



## **Submission of Civic Trust Auckland**

### **Chamberlain Park Redevelopment**

We would welcome the opportunity to speak in support of our submission at a public hearing.

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### **Civic Trust Auckland**

Civic Trust Auckland is a non-profit public interest group, incorporated in 1968, with activities and interests throughout the greater Auckland region.

The aims of the Trust include:

- Protection of natural landforms
- Preservation of heritage, in all its aspects
- Encouragement of good planning for the city and region.

CTA would like to be kept informed about the redevelopment of Chamberlain Park and we would welcome the opportunity for further engagement to discuss our submission.

1. CTA is concerned that there is no option presented for the status quo. There are four options presented for discussion, all involving substantial change to the present golf course.
2. CTA would prefer that there is an option of maintaining and enhancing the present golf course.
3. Of the four scenarios offered, our preference would be a variation of Scenario One, without the proposed public walkway through the course.

### **Background Golf Issues**

4. We take issue with the statement in the report to the Albert Eden Local Board by council Policy Analysts Rebecca Eng and Shyrel Burt in their Executive Summary:

*“Chamberlain Park offers a type of golf course for which there is understood to be an oversupply in the region”.*

It is the only public golf course on the central isthmus. This comment surely applies to private golf clubs.

There are further quotes from “*O’Connor Sinclair (2014) Chamberlain Park – Needs and Future Development Assessment*” which talk about “*Lack of income diversity: Golf courses have traditionally relied upon membership revenue*”.

This is incorrect in Chamberlain Park’s case, as most of its revenue is from casual green fees.

Similarly the report states “*Utilisation of golf courses across Auckland is very low at 23%*”.

Chamberlain Park has in excess of 50,000 rounds per year – the highest in the country.

And also quoted “*Golf is currently meeting the needs of a relatively narrow part of the potential market*”.

Chamberlain Park is used by a diverse range of Aucklanders of all ages and ethnicities, as discussed below, as well as a significant number of tourists.

5. As the only public golf course on the central isthmus, Chamberlain Park is not just a local park within the Albert Eden Local Board area. It is a city wide asset, to be considered in the same light as the Auckland Domain and Auckland Zoo, which are not simply assets of the Waitemata Local Board.
6. While it is acknowledged that the Albert Eden Local Board area has one of the lowest amounts of green space in the city, local residents do not consider Local Board boundaries, and would perceive Chamberlain Park as being close and adjacent to: Auckland Zoo, Western Springs Park, Fowlds Park, UNITEC grounds, MOTAT, and all the associated Meola reserve spaces. There is little need to carve up a well-functioning golf course for “community use”, when significant amounts of publicly accessible green space are in close proximity.
7. As a public course, Chamberlain Park performs a city-wide function, providing access to golf for a wide cross-section of the population, in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status. It is particularly patronised by those from Maori and Pacific Island communities.
8. Club membership is available at \$132 per year, as opposed to \$1925 per year at the private Akarana club, the nearest other golf course. This make quality golf affordable for both students and older persons on fixed incomes.
9. The course is very well patronised – over 50,000 rounds of golf per year – one of the highest in the Southern Hemisphere. This demonstrates the existing extensive use of community facilities by a diverse cross-section of the Auckland community.
10. The course is open at 6am and closes at dusk, 365 days a year. This allows a much higher hourly use rate as compared to sports fields, which are used in the weekends and some evenings only.
11. The present course has a New Zealand Course Rating, which means that players who hand in their score cards qualify for a handicap rating. More than 75% of

course players hand in score cards for rating. Proposed changes to the course under **all** four scenarios will destroy the course's ability to have a national course rating, as courses must be par 69 or greater. All four scenarios propose pars from 35 – 60.

12. Any of these four proposed scenarios will reduce Chamberlain Park to a “play” course, which will almost certainly result in a drop in patronage and therefore revenue.

### **Proposed Walkway through Golf Course**

13. All four scenarios propose to have a walkway through the course, from the present cycleway along the southern edge of the north-western motorway, to the existing clubhouse, which leads onto Linwood Ave.
14. There seems to be little rationale for this walkway, as users would need to travel along the edge of the motorway for a considerable distance to access it. Only a few metres further east is St Luke's Rd, providing almost the same access to Linwood Ave, and a pedestrian crossing over the motorway to Great South Rd.
15. This walkway significantly compromises the golf course in all four scenarios, for little perceived public gain.
16. A walkway through a golf course poses significant health and safety issues and would have to be completely covered to be safe. This greatly reduces its attractiveness for community use.
17. Walkway access from the north-western cycleway will encourage unauthorised and unpaid access to the course, as players can simply enter and play from the adjacent holes.

### **Community Gardens and Creek Restoration**

18. CTA supports the development of a Chinese Garden on the strip of land between Great North Rd and the northern side of the motorway.
19. We support the proposed restoration of the Waititiko/Meola creek environment. This opportunity to improve water quality and biodiversity, and to create linkages to neighbouring parks is to be commended.
20. We wish to make comments on each of the four proposed scenarios:

### **Scenario One**

21. This scenario proposes to leave the course mainly intact, except to take the land on the western side of Meola creek for community use as a BBQ area and playground.
22. CTA notes that the access to this area is off Sutherland Rd and there is to be no parking provided. This is also the wettest and lowest part of the present golf course.

23. We feel that the walkway proposed through the course creates issues, as described previously in our submission points 14-17.
24. This proposed layout as a par 62 will mean the course will not be a rated course. The disadvantage this creates is outlined above in points 11 and 12.
25. It will not have a par 5 hole, which is considered a fundamental part of a golf course. Two par 5 holes per course is considered standard.

### **Scenario Two**

26. The course under this scenario is a proposed par 60, and the previous comments above on course rating and lack of par 5 holes also apply here.
27. This scenario proposes to have some holes with shared greens. This is shown to slow up play on courses, allowing less rounds to be played and therefore less revenue to be collected. Shared greens also pose safety hazards, particularly with learner golfers.
28. The proposed driving range could be an asset, but as sited, has significant disadvantages relating to access.
29. The proposed access point to the driving range, with a separate carpark, is busy St Luke's Rd, within a few hundred metres of a motorway on ramp and an often congested intersection. Adding to the traffic complexity of the area seems counterintuitive.
30. Separate access to the driving range away from the clubhouse is not best practice for golf facilities. There will need to be two sets of management and staff to maintain both facilities, at extra cost.
31. Previous comments about the advisability of a walkway through the course, and associated health and safety issues also apply to this scenario.

### **Scenario Three**

32. In this scenario a par 60 course is proposed, as in Scenario 2. All the previous comments about course rating therefore apply here also.
33. The comments about the proposed walkway through the course in points 14-17 also relate to this scenario.
34. Instead of a driving range, this scenario suggests three multi-purpose fields, with car-parking and access from St Luke's Rd. The previous comments about the disadvantages of site access from St Luke's Rd should also be applied here.
35. The three proposed sports fields will have a low use time compared to the number of hours per day that the golf course is in use.
36. This option allows an area to the west of the sports fields for informal recreation. This seems to be unnecessary, when adjacent to the course on the other side of the motorway there is Western Springs Park, with acres available for this type of recreation.

37. All sports fields administered by the council are allocated to a particular sports club who manage their use. If fields are to be multiuse, this will require a different management model.

#### **Scenario Four**

38. Scenario Four differs from the other three, as it proposed a nine hole course, with a driving range, two multiuse sports fields, a large area for informal recreation, and a possible aquatic centre.
39. The comments about the proposed walkway through the course in points 14-17 also relate to this scenario.
40. In this scenario a par 35 course is proposed, and therefore the previous comments in points 11 and 12 about course rating are also relevant.
41. If redevelopment results in a high quality nine hole course, with the standard configuration of 2 par 3 holes, 2 par 5 holes and 5 par 4 holes, CTA could support this option.
42. The better sighting of the practice area and the driving range mean all golf facilities could be managed from the existing clubhouse, for most efficient use of staff.
43. The previous comments about access to the proposed sports fields off St Luke's Rd also apply here, ie. points 35 and 37.
44. CTA does not see the relevance of proposing to site an aquatic centre here, when the Phillips Aquatic Centre is a mere two kilometres away. Access from St Luke's Rd will have problematic issues, as stated for the proposed sports fields.
45. This scenario also proposes a very large piece of ground for informal recreation – our comments in point 36 are restated here. This piece of land is the driest part of the present golf course, and its use for non-golf purposes will deprive the golf course of its best holes.

#### **In Summary**

46. CTA supports the retention of a quality 18 hole public course for the benefit of all Aucklanders citywide who wish to experience golf that is easily accessible and affordable.
47. CTA supports the restoration and enhancement of Meola Creek.
48. CTA does support the development of a Chinese Garden on the northern side of the north-western motorway.
49. CTA does not support the degradation of Chamberlain Park golf course by an unnecessary and unjustified walkway, cutting off the best part of the present course.
50. CTA does not support activities on the eastern part of the course, to be accessed off St Luke's Rd, due to potential traffic congestion issues, and the loss to golf activities of the best part of the present course.

51. CTA considers that information from the O'Connor Sinclair report discussed in point 4 applies to private golf clubs and has been inappropriately applied to the public course model of Chamberlain Park.
52. CTA does request that the option of enhancing the existing golf course experience is added to the development discussion.

Date of submission: 2 June 2015

Signature: H R Geary



Helen Geary  
Board Member, Civic Trust Auckland