



Submission to SmartGrowth 2013-14





About the Chamber

The role of the Chamber is to promote business vitality in the greater Western Bay of Plenty region. Our mission is to build better business by providing leadership and services to the business community that drive business growth and prosperity, and to make our community and region the best place to live, work, play and visit through effective and relevant advocacy, networking, and education.

The Chamber of Commerce is a membership based organisation with 700 members. We have a wide reach into the business community crossing the full range of demographics in both business size and activity. Our reach extends beyond business owners to the thousands of employees who work in these businesses. We also have a growing number of member organisations providing community services, and whose interests we strive to represent.

We have a significant interest in regional economic development and a direct role in administering central government programmes for fostering business development and growth. The Chamber supports and encourages new business establishment, provides information and services to the business community, offers training and networking opportunities to both Chamber of Commerce members and to the greater business community. We are a strategic partner to SmartGrowth, a lead agency in Smart Economy and are represented on the Smart Economy Action Group. We are a member of City Centre Action Group, and are represented on many of the key strategies in the City.

In partnership with agencies like New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, Priority One, Export New Zealand BOP and the Sustainable Business Network, we actively seek to work cooperatively to benefit businesses in the Bay of Plenty and through them the wider economy.

We would like to be heard in support of our submissions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Max Mason".

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The Chamber welcomes the opportunity to submit on the Draft Annual Plan 2013/14.

Rating Level

The Chamber supports Council on its approach to achieve a modest rate increase. We acknowledge that there is always a tension for Council between keeping rates at an affordable level while still investing in the future of the city. It is important for this rapidly growing city and its connection to both the Waikato and Auckland that it maintains its momentum to accommodate future growth and development and encourage highly skilled people and new businesses to the region to grow the economy.

Purpose of Local Government

As Council you have asked for feedback on “good-quality local infrastructure” and “local public services”. These two terms could be interpreted in very different ways, but the Chamber would suggest that it goes without saying the all local infrastructure should be good-quality, delivered to a long term vision of the city, which incorporates its growth, and meets its community needs.

Again the definition of “local public services” is very difficult to define and open to a multitude of definitions, depending on which lens one is looking through.

A City Vision Statement

The Chamber feels strongly that a clear aspirational, and inspirational city vision statement is critical, something that every citizen feels they understand and can be proud of. That shows clearly where we are going and what important to us. Auckland with its new vision has set an excellent example and as have other New Zealand cities. Council can take the leadership role and redefine our vision to make it more relevant for the future of this city.

Major Focus

The Chamber supports the rationalization of CCO's with increased sharing of services.

The Chamber supports the selling of non-strategic properties which will have a positive impact on the Council balance sheet, and supports any initiatives that can improve the debt loading and therefore make a positive impact. We also support joint ventures with the private and other sectors.

The Chamber supports the prioritization of stormwater work at the Mount Maunganui industrial area.

The Chamber supports the realignment of the Southern Pipeline by moving out the completion date and the investigations into exploring alternative routes and new technology.

The Chamber supports the wooden walkway on Pilot Bay, and acknowledges the Port of Tauranga for its generous contribution to this asset.

The Chamber strongly supports the development of a Tertiary Campus in Durham Street. The Chamber sees the establishment of a Tertiary Campus as a way of increasing the educational and research capacity within the city, and will add to the CBD development. We acknowledge the contribution of the Council of making the land available for the campus.

Economic Development

Chamber supports the continued support Council gives to economic development through the contracts with Priority One and Tourism Bay of Plenty, and the continued implementation of the actions through SmartEconomy.

Chamber supports Councils contract through Priority One with the Tauranga Chamber of Commerce to provide community good business development services through the Smart Economy Business Advisor. This service continues to achieve excellent outcomes and benefits for the business community and particularly in trying economic times.

Chamber supports the ongoing Sister City agreement with Yantai and the contract with Export Bay of Plenty to deliver economic outcomes from this contract.

City Centre

Chamber supports the continued support of the CBD revitalization by funding the implementation of the City Centre Strategy through the City Centre Project Manager and the City Centre Action Group. The Chamber agrees with the Council's, Mainstreet's and CCAG's approach that the CBD is the commercial, cultural and civic hub for the sub region and as such has a particular place in the hierarchy of city planning.

This includes specific projects such as:

- An international hotel
- Conference centre or flat floor space
- Improving the streetscape and public amenity
- Improving access in and around the city centre

The Chamber strongly supports the continued development of the waterfront precinct. The Chamber would also like to see the Strand moved into a precinct model so that the combination of both waterfront and Strand will create an exciting and vibrant 24/7 destination. The Chamber also supports that where possible advancing the completion of the waterfront development as this asset is already proving to be a popular venue both for events and community.

The Chamber supports Councils approach to the CBD by reducing the minimum car parking requirements. This will encourage new development within the CBD which through the earthquake strengthening requirements can and will change the face of the city.

The Chamber supports the removal of time restrictions for on street parking in the city centre and the proposed three-tiered parking system for parking in the city centre.

We acknowledge that parking continues to be an issue for some retailers in the CBD as they consider it to be a deterrent to visiting the CBD. However if the city is to be recognized as the commercial, cultural and civic hub there will be a much greater need for parking, and somebody needs to pay for the parking assets. We do not consider it fair to place that burden either back on the general ratepayer or the wider business community. Parking fees are an excellent example of user payers, and the three tiered parking allows the driver to choose.

We **encourage Council** to establish a long term parking regime and to not constantly change it so as to remove ongoing confusion for consumers. Making parking easily understandable should be the priority.

Therefore the **Chamber supports** the improvements to the parking assets and agrees they need to be more visible through good street signage to improve awareness and to improve occupation.

Commercial Marketing - Tauranga 2018

We agree with CCAG continuing to work with Priority One to develop a *Tauranga 2018* prospectus which will market the opportunities and reasons for investing in the Tauranga city centre. This product will fit within *'The Tauranga Business Case'* collateral.

The intention of this initiative is to reinforce Tauranga's commitment to investment and growth and to demonstrate that robust planning is in place to achieve this vision, as well as outlining opportunities for private sector investment. This marketing approach can, if supported, also proactively approach businesses that have a strong market match to Tauranga.

This submission **seeks Council's consideration** of the following:

- The provision of additional funding of \$25,000 in the 2013-14 financial year to support the development of the *Tauranga 2018* prospectus and marketing collateral to promote the Tauranga city centre nationally and internationally for business relocations and investment. If this is granted that Priority One member subscriptions will be used to match Council's contribution dollar for dollar.

Arts and Heritage

Chamber supports the need for Arts and Heritage amenity in the city. Having a suite of cultural amenity is one of the reasons much needed highly skilled people move to an area. This includes the Art Gallery and proposed Museum.

Chamber supports the Hairy Maclary and Friends Tauranga Waterfront Sculpture Project.

Chamber supports the Larger than Life – Owen Dippie public art project.

Chamber supports the development of a Public Art Policy which provides guidelines for ongoing art projects within the CBD.

SmartGrowth

The Chamber supports Council's ongoing support and implementation of SmartGrowth as a 50 year land and growth management plan. SmartGrowth has given confidence to many stakeholders

from Central Government to small business in the sub region that we are developing in a sustainable and focused manner. Like all plans SmartGrowth is a dynamic ever evolving plan and as such moves with changes in its environment. We welcome the review that SmartGrowth has recently undergone and the upcoming benchmark against the census.

Major Events Trust

Whilst the Tauranga/Western Bay of Plenty sub-region is recognised nationally and internationally as a vibrant location for hosting of major events, there is no cohesive approach to funding and attracting major events to the region.

In addition there is currently no organisation that has responsibility for the attraction and delivery of major events.

Holding year round events will bring people into the city and will raise the profile of the city at a local, national and international level, thereby increasing our competitive advantages in the attraction and retention of businesses, investment and skilled and talented people. However, it is critical that a consistent funding model be put in place which will enable the ongoing delivery of existing and additional events at appropriate times throughout the year to maximise visitations to Tauranga city all year round.

In late 2012 the Chamber was party to a proposal that was put to elected members for the establishment of a major events trust that would be administered in partnership with the private sector. There has been a strong indication that the private sector would be investors into this model and understand the benefits for the region.

The trust model would enable the private and public sectors to partner to increase funding into major events and to develop, attract and grow major events. The Trust could also protect current iconic events, eg the AIMS Games, the Port Half Iron. It would also provide a sustainable investment base (capital component protected). It would also provide a strategic, long term view of major events, with a strong focus on economic and community outcomes with the flexibility and agility to respond to opportunities. And in time it could provide a single point of contact to lobby central government and access funding.

This submission **seeks Council's consideration** of the following:

- Political support for the proposed events trust model that has been presented to elected members by Sport Bay of Plenty, Tauranga City Venues Ltd, Tourism Bay of Plenty, Tauranga Chamber of Commerce and Priority One.
- Financial support of \$200,000 in the 2013-14 financial year to contribute to the establishment of the events trust, which would include the employment of a business development resource as well as actively commence growing major events. It is suggested that this funding could come from Council's current budget for events so would not be an additional cost.