



Submission: Draft Upper Harbour Local Board Plan 2023

1st August 2023

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1st August 2023

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Submission to Draft Upper Harbour Local Board Plan 2023

Auckland Council and Upper Harbour Local Board (UHLB) are seeking feedback on the Draft Upper Harbour Local Board Plan 2023.

Introduction

Business North Harbour (BNH) representing the North Harbour Business Improvement District welcomes the opportunity to make this submission on the Draft Upper Harbour Local Board Plan 2023.

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.

The Draft UHLB Plan 2023 under each of the five themes, sets out UHLB's objectives, outlines the key initiatives which illustrate how UHLB proposes to achieve these objectives and includes measures of success. Our response, which is delivered from a business community perspective, is provided in summary and then answers UHLB's specific feedback questions which are:

1. Do you think our draft plan reflects the needs and aspirations for our community over the next three years?
2. Do you think there is anything crucial missing from our draft plan that should be included?
3. Do you have any other feedback on our draft plan?

BNH Feedback Summary:

- BNH supports in principle the five themes outlined in the plan, Our People, Our Environment, Our Community, Our Places and Our Economy. We have identified opportunities to collaborate with UHLB on some of the proposed key initiatives in each of the five themes, to support the achievement of some of the objectives identified.
- BNH would like to acknowledge that UHLB has taken both Climate Action and Māori Outcomes into consideration when developing the draft plan 2023.
- BNH acknowledges that Upper Harbour is a vibrant and rapidly growing area with diverse communities. This brings both challenges and opportunity for BNH and as the local

board's only formal BID, we look forward to working with UHLB to leverage from the ongoing growth of the region.

- BNH would also like to acknowledge the continuing support received from UHLB and we look forward to working collaboratively with the board throughout the duration of this plan and beyond, as we look to achieve the best outcomes for our members and the UHLB area as a whole, by supporting the plan's key initiatives wherever possible.
- Growth in the UHLB area continues to out-perform Auckland and New Zealand in a number of key matrixes including Business Units, and Population Growth. Access to business land, a diverse workforce and local employment opportunities are vital if the area is to effectively support this ongoing growth. Additionally, adequate and effective infrastructure to meet the needs of business and the area as a whole is imperative to ensure that this growth is sustainable and leads to improved productivity.
- BNH relies on 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 Specific Feedback:

(1) Do you think our draft plan reflects the needs and aspirations for our community over the next three years?

BNH generally agrees that the plan reflects the needs and aspirations of the community, noting that some of the key initiatives still require a more in-depth explanation as to how they will be implemented to achieve the objectives and meet any success measures.

Our feedback under each theme is outlined below:

Our People:

BNH would request that the local board Engagement Strategy referred to includes engagement with our business community to better understand the needs and opportunities of this important local community.

In supporting a geographical approach to initiatives which bring communities together, BNH would ask UHLB to promote buying local and utilising locally available services in any relevant communications to the wider UHLB community.

BNH supports the development of an Emergency Response Plan and acknowledges UHLB's intent to work with ethnic communities including Māori and Asian communities, the latter of which make up a growing business community within our BID.

Our Environment:

BNH supports UHLB's approach towards protecting the natural environment, supporting the community to live sustainably, respond to climate change and value kaitiakitanga (guardianship), whilst also accommodating the planned growth of the area.

BNH notes that the most effective initiatives to improve business' understanding of the need for a more sustainable approach to their operation is education and raising their awareness of effective waste minimization opportunities. We therefore support the relevant initiatives in the draft plan referencing these topics.

Our Community:

BNH fully supports any initiatives that promote both physical and mental wellbeing for our members, their employees and the wider community. Although most of the content of this theme sits outside of BNH's scope, we acknowledge the need for adequate indoor and outdoor recreation facilities and appreciate the opportunities provided by UHLB within and close to the BID, for members and their employees to engage in informal recreation and connect with nature.

Our Places:

BNH supports UHLB's focus on the infrastructure challenges for the growing population and their advocacy for improved public transport and roading networks, provided 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 adequate, effective and affordable alternative modal options.

Effective and efficient access to and around the business district is critical for business owners and the 37,000 employees working in the North Harbour BID. BNH supports the delivery of transport projects that improve local and connecting transport networks and see a shift in transport modes and we support any advocacy to Auckland Transport and Waka Kotahi to achieve these outcomes, noting the caveat in the previous paragraph.

We acknowledge and support the development of improved cycleways and footpaths making these alternate modes more user friendly, hopefully encouraging some commuters out of their vehicles.

BNH would suggest that UHLB includes education initiatives for business owners, their employees and other residents outlining the alternate mode facilities and connections and public transport options available to them, to help initiate the behavioural change required to reduce vehicle kilometres travelled.

We request greater support for local transport infrastructure projects which support business and economic development, over and above community or politically led initiatives.

Our Economy:

BNH supports UHLB's objective to provide local employment opportunities to reduce the need to commute, supporting initiatives that foster local business and employment growth. BNH supports UHLB's advocacy for land use planning to support these outcomes.

We support UHLB's intention to encourage sustainable business practices and their support of initiatives to improve the amenity of the public areas around local businesses.

BNH is also confident following ongoing discussions with UHLB, of the importance the board places on the enhanced economic performance of the local economy. We support the intention to encourage social and local procurement and retail opportunities that contribute to a successful local economy.

(2) Do you think there is anything crucial missing from our draft plan that should be included?

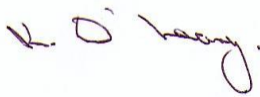
BNH believes that other important topics that should be included in the draft plan are crime prevention and safety. These topics may be embedded covertly in some of the objectives and key initiatives, but given the current rising trend in crime, including violent crime and the need for people to feel safe both in our communities and on our roads, some reference should be made as to how UHLB are going to deal with these issues.

(3) Do you have any other feedback on our draft 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 Budget 2023/2024, which could adversely affect the delivery of certain key initiatives contained in the Draft Plan 2023. We would respectfully ask to be consulted on any such limitations that will have a negative impact on the delivery of outcomes and key initiatives resulting in detrimental outcomes for the local economy and the local business community.

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