



# **Submission: Auckland's Future Development Strategy**

**24<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

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24<sup>th</sup> July 2023

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## **Submission to Auckland's Future Development Strategy**

Auckland Council is seeking feedback on Auckland's Future Development Strategy.

### **Introduction**

Business North Harbour (BNH) representing the North Harbour Business Improvement District welcomes the opportunity to make this submission on Auckland's Future Development Strategy.

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 37,000 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.

### **Background**

Auckland Council has commented:

That the Future Development Strategy (FDS) sets out the big picture vision for how and where we should grow over the next 30 years to achieve the best outcomes for Tāmaki Makaurau.

There has been a lot of change recently. Central government introduced legislation for more housing intensification across the city. The effects of climate change are being felt more frequently, as seen by the Auckland Anniversary floods and Cyclone Gabrielle. We also have a commitment to halve our greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and reach net zero emissions by 2050. The way we grow and develop should improve the environment, avoid hazards and help address the impacts of climate change.

This changing context means we need to update our strategy for how the city grows in the future. There are many ways cities can grow. We propose that most new housing and business development be in the existing city near town centres, good public transport services and jobs, rather than spread out across the region. Focusing growth in our existing urban areas, rather than more growth on the edges, results in improvements to the environment, the economy, and people's wellbeing.

We would like your feedback on our approach to how and where Auckland should grow and change.

## **BNH Feedback:**

### **(1) Focusing Growth**

*Denser, more compact cities result in improvements to the environment, the economy and peoples' wellbeing. Auckland's urban area is made up of neighbourhoods, town centres and business areas that are interconnected and that support where most Aucklanders live, work and spend their leisure time. We propose that most housing and business growth will be focused within existing urban areas and that this growth be more intensive. This means less growth in greenfield areas at Auckland's edges. What greenfield growth there is will be phased over 30 years and longer.*

#### **What do you think of our approach to focus most of Auckland's growth in existing urban areas?**

BNH agrees with this approach as reducing the spread or sprawl of the city will enable future development to utilise and improve existing infrastructure which is usually more cost-effective than building new infrastructure. Additionally, this approach should secure more greenfield areas for leisure use to support more peoples' health and wellbeing as the population grows. That said, this strategy will only be successful if the planned intensification is adequately served by the provision of all the necessary and purpose-built infrastructure required to achieve the desired outcome of enhancing current urban areas sufficiently to enable Aucklanders to live, work and enjoy leisure activities in their local communities.

### **(2) Accessible Local Centres:**

*When people have easy access to workplaces, services, facilities and shops, communities become more resilient and connected. It also helps to reduce travel time, emissions and lower household transport costs. We propose focusing housing and business development near local centres where most peoples' daily needs are easy to access by walking, cycling and public transport.*

#### **What do you think of our approach to focus development near local centres?**

BNH agrees with this approach because as stated, it will assist in reducing the need for excessive travel between home, work and leisure activities, thus helping to meet any climate action targets and supporting people to have a sense of belonging in their local community. For the desired outcomes to be achieved it is imperative that adequate and suitable infrastructure is provided to enable people to utilise alternate travel modes and that adequate, affordable public transport is also available if Vehicle Kilometres Travelled (VKT) are to be reduced by the amount required.

BNH would also suggest that local campaigns to educate people about the availability of these alternate modes are undertaken as development is completed in individual communities, to encourage the behavioural change necessary to ensure the optimum use of the alternate modes available by local residents and employees, thus helping to reduce car dependency.

### **(3) Avoiding Hazards:**

*As our climate changes, the frequency and severity of hazards such as sea-level rise and coastal erosion will worsen. Where and how we plan for growth and how we adapt to these hazards is increasingly important. We propose that known areas constrained by significant natural hazard risk should be looked at to see if further development is appropriate. Where development is already enabled in potentially vulnerable locations, we will further investigate appropriate actions.*

***What do you think of our approach to avoid further growth in areas which are exposed to significant risk of environmental hazards?***

BNH agrees with this approach. The recent natural disasters which took such a heavy toll across the city have served as a reminder of the vulnerability of certain areas in the region. Unfortunately, for some businesses and households this initiative has come too late as they were unable to recover from the impact of these significant events. Many businesses owners and home owners are now living in constant fear of another significant episode as soon as it starts to rain which is unacceptable.

BNH would ask that the assessment of development-enabled vulnerable locations should be prioritised and any remedial work to mitigate the risks and help these communities to adapt be initiated as soon as possible, to support the businesses and households in these areas. BNH believes that this work should be undertaken prior to known areas constrained by significant natural hazard risk being assessed for future development.

**(4) Resilient Infrastructure:**

*Infrastructure across Auckland needs to cope with ongoing change, such as the impacts of climate change and evolving technology. Nature-based infrastructure, such as rain gardens, swales and detention basins, is better able to respond to ongoing change. This can help protect communities from hazards as well as protect and restore the natural environment. We propose prioritizing investment in infrastructure that is decentralized, nature-based, regenerative and mauri-enhancing.*

***What do you think of our approach to prioritizing nature-based infrastructure that responds to the impacts of climate change?***

BNH agrees in principle with this approach provided that there is still sufficient investment in the day-to-day infrastructure that intensified urban communities require. 'Traditional' infrastructure to provide clean water, remove stormwater and waste water, along with the necessary roading and alternate mode pathways must also be provided. BNH believes that a balance between the nature-based approach and the current approach to infrastructure investment needs to be achieved to provide the best outcomes for current and future communities.

**(5) Other Feedback:**

***Do you have any other feedback on our approach to how and where Auckland should grow and change?***

BNH acknowledges the intent to prioritise investment in parts of the region that need it most to address disparities and serve communities of greatest need. We would however ask that development opportunities, particularly business development, are not dismissed in other areas where local communities would derive benefit from any such development.

BNH welcomes the statement in the Consultation Document Principle 5(c) acknowledging the inequities in the distribution of business land and the commitment to protect business sites to provide for long-term business needs.

BNH also acknowledges the statements on page 31 of the same document indicating that there is sufficient region-wide plan-enabled business capacity, although there are likely to be some shortfalls in the short to medium-term. BNH would ask that the provision of additional business-zoned land in the medium to long-term plans be brought forward to mitigate this risk.

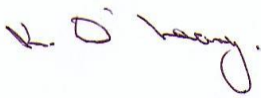
BNH supports the recognition of Albany as one of the four identified sub-regional development nodes aimed at generating increased employment opportunities, bringing housing and jobs together.

**Conclusion:**

Overall BNH supports the approaches outlined in Auckland's Future Development Strategy. However, we would respectfully point to the various caveats to that support in this submission which we would ask Council to make note of and give due consideration to as future development decisions are made.

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', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kevin O'Leary  
General Manager