

The Karangahape Road Business Association.

Chairman's Address to Annual General Meeting 2016.

Background.

In 2010 the Karangahape Road Business Association formed a Business Improvement District (BID) partnership with Auckland Council. The BID programme provides a collective voice for businesses and landlords, and collective marketing and action for business improvement activities in the area.

The Karangahape Road BID programme is funded by an extra levy on rates of 378 business-zoned properties located within the defined area of the Karangahape Road BID.

Within the Karangahape Road BID, there are over 600 businesses with the main groups comprised of: Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services (19.0%), Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (18.0%), Accommodation and Food Services (13.0%), Retail Trade (10.0%), Financial and Insurance Services (7.0%)
The large share of Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Businesses in the Karangahape Road BID is reflective of the property boom, the retrofitting of commercial buildings and the number of new apartments coming on stream at this time.

Karangahape Road is sought after for its central location, built heritage, human history, arts-based creative enterprise, diversity and business innovation, and as a multi-cultural hub for authentic owner-operated businesses.

The makeup of businesses across the BID continues to evolve and change as new forms of services, technology-based business and web-enabled enterprises enter the marketplace.

At the Census population count, in 2013, the Karangahape Road BID had 4,422 residents. The resident population of the neighbourhood is forecast to significantly increase based on demand for inner city living and the proposed City Rail Link.

It's been a big year for Karangahape Road and the KBA.

We started the year without a PM and facing some significant looming challenges.

I must thank and commend the KBA office staff - Kathy, Teseina and Edward for their efforts in keeping us operating in the 6 or so months in which we were without a PM, and the following months in which Michael worked to get his feet under the desk and his head in the K Rd space.

I must also acknowledge the work of the Treasurer Margaret Lewis whose cunning and care has served us well across this last year.

This year has definitely not been business as usual.

A new PM, a new committee and the start of a series of incredibly significant developments within our precinct have kept us very occupied.

Core KBA matters such as security, promotions, events, and economic development have had to be addressed while also effectively responding to what is the start of a 5-10-15 year period of intensive development.

How the KBA, K Road and the wider community respond to the challenges and opportunities created through that development will determine the nature of K Rd in years to come.

While this year has been challenging, the years ahead are likely to be more so.

With tangible impacts on many of our street traders through construction projects, a changing demographic, a potentially diminishing targeted rate return, challenges to our diverse dna, increasing rents, and of course the 'G' word..

Yes, we have a changing landscape here on K Rd, our built environment, economic climate, our social and cultural makeup are all set to change in some way.

But with these challenges and change comes opportunity, and with that opportunity there is also cause for excitement.

One of the key concerns for the KBA this year has been to work alongside the agencies leading this development in a productive and collaborative manner.

While it is generally understood that K Rd hosts a vibrant community with a strong creative tradition and rich diversity, it's not well understood how this has come to be, what conditions have enabled it and continue to promote it, nor how much value it holds for Auckland and indeed the country.

We are a fabled strip whose name recognition sits near the top of all place names in New Zealand.

When it comes to protecting and promoting the unique fabric of K Rd, How might this be done if it's true nature isn't understood by those who are charged with the development taking place within the K Rd precinct?

Part of this process involves taking the time to educate people and organizations about the ecology of KRd. About what makes it what it is. We don't think this can be achieved through a list of words we often hear used in connection to K Rd. Words like quirky, edgy, colourful and the dreaded 'f' work.... Funky. It requires much more indepth understanding and we all have a role in promoting that.

We have public development in the form of the streetscape enhancement project, the CRL, light rail for Upper Queen St, shared space for Cross Street, the ongoing development of Myers Park, Poynton Terrace, Beresford Square.

We have renewed private development taking place the length of the street, creating a much larger residential population.

And amongst all of this there lies many challenges and many opportunities. I find myself in some mental space in the middle of it all asking;

What do we stand to lose and what do we stand to gain?

But I think the real question is, how do we reap the benefits while still ensuring that all the good stuff that we already have, is still here at the other end of all this?

I can see a future for K Road

- that benefits from an upswing in foot traffic,
- that benefits from a better quality built environment where people want to spend time,
- that operates strongly as a place for residents, business owners, spectators, participants, shoppers, loiterers and visitors,
- that values its difference, it's diversity, and works to ensure it continues to be a place for all.

It's a place where our NGO's, vintage clothing stores, creative spaces, galleries, tattoo studios, live music venues, and the plethora of distinct offerings that make K Rd what it is, continue to not only exist - but thrive.

I personally look forward to the return of K Rd as a commercially vibrant and viable place.

I just want to ensure that we retain the qualities that attract a lot of us here in the first place.