



Submission: Auckland Transport BID Relationship Management / BID Liaison Positions

28th April 2023

Business North Harbour Incorporated

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Local Board Representation: Upper Harbour Local Board

28th April 2023

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Submission to Auckland Transport re:

BID Relationship Management / BID Liaison Positions

Introduction

Business North Harbour (BNH) representing the North Harbour Business Improvement District makes this submission in support of the BID Relationship Management / BID Liaison Positions.

BNH is a significant commercial and 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. The organisation is located within the Upper Harbour Local Board area, which remains one of the fastest growing areas in the country, in both absolute and percentage population terms, which brings both challenges and opportunities to the North Harbour business district.

BNH represents and works with a wide range of businesses comprising of a mix of sole traders, Small Medium Enterprises (SME), through to multi-national organisations, representing sectors such as ICT, business services, specialist manufacturing, light – medium warehousing, logistics, retail and hospitality. In addition, we have key educational institutions within or on our boundary, including Massey University Albany and AUT Millennium, along with a variety of primary and secondary schools including Rangitoto College, the largest secondary school in New Zealand.

BNH is currently one of 50 BIDs in Auckland, with a combined capital value estimated at \$72.7 billion.

Our role in the Auckland economy is to improve the business environment of our areas, promote innovation, prosperity and employment as well as attract new businesses, customers and visitors.

Feedback

BNH acknowledges the difficult situation that Auckland Transport (AT) finds itself in with the need to reduce operating costs due to the significant budget shortfall of \$295 Million projected in the Auckland Council Annual Budget 2023/2024.

BNH asks that AT DOES NOT disestablish the Business Improvement District (BID) Relationship Management / BID Liaison positions established in 2019. These engagement roles have significantly reduced confusion, enabled BIDs with a clear pathway to get issues addressed and provide a single contact point to raise emerging concerns.

Maintaining these positions is vital as they support a mutually beneficial relationship between AT and the current 50 BIDs for the following reasons:

- (1) BIDs are important key stakeholders
- (2) The cost benefits from involving BIDs early in the decision-making process
- (3) BIDs provide a communications and engagement platform for AT for the dissemination and receipt of information important to business
- (4) The correlation between transport, business, and economic development
- (5) BID/AT Liaison successes

(1) BIDs are important key stakeholders

The current 50 BIDs are spread across the Auckland region and are critical stakeholders for AT as they represent 25,000+ businesses whose employees need to travel via some mode of transport to access their place of work.

Additionally, the BIDs have access to all these businesses and their employees, enabling important local community feedback to be sought and provided to AT on any number of large scale or smaller projects. This results in greater engagement and transparency in the process for any proposed projects shared with the BIDs.

(2) The cost benefits from involving BIDs early in the decision-making process

Involving BIDs in discussions regarding proposed projects, particularly large-scale projects such as the recent major changes on Karangahape Road, is vital from a cost benefit perspective. Any early engagement with the BIDs ensures that feedback from the local business community regarding the practicalities and effects of any project is factored into conversations from the outset. This enables time and money to be saved by supporting the cost saving mantra of 'do it once – do it right'.

(3) BIDs provide a communications and engagement platform for AT for the dissemination and receipt of information important to business

Providing a communications platform for AT to disseminate and receive information is a critical aspect of these BID Liaison positions. This not only helps to provide the BIDs and their members with the necessary information upon which to base their fully informed feedback, but as noted above, it also supports AT to engage more effectively with the local business community, thus offering a more transparent process around any project consultation.

(4) The correlation between transport, business and economic development

Local and regional economic development is vitally important to Auckland, particularly following the well-documented economic challenges that the city and businesses have faced during and post the pandemic. There is an obvious correlation between transport, business and economic development. Transport is a vital link - bringing patrons to businesses and other economic activities such as events, then moving some of the same patrons from one economic activity to another.

This is a win-win situation as the resulting financial growth then provides more opportunities for an increase in business and other economic activities, which is a win for business and the development of Auckland. These opportunities, in turn, attract more patrons on AT services, providing increased income and so the cycle continues to everyone's benefit!

(5) BID/AT Liaison successes

The relationship that BNH enjoys with our BID Liaison Bernadette Fatu has been instrumental in our ability to provide members with information regarding proposed AT projects that may affect their businesses or their properties. This has enabled BNH to provide relevant feedback from the local business community to assist AT in delivering the most cost-effective projects, whilst also enhancing AT's ability to engage with our local community in a more transparent way.

Additionally, BNH and our members are now more confident that any issues we may raise such as congestion hot spots, will be investigated and where possible mitigated as far as is practicable, which often wasn't the case prior to the BID Liaison role being introduced.

Consequently, over recent years BNH, our members and AT have all been able to enjoy the benefits of numerous successful collaborations on projects, both large and small, along with improved communications and outcomes covering a variety of subjects such as:

- Prior notification of impending roadworks within the area, where AT had previously neglected to notify the BID.
- Updates on planned and ongoing roadworks within the area.
- Capturing and forwarding general transport information which may be of interest within or may have an effect on our area.
- Assisting with individual roading queries, providing key contacts and recommending the necessary actions to take.
- Expediting our concerns despite the significant number of complaints AT receive.
- Asking AT teams to rereview certain requests following additional concerns / issues being raised when AT had already closed the case.

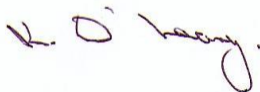
Conclusions

BNH acknowledges that AT needs to carefully consider the decisions being made to make the operational savings required of the organisation, but we ask that the disestablishment of the BID Relationship Management / BID Liaison positions are NOT deemed necessary to achieve the requisite savings target.

We fundamentally believe that for the many reasons identified above, maintaining these positions will provide greater financial and other non-financial benefits to AT versus the upfront spend invested into these positions.

Should there be any questions or other matters arising from this Submission, we would be pleased to respond to these.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'K. O'Leary'.

Kevin O'Leary
General Manager