to how these additional funds will be spent. (Draft UHLB 2017 Budget, pg13).

Business North Harbour seeks investment by Auckland Council, their Council Controlled Organisations and UHLB, to develop an all-encompassing strategic growth plan for the Albany district. Business North Harbour proposes this plan be modelled on those produced by Panuku.co.nz, and commissioned through Auckland Council's Development Programme Office Infrastructure Programme. Business North Harbour is willing to help drive the development of this strategic plan.

### Question Three: Funding through Auckland Council's 10-year plan (2018-28)

Business North Harbour fully supports UHLB's advocacy to deliver light rail to the North Shore as a longer-term solution. Business North Harbour will support as a priority, the allocation of funds within the 2018-28 for feasibility study and investigative work.

Business North Harbour would support UHLB's advocacy for a second Waitemata Harbour Crossing within the next ten-year plan ahead of the development of additional recreational facilities outlined in the UHLB Draft 2017 plan. This is due to the economic impact of congestion and the impact the daily commute is having on the lifestyle of our members and their 28,000 employees.

Business North Harbour accepts that funding for projects allocated in the 2015-25 plan may be impacted through the Auckland Council 2018-28 realignment. However, Business North Harbour requests clarity and transparency from UHLB as to which of their projects they deem as non-negotiable and which projects they would be prepared to compromise on should funding shortfalls necessitate.