



Submission: Draft Upper Harbour Local Board Plan 2020

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Business North Harbour Incorporated

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Signature:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "K. O'Leary", written in a cursive style.

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Submission to Draft Upper Harbour Local Board Plan 2020

Auckland Council and Upper Harbour Local Board are seeking feedback on the Draft Upper Harbour Local Board Plan 2020.

Introduction

Business North Harbour (BNH) is a significant commercial/industrial Business Improvement District (BID), representing over 4,500 commercial property owners and businesses within the North Harbour area. Collectively they employ over 35,000 Auckland residents and ratepayers.

Our businesses comprise of a mix of sole traders, Small Medium Enterprises (SME), through to multi-national organisations representing sectors such as ICT, business services, specialist manufacturing and light – medium warehousing. In addition, we have key educational institutions within or on our boundary, including Massey University Albany and a variety of primary and secondary schools all within an industrial estate which is on average less than 20 years old.

The Upper Harbour Local Board (UHLB) area is expected to be the fastest growing area in the country over the next ten years, in both absolute and percentage population terms¹, which brings both challenges and opportunities to the North Harbour Business district.

The Draft UHLB Plan 2020 sets out UHLB's strategic outcomes and outlines how UHLB proposes to achieve these. Business North Harbour's response, which is from a business community perspective, is provided in summary and then specifically addresses UHLB's key questions for feedback as follows:

1. Do you agree our plan reflects the needs and aspirations of you and your community over the next three years?
2. Do you think our plan will help our communities, including our local businesses, recover from the impact of COVID-19?
3. Is there anything else you think would help our community and local businesses recover?
4. Do you think we should investigate the possibility of a targeted rate to fund additional public transport routes through areas that do not currently have public transport options?
5. Do you have any other feedback on our proposed local board plan?

BNH Feedback Summary:

BNH supports in principle the five strategic outcomes outlined in the plan and has identified opportunities to collaborate with and support UHLB to achieve positive impacts within a number of the proposed key initiatives in each of the five strategic outcome areas:

1. Empowered, connected and resilient Upper Harbour communities
2. An efficient and accessible travel network
3. Healthy and active communities
4. Our unique natural environment is protected and enhanced
5. A resilient local economy

¹ Auckland Council 10-year Budget 2018-28, Supporting Information, Section 6: Local Board Information, 6.17 UHLB

There is limited scope in strategic outcome 3 Healthy and active communities which, whilst we fully support, as the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our staff and our community are of paramount importance to BNH as an organisation, the scope of the outcome generally falls outside our operational remit, except for key initiative 6.

We again acknowledge that Upper Harbour is a diverse and vibrant area, continuing to be one of the fastest growing areas in the country in both absolute and percentage population terms, a trend that is expected to continue over the next ten years. This brings both challenges and opportunity for Business North Harbour and as the local board's only formal Business Improvement District, we look forward to working with the board in leveraging from the ongoing growth of the region.

BNH acknowledges the continuing support received from Upper Harbour Local Board and look forward to working with the board in the years ahead in a collaborative manner, to achieve the best outcomes for our members and the area as a whole, in line with the board's strategic outcomes outlined in the Draft Plan 2020.

The latest Infometrics economic reports² highlight that the UHLB area is out-performing Auckland and New Zealand across a number of key matrixes including Business Units, Employment and Population Growth. Maintaining this level of output will prove difficult if the infrastructure business needs is not supplied. Thus, access to employment land, a diverse workforce, local employment opportunities, plus improved productivity and reduced environmental damage through less congestion, are all critical success factors for the sustainable growth of the region.

BNH members continue to affirm that effective and efficient access to the business district is critical for the 35,000 employees across the North Harbour BID. We request greater support for local transport infrastructure projects which support business and economic development, over and above community or politically led initiatives. We acknowledge and support the rationale of developing improved cycleways and footpaths in an attempt to make these modes of access more user friendly, hopefully encouraging some commuters out of their vehicles.

We support the UHLB's focus on the infrastructure challenges for the growing population and their advocacy for improved public transport and roading networks on the proviso that, the provision for rapid transport does not remove or compromise infrastructure assets and facilities relied upon by commercial trade and employee commuters in the absence of alternative modal options. BNH sees the continued advocacy on the flawed Rosedale Bus Station plans as a priority here.

We rely on the UHLB's extensive local knowledge, and influence across the Auckland Council family to add value to their role of local board governance. We also collectively rely on the board's ability to influence government decisions for the greater good of the region and the economic vitality of those who choose to create local employment opportunities within the North Harbour district.

BNH is delighted to note the inclusion of and increase in specific economic development and business development priorities listed in the Draft Plan 2020 strategic outcomes and key initiatives. We are also confident following ongoing discussions, of the importance the board places on the enhanced economic performance of the local economy.

Given that the area incorporates one of Auckland's major commercial and industrial hubs we support the local board to identify opportunities that ensure that ATEED contribute to, support,

² <https://ecoprofile.infometrics.co.nz/Upper%20Harbour>

and deliver, localised economic initiatives as they must be held accountable for delivering economic development projects within the Upper Harbour Local Board area, that support local economic growth and development.

Business North Harbour supports UHLB's 'Vision Zero' approach in relation to safety in the local board area (outcome 2). Our members have again identified personal safety and the safety of their businesses as being of importance and we feel that the above approach fully supports the personal safety element.

BNH also supports the inclusion of the sustainability initiatives outlined in the Draft Plan 2020 (outcomes 2, 4 and 5). These initiatives will help businesses to better understand the subject of sustainability and the contributions that they can make towards Council's Auckland Climate Action Framework (ACAF). We welcome the commitment by UHLB to advocate to prioritise funding the key initiatives in ACAF that support business growth and accelerate innovation and skills in a green economy in Upper Harbour (outcome 5 page 23).

BNH Specific Feedback:

(1) Do you agree our plan reflects the needs and aspirations of you and your community over the next three years?

BNH generally agrees that the plan reflects the needs and aspirations of the community with the proviso that, a number of the initiatives still require a more in-depth explanation as to how they will be achieved. For example, a number of the key initiatives in outcome 5 which state 'work with ATEED to....', or a key initiative in outcome 1 states 'provide resources to guide community and business resilience projects' – of what do these resources comprise?

(2) Do you think our plan will help our communities, including our local businesses, recover from the impact of COVID-19?

BNH generally agrees that the draft plan will support local businesses to recover from COVID – 19 provided that the board are able to achieve success in identifying and collaborating with organisations, particularly ATEED, to identify and deliver the necessary support and resources required for businesses to optimise their individual and collective economic recovery.

Other keys to the success of this recovery will be the board's ability to improve access to employment opportunities by securing additional employment land (outcome 5) and improving transport options (outcome 2) for businesses and employees, providing the opportunity for economic growth and improving local employment opportunities for local residents.

(3) Is there anything else you think would help our community and local businesses recover?

To better understand how UHLB can support our businesses BNH would suggest that the business community is identified as a specific stakeholder group when the board develops its Engagement Plan, as per the key initiative in outcome 1. This will support the achievement of a key initiative in outcome 5 'Work with ATEED..... tailored to our communities' needs'.

The use of funding for community programmes or events that strengthen community connections identified in a key initiative in outcome 1, could also be made available to the business community if and when appropriate.

High profile support from UHLB for local businesses by utilising every possible opportunity to encourage the wider community to shop local, buy locally made products and utilise locally available services.

(4) Do you think we should investigate the possibility of a targeted rate to fund additional public transport routes through areas that do not currently have public transport options?

Business North Harbour would prefer that public transport improvements are funded through Auckland Transport. However, if this is not an option, then investigating the possibility of a

targeted rate to fund additional public transport routes in these areas makes sense, provided that the communities affected are fully consulted and their opinions are honoured prior to any decisions being made.

(5) Do you have any other feedback on our proposed local board plan?

Business North Harbour would like to acknowledge the financial limitations that may be placed upon the board as a result of the Auckland Council Emergency Budget 2020/2021, which could adversely affect the delivery of certain key initiatives contained in the Draft Plan 2020. We would respectfully ask to be consulted on any such limitations that will have a negative impact on the delivery of strategic outcomes and key initiatives resulting in detrimental outcomes for the local economy and the local business community.