



**Greater East Tamaki
Business Association Inc.**

Submission to the Auckland Council Draft Annual Plan 2014/2015

By: **Greater East Tamaki Business Association Inc. (GETBA)**

We wish to speak in support of our submission to the two Local Boards.

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1a. Stadium Strategy

- We do not wish to comment.

2. Auckland Arts Festival

- We do not support making the Auckland Arts Festival an annual event from 2016, unless it is able to do so without impacting negatively on suburban arts festivals. The Howick Arts Festival is currently run in the alternate year and is concerned at having to compete for financial and people resources, and attendances, should the event become annual.

3a. Your Community

GETBA's submission relates to two Local Boards:

- Howick Local Board
- Otara Papatoetoe Local Board

4. Other comments on the draft local board agreement/local consultation topics

Howick Local Board Draft Local Board Agreement

- We welcome the Board's recognition of the significant contribution of the business community and Business Improvement District partnership programmes including GETBA, and the Board's continued grant contribution of \$15,000 to GETBA.
- GETBA supports the continued advocacy by the Board on the options for an East-West link that includes the upgrading of the Highbrook motorway interchange which exceeds capacity at peak times, of Highbrook Drive as a freight corridor, and the extension of Gossamer Drive to connect with Highbrook Drive to address massive congestion around Gossamer/ Ti Rakau /Trugood Drives and Cryers Road. We also support the Board's advocacy for the continuation of the AMETI project.
- We support the advocacy by the Board to the governing body to ensure that a higher priority is given both for the development of area plans and a spatial plan strategy for the Howick area which includes East Tamaki.
- We support the spending of \$733,000 operating expenditure and \$315,000 capital expenditure on economic opportunities for businesses and industries in 2014/2015.
- With regard to the Local Board's commitment to spend "our allocation of local funding wisely which amounts to 19 per cent of rates collected in this area", we question what percentage of rates collected from the East Tamaki business precinct is allocated to the precinct.

Otara Papatoetoe Local Board Draft Local Board Agreement

- We are pleased to note that the Otara Papatoetoe Local Board states: "Business Improvement District (BID) programmes in Otara, Hunters Corner, Old Papatoetoe, Manukau Central and Greater East Tamaki (GETBA) are supported and championed by the Board. A \$30,000 grant is made to each BID to support the BID programme and other Local Economic Development Initiatives." The Board in the 2013/2014 year withdrew its \$15,000 share of GETBA's grant (the other \$15,000 paid by the Howick Local Board). We would welcome the resumption of this grant and would put it towards a study of the stormwater issues and opportunities in East Tamaki which would lead into a strategic stormwater plan, an important Council implementation action of the East Tamaki Business Precinct Plan.
- We request the Board's continued advocacy from the Otara Papatoetoe Local Board Plan 2011-2014 for "a reconfiguration of East West transport connections, linking the East Tamaki industrial business community to the commercial south, the port, and the airport, including a freight corridor and public transport supporting the East Tamaki employment hub."
- We support the implementation of the Board's Economic Development Action Plan developed during 2013/2014.
- We support the spending of \$1.1 million operating expenditure and \$406,000 capital expenditure on economic opportunities for local businesses and industries.

5. Other Comments on the draft Annual Plan 2014/2015

Expenditure and Debt

- GETBA acknowledges the need to spend on infrastructure assets (transport, water, wastewater and stormwater) in order to be competitive. Growth must be supported by appropriate infrastructure. Based on a growing population GETBA agrees with the use of prudent sustainable debt to fund growth and transformational projects which will be of benefit to the NZ economy as a whole.
- With rates providing approximately 43% of the Council's operating revenue, we are in favour of alternative revenues being explored, generally on a user pays basis. We specifically support tolls and network charging being part of the funding mix with regard to transport infrastructure.

- Council remuneration policy preparation which will investigate the costs and wider implications of the Living Wage Policy. GETBA feels strongly that Council should not be considering a living wage for Council employees. Doing so would be inflationary and have unintended consequences. Increasing the lowest hourly pay rate would effectively trigger the same increase across all pay rates. Tax implications could also penalise the people it was intended to assist with reductions or confiscation of other welfare payments or benefits.

Rates

- GETBA commends the Council on keeping the average rates increase to 2.4%, however there are a significant number of commercial properties with significant increases. Residential rates are capped at 10%, not so for businesses.
- We again wish to record our concern at the existence of the differential, and dispute the Council's rationale.

Transport and Rooding

- We support the further investment in AMETI. We strongly support the priority investigation of the East-West Link to enhance connectivity between SH1 and SH20 freight corridors. We strongly advocate for the upgrading of the Highbrook motorway interchange which exceeds capacity at peak times, of Highbrook Drive as a freight corridor, and the extension of Gossamer Drive to connect with Highbrook Drive to address massive congestion around Gossamer/ Ti Rakau /Trugood Drives and Cryers Road.
- We also wish to express our significant concern that the widening of Smales/Allens Roads and Intersection has been pushed back year on year. This is a priority for this important employment hub that needs urgent attention. We are concerned that this project by the time it comes about will not be sufficient, in that the widening does not reach to the intersection of Allens Road and Highbrook Drive, so there will still be a bottleneck in traffic flow. The extension of this road widening to include the whole of Allens Road needs to be planned-for now.
- Our concern with delays also applies to the improvements to the Preston/Ormiston Road intersection to the south west of the East Tamaki business precinct.
- We support the implementation of the first stage of the public transport network upgrade and welcome the adoption of some recommendations made by GETBA for bus route/frequency changes in our area.

Water and Wastewater Charges

- GETBA notes the Council's projected water and wastewater price increases of 3.5% and 3.75% and intention to reduce the overall increase for 2014/2015. GETBA expects any reduction will apply to commercial as well as residential properties. Businesses are already unfairly disadvantaged by the wastewater business differential.

Changes to regulatory fees and charges

- We note proposed increases in a number of building control fees that are significantly higher than the rate of inflation (eg LINZ registration processing deposits, Building applications, Amended plans, Code Compliance Certificate, Product Assessment). A possible rationale for the increases, including stepped increases by value, is that historically the deposit fees may have been lower than actual cost and any subsequent non-payment has penalised Council revenue. There may also be implications from recent changes to the Building Act. We would however welcome confirmation of the rationale for increases higher than the rate of inflation.
- We acknowledge the Council's goal of being more business-friendly and see an opportunity for Council to do so in two ways. One is for the number of Council officers involved in the regulatory process to be more transparent in time-keeping to keep client costs to a minimum. Another recommendation is for Council officers to give greater credence to applicants' professional engineering consulting firms' expert views

rather than adding to cost by having them peer reviewed by another consulting firm resulting in unnecessary duplication of effort and cost.

Unitary Plan

- GETBA supports progression of the notified Unitary Plan.

Bylaw Review

- GETBA welcomes the review and making of new bylaws for consistency across the legacy Councils.

Waste Minimisation Plan

- As the recipient of a small amount of funding assistance to identify and promote waste minimisation initiatives, we support the implementation of the Waste Minimisation Plan.

Southern Initiative

- We support actions and initiatives being undertaken under the Southern Initiative.

Industrial South Business Precinct Plan

- We support the development of an integrated business precinct plan for the Industrial South.

Skills Supply and Demand

- We support the Council partnering with Auckland businesses to better match skills supply and demand.

NZ Health and Innovation Hub

- We support the funding of the NZ Health Innovation Hub.

Graffiti Vandalism Prevention Plan

- We support the implementation of the regional Graffiti Vandalism Prevention Plan.