



**North Harbour Business Association Submission  
Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan**

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Local Board Representation: Upper Harbour Local Board

**Please note: We wish to make an oral presentation to this submission**

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## **Attachments**

1. North Harbour Business Improvement District Map

## 1. Summary of Key Recommendations

The following key recommendations for changes to the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan (PAUP) from the North Harbour Business Improvements District (NHBID) are highlighted for the information of the Unitary Plan Hearings Panel –

- i. The reclassification of areas currently proposed as Light Industry to General Business
- ii. The resultant removal of the proposed Albany 2 Precinct - provisions of General Business zoning cover office applications within the proposed precinct.
- iii. The specification of a small number of terraced mixed use commercial/residential properties located as Mixed Use.
- iv. The reclassification of the following activities under General Business Zoning as Discretionary - Community, Education Facilities (up to secondary school) and Entertainment.
- v. Amend the definition of Educational Facilities to include Tertiary Education/Training Organisations supporting business activities.
- vi. Creating provisions within the Unitary Plan to cluster like businesses (e.g. Retail) to make best use of available roading access and parking facilities within a General Business Zone.

## 2. Introduction

The North Harbour Business Association represents approximately 4,000 property and business owners in the North Harbour Business Improvement District (see Attachment 1. – NHBID Map). The area encompasses an estimated 25,000 employees and is a substantial contributor the Upper Harbour area of the Auckland Region. The Upper Harbour area generates approximately \$4.b p.a. in GDP for the Auckland Economy, based on Auckland Council statistics from 2013.

The following submission is made on behalf of our members who have been canvassed for submissions and provided regular information on the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan (PAUP) and its consultation process.

Our members have been encouraged to also make individual submissions to Council on the PAUP in their own right where they have specific issues they would like to have input on.

In making our submission we also reserve the right to consolidate or support other representative regional business groups or individual submitters who have positions consistent with our own proposed positioning on specific issues.

We request the opportunity to speak to our submission.

### 3. North Harbour Business Improvement District (NHBID)

Attachment 1. Highlights the area encompassed by the North Harbour Business Improvement District (NHBID).

The area has grown significantly from a green field location over the last 15-20 years to now encompassing a wide range of local and international business operations.

The area has become popular for small through to large scaled operations who wish to secure access to an established pool of personnel from primarily North and West who are well skilled, educated and experienced for the roles on offer. The area's major attraction is the convenience of location for owners/managers and staff seeking to work locally rather than commuting to, or through, the CBD on a regular basis. This can save 2 hours to a business day plus associated direct, environmental and social costs. Within the Upper Harbour District employment and education levels are above those of wider Auckland.

There is currently minimal vacant land available for new build development within the NHBID area. Leasehold vacancy rates (particularly for medium/large buildings) are currently at very low levels, (currently approximately 2-3%), having recovered from the effects of the global financial crisis some 6-7 years back.

Although the majority of current businesses in the NHBID area incorporate a mix of warehouse/light manufacturing applications, over the last 10 years demand has increasingly seen growth in Office, Education/Training and Commercial/Public services.

We have already seen large scale retail distribution centres (Dick Smith) relocate to South-East Auckland to more efficiently access key transportation hubs.

Recent property developments in the area have included the Apollo Medical Centre and dedicated office clusters in small/medium scaled business park like environments (27-29 William Pickering Drive, Candida Office Park, Apollo Technology Park).

There is a significant variety of businesses that occupy the NHBID area on both the Western and Eastern sides of the Northern Motorway. It has a mix of small through big box type retailers (Bunnings and Farro), and medium scale boat/vehicle sales locations such as Fish City and Turners Car Auctions. We also are home to a Heliport on Rosedale Road and there are small pockets of mixed used terraced commercial/residential properties.

Although there is the potential for conflict of business and residential interests – this appears to be limited at its current scale of residential occupation. Adjacent businesses tend to benefit from a security/crime prevention perspective with residents creating a presence at times when the majority of businesses tend to be closed (nights/weekends/holidays).

The area also features significant ICT infrastructure and related businesses along with regional hubs for emergency services and public utilities including the Regional Police Headquarters, Fire Service, St John Ambulance, waste transfer station and waste water treatment plant.

The NHBID area has transport challenges associated with the number of employee cars at peak times and multiple schools/education, training and sporting facilities located primarily on its boundaries (Albany Junior, Albany Senior High Schools, Kristin and Pinehurst Secondary schools and Rangitoto College). It also has tertiary and private/trade educators (North Harbour Hockey, AUT Millennium for high performance sports, Unitec's Northern Campus, IETLS providers, plus one New Zealand's first Charter School - Vanguard Military). We also closely located to the Massey University Albany Campus and its residential facilities on its south western boundaries.

Although the existence of educational/training facilities located within the NHBID area creates pressure on roading access and car parking, they also support a growing need for public transport for the wider business and residential users. This will assist with reducing commuter traffic as the Auckland transport network continues to mature and integrate more effectively.

The NHBID area also includes a range of small retail and trade/commercial service businesses which also serve both the business and adjacent residential customers. This creates a sense of community, natural security, amenity through convenient local services and employment opportunities for a wide range of skill levels.

### ***Significant Future Developments***

The NHBID area is strategically well positioned to attract and retain local and international businesses. The relatively close proximity (by international standards) to the Auckland CBD, key transport nodes and its positioning at a cross roads of two major roading arteries North/South (SH1) and East/Western (SH18/16) ring road link provides ready access to staff resources and commercial transport links. In the near term the NHBID will have ready road access via the western link to the Airport and as a potential alternate bypass to the CBD or points South in times of peak demand or in cases of significant incidents or delays.

With ongoing, large scale residential developments to the North, and West of the NHBID, there is a long term opportunity to generate additional local employment within the area to accommodate a wide range of services, skills, trades and professional services, whilst seeking to minimise further traffic congestion to/from the CBD.

Land use demand in the NHBID will ebb and flow based on economic cycles. They are likely to be led by ongoing technological change, transport access and other market factors including an ageing population. Growth of a knowledge led economy with strong links to tertiary organisations with international business aspirations (e.g. Massey University initiative for global distance learning resourced ex New Zealand) will drive demand for additional business infrastructure in, and around, the NHBID area.

Flexibility of land use and effective management of the limited business land available will be essential to meet the demands of new business developments over the next 30 years.

Although land supply in the NHBID area is relatively limited and leasehold vacancies are historically low at present, we believe there is potentially a major opportunity to provide additional Industrial/commercial land within the NHBID area through the redevelopment of the Rosedale Wastewater Treatment Plant's settling ponds. It is understood that these facilities may no longer be required based on the recent technology upgrades of Treatment Plant.

Subject to potential remedial costs required to make such land commercial viable to develop, this could create a significant opportunity for the development of land with profile to the Northern Motorway corridor.

NHBA believes that we need to focus on the maximisation of current land use and build on existing regional strengths through clustering complementary businesses. This coupled with improved building design and the longer term potential for additional land capacity in the area, will add significant value to the local Upper Harbour economy, community and wider Auckland.

#### **4. NHBID Area Specific Unitary Plan Issues**

- a. Key outcomes for property owners and businesses in the NHBID area from an amended Auckland Unitary Plan include -
  - i. Protection of existing and potential investments in land, buildings and business infrastructure
  - ii. Maintain relativity of zoning for the Western and Eastern areas of the NHBID.
  - iii. Maintain current variety of business operations to service and support the local business and residential communities
  - iv. Maintain linkages with residential communities located in mixed use premises and adjacent residential areas.
  - v. Improved public, private and commercial transport access to key Auckland business locations and transport hubs.
  - vi. Maintain, but not expand, mixed use residential/commercial developments that may have potential to conflict with business applications in the medium and long term.
  - vii. Consistency of zoning/consent processes to cluster complementary business activities to provide efficient use of available infrastructure.
  
- b. NHBID Proposed Changes to the draft Unitary Plan
  - i. Apply General Business zoning to the areas currently classified as Light Industry
  - ii. Remove the proposed Albany 2 Precinct
  - iii. Specify terraced mixed use commercial/residential properties located within the NHBID area (including but not limited to – Arrenway Drive, Saturn Place, William Pickering Drive, Lovell Court, Airborne Road) as specific Mixed Use zones under the Unitary Plan.
  - iv. Under General Business Zoning reclassify Community, Education Facilities (up to secondary school) and Entertainment as Discretionary.
  - v. Amend the definition of Educational Facilities to include Tertiary Education/Training Organisations to support business activities in the area.
  - vi. Create a preference to cluster like business operations (e.g. retail) to make best use of available roading access and parking facilities with the General Business Zone.

### ***Discussion***

The current classification of Light Industry (including the additional office provisions under Albany Precinct 2.) under the PAUP for the vast majority of the NHBID area, creates potentially significant limitations on the type of buildings/facilities that can be developed in the area. It also potentially imbalances demand based on available developable land in the long term.

Based on the information provided earlier in this submission it is clear that a thriving business environment has been established in the NHBID area which is benefiting from its mix of activities, scales of business operations from SME start ups (with adjacent Massey University Incubator), through to owner operators, to medium/large scale local and international businesses who have located here for specific strategic reasons.

Our members seek Council support for the continuing development of the NHBID area along the successful lines already established through significant investment to date in both infrastructure and self supporting business services – including the North Harbour Business Association.

General Business zoning , (with the proposed changes to proposed activity controls), as opposed to Light Industry, better reflects current and potential future demands for business applications/services in the area and also creates relativity between the Western and Eastern areas of the NHBID for Office developments of relatively small independent office facilities up to 500m2 GFA.

## **5. NHBID Commentary on Wider Unitary Plan**

With the aim of creating a stronger base for ongoing economic development for continued prosperity of the Auckland Region and its roll on impact to wider New Zealand, we support the following general provisions of the draft Unitary Plan -

1. Unitary Plan Term – 30 years - medium term view. This could be extended to a longer timeframe and aligned with other key regional planning documents to provide context to large scale infrastructure developments – e.g. second harbour crossing, bypassing Auckland City, increasing localised quality employment – aligned to population shifts and drive to grow intellectual property based businesses supported by strong tertiary education sectors.
2. The consultation and implementation process being adopted by Council showing strong levels of engagement across the diverse business and residential communities.
3. Consolidation and simplification of land zoning and activity controls.
4. Recognition of General Business, Light and Heavy Industry applications and reserving future developmental and brown fields land for such activity.

5. The intensification of urban activity to focus development of the restricted land available to appropriate – non conflicting activities and protect the Auckland Regions rural and coastal environment. Secure economies of scale from infrastructure investment and enable cost effective public and private transport networks to be established and maintained.
6. Environmental and sustainability considerations including Air Quality Sensitive land use application and Green Star building ratings – appropriate to building type/scale.
7. Building height limitations and minimum car parking provisions in the General Business and Light and Heavy Industry zones.

We understand and respect the processes related to treaty of Waitangi and the provisions identified in the Unitary Plan related to Mana Whenua. We would welcome further detail on how the consent provisions related to Mana Whenua will operate to ensure that such processes do not create additional bureaucracy, delay, cost or areas for potential conflict. We believe there needs to be very clear rules of engagement and authority provisions to avoid any risk of any lack of clarity surrounding jurisdiction and potential for personal or group biases based on cultural heritage.

## **6. NHBID Proposed Unitary Plan Considerations**

We believe the following areas of focus and initiatives would add value to Business and the wider community as part of the Unitary Plan -

1. Encouraging economic development through local investment in business infrastructure, increasing the scale of business operations to create more efficient/profitable and sustainable business operations that create ongoing demand for quality local employment to minimise the need to commute across Auckland.
2. Council to provide ongoing policy and executive support to Business Improvement Districts to ensure that services and infrastructure continue to be developed to maximise the efficient use of the limited General Business, Light and Heavy Industrial land by attracting, retaining and developing new and current businesses.
3. Ongoing protection of General Business, Light Industry and Heavy Industrial zones for business operations that create ongoing sustainable economic value with continuous utilisation of 5 + days of business operations.
4. Ongoing focus on more efficient private and public transport access to both commercial and private users. Key corridors – North Shore to/from the CBD, Port, Airport and Road/Rail Transport hubs (Central, South and East Auckland), potentially including a North/South CBD bypass and direct CBD/Airport links.

5. Support for clarity across Auckland's transport planning and navigation e.g. online traffic conditions and the relabeling of roading on key transport corridors. This would assist with the internationalisation of the City to facilitate efficiencies and improved road safety for local residents (especially those who do not have English as a first language) and foreign visitors.
6. Additional infrastructure and capacity improvements including private/public partnerships for – roading and public transport facilities. This could include the increased parking capacity and utilisation of current Park and Ride facilities and the development of additional Park and Ride facilities at key gateway locations to commercial/industrial facilities to minimise traffic congestion at motorway connections such as Constellation Drive. Multi-level parking facilities with integration of parking costs as part of public transport services would potentially add value.
7. Retain possible provision of regional commercial airport operations at Whenuapai for services to key New Zealand and Australian destinations when passenger/freight demand is sufficient to justify such a consideration.
8. Support future transport technology developments e.g. electric or unmanned car/trucks and buses with associated transition points, recharge locations plus storage and servicing facilities.
9. Encourage building designs, based on local and international initiatives, that create multi-level commercial operations to future proof future redevelopment of limited commercial/industrial land.
10. Along with Green Star building design ratings of 4 for new buildings over 5000m<sup>2</sup>, integrate the new NABERS building energy efficiency rating system (or nationally adopted equivalent system).
11. Support the further development and integration of the successful Northern Busway. We believe the extension of the Busway network via a western link route SH18/16 to/from Western Auckland and the CBD would provide significant long term benefits to Business and the wider community. We also support the increased utilisation of the Busway network by allowing access to other commercial users such as multi-passenger shuttles and taxis. This would provide efficient access to the CBD and Auckland Airport further reducing sole occupancy commuter vehicle traffic over our motorway network during peak periods.
12. Support Auckland Council's approach to integrated transport solutions. We believe the implementation of combined pedestrian/cycleway space adjacent to roadways will improve safety and ensure that both road access and car parking are not negatively impacted by cycleway implementation/operation.

**7. Conclusion and Request to be Heard**

We appreciate the opportunity to submit our views and proposed amendments to the draft Unitary Plan on behalf of the members of the North Harbour Business Improvement District.

We trust our input will add value in the development of the final version of the Unitary Plan and request the opportunity to present our submission in person to the Hearings Panel.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'W. Kitchin', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Warren Kitchin CA Dip NZIM

**Chairman – North Harbour Business Association**