



Until recently, former Albert-Eden Local Board member **Benjamin Lee** *pictured*, liaised with both the Uptown and The Fringe District (Kingsland) business associations as one of the local board’s busier BID representatives.

Before he resigned from the local board in February, we asked Benjamin how, in his experience, BID programmes had made it easier, safer and more profitable to run businesses within Albert-Eden’s town centres and main streets.

The engineering graduate said BIDs have been effective at bringing businesses together.

## BIDs’ holistic engagement key to successful advocacy

“The BID programme creates a sense of community amongst the businesses which, in turn, creates network effects such as synergistic marketing.

**“To add to that, the awesome work the BID managers do with programmes allow the businesses to have a reasonable amount of influence to powers-that-be,” he said.**

***We asked what had impressed him about BID committees’ approach to governance and what might they do better.***

“Overall, I have found them all to be very well run from a governance perspective. If I am honest, I’d argue they’re better run than even our own local board meetings! However, I believe that is partially because the businesses do not have as heavy governance requirements as the local board does.

“In terms of pluses, I’d say the BID managers play a very good role as a neutral chair and they have been very much the driving forces of the BIDs - both Claire (The Fringe) and Brent (Uptown) are excellent at what they do.”

***With advocacy being such a key activity for BIDs, we asked Benjamin to assess recent lobbying efforts.***

“Most recently, the Fringe/Kingsland successfully supported the Eden Park concerts proposal.

“They have been very strong advocates to the local board - which is why I personally worked hard to support it - but also in advocating to their communities and customers.

“I believe the success came from their holistic approach with who they advocated to,” he said.

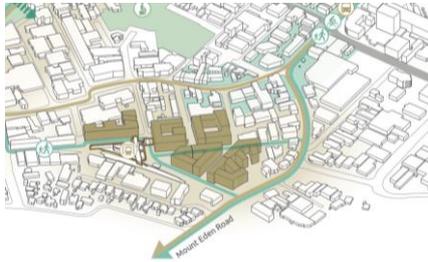


Brent Kennedy/Uptown



Claire Baxter-Cardy/The Fringe District





Outcome 4: A strong local economy with thriving town centres We have economic sectors in our area that provide the opportunity for highly skilled, well-paid local jobs. Growth sectors such as professional services, health care, food service and education provide the opportunity for more employment options in the future. Our small local businesses and town centres are important economic and community hubs, and their success is vital to our community.



“Uptown have also been advocating very strongly not just to the local board but to all interested parties - including the local community - with what they want the new Maungawhau (Mt Eden) train station and the surroundings to be like after the completion of the CRL,” said Benjamin.

“Again, I believe their holistic approach - approaching everyone as opposed to just the council - will do very well as they push ahead with this project.”

**Uptown’s ‘community visioning’ around the CRL’s Mt Eden Station has been supported in Albert-Eden’s 2020 local board plan. We asked Benjamin what he would like to see happen in that area to help both businesses and the increasing residential community.**

“The new train station would be amazing in making it an easy 'destination' to come to. However, I believe the new residential developments all around the station - particularly the Basque Park surrounds and the Edwin St triangle - are what will pump up the economy in the area.

“Uptown are also doing a great job in engaging with the communities in those areas which are quite different to a traditional Kiwi setup - high density apartments versus large open detached housing. I think parks and green spaces would be essential as community centres for these new dense housing areas.”

**We asked Benjamin what the Albert-Eden Local Board is doing to support local businesses’ resilience and how this involves the BIDs and/or Auckland Unlimited.**

“We had redirected some funds from cancelled events to grants to the BIDs to decide what was best for them.

“For example, Uptown redirected part of their funding into a marketing campaign for the precinct overall which had a very positive response from both businesses and local communities, some of whom were discovering their local precincts for the first time. Given the limited funding on our side, I see the local board's role more as one of understanding and advocating to Auckland Unlimited and/or Council for support and improvements.”

**We asked Benjamin which smart transport and infrastructure solutions he would like to see within the Uptown and/or ‘Fringe District’ precincts to enhance the local economy and businesses’ prosperity.**

“In terms of quick and easy low-hanging fruit, I'd say research into pedestrianizing/shared spacing the business districts.

“Many fringy areas in European cities have turned most of their shopping districts into pedestrianised areas – for example, Mödling in Vienna,” he replied.

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“I’m aware that Dominion and Mt Eden roads are big arterial routes, so we will need to see how traffic would be affected and if it needs to wait for reductions and redirections in traffic to do so.”

“I (am seeking) research and data on the (central city’s) Fort St, High St, and O’Connell St pedestrianisations.”



“In my opinion, I believe research on the effects on businesses there before and after construction would be extremely useful in convincing businesses or politicians one way or the other.”

“In terms of long-term stuff, we will need to increase the population density in the area - local affluent populations who can easily and pleasantly walk and cycle to the precincts are absolutely key to ensuring the success of local businesses. Otherwise, we will just end up going to the nearest convenient mall.”



“This, of course, opens up many cans of worms but at least on the Uptown district, industrial areas are turning residential so we will be able to see in a natural experiment how the local economy in Uptown improves.”

